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Capacity Building of Teachers at the Secondary Level of Education in the Context of Social Change in Assam, India

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Abstract:

Human beings are always in love of change. Science and technology have brought about sea changes in our society. Today, the student community is much different from those of yesteryears. Therefore, a teacher has to improve himself/herself in order to keep pace with the changes. Moreover, society has increased expectations from the teachers. In this paper, an attempt has been made to throw light on the different aspects of changes among students of secondary level and the various techniques to deal with the changes to be adopted by a teacher. The various approaches to bring out the best in every teacher are to be highlighted.

Keywords: Capacity building, Secondary level, social change, approaches

1. Introduction

1.1. Science and Technology and Social Change

Human beings are always in love of change. Change is an inevitable part of human life and society. Society can be regarded as the web of relationships and all the members participate in the different activities of the society. With the changes of time, people change and consequently relationships also change. Such changes can be termed as “social change.” It also involves change in the structure of the society e.g. the size, composition; balance of its parts or the types of its different organizations. India is also a country on the move. It is moving rapidly from a traditional society to a new society based on science and technology. Science and technology have brought about tremendous changes, influencing the philosophy, aspirations, ideals and ideas of each and every member of our society. Today we have become machines under the influence of science and technology. Everything has been changed.

In the student community too, we have witnessed a number of changes. Gone are the days when we expect “namaskar” from our students. Now teachers are wished by “hello Sir/Madam”. This is change, change in its simplest form. Though “namaskar” is still in the superior place but in general today’s children prefer “hello/ good morning/ good evening” to wish and show respect to their teachers. Now children don’t play “dora- koina, edim sedim ba”. Rather they love to play computer games and keep themselves busy in making friendship in different social networks. The secondary school students have a vast idea about Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp than anything else. Children today are funkier and more technology oriented.

In such a world, education cannot resist change. We must accept the fact that a surprising revision of educational practices is possible and inevitable. The demands of new times, new visions require change in our education too. And it is the responsibility of the teachers to consider the changes of the society. Teachers have to be strong and determined to help the students philosophically, psychologically and socially. As the student community is much different from those of yesteryears, a teacher has to improve himself/ herself in order to keep pace with the changes. Moreover, society has increased expectations from teachers. The teachers at the secondary level are again have an important role as they have to deal with the adolescents. The adolescents with their “dream world” are easily influenced by changes in the society. They like to explore each and every aspect of their newly achieved stage of their lives. They love to be unique with their own interests, attitude, aptitude and abilities. Therefore, teachers have to be very careful while dealing with them. He/ she has to take care of the feelings, emotions.

2. Process of Capacity Building among the Teachers of Secondary Level

Now-a-days, utmost importance is given on capacity building of teachers throughout the world. Capacity is often defined as the ability of individuals, organizations or systems to perform their appropriate functions in an effective and sustainable way. Recent definitions of capacity building emphasizes on the continuous process of strengthening of the abilities of performing core functions, solving different problems, proper definition of the objectives and their achievement, understanding and dealing with developmental needs in a broad context. So, the term ‘continuous’ is very important in the process of capacity building. It also refers to a process of equipping individuals with three basic qualities_ knowledge and understanding, training of skills and access to information. All these qualities help a person to perform in a better way. Moreover, another essential aspect of capacity

building is the development of the capacity of adapting to the changes and inculcation of an integrated and holistic approach while addressing problems of professional life. So, the process of capacity building is not an easy task at all.

Continuous learning is essential to improve the quality of teachers and educational system. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame." So, a continuous process of capacity building of teachers to deal with the technology based adolescents is of utmost importance in the context of change in society. Now each of the classrooms doesn't have only space for using maps, charts, pictures, specimens, models etc. A variety of self-regulating and self-thinking machines are being used in educational institutions.

In order to teach the students of secondary level, a teacher has to know and understand about their "world of technology". A teacher today must know about the world of computer, internet and even the world of Facebook and Twitter. Classrooms can be interesting for the grown-ups if their teachers use examples related to the latest trends brought about by science and technology. Positive discussions on the use of internet will surely help the teacher to bring about the desired changes among the adolescents. Today, teachers, besides parents, must have every minute detail of their students' activities in social networks. The immature adolescents often fail to grasp the difference between good and bad and become the victims of different crimes under the influence of social networks and peer pressure. A teacher has to keep them on the right track and help them to be efficient members of the society. So, proper handling of technological devices is also necessary for the teachers. Teachers can engage themselves in different workshops, seminars, training sessions etc. to keep themselves up to date.

However, the following approaches can be very helpful in this process of capacity building_

- **Individual responsibility and relationship:** In order to bring about effectiveness in the educational system, each and every teacher must internalize the individual responsibility and its relationship with the student community in particular and the greater society in general. Individual initiative and willingness are very necessary in the process of capacity building.
- **Daily supervision:** Regular supervision is very helpful in the process of capacity building. Supervision conducted by eminent scholars or personal can develop a sense of duty and responsibility among the teachers. Simple and basic guidelines regarding the supervisions will help a lot.
- **Self-reflection:** Self- reflection and self- evaluation help a teacher to improve his/ her effectiveness as teaching personnel. A teacher has to keep up-to-date knowledge of new development and trends in almost all the aspects of education. He should compare and evaluate himself with these new trends and develop a thirst to acquire new skills to cope up with them.
- **Feedback based model:** Teacher should develop a feedback based model with the help of which they can have a better understanding of the new generation student community. Acting with love, friendship and care, the teacher must discuss with the students about themselves. Students should be given enough freedom to speak out different problems, their opinions regarding the teaching of different teachers, their concepts of good teachers, their expectations from their teachers etc. Such a discussion will surely help the teachers to realize their shortcomings and rectify them. Such a feedback helps greatly in the process of capacity building in the context of social change. It should be adopted to identify and nurture individual strength and capacity of the teacher.

3. Concluding Remark

Government schools of Assam, a north eastern state of India, are comparatively lagging behind in case of introducing "technology based classrooms". Private schools are coping with changes brought about by technology in a rapid manner in this regard. However, the Central Government initiative Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), which was launched in 2009, is operational in Assam too. RMSA conducts in service teachers' training specially for the teachers, headmasters and principals along with other activities. The Online School Monitoring System (OSAMS) of the RMSA programme is helping the teachers to remain active during the school hours. Focusing on the quality education, RMSA is a new hope in the field of secondary Education in India and Assam. Again, another important point is highlighted by Sir John Daniel in his speech on "Teacher education: new approaches are necessary and possible". He stressed on using variety of technological devices and to broaden our horizon. He remarked that in the North people usually think of educational technology in terms of laptops and computers only. But handhold devices using mobile phone technology are being used in teachers' education in Bangladesh. They deliver personalized teacher's training and "just in time" learning as needed in classroom and other learning environment. Again, African teachers rely on their mobiles to network with their colleagues for professional development.

The process of capacity building among the teachers of secondary level is very challenging and it needs the supportive and dedicative hands of the teachers, community people and Government.

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