

Re-thinking on Teacher Education

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Abstract

It is a common assumption that education is a panacea which can provide knowledge, truth, beauty, power, wealth, peace, security, love and ecstasy. Teacher is the real hero in educational enterprise. A good teacher is like a priest who can help the learners by his conscious power to unite with the real Source. He is a candle who can kindle other candles. The future teachers should rely on life long, self-education and to be constant readiness to face and master the unexpected. Due to material development (external) only teachers are becoming worries and frustrations rather delight and realizations. To overcome these challenges both material and spiritual development is needed. Teacher education should provide this. Teacher is a real social engineer who can build the nation. No profession can be compared with teaching. The nation where teacher is worshiped that nation will progress. Economical development is not real development. Knowledge is the foundation of any progress of civilization. Modern science and technology will be helpful in teaching learning process. It cannot replace teacher. Teacher can use it judiciously for effective teaching. Research says that, teacher education in every country is neglected. There are several pitfalls in this field. But it is said that “If we educate a boy, we educate one individual, if we educate one girl, we educate the whole family and if we educate one teacher, we educate the whole community.” Hence, it is the time to rethink about teacher education. On the whole, the teacher education should be spiritual based, literally developed, scientifically advanced and technologically equipped

Introduction

“A poor teacher tells
An average teacher explains
A good teacher demonstrates
And a great teacher inspires”

This is a valuable quotation for teachers in the World. We have had inspiration from the great ‘Gurus’ like Valmiki, Vasistha, Viswamitra, Vyasa, Buddha, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and from the great teachers as Socrates, Plato, Froebel, Dewey and Radhakrishnan,. Why! What they had? We have to think deeply. They were not mere human form only. They signify to great consciousness. They are Teachers for all time. They influence others by their own consciousness and teaching. Then what is consciousness? Simply it is a power achieved from Supreme or God or Divine; whose characteristics are Absolute, Perfection, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

Delor’s Commission focused on “Learning to know, Learning to be, Learning to do, Learning to live together” in education of 21st century. How can it be possible! There was a great experience of the Indian seers in the similar word “Vasudheiva Kutumbakam.”It is possible only by development of consciousness. The human

being who himself is conscious can respect others, love others and gradually he extends his arena from a small family to a larger universe.

‘Learning to know’, philosophically it means first to know thyself. Who knows himself, he knows others, and he can realize the Universe. This is the mysticism of spirituality. Hence becoming a global standard teacher it must be needed to become a good local teacher.

In education there are three basic elements: God (the source of all Knowledge and Wisdom), learner (who seeks to learn), and teacher (the agent or the communicator of learning). Now a few questions arise in mind that how should be a teacher? What should be his ability? How would be his education? What should be his potentialities? How he can become a global teacher? How can one accept the new challenges? These are fundamental questions.

Before going to discuss it, it is needed to know what education is. What are the objectives of education? Education is a vast term. Each definition signifies some aspects, not whole of education. It is a common assumption that education is a panacea which can provide knowledge, truth, beauty, power, wealth, peace, security, love and ecstasy. A good teacher is like a priest who can help the learners by his conscious power to unite with the real Source. He is a candle who can kindle other candles. Then it may be possible to achieve the above objectives.

The Present Scenario of Teacher Education

It is observed that the Present system of teacher education in India is not effective. Its quality is diluted. The Verma Commission on (2012) appointed by supreme court of India found that “around 90% of pre-service teacher education institutions are in the non-government sector and most Eastern and North eastern states are facing an acute shortage of institutional capacity of teacher preparation in relation to the demand”. The Committee also said it inspected 291 institutes which prepare teacher in Maharashtra are found only 34 fit to continue. It is also proposed to strengthen of regulatory powers and functions of NCERT, which must develop comprehensive guidelines for innovative teacher education programme. It is also appropriate for other states.

Banarjee committee (2008) reported that, the NCTE (the highest apex body of Teacher Education in India) had moved away from its mandate of ensuring quality teacher education and was preoccupied with sanctioning institutions. There are several criticisms and court cases appear against NCTE. On the whole, the teacher education in India is not healthy. What about other countries?

Singh (1990) says, “The teacher education in UK is in state turmoil. Things are shaping and several new experiments being tried out. A whole range of new courses being offered on absolutely innovative lines. . But human failings have left their deep impress in their programmes. The universities continue to behave in an aristocratic manner looking down upon those who seek their validation or authority....Open University has posed yet another challenge to the rarefied air of the universities with considerable degree of success.” Teaching career in UK is the last choice available. The high cast people are in best positions of the universities.

Teacher education in USA has several problems. According to Singh (1990), “The problems range from an ever increasing number of teacher’s strike, school indiscipline, subject of incompetence of teacher in teaching. Lawrence A. Cremen has brought to the people’s notice the ‘decline quality in teacher training’.” Teaching is perceived one of the poorest jobs. Hence, a few learners come to this profession. There is shortage of competent teachers in new areas along with poor quality of teachers in English language and literature appeared.

Regarding Japanese teacher education Grewal (1990) said that, teacher training of Japan has currently received public attention. A private Commission on education, appointed by Japanese prime minister, points out in its report that teachers are “not just ordinary workers.” The report has made two recommendations in this regard. One is introduction of internship before formal employment and the other is “recruitment of people with rich experience outside the education field” so as to recruit teachers of diverse talent and knowledge.

From the above discussion it is very clear that teacher education in every country is neglected due to ignorance. There are several pitfalls in this field. But it is said that “If we educate a boy, we educate one individual, if we educate one girl, we educate the whole family and if we educate one teacher, we educate the whole community.” Teacher is a ‘friend, philosopher and guide’ or ‘facilitator and manager’, whatever it may be, the question is how can he become this. It is obvious that ‘teacher is not an information monger’ only, he is much more than that. Hence it is time to re-think about the teacher education in the Globe. Based on Integral education of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother the researcher proposed a model of teacher education.

A Proposed Model of Teacher Education

Objectives

- To become conscious about thyself and others
- To encourage for self discovery
- To generate beauty in body by cultivating physical education
- To gain knowledge in mind by mental education
- To enhance power in vital by training the vital being
- To achieve love and bliss by psychic and spiritual education
- To become a perfect man on the whole

Curriculum

The curriculum of teacher education is not a piece of meal or a tablet which can be provided in three or six months. It should be prepared at least for two to four years in a residential campus according to level of education (primary, secondary and tertiary). The individual should be helped to realize his utmost potentialities. He should be enabled to find his proper relation with his social group and his nation. He should be encouraged to find his true place in global community. Hence, there is a personal, a social (national) and global (racial) aspects of education. In the first changing global situation today the teacher education should be comprised the needs of harmonious development of body, mind and soul, and the mobilization of enduring gains of the past, the thrust of the present and the possibilities of unfolding future.

The curriculum of teacher education should include the following subjects. They are: (1) Physical Education; should have an important place. It contains physical training, sports, games, gymnastics, balance diet and preventive care. (2) Vital Education: It includes music, arts, drama, crafts, ballet etc., so that life energy will be channelized through freedom, leadership, responsibility and learning by doing. (3) Mental Education: This must be developed through academic studies like languages, mathematics, social sciences and pure sciences as choice paper along with foundations of education. (4) Psychic and Spiritual Education: All kinds curricular and co-curricular activities should aim at inculcating spiritual and psychic values like love, truth, faith in God, competency in performance strength of mind and heart. (5) International Education: Universal love, sympathy, fellow feeling and understanding are the important characters which should be included along with.

The future teachers should rely on life long, self-education and to be constant readiness to face and master the unexpected. Due to material (external) development only teachers are facing worries and frustrations rather than delights and realisations. To overcome these challenges both material and spiritual development is needed. The acquired information should be fused into knowledge and practised as wisdom. It should be developed with the basic knowledge or disciplines around which technology develops. It is needed at awakening and developing the learners' diverse and dormant faculties of observation, experimentation and speculation. Regarding this approach Iyengar (1975, P.9) said, "Within a broad framework of theory, the people should be encouraged to learn through doing-to experiment for himself-and to adventure boldly into the unknown. Learners have to acquire, through self-effort as far as possible, the sort of competence and self-confidence that will train them to improvise the necessary specialist skills to meet future contingencies and challenges. What education should thus try to provide is not so much a finished skill valid for a life-time (there are no such skills any more), but the energy of body, alacrity of mind, and especially the deeper poise of spirit that will develop the relevant skills as and when required."

Every subject should be considered in relation to the Whole, the very Ground of Reality. The stress should be given to integral growth of the whole human personality. The amalgamation of matter and spirit should be emphasized. The education program would simply be the flowering of human consciousness.

Here are some suggestions given by Iyengar which will be very helpful for quality excellence in teacher education.

- The content of compulsory courses may be drastically reduced by casting aside the dead survivals.
- Free time may be made available to learners for studies or projects of their own.
- A much wider real choice of subjects may be offered to suit the varied aptitudes and preferences of the learners.
- The teacher must be a friend, adviser, collaborator, and fellow adventurer rather than that of a sales man, examiner, policeman, and magistrate.
- Promoting healthy teacher-learner dialogue.

- The ideal of all-round excellence may be placed before the learners, but viewed less and less in terms of grades, ranks, marks and distinctions, and more and more as the efflorescence of personality in its wholeness and wholesomeness.
- There may be set apart daily some minutes of silence, and an hour of meditation or silent self-introspection every week, when the pupils are encouraged to cultivate the divine seeing eye that looks deep into the innermost truth of things.
- The attempt to give an inner orientation to education may be expected to achieve in an accession of keenness, freshness, vitality, open-heartedness and clarity of vision.

Campus and Infrastructure

A teacher education institution should have a spacious, lonely, natural surrounding like 'Ashramic' environment. There must be agriculture, orchards and beautiful gardens in the campus. It must be free from chaos and pollution and far from market place or populated city. A calm and quite atmosphere should be reign everywhere. It is no need of high storeyed building as infrastructure. Simple village style roofing may do. But it must be decent and attractive. It can be decorated with simple flowers, leaves, twigs and various good quotations. The campus should be neat and clean. There should be no hierarchy in work place. Every body can do every work with love or 'shraddha'. Every body can learn everything with his interest. Only experts in respective discipline may guide others.

As a whole, the institution should be considered as a temple of learning. It should be such an atmosphere where the sanctity of mind could be established. The environment should be helpful for growth of consciousness where both trainees and trainers can search cooperatively. It should be residential. There should be no restriction in time or place of learning.

Methods

The Teacher Education is a daring adventure into unknown possibilities. Here teacher will constantly learn, discover, aspire, advance, grow in knowledge, acquire newer skills, rise in the wings of contrivance and complexity and try to rise higher and higher. There may be failure, yet the spur of aspiration should be unflinching and defeats should be refreshed by new hope and effort.

The teachers and the learners have to awake about the following quote provided by Sri Aurobindo in his treatise *The Human Cycle*;

"...each human being is a self-developing soul and ... the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. It is not yet realized what this soul is or that the true secret, whether with child or man is to help him to find is deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come foreground, and still more if we call it into the foreground as 'the leader of the march set in our front', will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realization of its potentialities of which our present

mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience of forming any conception.”

One should encourage the trainees to exploit his innate buoyancy, and curiosity and learn largely by his own efforts; to embark upon projects formulating his own objectives and seeking his own solutions through self-regulated programs of work-experience; and to engage in group activity with his fellows, alike for gaining knowledge and skills and for community service. Flexibility and dynamism, rather than rigidity and uniformity, should thus be the governing laws of the educational process. The trainer and trainees confrontation should be ended by making them both participants in the educational field.

A congenial environment is to be created, which will facilitate learner's discovering and activating the psychic being within. Thereby, the ego will disappear. A good rapport with the soul or the psychic being in others will be established. The sense of separateness will be lost. He can unite with the universal spirit. Sri Aurobindo says, “The evocation of this real man within is the right object of education and indeed of all human life”. By transforming one's ego-desire one can find himself and make himself a true representative of the Divine in the world. The academic atmosphere contact with the Divine presence, dedicated love of the teacher, the stimulating fellowship of other pupils, unending romance of life, the constant play of curiosity and the thrilled satisfaction of doing things on one's own or by spontaneous co-operative effort-these are among the elements of educational engineering that will prepare the future teacher.

The following tips have much significance which may be practised during teacher education programme.

- Applying creativity
- Becoming conscious
- Becoming sincere
- Brain storming
- Churning of ideas
- Collective wisdom
- Conscious environment
- Consider everything as opportunity for progress
- Cooperation
- Dedication
- Development of own area
- Doing research and solving problems accordingly
- Encouraging and motivating
- Enjoy the work always
- Gratification
- Guiding subordinate
- Hard working
- Helping others
- Inner dialogue
- Introspection
- Leadership in action
- Learning from everything
- Look at your weakness, never condemn it rather try to reject one by one
- Love to each other

- Love to profession
- Managing thyself
- Never condemn human resource or potentiality
- No rigidity rather flexibility in organization
- Positive thinking
- Preparing documents properly
- Promoting healthy teacher-pupil dialogues
- Remain happy
- See well in yourself and in others
- Self analysis
- Self-discovery
- Setting proper vision, mission and goals
- Step back
- Using favorable scientific ideas
- Using technology judiciously

The Traits and Characteristics of a Good Teacher

Quality of education or institution depends on quality of teachers. Teacher is the real hero in educational enterprise. Hence, everybody wants a good teacher. But it is rare. How should be a good teacher? Now, this is matter of discussion.

According to Sri Aurobindo, to be a good teacher one must be a saint and hero. One must be a great yogi. One must have a perfect attitude to be able to exact a perfect attitude from the students. A teacher cannot ask anyone to do what he does not do himself. The teachers must be perfectly calm, who have an endurance that never fails, and a quietude which nothing can disturb.

Becoming truly good teachers, they are capable of making an inner progress of impersonalisation, of eliminating their egoism, controlling their movements, capable of clear-sightedness and understanding of others and a never failing patience. A teacher should reject the feeling of superiority. He should have a good relation with the divine. He should eliminate his desires by a sincere flame of aspiration.

The first task of teachers is to learn how to identify themselves with the others, to feel as they do. Then one knows what one should do; one keeps one's inner light, keeps one's consciousness where it ought to be, very above, in the light, and in the same time gets identified. Then one feels what they are, what their reactions are, what their thoughts, and one holds that before the light one has. One succeeds in thinking out perfectly well what should be done for them.

A teacher should teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves and to will what they want to be.

The teachers must have lived what they want to teach. To rise into new consciousness, the first condition is to have enough modesty of mind to be convinced that you think to know is nothing in comparison to what yet remains to be learnt. All that you have learnt outwardly must be just a step allowing you to rise towards higher knowledge.

The school should be an opportunity for progress for the teachers as well as for the students. Each one should have the freedom to develop freely. Applying a method is fruitful when one has discovered it oneself.

Formulating a new method of teaching would be very interesting for children. The true way of knowing is mental silence, and attentive silence turned towards the truer consciousness and the capacity to receive what comes from there. A teacher should have this capacity. He must be able to answer every question. The children should be given little indications at the age of seven, a complete explanation at fourteen of how to do it. It is the only way to be in relation with the deeper truth of things.

The teacher themselves should at least have a sincere beginning of discipline and experience. The good teachers want to show what can be done, and try to prove that it must be done.

One should not make a mistake. One should not lose his temper. He should always understand. He should try to know and see clearly about the movement and the inner constitution of the child, what is the thing to be strengthened and brought forward. This should be done. Let them be free to blossom. Provide then opportunity to see many things, to touch many things, to do as many things as possible. It will be very good. Never should one try to impose on them what one thinks or knows.

Management of Teacher Education

Modern management is materialistic, professional and felt as soulless. It is a technique imported from West. They concentrate on 'production targets' and 'profit and loss account'. The maximizing of profit becomes the ultimate goal. Regarding this Capra Fritjof (1987, pp.230-31) says; "This technology is fragmented rather than holistic, bent on manipulation and control rather than cooperation, self-assertive rather than integrative, and suitable for centralized management rather than regional application by individuals and small groups. As a result the technology has become profoundly anti-ecological, anti-social, unhealthy and inhuman." This materialistic management has lost belongingness, harmony, cooperation, fellow feelings, and as a whole, the human values. On the other hand it creates conflicts, violence, strikes and breakdowns in industry or institution.

The manager earns some dollars at the cost of his peace and harmony. He suffers from diseases and mental discomforts. Labour problems, loss of production, market declination, tax measures and reduction of profits hunt his brain, create unrest, sleeplessness and make reliant on medicine.

It is quite obvious that 'transformational leadership' is more positive than common leadership. But research is not ended here. Human's wants are unlimited. He does not satisfy with such result. He enquires more and more. He wants to ride the next step of leadership. Some say that the next one is Spiritual aspect of leadership. Now it is being discussed somewhere. Let us discuss about it.

"There is an invisible order that governs the universe.

- Sensing that order is the beginning of spirituality.
- Respecting that is the beginning of learning.
- Understanding it is the beginning of self-development.
- Flowing with it is the beginning of good management.
- To be animated by it is the beginning of leadership.” (Saumendranathji, 2004)

Any good management aspires to achieve high degree of performance and productivity with peace and growth with harmony. One school of management says, production is increased by material incentives. Another school says, it is increased rather by impulsion of political and social idealism. But Gupta (2009, P.132) says, ‘spiritual approach of management based on consciousness-from within-to-without management-that stimulates real prosperity’.

A good management needs a good manager or leader. A spiritual leader must have heightened consciousness who will dedicate himself to his profession. He must be a self-realized personality. Self-realization enhances self-management. A self-managed person can lead others and manage institution properly. He is more stable and charged who can influence others. He creates positive climate by his positive thinking. He loves and respects both animate and inanimate objects. He deals with peace, truth, knowledge, power, beauty, love and bliss. There are number of (saints) spiritual leaders in the earth who are the glowing examples. There are innumerable scriptures available in our society, which give wide knowledge regarding this. If it is practiced sincerely it will give positive result. It increases belongingness, harmony, cooperation, fellow feelings, and as a whole the human values. It is experimental fact. The researcher has been practicing it for twenty five years. The result is wonderful.

A spiritual leader must be free from flattery, greed, suspicion and fear. Rather, he should have hard-won knowledge, a total sense of responsibility, and an approach of consciousness. According to Gupta (2009,P.140), he must “ponder over such steps as justice and fairness in thought and action, sincerity of purpose and words, awakening of consciousness, feelings of patriotism and nationalism, spontaneity of actions, aesthetic values, creation and satisfaction of higher actions, promotion of goodwill and oneness, behavioral decencies, satisfaction of religious and moral aspirations, human touch and sense of spirituality through instructional and behavioral programs and organizational adjustments.”

In spiritual approach of management, it is focused on development of man and society rather to train or retain a worker. The management should do all that helps the workers to develop their physique, broaden their outlook, energize their mental faculties, grow their consciousness and enrich their soul. A true leader of education (ibid, 2009,P.145) “can also become a yogi who starts with an inner prayer for the success of organization, consecrates his business as surrender to the Divine and aspires for the Divine Grace for the growth and development of his business towards progress of his organization, welfare of his workers, customers and consumers. He consecrates his work to the Divine, relies on his inner being and invokes the progress and welfare of society. While he acts in the world he remains in Divine consciousness through prayer, consecration and aspiration for progress and welfare of all concerned because ‘imperfect is the joy not shared by all’.”

A leader of teacher education can create an environment by his actions and behaviors to inspire his colleagues, students and parents (stake holders). He must have faith, dedication, introspection, and aspiration for a harmonious life and living. He should have a good character, integrity and intellectual honesty, selfless and objectivity. First he must form a positive attitude to develop his consciousness. He must aspire to invoke Divine grace towards progress & welfare of his institution or profession.

A leader in educational institution should take care of all the components in the educational enterprise, i.e. man, material, machines, methods and money. It should remember that the Divine is in all things and all things are Divine. By giving care and attention in the form of mental interest, loving care, enthusiasm and physical concern one can contact and respect the Divine in matter.

Evaluation and Assessment

In our society everybody wants maximum percentage of marks. This wanting almost forces students to close the door to inter inner worlds. But in case of proposed teacher education it should have to make a shift in assessment procedure so that a student life is not dominated by the common popular model. In assessment procedure it should be based on developmental model. The assessment procedure should be diagnostic and has to create self-awareness.

All the time, the trainees should be busy with something, exploring, discovering, experimenting, repeating etc. That is a constant learning should be taken place. A teacher has the vital task to guide this process, to offer certain feedbacks, to help the trainees, see certain structures so that they can grow to the maximum of their potential.

A quality Teacher Education requires an evaluation which should be based on development and not on ranking.

Therefore it:

- is diagnostic
- is participatory
- fosters self understanding
- is non-judge mental
- gives positive feedback
- is individual
- requires self evaluation and
- Creates self-awareness and self-discovery. (Hupples, 2001, P. 211)

Assessment

We may take the following points for assessment.

1. The environment of assessment should be open respectful enriching and encouraging.
2. Assessment will be done through observation.
3. We can use variety of evaluation techniques.
4. The number of paper and pen tests should be reduced.
5. We should always remember the objectives of assessment i.e., assessment is not for ranking but for development.

6. The tests which encourage rote-learning should be avoided.
7. The qualities and capacities of the students should be observed. Never assess these.
8. Self-evaluation must be encouraged.
9. Be enthusiastic, understanding, inspiring & open hearted.

Suggestion and Conclusion

Teacher is a real social engineer who can build the society. No profession can be compared with teaching. The nation where teacher is worshiped that nation will progress. Only economical development is not real development. Knowledge is the foundation of any progress of civilization. Modern science and technology will be helpful in teaching learning process.

It cannot replace teacher. Teacher can use it judiciously for effective teaching. Amalgamation of spirit and matter in teaching profession will make it more effective and permanent. Hence teacher education should be spiritual based, literally developed, scientifically advanced and technologically equipped. The academics, academicians, researchers, planners, scholars, educators, managers etc. in this field should understand and practice the above ideas to make the new paradigms in teacher education.

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