

Emerging Progressive Perspectives for Global Teachers

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Abstract: - Much has been researched and anticipated on contribution of teachers in the education sector. With global challenges and opportunities influencing the setting of concerns and expectations from the teachers, it becomes a matter of immense importance to establish quality processes that are sensitive enough to capture the dynamism inherent.

The concept of teacher's role is usually interpreted and understood based on experts' opinion, how so ever, as the children occupy the key focus in today's learner centric approach of education system, in the present study efforts were taken to understand the conceptions of children about their teachers and the importance of role they played in their lives. It is believed that the an inquiry into the conceptions of children would provide the fundamentals for uncovering the question, what are the concerns and expectations from the teachers of today's age? The interpreted information would provide a useful missing link to better understand, not only the current realities of classroom but also help defining appropriate framework for teacher training and education required to meet the the global standards for assuring quality learning outcomes.

For the present study, children from schools with four different school governance, namely; Central government, State government, Private unaided school and International school were considered.

Key words: conceptions of children, teachers' role in global challenges and opportunities, progressive milestones for teacher's achievement

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian education system is fast transforming to meet the emerging trends globally. School education holds its unique importance due to the highly sensitive function and impact it displays. The concern over quality of school education were first acknowledged in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) activities in the late 1970's. Furthermore, it was the joint effort of OECD with International Assessment for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) to develop the performance indicators to assure school quality education. A 'Good School' is said to perform well in terms of identifying goals, planning, decision making, leadership, curriculum framing, strategizing for progressive improvement through assessments, and engaging stakeholders in an effective manner. Adding to the list, one more quality determining factor in school education is the teacher, in fact, it is considered to be the most dynamic and sensitive influencer due to not few but many reasons. Even

after long years of independence, the researches and data reviews reveal, below standard performance of our children in school, and we cannot isolate teachers when it comes to the sharing the responsibility for this below standard performance of our children. The figures from National Sample Survey, NSS, indicate an increase in the enrollment percentage, but unfortunately, the learning levels remain to be much below expectation. The report Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, The Progress of School Education in India (2007), The Public Report on Basic Education in India (1999) by the PROBE team, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) by Pratham NGO, are evidences to support the much needed attention towards quality learning.

Though learning process does not imply in isolation, but the student- teacher cognizance is the most contributing matrix. On none hand, our student's will be the members of global community demanding for exposure enriched with upcoming trends, on the other hand, it is required teachers have the attitude, knowledge and experience to meet the demands. Today teachers encounter various challenges in the classroom as the children bring along with them the variety of languages, learning styles and intelligence. It is important that the role of a teacher today is understood in context to the challenges encountered.

An aspiring candidate completes the professional course and becomes a 'teacher'. The professional course is assumed to equip the candidate with the relevant knowledge and skills required to enter the classroom. The journey begins, with the help of acquired knowledge and skills, the teachers who is able to plan and strategize the learning process, becomes a 'good teacher'. An effective execution of the planning is equally important to bring in the planned transformation, the teacher successfully executes the plan becomes a 'great teacher'. Ideally, in case of any 'mechanical product', the process should terminate with effective execution, but the education industry tends to churn out 'educated humans' which involves the growth and development of the human under process. And if the teacher is responsible for the growth and development of the child, just effective execution of well-planned strategy may not be fulfilling. In the process of planning and execution and even post that, there is a need of stimulating element, that assures the role of a teacher imbibed in true sense. Not to say, conceiving this stimulating element defines a 'proud teacher'.

Our children are the 'living' product of school and the ones directly affected by the influence of the teachers. Therefore there can be no other than our children to best interpret the need and relevance of this stimulating element and more than that also, what is their interpretation about this stimulating element. The present study is an effort to further understand the children's conception about this stimulating element. The insights from the study would be useful to the policy makers in bridging up the gaps that contribute to the failure of teacher empowerment programs and inability to reach to the desired impact. The study was conducted in the twin cities and Hyderabad and Secuenderabad, as these cities were considered to be progressive enough to capture the insights desired.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the present study is qualitative and as a guiding plan to achieve the study objectives, ethnographic approach was used. The tools used were written, oral and observatory. For written data, a set of open and close ended questionnaire was prepared. The tool was submitted to the panel of experts from educational fields and post three rounds of brainstorming and discussion with the eminent educationalists, mutually agreed amendments were made to finalize the set of open and close ended questionnaire. The finalized set of questionnaire post amendments, was considered to have content and conceptual validity. The oral unstructured interviews and observations were used as the important supportive data collecting tool to ensure no perception was left unnoticed and unattended. Also, it gave the flexibility to adapt and meet the requirement to capture the perceptions. The data was carefully noted as observations and later interpreted with expert opinion for any conclusions.

Keeping into consideration the nature of the data required to be captured, the age group of 13-14 years was agreed to be best applicable. The role of gender in decision making and perception forming was also accounted and therefore the sample drawn was gender proportionate. Other factors like social, economic and educational status influence the expectations and therefore cannot be negated. Considering the fact, four different types of school governance were selected for the sampling purpose. These were; International schools, Central government schools, State government schools and private unaided school. It was assumed that the children in these schools with different governance cater largely to similar social, economic and educational background.

Anticipating the sensitivity of the process and for the free flow of ideas, the test was administered in an environment free from any obstacle and distraction. Also, assuring the research ethics, all types of collected data was under privacy. For written questionnaire, each item was discussed with the group to assure no misleading interpretation of words/terms used in the question. The relevance of each was item was clearly shared and children were given appropriate time to read and understand the items and ask for any doubts before they commenced writing.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

The written data collected was presented in graphical and tabular form for further interpretation. The data collected through oral unstructured interviews and observations were taken into account for finally drawing conclusions. The nature of the study being qualitative, the process of drawing conclusions was done followed by intense analysis and interpretation of data collected through all three modes, thus applying the holistic approach for appropriate diagnosis.

IV. FINDINGS

Before getting to discuss the findings of the study it is important to mention that the teachers who were concerned with the sample in the present study were all qualified and their appointments in school were in compliance to the defined eligibility criteria. Also, they were exposed to in service training periodically. This can be understood as the fact that the concerned teachers for the present study were qualified and trained for the job of a teacher.

Further, the collected data and information was processed for interpretations at two levels. Firstly, seeking an insight to the children's conception about their teachers, and secondly categorizing the insights into relevant and appropriate parameters to assess the three identified categories of teachers, namely, Good teachers, Great teachers and Proud teachers.

Following the same, post the first level of data processing it was found;

1. All children agreed to the fact that the teachers should be their guide and mentors rather than just instructors.
2. Children of State government mostly felt uncomfortable discussing problems with their teachers. Children from other schools were comparatively more at ease with their teachers, though only children from International school felt they hardly encounter situations when teachers are not readily accessible to discuss problems.
3. Children from State government mostly felt that the teachers were usually strict in class and the gestures of love and care were usually missing. On the contrary, most of the children from International school felt that most of the teachers showed gestures of love and care, also the classroom environment was not very harsh. The response from Central and Unaided school children was mixed on this idea.
4. When the children were asked to give reasons if they did not like their teachers, the reasons listed by the sample were
 - Use of bad language
 - Lack of enthusiasm
 - Not prepared with lesson

- Class politics/being partial
 - Discouraging with words and gestures
 - Not listening and understanding their perspective
 - Do not exhibit moral values
5. The method of teaching were felt to be not very innovative and child centric in State government and Unaided private school. Though in International school, teaching methods included various tools to maximize the effectiveness of the process, but still children felt the need for better resources. For instance, they were given laptops as a learning resource as and when required, but children felt that the laptops should be retained with them so that they have the flexibility to work. This could be accounted due to the difference in the social and economic status, never the less, the school managed to meet the required level. In the Central government school, children felt learning was more mechanical in nature, with less focus on practical applications and understand of the concept in real life.
6. The examination system in State government school, Central government school and Unaided private school was felt to be more 'marks' oriented and not for improvement. The children in International school felt though the examination system was not very rigorous and orthodox in nature, but at the same

time not much was done to take the same as a measure for progressive improvement.

7. Lastly, when asked if they look at their teachers as their role model, and would they want to be like them, it was noted that almost the same teacher/s were identified by children from specific school. The reasons listed by them for their likes were
- More like a guide/friend/mother/father
 - Always carries a smile
 - Models and endorses the expectations
 - Is always prepared and accepts for new ways of teaching- learning
 - Appreciates and acknowledges efforts
 - Makes learning more engaging and meaningful
 - Uses variety of ways for presentation and understanding of concepts
 - Stands beside as strength for motivating

At the second level, the conceptions of children were studied at a micro level and with the experts' opinion eleven parameters were identified. Considering the sensitivity involved, the task was completed after multiple rounds of discussion, keeping into account the data collected through observations, informal oral interactions and unstructured interviews. The data interpretation with findings is shared in the below table;

Table 1

S.No	Parameters	Good Teachers	Great Teachers	Proud Teachers
1	Knows & Understands the subject well	✓	✓	✓
2	Demonstrates integrated approach towards learning	✓	✓	✓
3	Engages students inactivates that foster real life learning	✓	✓	✓
4	Diagnosis students potential		✓	✓
5	Provides appropriate and adequate opportunities to students to enhance potential building		✓	✓
6	Delimits/breaks through the boundaries of/for continuous learning		✓	✓
7	Facilitates ethical learning environment, indulging with technology for enhancement		✓	✓
8	Linking learning with values/morals to be imbibed			✓
9	Develop and practice values/morals for sustainable learning and real life problem solving			✓
10	Develop acceptance and respect towards all kinds of diversity, mainly, gender, social and cultural			✓
11	Insists for acceptable behavioral transformation			✓

The qualification and experience of the teachers involved in the study was in compliance to the norms specified by

authorities. And if the certifications are considered to be the only eligibility criteria for being a teacher, it is surprising to

note the gaps and the missing links. It was quite disappointing to note that even the student- teacher relationship which is the foundation of learning-teaching process and ladder to the desired impact, was at stake. For sure, one thing is evident, that it is something more than qualification and training that is required, may be the shift required is from training to educating teachers. It is essential that we decode the term 'impact' that we desire. If the desired impact is just transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, the approach may not be that difficult. It is simply achievable with use of innovative teaching process and use of technology. But, as discussed earlier, the 'product' here is not mechanical, but 'educated humans' which requires transformation in behavior along with knowledge. In fact, behavioral transformation sets the grounds for knowledge transformation. No wonder, even after teachers being qualified and delivering the lesson, fail to create the impact in learning, because least is done to assure behavioral transformation. Behavior is directly rooted to the bonding the teacher shares and establishes with the students. In the absence of the bonding, the process of knowledge transformation just remains to be superficial without any adherence. If the child is the core concern to the teacher, it is mandatory that our teacher empowerment programs have enough of sharing on child psychology as applied in real life classroom. The gap between the theoretical and practical application of the teacher empowerment programs would require educating teachers rather than just training them. A great teacher assures best of means for knowledge sharing but the impact is worth measuring if it includes the stimulating element that is, the behavioral transformation. It's time to view teacher education with a global perspective and shift the paradigm from being a great teacher to a proud teacher.

V. DISCUSSION

Teacher empowerment in India is the most to be explored dynamics today. With new challenges emerging, it is essentially required that the trends are well studied and received to address the issues with utmost efficacy.

On one hand, where teacher education and training proves effective in updating teachers with the knowledge, on the other hand the reality is that it is least absorbed at the root level. The reason could be that by default, the main objective of teacher education and training is to only equip teachers with mechanisms to transfer information. As it tends to only download the information, the same may not be adequate to enable teachers successfully and effectively practice the same. The gap between receiving and executing the knowledge for improvement and advancements, establishes strong need for a different approach to the posed challenge. It is must that the teachers get to believe in the concept so as to ensure it is well information but also focus on activating the thought process in the desired direction. Probing the thought process to self-analyze and believe in the philosophy would certainly

complete the learning loop and ultimately help in getting to achieve the set objective.

To get started, it is important to first precisely create a vision. It is believed that our policy makers have set the vision post rigorous brainstorming and discussion on the questions, as in, what are the gaps identified? What action/s are required to overcome the gaps? What adaptations/modifications would be required to perform the desired actions? And so forth. Post, it is the time to execute plans for differences and betterment. It is here that the ongoing teacher training could play a vital role, establishing a link between planning and execution to strive the vision.

Going ahead, answering a straight question to self- what is the 'big idea' behind the teacher education and teacher empowerment, could precisely guide path. In case, the expectation is only transfer of knowledge, the efforts could be minimal, but if it is also about behavioral transformation, it may require a deeper thought. It is unfortunate to note, today, teachers are more occupied with processes and functions required for knowledge transformation without any meaning.

The diversity in professionalism as exhibited by teachers across schools with different governance in India, throws one more serious challenge. It is therefore quite understood, that the process to address the concern would also differ. In a nutshell, the process could be understood as achieving three milestones, namely; Ignite, Evolve and Exceed. These are in itself continuous process leading to one another. Taking a step ahead, these could also be considered to understand the level of motivation required for the teachers. To reach the first milestone teachers would be more concerned with the 'what', 'why', and 'how', as in what is this philosophy about? Why should I follow/believe in the philosophy? And lastly, how will it make a difference to my classroom? Looking beyond the tip of the ice berg, the answers expected should be more 'philosophical' in nature rather than a theory. With the belief set in, comes the next milestone, Evolve. This is a pure action oriented phase, time to engage in activities that are directed towards improvement. Lastly, the third milestone, is the measure of quality benchmark achieved. Not only is it the measure of achievement, but also opportunity to identify the gaps and re frame to address the gaps for continuous improvement and therefore leading to excellence.

For the seeds to transform into plants and start yielding fruits, is a systematic process demanding sensitive and appropriate handling. Similar is the understanding of teacher training process also. For the teacher empowerment, it required strong grounding in philosophy (belief), nurturing with efforts (engagement) and then assessing for quality (impact-Knowledge & behavior). It is unrealistic to expect quality without confirming the first two phases. The same has been depicted below in the form of a system required to ensure system effectiveness and sensitivity to capture dynamism inherent.

Table 2

Evaluation Process

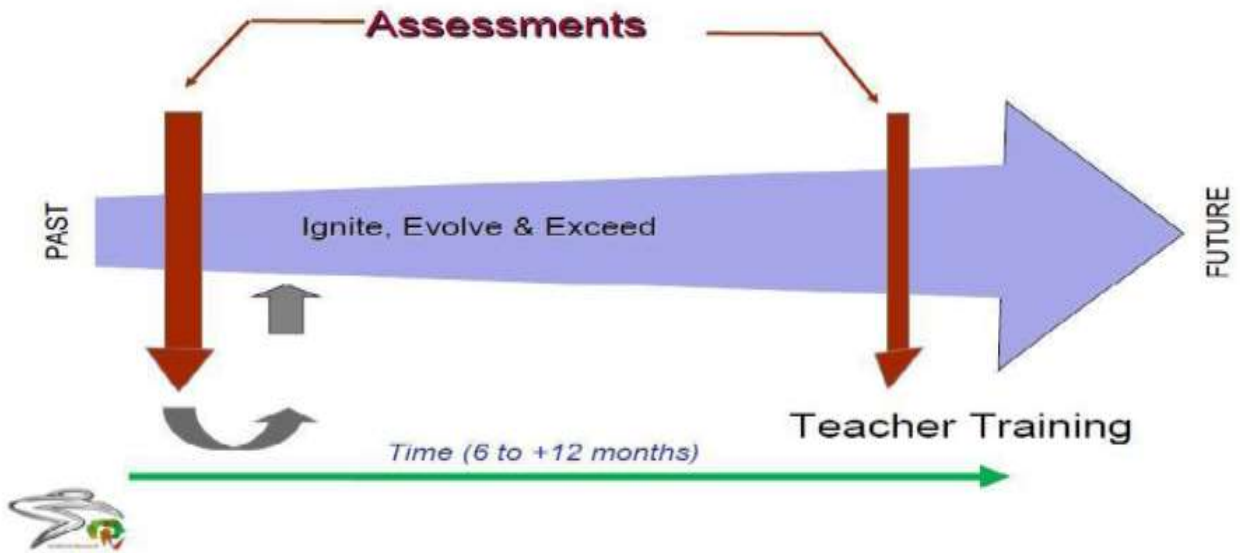


Table 3

Model: Self-Regulation

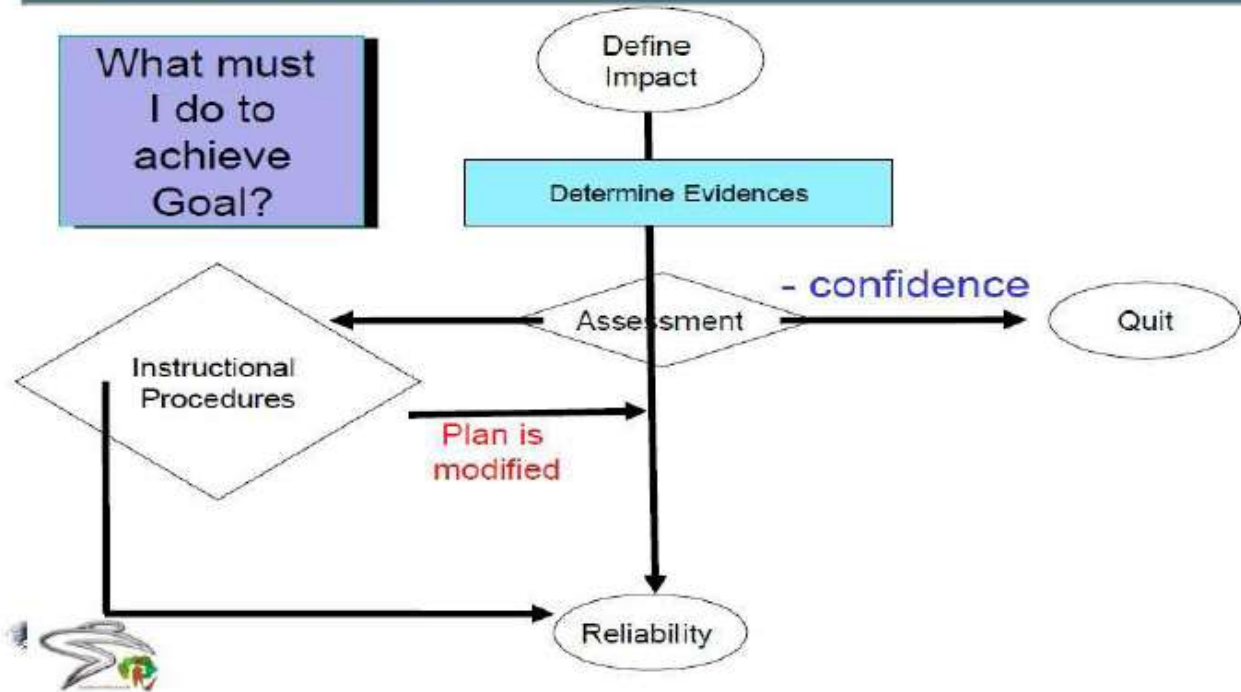


Table 4

Assessment Procedures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define desired 'IMPACT' (Academic & behavioral) • Determine evidences for desired "IMPACT" • Plan Instructions and Processes (academic and technical) • Implement & assess the applicability of the above on sample schools • Evaluate processes for reliability 	<p>Assessment of progress toward objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pupil progress •Teacher performance •Program effectiveness <p>Formal or Informal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Psychomotor Domain •Cognitive Domain •Affective Domain 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Future improvement and adjustments to assessor judgments •Improvement to the assessment tools • Adjusting results of a specific cohort of candidates, prior to finalization of results •Requesting copies of final candidate assessment results
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