

## On retirement of teachers

Times Report

Should the age of retirement of teachers be equated to that of other government servants? Most teachers would reply with an emphatic "No". Why only the teachers? A majority of any group of people would be rather perplexed to provide an answer in the affirmative.

And in fact since the enactment and application of the Public Servant's Retirement Act, 1974, teachers of government schools and colleges, who are also treated as government servants, are asking this question.

Some teachers of government educational institutions have also approached the authorities concerned in individual capacities on various occasions to arouse the feeling that their profession should be given differential treatment in this regard, but without success.

The said Act provides that a government servant would retire at the age of 57. This applies equally to teachers of government schools and colleges. There is a provision for extension of service or re-employment for another three years in case of a government being a teacher or a physician. This, however, is not followed generally.

There exists a practice, though rarely, to extend the service of a teacher for three years within the scope of the Act if the service of the teacher in question was considered indispensable. Allegations are there that the scope of this arrangement is often manipulated through the backdoor.

In the non-government educational institutions where the government contributes a substantial portion of the salary of each teacher, the age of retirement is 60 years.

As per an order of the Ministry of Education of February 16, 1983, Managing Committee of

Governing Body of a non-government educational institution may re-appoint a retiring teacher for five more years in three phases — first two phases being of two years each. In case of such re-appointment, however, the institution concerned would have to pay the entire salary of the teacher, because government contribution towards his salary would be stopped on his attaining the age of 60.

Teachers of both government and non-government educational institutions, keen as they are on getting differential treatment because of their being teachers, urge upon the government that an uniform age of retirement be there for them. They say, theirs is a profession where experience counts most. "It's not general administration that you require the infusion of new blood," they say.

They concede that the profession of a Court Judge and that of a physician also merits treatment different from that of a career administrator.

In support of their demand, they argue that teachers, especially those of schools, often retire without getting any promotion throughout the career. Nor do they long for power. Economic hardship that has by now become a part of life to them turns worse on their retirement.

The satisfaction lies in that, "His is a noble profession dedicated to the creation of educated citizens. His dreams remain concentrated on how his pupils could attain greater and greater successes in life. He forgets all his financial difficulties when someone brings the news of any of his students making a big achievement."

"We want nothing big", said a teacher, "but please make the job of a teacher a bit more attractive, a bit more secure for old age."