



Professionalism in teacher education

Pardeep Singh

Assistant Professor in Education, GDC Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Abstract

Teaching is considered as one of the noblest professions in that knowledge gets transmitted from one generation to another through the adoption of variegated pedagogical skills, methods and techniques. The growth, development and success of any nation depend on the very quality of teaching in particular and the overall role of teacher in general. However, despite its fundamental importance in shaping the future of any society, we are still miles away from attracting best minds in it. We are moving towards more and more complex societies that in turn poses diverse problems before us. Looking into the newfound challenges which are posed before us, the need of the hour is to bring about professionalism and competencies in teachers. In this context, an attempt is made in the present paper to analyse different ways and means through which professionalism in teachers could be brought about by adopting different strategies.

Keywords: pedagogy, professionalism, skills, teachers, strategies etc

Introduction

Teachers are the greatest resources of any system. They stand in the interface of transmission of knowledge, skills and values. They are accepted as the backbone of any education system. Quality of teacher is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students learning outcomes in particular. To vindicate this, even the Indian Education Commission said, "No system can rise above the status of its teacher." Teachers help in shaping and reshaping the society and determine the quality of life in the community and of the nation. The increasing complexity of society with multi-culturalism, the swelling demand of the work force and the ever-expanding knowledge society, all exert pressure on education system for rectification. These pressures certainly influence the teacher education debate. Professionalism is a process where the whole of the occupational group improves the status, standing, regard and level of reward. Professionalism of teacher education is occurring as a response to the increased pressure on teachers due to socio-cultural and technological advancements in the present society. These pressures include:

- Expansion and swift changes in stuff of what teachers are estimated to teach, making it harder for teachers to keep up with developments in their subject and encouraging collaboration and team approach.
- Expansion of knowledge and understanding about teaching styles and methods.
- Addition of social responsibilities to the task of teaching.
- Integration of students with special education needs into ordinary class demanding a wide range of abilities and behaviours of teacher.
- Keeping in view multi-cultural diversity and recognition of the rights of minorities to see their cultural values.

- Changing structures and dealings of school management and leadership with more emphasis on the team work and collaborative decision-making.

Professionalism in teacher education refers to commitment for excellence. The profession of teachers prepares man to transform the present crisis-stricken society into future utopia. Teacher must learn to teach in ways they have not been taught. But teacher education must engage with new teacher's prior believes or images of teaching and help teachers rework them and move beyond so that they become the kind of teachers who can adapt to the changing demands of society.

A majority of school teachers in our country in general when assessed against the different criteria of professionalism are found to possessing it in very small degrees. A number of studies conducted under the various state and central level agencies revealed that some of the teacher's own knowledge of the subject content was not superior to that of students whom they teach. Most of the teachers perceive teaching simply as a routine task of transmitting the knowledge and information given in the books to the students and repeating it unendingly without any alteration or addition. Most of present day teachers lack professionalism in varying degrees, especially due to the erosion of social or moral values in the society, teachers' low status, respect and credibility in the society, entry of such persons in the profession as are neither suitable nor have inclination for it, faulty admission policy and failure of the teacher education system to lay foundation of professionalism among forthcoming teachers.

Teacher's role in the process of professionalism

A professional in teaching needs to have (NCF 2009) performance, competence and commitment. A teacher must have commitment towards learner, society, profession,

excellence and basic human values. He must pose competence in content managerial and pedagogical skills. Professional learning therefore must be seen as a continuous process for teachers to prosper in an occupation, which is inherently and increasingly complex and difficult. Teachers must see their professional learning as a continuous rather than something they never revisit once their initial training is over. On the other hand they should look at it as a something which they engage themselves especially through short courses. Continuous professional learning is an individual responsibility as well as institutional obligation. Indian teachers must entrust seriously to career long professional learning which should properly be regarded as measures of professional standards and competence in teaching. At the same time resources and opportunities for the career long professional learning must be appropriate so that professional learning is integral to the role of a teacher. Teachers must have the opportunities to learn the skills to become leaders of their colleagues as well as the leaders of their classes. Pre-service and in-service education need to provide more and more better professional learning about student-teacher relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, parent-teacher relationship, parental communication contact and co-operation as well as practice in managing them effectively.

Policies for promoting Professionalism Among Teachers

- **Capacity building:** Capacity building is a conscious purposeful process of acquiring knowledge, new trends, skills and competencies or doing work in a way that enables the individual to perform the job in a better way than earlier in the future. The need for capacity building is ever in the era of globalization, liberation and privatization. The challenges that arise as a result of scientific and technological advancement and the revolution in information and communication technology have marked a enduring effect in the practice of education. Capacity is relative terms which differ from task to task. A doctor who is treating patients enhances his capacity as long as he is getting experience in his field. A lawyer enhances his capacity with a number of cases. But a teacher's capacity cannot be increased with the number of years of experience. It will be just like increasing the level of water in a stagnant pool. Teachers have to build their capacity from their basic foundation i.e., from the teacher's training. The foundation of the teacher's pre-service education should be made strong enough not by mere transaction of curriculum but also by developing dedication, loyalty, commitment and respect for the profession. Only those who have real passion for teaching and consider it as a sole responsibility should join this profession.
- **Innovation and Research:** Educational development has always been an important agent of social change and development. For qualitative improvement of education, a sound program has to be undertaken. Educational research has to be undertaken in order to understand whole process of teaching learning and to transform it. In most of the universities pre-service education does not have enough provisions for the teacher trainees to undertake innovation research projects. Teacher training programs must have a compulsory component of innovative research and

weightage must be given to it in the evaluation process. The research findings must be presented before scholarly group and after discussion proper diffusion of knowledge should take place. Proper orientation regarding the scope of research in teacher education suggest a wide range of problems starting from the selection criteria, abilities and qualities of teachers, pre-service and in-service training, teacher's work load, job satisfaction, administrative set-up, students-teacher characteristics like personality factor, intelligence, self-concept, class room climate, discipline, learning etc. Motivate teacher educators to utilize their abilities to do research with proper incentives in terms of monetary gain or recognizing ones work. Provide adequate resources and facilities for research. Proper Resources and facilities in the form of experts', internet, advanced reference books, journals of both national and international repute should be provided to teacher educators. Proper funding by agencies like UGC, NCERT, AICTE and ICSSR are to be ensured.

- **Preservation and Transmission of Culture**

Teacher educators must develop proper attitude and skills in the integration and fusion of culture of a particular locality in the curriculum transactions. This makes education process interesting and meaningful in real sense. This demands the teacher to be resourceful in the cultural component of curriculum. Indian culture encourages love, peace, co-operation and co-existence. Developing a peace culture is of extreme importance because even today Indians become victims of communal riots, terrorism, enmity which leads to mass killings. Therefore, it is relevant to inculcate peace education in teacher education and in all subjects at all levels.

- **Professional Development Through Reflective Thinking**

Teachers can be more effective in their profession, being a reflective practitioner. In simple terms reflective practice is to think about and critically analyze one's own teaching task in order to improve teaching practice. Various measures through which teachers can adopt reflective teaching:

1. Articulates an understanding of lessons goals and objectives.
2. State the strengths and weaknesses of lessons based on data.
3. Analyse student's participation.
4. Accept feedback and implement recommendations.
5. Develop written plans for improvement.
6. Conduct self-analysis through teaching portfolios in which efforts to update course content and delivery can be documented, use student feedback and use self-assessment forms.

- **Quality Management:** The present demand for quality education has enormous implication on teacher training programs in India. Teacher training programs cover a wide range of experiences ranging from academic, professional and personal development of the teacher. Quality management plays a vital role in the process of preparing admirable teachers. Training college and teacher educators have the responsibility for providing long term welfare of students' teachers by teaching them how to learn, teach and communicate with

students. They should have total dedication towards continuous improvement, personally and collectively for the satisfaction of customers. Therefore, continuous improvement one's own abilities and also those with a win-win approach is essential.

- **Promoting Positive Professionalism Among Teachers:** In India, there has been a continuous debate regarding teaching as a profession. Teaching is not considered as a fully-fledged profession like medicine, engineering and law because of various factors like duration of the course, time duration of internship, status and wage. If teaching is to be acknowledged as a sought-after profession and to provide more autonomy, privilege and status to teachers, professional development of teacher should be emphasized. Various measure to promote professionalism in teacher education could be:
 - Liberty of thought and innovation.
 - Professional competence to be experienced by appropriate learning environment and placement of teachers.
 - Attractive emoluments and service conditions.
 - Social recognition in society.
 - Follow professional codes of ethics.
 - Avoid political interference which affects the quality of dispensation and discharge of their duties.
 - Good co-ordination between demand and supply, so that profession attracts right individual for teaching.
 - Due emphasis to societal goals, values and competence to carry out research in training, curriculum development and development of evaluation material etc.
- **Seminar, Symposiums and Workshops:** For continual professional development of teachers and teacher educators, they need to participate in seminars, workshops, symposiums with significant contribution by delivering talks and organizing sessions. Seminars and workshop provide avenues and platforms when scholars of the same field can assemble and share their experience and expertise in their field.

Some other policies for professionalism may include

- Promotion of teacher e-education.
- Maintaining accurate record of students and learning styles.
- Improved use of ICT.
- Reforming curriculum and qualification of teachers.
- Self-learning and refresher courses etc.

Conclusion

As we all know that various education policies focus on quality and relevance of education, it is necessary that only those who are professionally competent, committed and willing are to be charged with the responsibility of preparing teachers for the nation. Teachers for various stages, levels and categories are prepared professionally by teacher educators. Teachers must plan their subject knowledge for the pupils on a scientific ground. Thus, teacher educators emerge as key players in the arena of quality education and professionalism of teachers. Teacher's educators are to be encouraged with professional determination, self-motivation

and initiatives from the side of government for implementation of policies with genuine spirit. Therefore, it is necessary that pre-service and teacher educators' education should be given a new orientation and improve quality and adjusted appropriately with the demand of the present day.

References

1. National Curriculum framework for teacher education towards preparing professional and human teacher New Delhi, NCTE, 2009.
2. Baggini J. What professional means for teachers today? Education Review, 2005,18(2).
3. David C. Professionalism and Ethics in Teaching, London: Taylor and Francis Books Ltd, 2000.
4. Sabu S. Teacher Education in the New Millennium, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
5. Mangla Sheela. Teacher Education Trends and Strategies, New Delhi: Radhika Publications.