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**Roles of Teachers in Higher Education in Present Times: An Analysis**

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Teaching in higher education has become one of the most challenging tasks in the changing scenario of today's world, particularly in view of remarkable technological advancement, overwhelming influence of globalization and its off-shoots like liberalization and privatization. There has been a total metamorphosis in the concept of teaching as the changing trend in higher education demands the competent teachers to cope themselves up with the new changes in the horizon of knowledge, methods and techniques of teaching and proper use of technology in teaching-learning process. Thus the teachers involved in higher education have been constantly under pressure to maintain the traditional image of a teacher, attain job satisfaction and keep pace with the innovations taking place in the field of education at every now and then. The role of teachers is no longer confined to teaching alone. They need to be thorough professionals fully equipped with high academic standard, pedagogical and practical skills and ethical and moral values. Recognising the global perspective in education, the Jacques Delors Commission in its Report, "Learning: the treasure within" (UNESCO,1996) highlights challenges that are to be responded by teachers and teacher preparation system. The teacher education must, therefore create necessary awareness among teachers about their new roles and responsibilities. Teacher educators can play a vital role in producing quality teacher. Harvey (1993) and Atwood (2007) point out that quality processes tend to focus on 'core' aspects of education such as learning-teaching and course organization. In spite of many innovations in this area abroad, the things are almost static in India. The teachers in our country are said to have failed to decolonize their psyche and thus also the syllabus, curriculum, methodology and the education process. Thus when quality assurance has become the main motto of higher education, now –a- days, the demand for competent and skilled teachers, capable of giving appropriate rejoinders to the challenges and threats posed in the highway of higher education has become quite urgent. In-fact, quality higher education and prosperity of life are becoming inter-dependent. Thus the system of higher education which originated in ancient India has taken a new dimension in the post-modernist and post-colonial era but most significantly after second –generation economic reforms. As teachers have to be involved in inter-disciplinary teaching and research work, the cross-flow of teachers and scientists through interaction between universities and research

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laboratories is extremely important. The National Policy on Education (1986) rightly emphasizes the importance of teacher as follows:

“The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society, it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. However, the entire edifice of education is shaky if the teacher is weak and ineffective.”

In-fact, success of any educational reform depends on the quality of the teacher which in turn depends upon the effective utilization of new teaching technology in our classroom teaching. Teaching is more a mission than a profession .Dr. Ambedkar called teachers as ‘charioteers’, a religious metaphor symbolizing movement and progression.

Education inculcates right blend of teaching values that is cultivation, preservation and transformation of knowledge into practice for sanctifying the teaching- learning process which is no doubt daunting task for the educator. Plato said “Good education is necessary to make man better than he is and if good education is necessary for making man better a good teacher is necessary for making education whatsoever it can be”.

There is now an explosion of knowledge. The nature of knowledge is that it is getting obsolete. And a teacher to be an effective communicator must go beyond the syllabi and acquire proficiency in allied subjects as well. An effective teacher looks all around. He neither looks upon, nor looks down, neither looks down upon. He must be able to generate confidence, emotional energy and dynamism in the students, provoke them and create challenges and issues in the class. It is the cumulative body of knowledge and principles that enables teachers as ‘technicians’ in the classroom, to diagnose the needs of the students, to treat them with successful pedagogical techniques and to assess the outcome of those treatments. The interaction between one’s approach and classroom practice is the key to dynamic teaching. The initial inspiration for innovations in teaching methods comes from the approach level, but the feedback that teachers gather from actual implementation then reshapes and modifies their overall understanding of what learning and teaching are-which in turn may give rise to a new insight and more innovative possibilities and the cycle continues.

The NAAC guidelines very clearly define the roles to be performed by the teachers in higher education. While preparing the AQAR and SSR of the college recently, all the things appeared as crystal clear. Faculty improvement for ensuring quality education has been given top priority by NAAC as well as UGC. Keeping this fact in view perhaps UGC is constantly sponsoring Refresher Courses, Orientation Courses, Short-term Courses, Summer Classes, Workshops, Seminars, Symposia, Conferences etc throughout the country for the teachers of colleges and universities. Particularly the teachers who are supposed to face APIs(Academic Performance

Indicators) for their promotional benefits have really to pass through a hard time keeping themselves always busy and under pressure. But the fact remains that the teachers are really giving efforts to empower themselves with quality education in order to disseminate the same among the students irrespective of the location of their institutions. Teachers all over the country have to fulfill the same criteria following which the gap between teachers in rural colleges and those in urban areas or metropolitan cities has become almost nil. It has brought about a uniformity in the upgradation of teaching community at large. But the sorry thing of the affair is that a proper research atmosphere has not yet developed in higher educational institutions located particularly in the rural or semi-urban areas like ours as the less ambitious teachers and those who think to have reached a saturated point in their career are not willing to work to this end though UGC and NAAC have got their specific guidelines regarding the cultivation of the research mindedness among the faculty and the IQACs of the colleges or universities have been entrusted with this task of inculcation of the same among the faculty for the larger interest of the students, of the institutions and the nation as such. There cannot be an alternative to learning on the part of the teachers involved in higher education in the present global scenario though their experience in teaching always comes to their rescue. Again the lack of job satisfaction of the part-time teachers, contractual and non-sanctioned teachers also acts as a great hurdle on the path of proper meeting of the demands of higher education right now. It is quite obvious that with a meager amount of salary, the teachers cannot be expected to go on learning and well-equipping them with latest sophisticated knowledge base. Teaching profession, in fact, does not allow any lethargy caused by age or any other factor. It is a saga of constant learning, continuous effort and hundred percent dedication till the day of retirement. And why not? The teachers, fortunately involved in higher education get the opportunity to breath with the youngsters maximum time of their life which is likely to remove all the passivity and lethargy from them. Any way, the greatness and importance of teachers have always been recognized and enthused by the great souls all over the world over the ages.

And to talk about the lady teachers, it is something wonderful as there cannot be a better profession for highly qualified women( though choices may vary) who have been able to prove their efficiency as home makers as well as professionals though the fact remains that lady teachers have to work within limitations as sufficient infrastructural facilities are not available for them in their institutions particularly in rural colleges like ours. They do not have the facilities of Day Care Centres for looking after their kids though UGC has clearly said about it. Moreover, toilet system of the colleges is not scientific and systematic one for the lady teachers and most of the colleges hardly provide rest rooms for them which is felt to be extremely necessary. Moreover, another unpleasant truth is that lady teachers many a times have to be the victims of gender discrimination in their respective institutions which definitely demoralizes them hampering their spirit and enthusiasm and

in this respect the administration should avoid all sorts of biasness and restore the lost spirit in them rather impartially. Again the state government lady employees do not enjoy certain leave which are being enjoyed by the central government employees which creates an undesirable difference among the staff. Any way teachers never bother about all these as their main motto is to do the best, learn incessantly and offer the best to the students for the greater interest of the society and nation at large. And women teachers are never lagging behind in discharging their normal duties and also the additional duties allotted to them and in some cases they have rather proved themselves more successful than their male counterparts. Even government duties assigned to them during general elections or census survey or current NRC-related works, female teachers have quite efficiently accomplished their tasks. A teacher is, in fact, viewed as the controller, the prompter, the resource, the assessor, the organizer, the participant and the tutor and he/she is supposed to be accountable, adaptable, caring, determined, compassionate, co-operative, creative, dedicated, empathetic, engaging, fearless, evolutionary, forgiving, joyful, kind, passionate, patient, resilient, resourceful, trustworthy, inspirational and lots more. Well-equipped teachers can motivate the students to keep up with innovations in curricula, pedagogy and the development of digital resources.

Higher education, to-day, is endorsed by the modern civilization which is becoming increasingly materialistic and socially insensitive and disoriented and has shown its bankruptcy in solving the real issues of the society. It is thus expected to promote such professionalism in teachers which is highly sensitive to the society and flexible for holistic development and prosperity. The philosophy of life-long learning and the vision of a learning society is dependent on teaching for democratic living by learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. For the fast emerging information-based society, effective teaching with a view to producing effective learners has become the call of the hour. Keeping all this in view, the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan recognises that the quality in higher education is critically incumbent on number and quality of teachers. But to realize it practically teachers involved in higher education must be given sufficient incentives and the decisions like categorization of higher education funding as ‘non merit subsidy’ must not be repeated as it denies the very positive role of education in socioeconomic and spiritual development of a nation.

Similarly, the Draft Plan Document of 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2012-2017) highlighting on the status of Higher Education states, “The sector is plagued by a shortage of well-trained faculty, poor infrastructure and outdated and irrelevant curricula. The use of technology in higher education remains limited and standards of research and teaching at Indian universities are far below

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international standards with no Indian university featuring in any of the rankings of the top 200 institutions globally” (Vol 3, p 90).

Dr. Vijendra Sharma, the former President, Delhi University Teachers’ Association writes in his article ‘The Higher Education in 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan’ that the document called for careful planning of future expansion so as to correct regional and social imbalances, improve standards and improve employability. The strategic aims of the twelfth plan centre around ‘three Es’ — expansion, equity and excellence. However, the draft plan document proposes “a paradigm change” for achieving these goals — through three new principles. First, emphasis will be on expansion with quality. Second, higher education opportunities will be diversified; world class research universities and sophisticated teaching institutions will be developed to impart key vocational and generic skills as per the needs of the labour market. Third, this excellence in diversity will be implemented through governance reforms.

Thus to implement the vision of the Planning Commission, removal of the bottlenecks on the path of the proper implementation of higher education has become the urgent need of the hour. And as a first step, the quality improvement in faculty is to be given top most priority and the shortage in quality teachers needs to be mitigated by filling the vacant posts of the institutions with fresh appointments. The participation of the existing faculty in various kinds of courses sponsored by UGC can be made mandatory in order to oblige them to be updated with the fresh findings of various researches and new learning materials of growing knowledge or information society.

Einstein once said that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it and thus current needs suggest that the world and in-fact education must be learnt to be viewed from a new angle. Reformation of higher education is extremely necessary and UGC as well as NAAC has kept a pressure upon the institutions throughout.

Education has created unprecedented opportunities for sustainable development and for eradicating poverty. As education is a dynamic and a continuously changing process and a higher educational institution is not merely a building but a part of the global village, the teachers —one of the most important components of an education system must be nurtured ,motivated and developed from both inside and outside. Teachers are now-a —days treated as agents of social change and they are supposed to empower the students in the process of empowering themselves by way of constant learning. Researchers like McAffrey et. Al (2003), Rivkin et. al. (2005), and Rockoff (2004) found that teachers have a significant impact on the achievement of the students. Good teachers are located in themselves, their culture and traditions, in their commitment to profession and inculcating the

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same in the learners. Socrates, one of the greatest teachers of humanity wanted the word 'teacher' as epitaph on his grave. He earned it, for despite all his unfathomable knowledge, Socrates remained just a learner. An ideal teacher must be self-schooled, self-scanned, self-esteemed and self-secured as has been described by Matthew Arnold regarding Shakespeare who is undoubtedly a world teacher. For that, quality practice and quality thinking have become very essential.

Teachers perform different roles while making decisions about the planning and teaching of lessons, the management of the classrooms and tackling the students as a whole. Teachers are required to be easily accessible to students both inside and outside the classrooms as there has been steep rise in students' violence, drug abuse, cyber crime, illegal trafficking, murder and suicide committed, abuse of social media done by the students, so on and so forth. Teachers are, therefore, to take strong stand against all the evils rampant in the society by developing healthy relationship with the students and instilling in them all those moral and spiritual values which is likely to take the wayward youths to a nobler and more sublime world. It is the call of the hour that teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should introduce their students to the vaster world and inculcate in them the sense of their own power to create change in the world. For that they should be able to identify proper learning styles of their students and try to convert them into life-long learners as they themselves are. If students are to be the productive members of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, they must move beyond the skills of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and master those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the focus of the new millennium is on producing students in higher education as highly productive, effective communicators, inventive thinkers and masters of technology.

Brown, H. Douglas(2007) mentions that teachers can play many roles in the course of teaching and this might facilitate the learning. Their ability to carry these out effectively will depend on a large extend on the rapport they establish with their students and on their own level of knowledge and skills.

According to Harmer, J. (2007), the term 'facilitator' is used by many authors to describe a particular kind of teacher, one who is democratic rather than autocratic and one who fosters learner autonomy through the use of group work and pair work and by acting as more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge.

Thus expectations are multiplying every now and then with regard to the changing roles to be played by the teachers involved in higher education and they do not have better road to adopt than that of constant learning in order to get them fully prepared under all circumstances and it is likely to render an extra-ordinary satisfaction to them as well.

Teaching in higher education has really become a stressful occupation. The daily interaction with students and co-workers and incessant and fragmented demands of teaching often lead to overwhelming pressures and challenges which may lead to stress....(De Robbio and Iwanicki, 1996).Teacher stress has thus become a relevant subject of studies in recent past. In a word, Darwinian concepts of ‘struggle for existence’ and ‘survival of the fittest’ can best be applied to teachers in higher education. But it is an irony as well as a matter of pride, power, and satisfaction that teachers in higher education have to remain constant learners. It is the unique saga of their life.

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