

DEVELOPING BEST TEACHERS

Teaching is one of the most revered professions since the times of yore. A teacher is believed to be the builder of a nation. A good teacher has the capability to not only impart knowledge and skills to his students but also helps them in imbibing good values. The future of a country its peace, progress and prosperity are shaped by them. The effective teacher is believed to bring positive changes in a students thinking and behavior. The quality of teaching is the most critical factor contributing to student learning. The policy makers are well aware that steps need to be taken to make them more effective so that they function not merely as imparters of knowledge but motivate their students to question, to think and to dream. Good teaching leads to effective learning which results in thorough and lasting acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. It is thus very important to develop good teachers.

Teachers can be of two types ones who are born as teachers and others who are trained to acquire the skills. For the former teaching is a passion while the latter are in the profession either because they were unable to do what they themselves , wanted or took it up as they were left with no other option that is to say it was their second choice. It is therefore generally believed that the best of people do not take up the teaching profession due to the problems that ail the system of education and also because in the age of commercialization economic satiation is of utmost importance. Our desires take primacy over our passions. In order to develop best teachers or make people passionate for the teaching profession we require the best brains to be attracted to this profession who are in it not due to some constraints but because it gives them leverage in society.

The tone and caliber of any organization is determined by its recruitment policy. A faulty recruitment policy inflicts a permanent weakness upon the organization, the latter becoming a haven for the dull and incompetent. In order to achieve this objective the system of selecting and appointing teachers needs to be refurbished. We do have a national test NET for recruiting teachers. The process of selection is marred by the same mindset of giving primacy to marks over talent. Initially the prospective teacher of HE was tested for aptitude and reason and knowledge of the subject matter in the first two papers and when he or she qualified the same was considered eligible for the third paper where not only knowledge but their creativity, their general awareness and expression skills were tested. The reason for making this paper objective would have probably been to speed up the process of examination and save time but in the long run has promoted the same rote learning and inability to think out of the box, an inherent defect of our education system which we are so critical of. Ultimately we might end up selecting those candidates who might not have good grasp over the subject but have been lucky to tick the right option. Quality will be compromised over the objective of being on

time. It also needs to be assessed whether this change has actually helped in declaration of timely results.

In order to keep themselves abreast with the changing developments it is of utmost importance that the teachers constantly update their knowledge bases and skills. They need resources and incentives to do this. The Academic Staff Colleges have commendably arranged for orientation and refresher programmes for this purpose. In many such colleges the course module itself is outdated or the pedagogy used is not in sync with the changing times and modern demands. The same classroom teaching is relied upon which we are so critical of. It might often work as a change from the dreary routine work for the teacher or perhaps as an extended vacation. It might help in rejuvenating the teacher but the avowed objective of knowledge and skill enhancement is not taken care of. Beside this in various colleges the acute shortage of teachers and skewed teacher taught ratio makes it a difficult proposition for them to leave class and attend these long drawn out three or four weeks courses. After all the primary objective of a teacher is to teach but he or she is left without options. If they are unable to attend these courses they will risk their chances of promotion and if they do so they will be unable to complete their syllabus. Wouldn't it be better to shorten the duration of these courses and pursue it in two stages. The new teacher can be invited to attend the orientation for two weeks in one year wherein he/she be trained in pedagogy and some skill. He can be assigned some research work or some short term project which can be assessed and evaluated in the second year for another two weeks. This way the classes will not suffer much and a teacher will actually learn and imbibe something new and innovative.

The commercialization of education has seen a rapid increase in the number of institutions of all hues and colors. Colleges set up by corrupt politicians, the uneducated educationists and the white collar criminals run aplenty. In this scenario merit often takes a backseat and economic profits and sycophancy run the roost. In this scenario we could have programmes to equip this breed of so called educators. They can be taught the nuances of the education system or perhaps we have management training programmes. As it is the teachers we have do not have the intellectual courage to challenge the system so we cannot expect them to be at loggerheads with the management and challenge their wrong decisions.

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