

LETTER TO EDITOR

Role of Teachers in Quality Enhancement in Higher Education

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“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's feet”

–Swami Vivekananda

Present Scenario of Higher Education in India

It has been found that only 10 % of Indian youth go to college. This percentage is 40-50% in developed countries. As per the available reports, two third of the Indian universities are providing sub-standard education while 90 % colleges in India are below average. Today, most of the institutions have become factory of degrees only. Students / teachers are running after attaining or providing degrees and not towards the gaining knowledge and wisdom. Attendance in the institution has dropped drastically and class room teaching is becoming only a ritual, to be followed mechanically. Though, it is said that the destiny of nation is shaped only in the class rooms, very little importance is being given to class room teaching. The overall scenario of higher education in India does not match with the global quality standards. It does not foster the global competencies and even does not make significant contribution to the national development. The present education system does not match with the needs and expectations of the employment sector.

The role of the teacher assumes greater significance in this deteriorating scenario of higher education. It is a daunting task for the teachers to improve the quantity, quality and equality in higher education. It is said that a good teacher can bring the entire world to the class

room. The teacher being a sculptor has to play multidimensional role to inculcate the nuances of subjects to the heterogeneous cult of students. He has to inspire to students to show interest in their subjects, even if he confronts students who are completely demotivated and dispirited.

Quality education is the solution to all the problems and teachers are the main ingredients in giving quality education.

Quality Education

It is said that quality is not destination, it is a continuous journey. Quality means doing the right things right. Doing things right - is efficiency and doing right things is effectiveness.

Quality in education is to learn the right things and to learn them well. It is not good enough to learn the right things only half well and it may be even worse to learn the wrong things well. Quality has become the key word in the higher education. Today, improving the quality is the biggest challenge before the higher education system. Access to the global economy will depend more on the quality and productivity. This problem can be solved by making available more and more professional skills. Higher education requires special emphasis and has major role to play in determining the quality of life and the pace of development of a nation and the world as a whole. It is the responsibility of the higher education system to ensure that the skills, understanding and output of the students are equal to the best in the world.

Quality education is the education that best fits the present and future needs of the learners. It is the education that provides students with the tools to deal with and find solutions to challenges confronting mankind. In a changing world of rapid technological advances, this means that what was considered quality education yesterday might not meet the standard of what will be understood as quality tomorrow. It should not be regarded as a process of consumption, but as a process of interaction between teachers and students.

Quality education can never be a neutral process, it will always be value based. It must aim at giving the students opportunities for personal development and confidence to adapt to new situations as well as change these situations, when they find that necessary.

Teachers

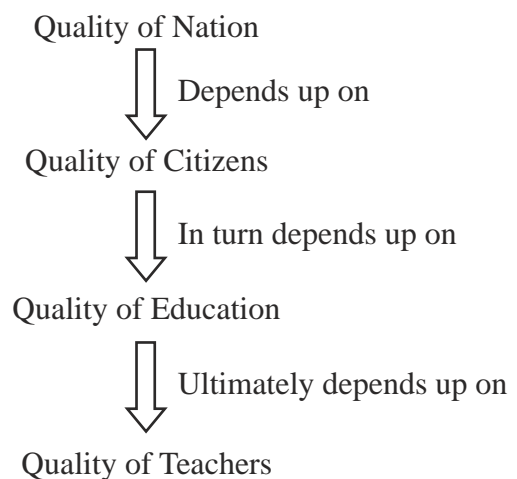
The success of any education system depends on the quality of teachers, which, in turn, depends on the effective teaching / learning process. Teachers' role is of vital significance for the development of society and appropriate changes in the society. Thus, the quality of higher education depends upon quality of those who impart it. Teachers are the most important components of any educational system. Teachers play most crucial role in the development of the education system as a whole and also in imparting and maintaining the standards of higher education.

In the present scenario, the 'personality' of the teachers has deteriorated. Teaching is considered as one of the noblest professions but unfortunately this profession is losing its status in the society because of modernization, political influence, castism, corruption and other unfair means. For many teachers, especially in medical and dental sciences, teaching profession has become easy source of earning money. Making many money

by unfair means like malpractices in examination resulted in decline of the quality of teaching values. Changing social attitude, non-responsiveness and poor level of accountability, emphasis on western system of education, impact of modernization, absence of the traditional Indian education system, etc. are the factors responsible for the degradation of teaching values in the society.

“The primary task of a society is to find a real teacher, one who performs his duty with perfection and dedication and is a perfect moral example for the society”

- Rabindranath Tagore



Thus, teachers play critical role in taking quality education and in shaping the future and destiny of a nation. Teachers teach the ways of life, channelize youth power and mold their character. In a real sense, the teachers are the backbone of the nation.

Role of Teachers in Quality Enhancement

“Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man”

- Swami Vivekanand

Teachers play crucial role in improving the quality of higher education in following ways:

1. Dedication and Commitment

Dedication and commitment of teachers plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education and shaping the future of nation.

2. Motivation

A teacher should act as a motivational force and should be able to create a learning environment in which students are encouraged to think carefully, rationally and express their thoughts and decide on the situations and difficulties. It is the responsibility of teacher to create a context in which the students' desire and ability to learn can work most effectively. A teacher should act as the role model for the students.

3. Skill Development

Skill development is crucial to the success of students in the job market. Skill development of students, on par with their counterparts elsewhere is an important aspect of enhancement of quality of higher education. With liberalization and globalization of economic activities, the need to develop skilled human resources of a high caliber is imperative. Consequently, the demand for internationally acceptable standards in higher education is evident. Therefore, preparing the students to achieve core competencies, to face the global requirements successfully is very important. This requires that the teachers should be innovative, creative and entrepreneurial in their approach, to ensure skill development amongst the students. By various means such as establishment of collaborations with industries, social organizations, networking with the neighborhood agencies/bodies and fostering a closer relationship between the “world of skilled work” and the “world of competent-learning”, it is possible to develop required skills.

4. Imparting Value Based Education

It is said that skills are of less importance in the absence of appropriate value systems. Hence,

teachers should shoulder the responsibility of inculcating the desirable value systems amongst the students. In a country like India, with cultural pluralities and diversities, it is essential that students imbibe the appropriate values commensurate with social, cultural, economic and environmental realities, at the local, national and universal levels. Whatever be the pluralities and diversities that exist in the country, there is ample scope for inculcating the core universal values like truth and righteousness. The seeds of values sown in the early stages of education, mostly aimed at cooperation and mutual understanding, have to be reiterated and re-emphasized at the higher educational institutions, through appropriate learning experiences and opportunities.

Values are the guiding principles of life, which are conducive to all round development. They give direction to life and bring joy, satisfaction and peace to life. In ancient India, more importance was given to morality, honesty, duty, truth, friendship, brotherhood, etc and these were considered to be the themes of Indian culture and society. Imparting value based education was the only aim of the teachers of ancient age. But in the present scenario, due to large number of changes, there is a considerable decrease in the quality of value based education.

Wisdom knows what to do next, skill knows how to do it and virtue is doing it. Teachers must try to impart knowledge, which leads to wisdom and not merely to training or skill. He should have capability to impart value based education to the students. The purpose is not to produce outstanding students but to produce outstanding citizens of the country.

5. Impact of Caliber

It has been revealed by many research studies that the caliber of teachers has tremendous impact on the caliber of the students. Hence, a teacher, who

is a permanent learner has to update the subject knowledge continuously and should be aware of latest development in their subject.

6. Lateral Thinking

Lateral thinking is solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that is not immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using only traditional step-by-step logic. Teacher should take initiative to nurture and nourish the students to develop lateral thinking.

7. Use of Resources

Efficient use of resources helps to produce uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. Motivated teachers can enrich their teaching with resources and co-curricular activities. Use of ICTs in teaching-learning process makes the lecture effective and improves the quality of teaching. Continuous updating of teaching methods and use of innovative teaching methods help to improve the quality of teaching.

8. Curriculum Design

The quality of higher education can be enhanced by designing need based curriculum, keeping in view the demands in the employment sector at national and international level.

9. Special Attention to Research

Promotion of research is crucial for improving the quality of higher education system. It is one of the factors, which influences the quality of teaching. Educational research must be strengthened as an instrument for improving educational quality and results of such research must be communicated to teachers in a better way.

The link between classroom teaching and research is extremely important. It must be a link operating in two directions:

- i) Information to the teachers about latest findings.
- ii) Information to the researchers about the problems.

10. Academic Development

To teach is the life-long process of learning

Teachers are the most important components of the higher education system. Academic development of teachers is crucial and necessary for the success of the higher education system because teachers are the prime movers and catalysts for all round development of students. Teachers play a significant role not only in improving the quality of higher education but also maintaining it; the professional competency of teachers has to be of such a high level so as to impart quality knowledge to the students. This would call the continuous upgrading of the professional development of the teachers, which is key guarantee of quality education. High-quality in service training and professional development within the profession in order to keep in touch with new findings in their subjects and to obtain continuous support for the improvement of their teaching. Teachers need continuous self-development to generate knowledge that goes to contribute towards inculcating high professional competency among students. Development of teachers depends on many factors. It is closely linked with

- The quality of research
- Participation in national and international seminars
- Faculty exchange programs
- Upgradation of qualifications
- Exposure to recent developments
- Writing of books and papers
- Collaborating with fellow researchers in other higher education institute

These activities help to impart quality education to students.

11. Quality Awareness and Self Evaluation

Ability to improve the quality of education is the ability to reflect on their own teaching, critically examine the methods used and looking for alternative ways of teaching. To create increased quality awareness and help teachers to improve their teaching methodology and skills may be of crucial importance to improve quality in education. One major way of doing this is to systematically evaluate the own teaching and its results. Evaluation helps to improve their own work. This also helps to discuss about newer effective methods to use in the teaching and to discuss about the choice of the best teaching methods.

12. Professional Freedom

Professional freedom of the teacher is of crucial importance in developing quality in education. Professional freedom does not mean that the teacher can do whatever he likes, but that the teacher, who knows the students, is the person best equipped to decide which methods to use in order to create an optimal leaning situation. There has to be a general thrust in the creativity of the teacher. Authorities can give suggestions to teachers regarding the use of newer teaching methods through service training, professional development programs and other means. But authority should not dictate about method to be used by teacher. The teacher should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties.

A teacher plays a crucial and demanding role in the process of students learning by creating a context in which the students' desire and ability to

learn can work most effectively. The task of the teacher in the higher education system involve the creation of a learning environment in which students are encouraged to think carefully, rationally and to express their thoughts and to decide on the situations and difficulties they wish to confront and resolve. The teacher helps students to achieve their own aims and adopt notion that underlines the higher education. Therefore, the quality of performance of the teachers is of paramount importance.

13. Professional Ethics

Professional ethics of teachers is an important issue. The complex task of teaching and many other responsibilities shouldered by teachers underline the questions related to the responsibilities and duties of teachers. This has also been reflected in a growing discussion on professional ethics among teachers. Promotion of professional ethics also helps to fight against corruption.

Conclusion:

Education without vision is fruitless and education without value is meaningless. The inculcation of values and promotion of values in educational system is a need of the hour to make all the possible attempts to inculcate value – oriented education in the centers of learning. The teachers' participation with vision to make education meaningful and valuable will contribute to the overall development of the system of higher education of the country as a whole.

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