



The Professional Ethics of Teachers in the Twenty First Century

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Abstract

In the modern day of globalisation, privatization and modernization the educational system has been undergoing a number of changes. This study focuses on the theoretical perspective of teacher ethic in the twenty first century in relation to ethical, personal and professional ethics. Now, teacher's role is multitasked. His roles not only fixed to teaching learning process, but he has to perform other tasks for which he may not be trained at all. This double role being both the subject and the object of changes makes the work of teacher a challenging one.

They should be well-utilized in professional ethic. It also serves as guide that helps the educators. The present study seeks to explore the meaning of professional ethics, its importance and what would be the professional ethics of teacher in twenty first century of our school and higher education institutions.

Key words: Teachers, Ethics, Professional ethics, 21st Century.

Introduction

Education vis-à-vis teacher education is a progressively, systematic and continuous process. It is also an integrative and communicative process. It is generally called that teacher is the back bone of the educational system. Hence, an importance is imposed on improving the professional qualities of teacher in the field of education. This also depends upon the curriculum of teacher training programme, availability of infrastructure, committed teachers, work culture and management style of the concerned authority.

To be honest to one's occupation, whatever occupation it may be, one has to play his total professionalism in conducting that job. He has to follow the principles that are required for that specific occupation. Take the case of a doctor, his duty hour may be 10 A.M to 5 P.M, but if patient arrives after the duty hours, ethics of the medical profession demand that the patient should be attended by the doctor to the best of his abilities and all efforts should be made to save the life of the patient. Such norms and ethics are similarly associated with every profession. These norms and ethics may vary to certain context from culture to culture and in different societal traditions, but the basic commitment needed for the worker remains the same. In the field of education, certain level of professional and ethical commitment is essential to implement. In one hand, some institutions have to compel their workers to follow the commitment imposed upon them. On the other hand, each teacher is accountable not only to the students, but also to the society as a whole.

The Need of Professional Ethics of Teacher

The teaching profession is one of the ideal profession that expect high standards of ethical behaviours from teachers living. In ancient times teacher was considered as high prestigious man of high standard. They were treated with respect

and regard. Then the teacher is called Guru who is the most knowable person in his area of education than others and he is the then role model in that society. Then the aim of teaching was not only to earn money but also to serve the society. But with the passage of time, this attitude of teachers has been changed. As a result, persons with commitment to the profession and requisite teaching abilities have lost their motivation to join the teaching as a profession.

Very recently, some teachers with essential ability are appointed in some public school and are paid according to prescribed rules, but in many schools of private sector, the teachers are paid for very low salaries. For that reason, some teachers are compelled to opt for tuition outside the school to earn sufficient money. Teaching, thus has become gradually a money making profession. As the main motivation is making money, the teachers do not update their knowledge. They do not innovate and their methodology of teaching remains unchanged.

Thus the challenges faced by the mushrooming teacher education institution raise questions for both school system and State Government. On one hand, the school system has to deal with poor teacher quality and increasing students and societal expectations, on the other hand, Different Educational Bodies of State and National Government have to impose different directives to maintain necessary arrangement to provide ideal teacher education system with an encouraging environment and meeting the needs of the school.

Due to rapid development of technology we are rapidly moving towards a new learning society where everybody will be a lifelong learner. Continuous learning will be the key element of societal development in the learning society. Technology optimises human learning and development of technology increases the capacity and capability of human learning.

In this situation what will be the role and ethics of future teacher. This is the main question regarding present mode of teaching.

In this respect, the author quote the following: Our vision of the coming century is one in which the pursuit of learning is valued by individuals and by authorities all over the world, not only as a means to an end, but also as an end in itself. Each person will be encouraged and enabled to take up learning opportunities throughout life. Hence, much will be expected, and much demanded, of teachers, for it largely depends on them whether this vision can come true. Teachers have crucial roles to play in preparing young people not only to face the future with confidence but to build it with purpose and responsibility (Delors et al.1996). In this view, the author's question is that what will be the role of a teacher.

Regarding the role of teacher, Swami Vivekananda said, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of the mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet". Hence, the followings are the important qualities of a teacher.

- 1) The teacher should be passionate. Without passion, he/she will not become a great teacher.
- 2) The teacher must possess a broad outlook. He always keeps students acquainted with the latest information on respective current affairs.
- 3) The teacher thinks positively and enthusiastically about his students and their capabilities
- 4) The teacher should maintain honesty and authenticity in his working with others
- 5) The teacher should establish and maintain mutual relationship with his students in working
- 6) The teacher should encourage his students to be positive, careful about the self-respect of the students
- 7) The teacher should adapt his teaching style according to the needs of the individual student
- 8) The role of the teacher is vital in shaping the future of not only the individual student but the society at large
- 9) Education is the vital pillar of a developed country. Therefore, the teacher should be the role models for the students.

Again, Aristotle said, "Teachers who educate children deserve more honour than parents." Adam said, "The teacher is a maker of man." According to the Education Commission (1964-66), all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teacher are undoubtedly the most significant. From the above qualities possessed by the teacher, the author assume the following as the professional ethics of the teacher.

Professional Ethics of Teacher in 21st Century

Professional Ethics

“Scientific statements of facts and revelations, indeed, cannot produce ethical directives. However, ethical directives can be made rational and coherent by logical thinking and empirical knowledge” (Einstein, 1953).

Ethics are integral parts of each and every profession.

Ethics refer to the various moral rules governing human relation. The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy states that the word ethics is “commonly used interchangeably with morality”.... and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group or individual.”

Professional ethic can be defined as the optimum standard of behaviour. It also refers to the comprehensive professional ethics that people should follow in the process of engaging in various professional activities and it is closely related to the professional activities. It also reflects the specific moral requirements determined by the professional labour. The addition of knowledge, skill and competency makes a teacher effective in his subject but the teacher can become an ideal man, leader and motivated in this process with the integration of all professional ethics. Mahatma Gandhi once said to the students, “I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers own lives than they do from the books.....This would not be possible if the teachers do not follow professional ethics attached to their occupations. If a teacher cannot inspire his students he cannot be a great teacher and to be a great teacher, one as to follow professional norms and ethics.

Professional Code of Ethics for Teachers

Code of ethics represent the methods used by professional organisation in order to communicate ethical standard to professional teachers and to society. The two important attributes of code of ethics are confidentiality and loyalty. The ethical standard for teaching profession represent a vision of professional practice. The objective of the ethical standard for teaching profession is to inspire the teachers to reflect and uphold their honour and dignity and to guide ethical decisions and actions and also to spread public trust and confidence. The important quality of effective teaching is its commitment to the students and their learning.

As part of the code of ethics, the teacher has a duty to encourage students to learn to the best of their abilities and also to teach social values. Teachers strive for the best possible performance. Teachers must possess all necessary qualifications for accepting a job.

The teacher tries to follow the school policies.

Teachers strive to apply ethical behaviour to their colleagues

They strive to maintain an open, accepting classroom environment for the students.

Teachers should have responsibilities to communicate home with the parents regardless of the community.

Teachers should take part in activities in the adjacent community.

In addition to the above, the teacher should foster healthy relationship with the students, parents, colleagues and school staff.

Responsibility towards students

The teacher encourages students in learning, health and safety.

The teacher resolves problem regarding discipline, law and policy.

The teacher must be fair to each student and justify each student equally.

The teacher provides learning equally to each student.

The teacher should have a helping attitude and should be able to guide students in need.

The teacher should listen students concern and problems.

The teacher should realize the highest possible standards of productivity in their students.

They should provide a fair system of grading.

Responsibility towards Parents/Guardian/Family

The teacher should participate in parents, teachers meeting and discuss the problems of the child.

The teacher should respect the privacy of a family.

The teacher establishes the relationship with parents based on courtesy, mutual trust and communication

The teacher should be truthful in the society.

The teacher should play an active role in the community relation.

Responsibility towards Colleagues

The teacher should have cordial and cooperative relationship with the colleagues

Groupism among the teachers should be avoided.

Do not reveal confidential information about the colleagues.

The teacher should not provide false statements about colleagues.

The teacher should assist, support and encourage new comers for the profession

Responsibilities towards Community

The teacher should inculcate among the students the feeling of brotherhood by organising different programmes i.e. mass literacy, tree plantation etc.

The teacher should hold meeting with the community for awareness programme on various issues of education.

The teacher should provide good citizen to community.

They foster academic integrity

The teacher should use fair and objective assessment.

They should have professionally appropriate relationship with their students.

Conclusion

Hence, the researcher concludes that there is no formula for successful teaching. Every teacher is unique and each has an individual philosophy and teaching style.

A generation ago, Sockett (1990) argued that a code of ethics was “something to be hammered out as professionalism develops.....as we discover what best practice is..... ” Clearly, it is the time for an attempt to be made. The teacher

of twenty first century would be sure that person with commitment to the profession and requisite teaching abilities, technologically advanced, able to adapt his teaching styles according to the needs of the students, respected by the parents and community, socially accountable, encouraging attitude, establishing good relationship with community and maintaining sound mental health necessary to perform to his/her task. A code of ethics can encourage discussion on the issue and improve how people deal with the ethical problem So, if the teachers follow their ethical behaviour, then it will be easy to teach publicly ethical issues among the students. If the generation be conscious about their ethical issues, then the society and the country will be benefitted. So, the teacher should be ethical and follow the professional code of ethics in their lives and then should only reflect their ethical behaviour to their students.

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