

ACCOUNTABILITY OF TEACHERS IN THE PRESENT ERA

(Gunjan Dubey and Neelima Joshi, Associate Professor and Research Scholar, Department of Education, A.M.U, Aligarh, U.P., India)

ABSTRACT

Traditionally in ancient India, teachers were looked up as a God's disciple. They were responsible for the all-round development of their pupils and were considered as the spiritual father of their pupils. On the contrary, the present status of teachers in India is abysmal, due to the lack of accountability, on their own part, towards their pupils, their profession and society at large. They work just for the pay cheques and are not committed to their highly honourable profession. Many committees and commissions in education had recommended regular evaluation of teacher performance to ensure accountability. In the present paper the authors have tried to throw some light on accountability issues of teachers in India.

Key words: *accountability, profession, evaluation.*

Introduction

Among the greatest services that can be rendered by men to almighty God is the education and training of children, so that they can faster 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. Teacher is a yard stick that measures the achievements and aspirations of the nation. The people of a country are the enlarged replica of their teachers. They are the real nation builders. Teachers are the pivot of any educational system of the young student. If the teachers are well educated, are intellectually alive and take keen interest in their jobs, then only success of the system is ensured. On the other hand, if they lack training in education and if they cannot give their heart to their profession the system is destined to fail. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also said, "The teacher acts as pivot for the transmission of intellectual traditions and technical skills from generation to generation and helps to keep the lamp of civilization burning". (Niranjan Singh, 2009)

Teacher's place in ancient India:

In Bhartiya Darshan, 'Guru' had a significant place. The word 'Guru' consists of two words, 'Gu-ru'. The word 'Gu' indicated darkness and 'ru' means controller. It means to avoid darkness or ignorance. Guru was considered as the greatest treasure of knowledge. He satisfied the needs and curiosity of his students. He was the spiritual father of his pupils. He was responsible for the boarding and lodging for his pupils in the gurukul, supervised their health and character, treat each pupil equally and make no discrimination among them. He was responsible for the all-round development of his pupils. He commanded highest regard not only from his pupil but from all classes of society and even the ruler. He was worshipped as God disciple because he creates, sustains knowledge and destroys the weeds of ignorance.

Present scene

Mass education in India appears to be in a degrading condition. Education imparted by some teachers is far from satisfactory. Majority of students lack fundamental knowledge in different areas of education. Such teachers do not feel it to be their responsibility. They are involved in private tuition and coaching centers to get some remuneration. Commitment on the part of the teachers has been reduced to a great extent. Teachers, who consider their job as a profession, work only for pay

cheque. Their work is considered useful for their own sake. Since per chance they have occupied a professional chair they try for their own good, at the cost of others.

Kabe (2011) found in his research that all the inputs to the educational system in India like, government funds, teachers' salaries, students' enrolment rates and access, teacher qualification, training and school infrastructure have been taken care of. Even then, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER-2010), the student learning levels in India is abysmal- 46% of 5th grades cannot read basic text in their local language; and 64% cannot do basic mathematical functions. The drop-out rates are very high (more than 50% drop out by 8th grade) and only 12.4% actually graduate from college. This all can be explained only by one factor-Accountability. Almost 65% of the teaching resources are wasted in India as a result of teacher absence and inactivity in school classrooms. Teacher absenteeism is chronic in India and only half the teachers who are actually present in the classroom are actively teaching. The lack of teacher responsibility in India stems from poor monitoring, high level of corruption, influence and power of teacher unions, inability to hire/fire teachers, seniority-based salary structure and extreme centralized nature of the educational system.

According to IIM Calcutta Report on Education (2010) - 'teacher's accountability is a concern'. It points out 'managing committees do not spend time on academic matters. The committees spend most of the time on matters concerning physical infrastructure.' It is essential to ensure that a teacher regularly spends 5 hours in the school every working day. A teacher should also take classes as per schedule. The report recommends innovative means of learning and incentives. An incentives scheme (in the lines of Pratibha Parvin Madhya Pradesh) may be launched for the teachers in primary and upper primary schools (Indian Express, 4th July 2010).

NPE (1986) calls upon teachers to be accountable to the students, parents, community and their own teaching profession. It enunciated that a system of teacher evaluation –open, participative and data based would be created. It also stated that norms of accountability would be laid down with incentives for good performance and disincentives for non-performance.

On the lines of the above recommendations of NPE (1986) state cabinet of Himachal Pradesh took a decision that 'Teachers and headmasters of all government owned schools affiliated to Himachal Pradesh Board of school education will now be held responsible and accountable for poor results of their students in classes VIII, X and XII. The performance of the school in these examinations will not only reflect directly on the annual confidential report (ACR) of the teacher and the headmasters it will also lead to a bar on salary increments. If a class scores a result of 75% and above, its teacher will be marked 'outstanding' in the ACR while 65% results will earn a 'very good' for the class teacher. If the result of a school and a particular subject is below 25% the headmaster and the teacher will be given a warning. If similar results are repeated, their increments can be stopped and they can be transferred too. (Indian Express, 10th Dec. 2009)

A question here arises “What is Accountability?”

According to Webster's Encyclopedia Dictionary, accountability means one's subjection to having to report, explain or justify and he is responsible and answerable to somebody else. Leon Lessinger (1971) stated that “accountability is the product of a process.” Accountability means that a public or private agency entering into a contractual agreement to perform a service will be held answerable for performing according to agreed upon terms, with an established time period, and with a stipulated use of resources and performance standards. (Taylor 1992).

In layman's language accountability means an accounting of one's performance with respect to the responsibility given to an individual. The account of his or her performance is taken by an

authority or by the society in general. Accountability is thus- measurement of the assigned responsibility actually performed by a person or a group. The term 'accountability' is concerned with the total outcome of the task given. Every employee is directly accountable to his superiors and organization and finally to the public or the society at large. Accountability may be regarded as an acid test for measuring efficiency and proficiency of the employees at their respective placements. It touches upon the sincerity of purpose, commitment and devotion to duty and profession. (Mohanty, 2000)

Teaching is a profession like any other profession but the roles and responsibilities of a teacher are more significant than in many other professions as he is regarded as an important source or generator and transmitter of knowledge, a creator of values and a self-sacrificing nation builder. That is why the teacher is apt to be more accountable than any other public servant.

Accountability has two aspects- moral and legal (Wagner, 1989). Moral accountability is based on upon a sense of responsibility, a feeling that one is responsible to one's clients (students and parents) to colleagues and to oneself. Legal accountability is being responsible to one's employer only in terms of fulfillment of terms of employment. For maintenance of quality it is necessary to devise an accountability evaluation system which shifts the emphasis from legal accountability to moral accountability to generate a feeling of responsibility rather than the feeling of failure. (Powar, 2002)

Criterion for Accountability

According to Gnanam (1995) the following criteria (having moral and legal basis) may be considered to ensure teacher accountability to their students, their parents, their community and their profession:

1. Regularity and punctuality of the teachers in performing their jobs.
2. Innovative methods of teaching evolved and or adopted for effective teaching, leading to generating interest and motivation and independent thinking on the part of students.
3. The number of level of courses taught and developed, number and quality of research papers published, research projects undertaken and Ph.D.'s guided.
4. Co-ordination and co-operation extended to colleagues and authorities.
5. Contribution to the construction of curriculum, design of evaluation methods, preparation of learning/reading materials and role played in student counseling and remedial teaching.
6. Seminars conferences and symposia organized at university level, and international level. Fellowship, awards and recognition received.
7. Higher positions secured outside the institution.
8. Office held in national or regional or international organization.
9. Contribution in resolving the social issues, international issues and issues related to national concern and priorities.
10. Contribution to environment preservation, co-curricular activities and extension services.
11. Implementation of comprehensive objective evaluation system in overall evaluation process of the institution.
12. Role played in enrichment of campus life, student welfare and ensuring quality education