

Role of Teachers in The Twenty First Century

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'A Lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living contact with his knowledge but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform but also inspire. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its worth. The greater part of our learning in the schools has been wasted because, for most of our teachers are like dead specimens of once living things, with which they have learned acquaintance, but no communication of life and love.'

-Rabindranath Tagore

Education is one process, which has attracted the attention of everyone whether rich or poor, male or female, learned or illiterate, and has acquired importance irrespective of region, religion or creed. But when a person devises a sequential series of activities to make learning relevant, meaningful and joyful or suggests some philosophical and psychological basis on which such activities can be built, he attracts the attention of the community. In modern India Contribution to education of such personalities like R B Tagore, Arvind Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi, Raman Maharishi, Jiddu Krishna Murthy etc. are critically reviewed, evaluated and are included in the syllabi of education courses. An oft-quoted expression defines a "teacher as a teacher 24/7". It means that, a teacher is always a teacher and may be held accountable for in and out-of school behavior that have a positive impact on the students. Students always prefer and require 'good teachers' - teachers who are 'good' by virtue of their education, training, experience and commitment to learners. **Fredriksson (2004) cites three ways in which teachers can be 'good'**-

1. Through quality awareness.
2. Through professional ethics.
3. Through professional dimension.

In its 1994 report, Quality in teaching, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that a teacher should have:

- * Knowledge of substantive areas and content;
- * Pedagogic skill that includes acquiring and using a range of teaching strategies;
- * The ability to be self critical;

* Empathy and commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others and

* Managerial competence.

A teacher's first and foremost duty is to help the learners develop to their fullest potentialities. He should be conscious of the accountability to his profession by being committed towards effective learning of the students. The work a teacher engages on a daily basis is complex and demanding and requires a certain level of professional engagement and commitment. The role and importance of teachers in the educational system is often eulogized. The National Policy on Education, 1986, stated that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. But, on the other hand, it is also true that teachers are generally blamed for the weakness of the educational system. There are many people who consider the teachers insincere, incompetent, and unmotivated and therefore feel that the norms of accountability shall have to be enforced strictly to improve the educational standards.

Society can never be fully satisfied with the prevailing educational standards and it always yearns for further improvement. There shall always be scope for improvement as the norms and standards are also revised continuously as a result of changing perceptions, aspirations and understandings. A variety of suggestions such as augmentation of infrastructural facilities, modernization of curricula, strengthening of the system of supervision, democratization of administration, professional development of teachers and enforcement of accountability are often made to improve the quality of education. Each of these suggestions has enough merit but they are linked with one another in such a way that absence of anyone will adversely affect the effectiveness of others.

Need For Modernisation of Education In The Twenty First Century

This is the era of globalization. It has affected the economy, our culture, information, and our relationships with other individuals. It introduced computerization into our daily life experiences, reducing the world into a small box. All these represent opportunities as well as challenges to the education system. The teacher transfers the knowledge as well as the changes to the following generations in the positive sense. It is expected that teachers will teach, guide,

evaluate and demonstrate their capacity to develop themselves, to participate in modernizing the school and to make it more proactive and receptive to change. They should not only facilitate learning, but also promote citizenship training and active integration into society, develop curiosity, critical thinking and creativity, initiative and self-determination. The job of the teacher, according to the International Commission on the Development of Education (UNESCO 1972) is less and less to inculcate knowledge and more to encourage thinking; his formal functions apart, he will have to become more and more an advisor, a partner to talk, someone who helps seek out conflicting arguments rather than handling out readymade truths.

He will have to devote more time and energy to productive and creative activities, interaction, discussion, stimulation, understanding and encouragement. The role of teacher will increasingly become that of a facilitator of learning within the group.

In order to undertake these tasks, experts at regional meetings believe that teachers need to:

- * Be skilled in counseling individual children and the management of groups of children;
- * Be skilled in the use and choice of a variety of teaching methods;
- * Be skilled in working with parents and other members of the community;
- * Be skilled in a variety of appropriate research methodologies;

- * Be skilled in linking the curriculum of the school with the needs of the community;
- * Provide effective management of the learning environment and resources;
- * Be actively involved in the affairs of society and local community;
- * Be aware of the attitudes and values which lead to a healthy human society.

Various commissions and committees have been working for the promotion of the role of teachers in the modern society. Various papers have been prepared to modernize the role of teachers and their commitments. If through these papers there is a change, it is likely to lead a successful and prosperous society.

Conclusion:

The roles of teachers today are not confined to four walls of class rooms. It has been accepted on the basis of various extensive research that teachers have deep influences on the minds and hearts of students. In today's first changing times students find themselves trapped in the dark, untapped labyrinth with so much information being bombarded in their brains through both, traditional as well as modern hi-fi technical methods. They are most likely to grope in the dark in the absence of proper and adequate guidance. Teachers need to understand their stand in the transitional phase of the education system. A highly self motivated, enthusiastic, devoted and dedicated teaching class is an urgent need of the hour. Motivation of teachers is, thus, a must in today's times.

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