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TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: -

Professionalism, it is generally believed, is not what it was. Depending on one's perspective, it may be seen to have either taken a knock and emerged with the scars to prove it, or had a style make-over and image-change. Some would argue that it has undergone both, with



the one necessitating the other.

KEYWORDS: Rehabilitation, Resettlement, land acquisition, displacement, tribal areas.

INTRODUCTION :

As a wholesale concept it is recognizable as having been renovated, and the 'new' epithet

has been applied as much to educational professionalisms – those relating to, inter alia, teachers, college lecturers, academics, and educational leaders and managers across all sectors – as to other public sector professionalisms.

IS TEACHING A PROFESSION?

Men are social beings. In a society, men are interdependent each other through various types of jobs. Some produce crops, some manufacture tools, some transport products, and some teach how to do all these things. Though all the jobs are valuable for the survival of a community, not all the jobs have same values. Because of the inequality in the perceived significance among the jobs, there is stratification in training for the job, remuneration, and social prestige of the workers. Some types of jobs are mastered on the site within a few weeks of training but others are required a few years of training even after college education. Some workers are paid by the salaries but others are charging fees to the clients. Some employees are forming unions for the protection of their rights but others are forging association for professional advancement.

Is teaching a profession? It is one of the controversial questions in the modern society of America. Most teachers in public and private schools are college graduates with years training in teaching. However, many people are thinking that if "everybody boil water and coach basketball, then they kind of feel the same way about teaching" (Wallis, 1994, p. 63). The emergence of home schooling and charter schools is partly based on the perception of the teaching as a "non-profession." Even though we admit the need of professional preparation of the teacher, many people think that the profession of teaching is fundamentally different from those that receive the greatest public recognition. "Teachers are not professionals in the conventional sense of the term" (Prate & Rury, 1991). Though there was another effort to define teaching as a "new professionalism" Teacher Professionalism 2 (Bicentennial Commission on Education for the Profession of Teaching, 1976), there are still other reasons that teaching is not a profession in a traditional sense.

Profession and Professionalism:-

An ideal to which individuals and occupational groups aspire, in order to distinguish themselves from other workers.” The prestigious status that the expert professionals enjoy is based on the following characteristics of a profession:

- 1) a distinctive body of knowledge,
- 2) the membership control, and
- 3) the commitment to the welfare of the client.

1) Expert Knowledge

Professionals are expected to have expertise to do their work. The status of a profession has in part been a reflection of its identification with a distinctive body of knowledge. Because of this expertise in knowledge, organizations that employ professionals are not typically based on the authority of supervisors, but rather on collegial relationships among peers (Ambrosie & Harley, 1988). Knowledge is the basis for decisions that are made with respect to the unique needs of clients. The professional autonomy and authoritative power of the professionals over their practices are also derived from this expertise of the professionals.

2) Professional Autonomy

The expert professionals assume collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal, and enforcement of professional standards of practice. They also control the education and licensing process of its members. The selection process starts from the admission process into the educational agencies, typically university programs at graduate level. Because of the competition to the limited number of students admitted to the program, the better prepared candidates are selected. In completion of the program, the candidates of the professionals have to pass the rigorous test on the expert knowledge, followed by continuous evaluation during the internship period. This certification process not only controls the induction of members to a profession, but also promotes the acquisition of standardized, formal knowledge required to its members through their interaction with the experts in the profession.

3) Motivation on Public Services

In addition to the requirement of expert knowledge in theory and practice, the professional practitioners pledge their first concern to the welfare of the clients. Codes of ethics in the professional practices are usually established by the professional association and enforced by the peers in the profession. If any client is not satisfied with the services provided by a professional, he or she initiates a legal process instead of reporting the case to the supervisor. Teacher Professionalism 6 As discussed so far, teachers are substantially different from the expert professionals in professional training, induction process into the field, professional autonomy, practitioner-client relationship, and social status. These differences not only characterize the nature of teaching but also determine the nature of education that the American students receive at schools. As teacher professionalism has been a major concern among the proponents of American education reform since early 1980s, more attention on the status of American teachers seems to be needed.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA:-

Education in ancient India was highly advanced as evident from the centres of learning that existed in the Buddhist monasteries of the 7th century BC up to the 3rd century AD Nalanda. In these centers, gathering of scholars gurukula used to be engaged in intellectual debates-- parishads-- in residential campuses. A few of these centres were large and had several faculties. Historians speculate that these centres had a remarkable resemblance to the European medieval universities that came up much later. The ancient education system in India slowly got extinguished following invasions and disorder in the country. Till the eighteenth century, India had three distinct traditions of advanced scholarship in the Hindu gurukulas, the Buddhist viharas, and the Quranic madarasas, before the British set up a network of schools to impart western education in English medium. The first such college to impart western education was founded in 1818 at Serampore near Calcutta.

Over the next forty years, many such colleges were established in different parts of the country at Agra, Bombay, Madras, Nagpur, Patna, Calcutta, and Nagapattinam. In 1857, three federal examining universities on the pattern of London University were set up at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The existing 27 colleges were affiliated to these three universities. Later, more universities were established. At the time of independence in 1947, there were 19 universities and several hundred affiliated colleges. The higher education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and 4738 colleges in the country enrolling around five per cent of the eligible age group in higher education. Today, while in terms of enrolment, India is the third largest higher education system in the world (after China and the USA); with 17973 institutions (348 universities and 17625 colleges) is the largest higher education system in the world in terms of number of institutions. The number of institutions in India more than four times the number of institutions both in the United States and entire Europe.

NEED OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:-

The need for teacher development is vital in an environment where educational goals for schools, and students are high. Teachers are expected to help students become critical, constructive thinkers who have developed thorough conceptual understandings. Students are required to synthesize information, solve problems, invent new ideas, create models, and explain themselves with confidence and proficiency. Classrooms are viewed as places where rich discourse should take place as students engage in their work and explore problems with meaningful contexts.

The traditional approach to teaching is a long-established style and is especially prevalent in schools amongst older who were taught, and have long been teaching in this manner. It consists of the mastery of concepts and procedures as the ultimate goal of instruction and places little emphasis on the processes of geography, or on the knowledge that comes out of geographical problem situations. There is therefore a strong contemporary need for teacher development. Modern curricula and new theory also indicate that a move is necessary from the over reliance of teaching practices where exposition and individual seatwork exist, towards activities that promote students' involvement in constructing, applying, and evaluating geographical ideas. This move is especially important for rural schools where there is a special need for teaching to include more geographical reasoning and problem solving, more communication, and more connections between the geographical ideas and applications. The contemporary approach is premised on constructivism, in which learning is directly focused on the construction of knowledge, and not the traditional transfer of it from the teacher to the student. However, this constructivist approach often takes far beyond their traditional and familiar roles and practices, requiring changes in epistemological perspectives and knowledge of how students learn mathematics. In addition, they also require changes in classroom practices. In order to give the opportunity to develop and make changes, with support, professional development is necessary. In particular, there is a need for professional development to cater for working in rural schools. The common view that each teacher must find their own style, as related by Ball, maintains this individualism and isolation of teaching. Common standards are difficult to develop, and disagreements are masked. The struggles a teacher may be having in their practice, especially in rural are often hidden because of the isolation. It is therefore hoped that by offering the good opportunities for learning, they are then able to critique and challenge alternative practices, with real and helpful debate, facilitating growth.

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND CLASSROOM PROCESSES:-

Eventually what matters is that teacher professionalism increases learning in the classroom. Classroom processes mean all the processes which happen in the classroom. The basic process which happen and which should happen in the classroom is teaching-learning. This involves delivery of the intended curriculum through lessons in an appropriate way. Despite the criticism of the Herbartian framework of the lesson delivery, experts have not suggested something that is really an alternative. Managing classroom environment is the next important process which can aid or hinder learning. Therefore classroom processes are basically teaching-learning and creating conducive conditions for teaching-learning. The latter precedes the former. The first

involves classroom environment management and the second involves pedagogical strategies. There are three dimensions of classroom environment - the physical dimension (the material order of things), the human dimension (the human actors i.e. the teacher/s, children), and the social dimension (the interaction amongst the actors). Classroom management involves managing this environment in all its dimensions for the goal of learning. The other important aspect of classroom processes is appropriate learning strategies to teach each of the constituents of literacy at the primary level reading, writing and mathematics.

TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM:-

The understanding of three concepts is necessary- profession, professionalization and professionalism.

- It has an abstract theoretical knowledge base;
- It is responsible for the decision that are made in the name of the profession;
- It has autonomy;
- It has a code of ethics;
- It has an organization and association;
- It has a sense of social service and altruism.

Professionalization is a process in which a vocation tries to become a profession. This is basically a process of institutionalization of knowledge, skills and ethics. Larson points out the following stages in the process of professionalization:

- Establishing a cognitive base in a paradigm style
- Making visible the service
- Production of producers
- Power relationship with the elite
- Establishment of an association
- Change of name code of ethics
- Prolonged political agitation for recognition
- Institutionalization

Professionalism is an ideology which emphasizes more on the knowledge, skills and ethics than the material benefits which accrue to a profession. While professionalization is concerned with standardization, professionalism is concerned with standards. There is a difference between standard and standardization. There can be three aspects of standard intellectual, practical and ethical. According to Caldwell the following knowledge and skills can be considered as essential to teacher professionalism in the present age.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:-

India has made commitments to fulfill the goals of Education For All (EFA), both at Jomtien and Dakar, and has even brought about certain Constitutional amendments for that purpose. In spite of considerable progress made during the last three or four decades, the problem of illiteracy still continues to be the main national concern. India is home to almost 35% of the world's illiterates. The entire school education system needs a thorough reorientation. The school teacher also needs to a thorough professional development. The National Policy on Education, 1986, and the Program of Action, 1992, have rightfully placed great emphasis on these aspects. India's effort in the field of teacher professional development is briefly presented here under :-

(a) A Centrally sponsored scheme of teacher education was launched in 1987 which aimed at mass orientation of school teachers in the main priorities and directions envisaged in the NPE , 1986, and also at improving their professional competencies. Orientation camps were held all over the country during the summer vacations. A special training package was incorporated for training the teacher in the use of teaching-learning materials (TLM).

(b) Almost simultaneously a program of setting up District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in each of the 600 districts in the country, was also undertaken to create a proper structure for providing quality pre-service

and in-service education to elementary school teachers and adult education/non-formal education personnel. The DIETs are also looked upon to provide academic and resource support to the elementary and adult education systems and to carry out action-research and innovative projects in these areas.

(c) Another important post-NPE development is the setting up of a large number of Elementary Teacher Education Institutes (popularly called the D.Ed. colleges) all over the country. With the tremendous growth of elementary schooling in the country, covering most of the hitherto unserved areas, the demand for teachers has also, *pari passu*, gone up. In view of the stress on quality education in the NPE/POA, many states have prescribed D.Ed. (Diploma in Education) as a pre-condition for recruitment of elementary teachers. This resulted in establishment of a large number of D.Ed. colleges in different parts of the country, with provision for internship.

(d) The teacher training programs are expected to cover the following aspects for teacher professional development. • Attitude change. • Understanding rural children and their special needs. • Class-room management. • Changing focus from teaching to learning. • Creating student-friendly class-room and school atmosphere. • Effective use of teaching-learning materials and creating such materials by using locally available materials. • Essentials of pedagogy. • Alternatives to class-room teaching/learning. • Multi-grade teaching. • Basic computer knowledge (use of the computer, surfacing the internet, word-processing, etc.).

(e) Colleges of Education are functioning in all the States for the last several decades. and award degrees such as B.Ed., M.Ed., etc. In many states a B.Ed. degree is an essential qualification for appointment as secondary school teacher. M.Ed. degree holders are preferred for appointment in the higher secondary schools/colleges.

(f) Almost all the universities have post-graduate research and teaching departments in education. Teacher seminars, workshops, conferences, orientation and refresher courses are regularly conducted in the universities as well as colleges with a view to enlightening teachers on latest developments in the field of education, which helps teacher professional development. Recently with the ushering into the era of globalization of education and incorporation of GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), a series of seminars was held in most of the universities and leading colleges of education to examine the implications of these developments on the Indian education system.

(g) At the national level organizations like the NCERT, NIEPA (now NUEPA), NCTE, AICTE, UGC, DEC devise policy frameworks for teacher professional development and popularize them through periodical seminars, workshops, conferences etc. Short duration training and orientation programs are also held for the benefit of the teachers. These national level institutions also organize international seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. from time to time.

(h) Distance Education mode is being increasingly used in India for promoting education at all levels. Besides a national level open and distance learning (ODL) University – Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) - most of the other major states have also set up their own ODL universities. Teacher education is one of the popular programs of ODL in India, so much so that the mad rush for admission had to be curbed by imposing seatrestrictions and certain minimum entry qualifications. The distance education mode has a special advantage in teacher education in that it can take place without taking the teachers away from their work. DE is particularly suited to the women, especially the rural women, who were denied opportunity due to various social, economic, historical, cultural and even religious factors. DE is also cost effective. Confidence building is an essential aspect of teacher professional development which ODL is capable of providing even in the remote, out-of-reach areas.

CONCLUSION:-

It may be stated by way of conclusion that teacher professional development is of utmost importance in ensuring quality in the educational programs. This aspect has been a matter of serious concern among world education community over the last two decades or so. It is being given serious attention in India also. However total eradication of illiteracy, especially the rural illiteracy, is a stupendous task in India where 74 % population lives in the rural areas. While teacher professional development will go a long way, there is need to bring about a change in the mindset of the rural parents/elders. This is not easy to come about in a tradition bound Indian rural community.

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