

# Need of Teachers Commitment and Competency in Contemporary Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

Good teacher educators and principals know that good education begins with precise knowledge of purpose. The purpose of schooling is to develop knowledge and skills, intellectual abilities and powers and desire attitudes and ideas also prepare students for life in the real world in their communities and societies, both in the present while students are in school and in the future after they leave school behind. They should know how to develop interconnection and interdependence with the real world. Such a way of dealing with the questions of the real world scientifically and presenting them to the students comes under the competency of the teacher educators. The competencies of them come through practice and experience. The global skills that the teacher educator needs to develop in himself as well as pass on to the students, requires and to have interest in his particular field. The commitment of the teacher educators are the prerequisite to global teaching in the school. Commitment, a sense of adherence, is a key factor that influences learning process of students.

Keywords: Contemporary Education, Teacher and Schooling

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## Introduction

Article 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), adopted by UN says, 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. 'Spirit of brotherhood is possible only when there is social unity. Society is made up of individuals. The society continuously keeps on changing. Education is an instrument that gives quality to a change. Any kind of change is possible but for a good change to take place education is important. Education is the only means to social change. Social change requires us to have right thinkers. Right thinkers are to be developed in a society to indicate social change. For this teacher educators play an important role.

Teacher's performance level increases as the competency level increases. Teachers competencies not only affect their values, behaviors, communication, aims and practices they also support professional development and curricular studies, (Selvi, 2010). Competencies can be defined as the set of knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for future, which manifests in activities, (Katane et.al.44). Fakhra (2012) operationally defined teachers competencies as knowledge and skills of teachers required for effective and quality education at higher education level. Pedagogical skills, management and assessment skills, and research skills are the teaching skills that a teacher requires in order to perform effective teaching.

Researchers have agreed on many aspects and indicators of teaching competencies. Mostly competencies of teachers include the knowledge of the content and instructional skills. University teachers, in new era of ICT, are expected to have additional competencies related to research, smoothing student self-governing learning, respect for and relationship with students and other teachers (Le, 2003). Marta, M José & M Angeles (2011) stated two functions of teachers at higher education level which are teaching and research.

Rice (2003) considered teacher competencies as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that suitably meet the societal and proficient requirements of teaching roles and bring about good learning. Teaching competencies can therefore be defined as an incorporated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed for effective performance in various teaching environments (Tigelaar; Dolmans; Wolfhagen & Van der Vleuten, 2004:255).

In today's teaching learning environment a competent teacher is possible only through a careful program of teacher training. (Jamani 2007). B Jan (2007) in changing scenario of the world felt the great need to improve traditional teaching methodologies and styles, teacher-student relationship, and pedagogical skills and knowledge base of teachers. Fitch and Kopp (1990) opined that in order to improve skills, knowledge, and performance competencies of teachers, in-service training programs are necessary.

### **Contemporary Education**

Contemporary Education refers to the present situation in education. The increase of ICT use in the schools and the necessity of it to be used in the present day teaching and learning have changed the levels of competencies in the teachers. At present the education has become Global. We can refer to it as Global education. Global education has been defined as "education which promotes the knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world" (Fisher and Hicks 1985: 8). Another definition states that "global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in the content; methods and social context of education in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age" (Kniep 1985: 15). Global educators emphasize that global education is a pedagogical approach, not just a new "teaching technique," and usually designate peace, human rights, development, and the environment as the four content areas of global education. Teachers in today's contemporary world requires themselves to be updated with the latest knowledge as well as should be competent in the skills required.

### **Contemporary Education**

Those who feel the call to teach, who sense teaching is a profoundly meaningful part of their life, have a passion for teaching (Garrison, Liston, 2004, p.1). Passion simply is defined as a strong inclination or desire towards an activity that one likes and finds important and in which one invests time and energy (Carbonneau, Vallerand, Fernet & Guay, 2008, p.978). Fried defines a passionate teacher as a someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that change our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class every day (2001, p.44). A committed teacher is the one who is passionate to teach and invest in student's life. Fried (2001) lists the following basic characteristics of a passionate teacher as likes working with young people, and takes an interest in knowledge and ideas. That students lack knowledge and skills cannot be an excuse to decrease his feeling of compassion for them.

Cares about students is aware of world issues, and current events in the classroom and effectively reflects them in his works at school is serious and has sense of humor tolerates absurd and meaningless things that students exhibit in their behaviors but at the same time critical and very attentive to manners that students must have. Avoids condemning ideas of unpopular and young people and attempts to create a culture of mutual respect takes risks; therefore, as much as any person makes mistakes but derives lessons from mistakes rather than ignore them. Endeavors to establish and maintain a learning environment where students can learn from their mistakes. Takes his missions seriously and reflects his ideas and beliefs clearly.

Today's educators need to understand the importance of student centered education. With the advancement of the technology the culture also seemed to have advanced as well as deteriorated. Some important values of life have been lost in the family. The students whose parents have undergone divorce have been known to be increasing every year. This deteriorating issue of the contemporary world leads the child to look for love and caring outside of the family. It becomes the responsibility of the teacher to be a parent as well as a counselor to the student.

### **Contemporary Competency Categories**

**Contextual competencies:** One of the first and foremost obligations of primary school teachers is to ensure acceptability of their efforts by the parents and the community. Towards this, they need to acquire a near total understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and religious contexts of the specific family milieu and the community profile. Policy provisions for equality, social justice, educational opportunity etc. will also have to be understood both in the form of written statements as also in pragmatic terms of their appreciation by the concerned community. The teachers' job is thus an integral part not only of the total educational system but also of the total social and cultural systems in which they have to operate. They must, therefore, be fully familiar with the education systems at the National and State levels as well as with their global and local ramifications. They should be able to

identify and analyze the factors responsible for obstructing the growth of literacy in the country and the concerned State, besides reasons for poor enrolment, retention and the problems of wastage and stagnation in the schools. They have also to understand the heterogeneities and diversities of the society while working out unifying factors for building a cohesive society that believes in national integration and attempts to provide every citizen a sense of belonging to the nation with dignity and equality. They will also have to understand various other issues like developmental activities, urbanization, unemployment, value inculcation, political dynamics, the growing impact of scientific and technological development etc. against the backdrop of the specific community. To ensure credibility of their actions and initiatives, their preparation, based primarily on the afore-said considerations, has to be a pre-requisite for the teachers. They have to be alive to contexts like these and develop, in turn, relevant competencies and corresponding skills. The existing curriculum could be explored for such components as could be converted into competencies. The gaps, if any, could also be identified and filled by working out suitable measures and developing workable strategies.

**Conceptual competencies:** It is equally essential to develop in the student teachers the right perspective in education that would enable them to receive new experiences meaningfully and in greater detail and depth, besides helping them thoroughly understand the meaning of education and learning and the impact of socioeconomic and socio-cultural factors on them. They should also know their educational implications with reference to the physical, mental, social and cultural needs of the child at different stages of child development. It is, therefore, imperative for the teachers to know significant characteristics of child development at different age levels to enable them to translate these characteristics into curriculum transactions including practical work. The knowledge of sociometry of the class too would help them organize curricular and co curricular activities quite effectively in the classroom and outside. This would also help them adopt various modalities of curriculum transaction such as teacher directed learning, group learning, self-motivated individualized learning and the like. The student teachers should appreciate the constitutional provision of universalization of elementary education and its three components, namely, (2) universal enrolment, (zz) universal retention and (in) universal quality education, besides various efforts made so far to achieve it in general and with special reference to the Minimum Levels of Learning approach translated into competency based teaching-learning process in particular. It may also be essential to identify and realize special needs of the handicapped and retarded children so as to enable the student teachers to provide congenial environment for their learning. Concepts like globalization, modernisation etc. has also tended to add many a new concepts which have to be clearly understood by the teachers to translate them effectively into the teaching-learning process. However, the list of conceptual areas can be extended on and on to make it quite extensive and exhaustive and as such the teachers have to be constantly refreshed and reoriented in the context of the conceptual competencies to render them into meaningful learning experiences.

**Content Competencies:** Needless to say that the teachers should achieve full mastery over the content competencies identified in the competency based curriculum of primary schools. It gains all the more importance in the context of a study conducted in this area which revealed that 50% of the new entrants of teacher education institutions, who acquired more than 75% marks at the Senior School Certificate examination, scored less than 30% marks in the content test based on the curriculum of primary school. In this light, it becomes essential that the content competencies, identified by Dave Committee Report or its adaptation by the State, must be achieved at the level of full mastery by the student teachers in their teacher preparation programmes at the Teacher Education Institutes. Besides, the student teachers must develop ability to analyse the existing curriculum content and co-relate it with relevant competencies. In this process, it should be possible for them to find out gaps and the hard spots of learning which often exist. They should also identify such areas from the curriculum where there is enough scope for joyful activities, individual learning and group learning. It could also be an enlightening experience to utilize media intervention for a high level of confident enrichment of the learning teaching process that may also, in turn, facilitate the transactional strategies.

**Transactional Competencies:** Teaching-learning process in education involves interaction between the teacher and the taught resulting in the achievement of the desired competencies. Teaching as a concept is to be conceived in three stages: planning, teaching learning process and evaluation. During transaction, the teachers put plan into action and evaluate its impact in terms of competency achievement level at the end of the transaction. One of the important causative factors for poor achievement at the primary level is poor curriculum transaction. Acharya Ramamurti Committee Report, 1992 on National Policy on Education, 1986 revealed that the present teacher education programme, being mainly theory oriented, due emphasis is not being given on practice teaching. In fact, this lacuna has been repeatedly observed by various commissions. In that, the 1964-66 Commission treated practice teaching as

the weakest link in the chain of the entire teacher education process and recommended its strengthening on top priority basis. Hence, it is imperative that student teachers need to be fully trained in this area. In the competency based teaching-learning process, the subject content is used merely as a vehicle to achieve relevant identified competencies at the level of mastery. While transacting curriculum content, the principles of psychology, management and societal aspects, as the case may be, should be integrated and practiced, it becomes extremely important for the student teachers to understand clearly the process of child development and growth and the management principles involved in order to affect maximum learning by the child. This would also further facilitate the transactional strategies. Since the young children have short span of attention, time for teacher-directed learning should be of fairly short span and in that, more time should be devoted to group learning and individualized self-learning by children themselves. It involves proper use of the textbooks so as to emphasize on the workbook reinforcement of the acquired competencies through direct involvement of the child. Variety of activities such as storytelling, singing, games, field visits, and celebration of national, social and cultural events should be organized with a view to making teaching-learning process joyful and participatory. Appropriate teaching aids and other teaching-learning material should be prepared as far as possible to strengthen the teaching-learning process. Continuous evaluation should be integrated with various approaches while transacting the subject content with a view to diagnosing the weaknesses and strengths of the teaching learning strategy and to identify the weaker and brighter children in order to take remedial measures and give enrichment programmes respectively. In a single teacher school or the multigrade school, the workbook part of the textbook may be used for individual or smaller group of children to reinforce the learning of children of one grade while teaching new competencies to the children of another grade in the same classroom. The teacher should acquire competency to handle the children of different grades sitting in the same classroom by using various techniques and devices to make learning by children meaningful and effective. All this requires transactional competencies of the highest order both on the part of student teachers and teacher educators.

#### **Teacher's teaching competency in contemporary education**

Every teacher entering the profession of teaching should have a deeper understanding of one's own personal motivation, a deep reflection about her/his own personal, social and intercultural competences, her/his own value and belief system. These aspects, especially dealing with the issues like attitudes, behavior, value clarity and respect are competences that lie far beyond the knowledge of the taught subjects. (TICKLE, The Final Report, 2009 p.11). ICT has a potential transforming impact on today's education system. Countries around the world face urgent challenges in this respect due to the rapid development of technologies, the required financial investments and the need to have a clear vision of the role that teachers have to play in harnessing the power of ICT in the classroom and beyond. (UNESCO IC, Competency framework for Teachers p.1) UNESCO's Framework emphasizes that it is not enough for teachers to have ICT competencies and be able to teach them to their students. Teachers need to be able to help the students become collaborative, problem-solving, creative learners through using ICT so they will be effective citizens and members of the workforce. The way ICT is used will depend on the subject being taught, the learning objectives and the nature of the students. Nonetheless, it is important to set out the basic principles which should guide the use of ICT in teaching, and this is what the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) project has proposed. ICT offers engaging and fast-evolving learning environments, blurs the boundaries between formal and informal education and prompts teachers to develop new ways of teaching and enabling students to learn. Ultimately, it requires education to re-think what skills and competencies students need to become active citizens and members of the workforce in a knowledge society. Teacher should include ICT in everyday life. Teacher competencies related to the knowledge deepening approach include the ability to manage information, structure problem tasks, and integrate open-ended software tools and subject-specific applications with student-centered teaching methods and collaborative projects in support of students' in-depth understanding of key concepts and their application to complex, real-world problems. (UNESCO, ICT p.11)

#### **Conclusion**

In the 21st century, education systems that face the challenge of equipping students with the new knowledge, skills and values need teachers that are committed to the cause and can give their service for the development of the new generation with competency. Thus the present education challenges us to think about the needed education but also its ultimate purpose. Committed teacher's effect on student achievement is observable. There is a strong relation between committed and competent teacher's teaching and successful student learning.

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