

# **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN SHAPING TODAY'S STUDENTS**

The heart of the country today calls for good teachers, capable of playing a significant role in the progress of the nation. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, one of the greatest teachers once said, "Until and unless we have dedicated and committed teachers who can take teaching as a mission in their lives, we can't have a good educational system. Teachers should be the best minds of the country."

## **Teacher as a dynamic force**

Among the greatest of all services that can be rendered by men and women to almighty God, is the education and training of children, so that they can foster by grace in the way of salvation, growing like pearls of divine bounty in the shell of education and will be one day the jewel in the crown of abiding glory.

The teacher is a dynamic force of the school. A school without teacher is just like a body without the soul, a skeleton without flesh and blood, a shadow without substance. 'There is no greater need for the cause of education today than the need for strong men and motherly women as teachers for the young'. The teachers- as social engineers can socialise and humanise the young by their man-making qualities.

## **Teacher as a lamp of knowledge**

It becomes inexorably important for teachers to resurrect from their gloomy, unimpressive, unproductive ways of teaching, sharpen their teaching skills and make teaching more dynamic, interesting and meaningful. In today's world, respect for teachers can not be ordered, it must be earned. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the heart of the teacher should be a lamp of knowledge burning bright, all the time his conduct should be simple and his ambition noble. His river of wisdom should not become stagnant, instead should flow like pure water. He should work hard, be broadminded and innovative.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam spoke of teachers as walking encyclopaedias, a fountain of love and, most of all, a caring human being. Great teachers put the students a few decades ahead, and see the future of the world in the eyes of the students.

Ranidranath Tagore said, "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. 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 traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds. He cannot quicken them."

## **Teacher as a classroom catalyst**

There are many classrooms today where students are silent witnesses of motiveless, purposeless and non-receptive teaching that is adulterated with imperfect relationships and

routine-boring activities. Teachers do not keep concrete objectives, do not engage the students and do not show the interest to incorporate the different teaching-learning styles that will stimulate and activate the students. Lack of professional commitment has exterminated the passion for teaching, learning and updating.

Today's teacher should understand today's children in today's context and constantly look out for innovative and effective practices, refine and improve their teaching strategies, skilfully manage and utilize specific teaching situations and resources, show a genuine interest in the subject, have a sincere love, care and concern for students and continually think, reflect and create most appropriate teaching learning situations, if they are to become relevant today.

### **Teacher as a parent**

During the formative years of the child, the world of parents and the world of teachers have a greater influence on the personality, attitude, behaviour and value development of the child. If these two world are supportive and almost similar in terms of approach, expectations upheld, encouragement extended, opportunities provided and guidance given, then child's development, progress and adjustment becomes easy, and one will reinforce the other.

Sad to mention, many teachers have some routine habits of teaching, uncaring ways which make students relinquish the passion for true learning. Today teacher's responsibility is not only providing information, but also encourage and guide them to explore information from the mines of knowledge. Therefore, teachers should understand the needs of the students, be flexible and incorporate all appropriate strategies to help weaker students. They need to create encouraging classroom conditions and enable them learn with excitement; give them active roles to play so that they are enabled to take control of their learning and behaviour.

### **Teacher as a transmitter of knowledge**

The two primary functions of teachers down through human history have been to transmit the knowledge that humankind has accumulated over the ages, and to guide the students to assimilate the knowledge, and actualize it into their life experiences. Thus, the responsibility placed on the teachers is a challenging one. As facilitators of good learning and builders of worthy habits and characters, they have a significant role to play in the education process.

Today knowledge is regarded as a commodity rather than a power. Everyone is searching for knowledge that suits one's career advancement, and for climbing the ladder of success. Recent rapid advancement in technology has made knowledge available on ones fingertips. To meet this challenge, teachers must be well equipped with advanced knowledge, utilize these skills, using the innovative measures, and make student learning really purposeful and life-changing. An effective teacher with right attitude, knowledge and skills is the person who can always impress and inspire the students Alertness, resourcefulness, foresight, enthusiasm, proper attitude, hard work and power of positive behaviour multiply one's potentialities and measures the achievements one can rewardingly procure.

The missing link in today's educational crisis is the failure on the part of the teachers to teach their students how to organize, apply and utilize the knowledge after acquiring it. Knowledge actually can become power only when it is organized, applied and utilized for a definite purpose. At every stage of student's learning, they should clearly know 'what', 'why' and 'how' to effectively learn. When they learn with a purpose, then knowledge gained becomes strongly ingrained and give meaning in their life.

### **Teacher as a moulder of personality**

An artist or a sculptor or a potter handles and works on an inanimate, lifeless block of stone, marble or wood or clay and imparts life to it through his imagination, ideas and skills. He can impart any desired shape, and put an indelible stamp of creativity on it. If something goes wrong, he will have the chance to redo it or otherwise it results in a waste of an inanimate material. A teacher, unlike an artist or a sculptor has to handle growing, developing human beings with a heart and mind. He tries to impart a meaningful shape to the child's life by transferring knowledge and life skills. Here is where a teacher cannot take things for granted and makes a mistake, if it happens, and then it prevails as a wrong influence in their life and leaves them as unproductive individuals wandering confused in the consumerist society.

The role of teachers in shaping and moulding the personality of students is formidable. A child's learning today is influenced by many factors – physical, emotional, mental, social and psychological. Emotional disturbances, stress, maladjustment, physical changes can frequently cause misbehaviour and internal unrest sometimes becoming too difficult to handle. If such conditions are not corrected, then it becomes detrimental to their studies. A well-adjusted, mentally healthy and wise teacher will be able to trace out the problems faced by the child and effectively solve them.

### **Teacher affects behaviour**

A teacher is someone who affects the behaviour of students, their relations with each other and their attitude towards learning. Children gradually adopt their teachers' ideas, whether they are desirable or not. If the teacher is friendly and courteous, he/she stimulates thoughtfulness, helpfulness and consideration in the children. A good learning situation depends largely upon satisfactory interpersonal relationships, and hence the teacher's personality is vital.

To be considered a great teacher, he/she should create a safe, secure stimulating and positive learning atmosphere and develop in them characteristics like depth of knowledge which is regularly updated, lively presentation of matter, with lots of activities and teaching aids, supported by creativity and maintain good rapport. Remedial teaching should be provided wherever necessary. A greater understanding of their diverse personality traits and patience will help teachers select appropriate nurturing and nourishing techniques for development of holistic individuals. Close monitoring of student behaviours and activities will show that in some cases guidance and counselling will be necessary.

Teachers with effective and dynamic teaching techniques will leave behind good memories in the minds of the students. Sydney Harris says, "The best thing we can give to our children next to good habits is good memories." The goodness shown by the teachers their inspiring teaching, encouragement, support at difficult times and the enthusiasm for educational ideals will form unforgettable frames of memories in the minds of the students. I used to tell teachers during training sessions, 'If you want to write your name among the stars, write it in the hearts of children, and they in turn will write your name among the stars.'

### **Teacher as a ladder**

Teachers are like ladders, helping students to climb up in life. Their aim should be to build character, inculcate values and build confidence that will enhance the learning capacity which in turn will make them innovative, creative and competitive to face the future with courage. Thus a lot of thinking, effort and innovation have to be constantly put in to enrich the learning experiences of the students, to equip them with a store of knowledge and life skills, which will enable them to lead a satisfactory life. All teachers by investing conscious efforts with the aim of adding excellence to the life of students will surely be able to fulfil their responsibilities and glorify the profession.

### **Teacher as a counsellor**

Education should guide people through life's problems. But it has become a source of enslavement to ideologies and the culture of the dominant community. The entire educational system seems to be oriented to meet the needs of the one-third of the population, to create consumerist 'needs' for the people and to disseminate the ideas of the rich. Today it is necessary to create an alternative system appropriate to the needs of the poor.

Every teacher can achieve greatness by sheer commitment, self-discipline, dedication and hard work. Once a man came to Mother Teresa, the saint of the gutter and said, "I wouldn't touch a leper even if you would have given me a million dollars". Calmly Mother Teresa replied, "Neither would I, I do it gladly for the love of God." Mother committed herself for the upliftment of the neglected because she discovered God in each of them. A teacher who earnestly works hard with unflinching dedication and commitment distinguishes himself as a winner.

### **Teacher as a person of influence**

Our education is not oriented to make our students agents of social transformation. We fail to give them an awareness of the root causes of social evils such as caste system, imbalance and inequalities. On the other hand, our education seems not only to be strengthening the hands of the oppressors but also making some of the poor become tomorrow's oppressors.

Our education has not effectively countered the pernicious influences of the media, which gives an unrealistic picture of sex, power and wealth and glorifies violence and crime. The task of education is to deepen the understanding of self, society and nature. To put it differently, education is society's continuing quest for self-awareness: it is the collective reflection of human beings about their roles and destiny in the universe.

### **Teacher as a role model**

Teachers are influential to the life of learners and to the society. They are respected by society because they are knowledgeable. Moreover, teachers have the qualities to be or become role models for students. As they love, care, instruct and guide their student to become a successful person, the student views teacher as being wise. Therefore, children looks up to them.

In the words of John Ruskin, “Education is the leading of human souls to what is best, and making what is best of them; and these two objects are always attainable together, and by the same means. The training which makes men happiest in themselves also makes them most serviceable to others.”

### **Teacher as an educator**

An educator is someone who accompanies the students and walks the territory of students. There are two types of educators, those who are committed to the call of being a teacher and those who are not. The first group has made their profession an integrated part of their life-style, whereas the second treats teaching merely as a job. Passionately committed teachers are those who absolutely love what they do. They are constantly searching for more effective ways to reach their children, to master the content and methods of their craft. They feel a personal mission, even a magical quest, to walk through life devouring new experiences, learning as much as they can about the world, about themselves and about others. The second group view themselves as technicians and view teaching as an easy way to make a living, have summers off, and stand in front of a captive audience who have no other choice but appear to be listening.

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