



Transforming School Education Role of Teachers



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Transforming School Education: Role of Teachers

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Transforming School Education: Role of Teachers

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Sneha Palit



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Foreword

During the last five years, multiple steps have been taken by the government to ensure the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act; including the formation of State rules, setting up of NCPCR & SCPCRs, recruitment of teachers in some states, infrastructural improvement and awareness generation among communities and so on. However, all these efforts have not been able to successfully transform the situation of school education in India.

The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 will be completing five years of its journey on 31st March, 2015. This date also marks the second deadline for the complete implementation of RTE Act- especially with regards to ensuring the regularization of contractual teachers and training of untrained teachers within the system.

Despite being a country with a large network of public schools (approx. 14, 48, 721 schools) catering to a majority of the children (more than 20 crore), government schools in India currently face a severe neglect by policy-makers and privileged classes. Resultantly, most of the privileged classes have withdrawn from these schools and those who have been left behind are those without any choice. The government schools are underfunded and consequently, over the years, have witnessed a decline in the quality of education. The RTE Act could have been an instrument of change. However, five years have passed and we have not been able to transform our schools into inclusive institutions imparting quality education.

Since the enactment of the Act, the Right To Education Forum has brought together civil society organizations, representatives of different social groups, educationists, teachers association members and government officials together across the country (19 states) and pushed for the implementation of the Act. Moreover, the Forum has taken stock of the implementa-

tion of the Act throughout its existence and regularly released the Annual Report on the Status of Implementation of the RTE Act.

This year (2014-15), the RTE Forum organized conventions in different states across India with the representatives of teachers associations and members of SMCs to find out the grassroots challenges impeding the implementation of RTE Act. The deliberations highlighted multiple challenges that are dangerous for the public system of education in India. Issues like school closure, increasing emergence of unregulated, low-cost private schools, handing over government schools to corporate foundations, increasing number of low paid contractual teachers, untimely disbursement of learning materials, poor PTR were identified as some of the common problems throughout the country.

Although the second deadline for the implementation of the Act was particularly significant for teachers and their challenges, hardly any measures have been taken by the State to recruit more teachers or ensure their welfare. Presently, there is a shortage of 5.7 lakh teachers in India. An additional 6 lakh teachers remain untrained. However, instead of hiring regular and trained teachers, the government is recruiting contractual teachers at a lower salary.

This book is the compilation of all the conventions that were conducted with teachers in the year 2014-15. It highlights the challenges that are being faced by teachers on a day-to-day basis. The book is divided into two segments- the first provides the context and introduces the readers to the thoughts of some eminent educationists in India. The second segment presents a detailed synopsis of the deliberations that took place in the various conventions- along with the recommendations that were presented during the events.



Ambarish Rai
Convener, RTE Forum

PART I



Stop War Against Teachers

*-Krishna Kumar**

India has been at war against its teachers, and it will be a great achievement for the new government if it can bring this war to a halt.

India has been at war against its teachers, and it will be a great achievement for the new government if it can bring this war to a halt. Started in the early 1990s under the cover of fiscal reforms, this war acquired social approval with the passage of time. The state, meanwhile, found many partners who have helped fight the war on its behalf. Gradually, while the war itself has become largely invisible and routinised, the new system it helped establish, both in school level and higher education, has gained widespread acceptance.

I remember meeting a young man and woman last year at Chakki Bank station in Himachal Pradesh. I was waiting for the Jammu Rajdhani and they were waiting for other trains to return, respectively, to Meerut and Varanasi. They were among more than a hundred candidates I had interviewed over the previous three days for two vacancies at the lecturer level at a new central university. The young man had a PhD and was teaching on a contractual basis for a monthly salary of Rs. 21,000. He told me that the 19-member faculty in education at Meerut University had shrunk to 2, and the remaining positions have been

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lying vacant for years. He had attended more than a dozen interviews since completing his PhD a decade ago. He got selected once, but a court case led to the cancellation of the entire process. All over Uttar Pradesh, there were hundreds of vacancies in colleges and universities in which ad hoc teachers were serving for years. The story of the young woman from Varanasi was similar. She too believed that there was a conspiracy to commercialise the entire system. I thought it might console them to know that even at Delhi University; over 4000 teachers are serving on an ad hoc basis.

By the time my train arrived, we had exchanged mutual notes of helplessness over the gloom that pervades higher education in India, wherein teaching has been turned into a vulnerable service industry, the support staff has dwindled, and severe budget cuts have hit libraries and laboratories. These are the two essential resources on which the quality of teaching depends.

The story of school teachers is a bit more complex and it varies from state to state. By the mid-1990s, many states had adopted the 'para' teachers' model of cheap appointments to meet the challenge of universal primary education. Madhya Pradesh went the farthest and paved the way for others in damaging its schools by downgrading the salary and status of all teachers. It declared the old system of permanent teachers as a 'dying cadre', and shifted recruitment to village Panchayats in the name of decentralisation. As years passed by, this policy became firm and political change could not alter it. I recall meeting a senior official in Bhopal in the late 1990s who told me that teaching was no more a career option for young people in MP. He was worried that the new system of recruitment would not attract those with the potential to become dedicated teachers.

The pursuit of the 'para' teacher policy, differently named

and pursued with varying nuances in other states, attracted both criticism and advocacy, but the latter dominated and ultimately prevailed. An atmosphere of disdain towards teachers already existed. The perception that they lead easy-going lives with undeserved emoluments was assiduously cultivated. A national neurosis set in, marked, on the one hand, by the demand for Indian values, which surely include respect for the teachers' dignity, but on the other, by contempt for them. Low-fee private schools and privately-run medical and engineering colleges had demonstrated how teachers could be turned into wage labourers. Management experts, NGOs and shortsighted economic advisers joined the chorus of accountability, linking teachers' income with outcomes defined in terms of test scores. Motley surveys were marshalled to 'prove' that India's children were learning very little despite huge public investments. Despite this empirical approach, albeit with its own problems, the conclusion that teachers are to be blamed was reached with a surprising lack of evidence. That apex bastion of the welfare state, the Planning Commission, smiled and blessed the activist experts who wanted teachers to be paid less and monitored by devices like biometric attendance and CCTVs.

What will it mean to bring the war against teachers to a close? To begin with, it must entail an accurate valuation of the teachers' labour. Unlike the West, both society and state in India today seem convinced that teaching is not a serious professional activity. Who can persuade civil servants and citizens to see a primary school teacher's daily life for what it is - a struggle against all possible odds? Engaging with young children is an exhausting activity, but this idea feels alien to the educated middle classes and education officers. In large cities, class-sizes have swollen since the promulgation of the Right to Education (RTE), leading to great pressure on the physical infrastructure of schools. The RTE Act has laid down a teacher-child ratio of 1:30. This ratio looks like a fantasy under today's circumstances. Official estimates point to a shortfall of more than a million

teachers at the elementary level alone. Where are these teachers to come from and what sort of individuals will they be? Given the plight and capacity of training institutions, many state governments are flirting with the option of distance education, even though a commission appointed by the Supreme Court has stipulated that distance education should only be used for in-service and not initial training. The same commission has recommended that government investment in new training institutions should be urgently enhanced. If the new government at the centre agrees to implement this advice, it will send a positive signal across a sick, hopelessly dysfunctional sector.

In higher education, it will take a lot more effort and will to stop the war against teachers. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has itself to blame for bringing higher education to its present state. It has been fully aware of the radical deterioration of undergraduate education across the country. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) exacerbated the crisis by misguiding central policy into mixing higher with vocational education. Along with the Planning Commission, the NKC endorsed fancy ideas like the four-year undergraduate course that Delhi University (DU) launched last year. The UGC hailed it as a great innovation but ignored the strange fact that DU was willfully depleting its permanent faculty strength even as it was launching an ambitious new degree programme. The UGC is also responsible for turning faculty recruitment into a mechanical calculation using the so-called Academic Performance Indicators (API). This scoring device has deepened the crisis that the UGC's earlier step of starting a shoddily designed National Eligibility Test (NET) had started. These two filtering devices ensure that the best available candidates feel discouraged and stay away from India's higher education system, often deciding to teach abroad instead. And common to higher education and schools, teacher recruitment has become an exercise of crude socio-political engineering. Huge armies of contract - ad hoc -teachers are being politically exploited, both by the ad-

ministration and the leaders of rival groups of teachers themselves. It is a scene that is sordid and chaotic, but difficult to capture in the limited space the media has for education. Instead, only an insignificant indicator garners frequent attention, when we hear how poorly Indian institutions are ranked globally.

Teaching is the heart of education, and that is where the crisis of education has hit India the hardest. The general cynicism towards teachers we see in our social ethos today has its roots in a paradox. As a professional workforce, teachers have low, powerless status. The younger the pupils you teach, the lower your status. On the contrary, ironic homilies reminding us that the nation's future depends on teachers are dutifully recited each Teacher's Day only. In reality, teachers have no place in India's modern economy and urban landscape, with their modest incomes and lack of authority even within their own professional sphere. As for social prestige, even a lower-level civil servant enjoys more recognition and respect, so that we easily conclude that teaching is the last option in the hierarchy of careers. On the other hand, teachers carry the burden of a loud cultural mythology, according to which they are transmitters of values, shapers of young minds, and architects of a new India. This contradictory state of affairs in the public mind highlights how hard it is for the state to restore any dignity to India's teachers. If the state stops the war it started more than two decades ago, the reconstruction of education can start, and we can look forward to a saner planning for the long run. But recovery from the damage inflicted on the education system by the state's war on teachers is hardly easy. Indeed, the decision to bring the war to a close constitutes as major a challenge of political will as does the post-war planning.

Quality Education Role of Professionally Untrained Contract Teachers

*-Prof. Ajit Singh**

1.0 Significance of Basic Education

Education is a basic human right. It nurtures talent and develops human resource. A child without education is a child without future. In modern knowledge economics, education is the key driver of economic growth and social equalizer. It is a means of fighting poverty at all stages and in different contexts. It reduces the vulnerability of the under-privileged population to poverty by providing them with a set of production and livelihood skills. Education can thus, be a lever to start making differences in the lives of the poorest of the poor.

2.0 Quantitative Expansion of Facilities for Education

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Over the period, there has been quantitative expansion of education. The number of primary and upper primary schools in the country has increased manifold. Barring a few very remote and inaccessible areas, there is one primary and one upper primary school within the radius of 1 km and 3 kms respectively from the residence of a child. Thus access to education has increased substantially. As a result, net enrolment ratio in class-I has risen to 90 per cent while 10 per cent of children in the age group 6-14 are still unreached. In India about 30 million children in the age group 6-14 are out of school. Eighty per cent of those who seek admission in class-I complete primary education and the remaining 20 per cent drop out on the way. Of those who complete primary education, some hardly acquire requisite knowledge and skills. Most of those who drop out before completing primary education come from marginalized sections of the society.

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2013-14 highlights that the quality of education is low in India. The report further highlights that even after completing four years of schooling, 90 per cent of children from poorer households remain illiterate. This holds true for around 30 per cent kids from poorer homes despite 5 to 6 years of schooling. There is learning crisis. Mostly children from poorer households are worst hit by this low quality of education. The report also warns that the learning crisis would affect generations of kids if no corrective steps are taken.

3.1 What is meant by Quality of Education?

The term quality of education is difficult to define. It is open to change. Moreover, meaning of quality is different in different contexts and from time to time. Most of the educational thinkers express that quality of educational programmes is best reflected in the learning achievement of students. An eminent scholar opines that since the personality of an individual is shaped by education, the quality of education should be determined by the kind of human it produces.

The increasing presence of private schools in the country has affected the concept of quality. Presently, the main indicator of quality is the students' performance in public examinations. The performance in examinations has become the most crucial indicator for the parents. The obvious reason for this is that admission to institutions of higher learning, say, engineering, medical colleges, etc. depends on that.

4.0 Factors Contributing to Quality Education

There are two main factors contributing to quality education. These are: Quality Learning Environment and Quality Teachers.

Quality Learning Environment

Conducive learning environment in a school is highly essential for learning to take place. Appropriate infrastructure facilities such as adequate number of classrooms, separate functional toilets both for boys and girls, safe drinking water, ad-

equacy of teachers, playground, library, adequacy of teaching-learning material, supply of books to learners on time, electricity, are pre-requisites for quality learning environment in a school.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-(2009) stipulates under Schedule – Norms and Standards for a School that there should be all weather building in a school consisting of -

- At least one class-room for every teacher
- Barrier-free access
- Separate toilets for boys and girls
- Safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children

Besides, teaching-learning equipment shall be provided to each class as required. There shall be a library in each school providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story-books. Play materials, games and sports equipment shall be provided to each class as required.

An existing scenario of infrastructure in government schools, particularly primary schools, depicts a dismal picture. This makes the learning environment in a school highly unconducive for learning to happen. There were on an average 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 classrooms against five classes during 2011-12, 2012-13 and even in 2013-14 respectively. Toilets for boys were not available in 7 per cent per cent schools even during 2013-14. Separate toilets for girls are available in only 80.85 per cent schools. However, percentage of functional toilets both

for boys and girls is very limited. This is because the facility of running water is not available in most of the schools. The percentage of schools having hand washing facility near the toilet/urinal was available in 41.62 per cent schools during 2013-14.

All over the world, the age at which girls hit puberty has been declining over the years. Girls at the age of ten are hitting puberty. In the absence of facility for running water, girls who hit puberty in class IV and V are not able to attend school regularly. Many even drop out before completing primary education. Further, drinking water is available in 94 per cent schools. But only in a limited number of schools, safe drinking water is available. This is because most of the schools use ground water for drinking. But the quality of ground water is hardly tested in any school.

Electricity connection is not available in 48 per cent primary schools. How can children learn when there is no electricity particularly during summer in the northern part of India where temperature rises to 45°C? (NUEPA2014)

Inadequacy of Teachers

Inadequacy of teachers in a school affects adversely the quality of education. The RTE, 2009 stipulates that there shall be at least two teachers in a primary school. Despite this provision, the government has not equipped all primary schools appropriately in this regard. This is because there were 10.80, 11.79 and 11.46 per cent single-teacher primary schools during 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively, (NUEPA, 2014). Further, one million positions of teachers are vacant in the coun-

try. Inadequacy of teachers in schools is denting the quality of education to a great extent.

Regular and Contract Teachers

Quality of teachers is the most important component contributing to education quality. Presently there are two sets of teachers in the system: Regular and contract teachers. Contract teachers are further divided into two categories—professionally trained and professionally untrained. More than 0.6 million are contract teachers. A large number of contract teachers are in government schools particularly in primary schools. Further, the percentage of professionally untrained contract teachers is not declining. This is evident from the Table-1.

Table 1: Percentage of Professionally Untrained Contract Teachers

S. No.	Year	Percentage of Professionally Untrained Teachers
1	2010-11	45.2
2	2011-12	62.2
3	2012-13	49.09
4	2013-14	53.3

The table reveals that even in 2013-14, there were 53.3 per cent professionally untrained contract teachers.

There are certain states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in

which the cadre of regular teachers has been abolished. Only contract teachers who are professionally untrained are appointed. However, in some states like Odisha, Gujarat, Delhi and Maharashtra only professionally trained individuals are appointed as contract teachers.

Contract Teachers and their Teaching-learning Process

Contract Teachers are required to teach and they do teach at different classes. How do they teach? Hardly any empirical study has been conducted to evaluate their quality of teaching-learning process. Generally, it has been observed that they follow a didactic approach in their teaching learning process. They transmit information relating to different subjects and ask their students to memorise the same. They are teaching environmental studies (Science) as they teach environmental studies (Social Studies). It is unbelievable that an individual without having acquired professional knowledge and skills is able to perform his/her professional responsibilities effectively.

A professionally untrained teacher does not know about the different learning styles of children. They do not learn in one way. Children learn in eight different ways as per the theory of multiple intelligences developed by Howard Gardner. Further, these teachers have no knowledge of instructional approaches and strategies such as inquiry training, concept attainment, mind mapping, cooperative learning. For instance, theory of constructivism highlights that each child can con-

struct his/her own knowledge. The task of the teacher is only to create a situation to help his/her students to construct knowledge.

Can an individual without acquiring professional qualification, say degree in medicine and requisite skills treat patients properly and undertake operations? If he/she does so, he/she may not be able to cure his/her patients or even may kill someone. Similarly, if an individual without professional qualifications, say diploma/degree in education and requisite mastery of teaching skills and strategies starts teaching, he/she will not kill any student physically, but is sure to harm them academically. As a result, these students may not acquire requisite knowledge and skills even after a few years of the schooling. Therefore, the existence of professionally untrained teachers is denting the quality of education to a great extent.

Moreover, most of the professionally untrained teachers have been recruited through backdoor. As such they may not be having mastery over different school subjects.

Job insecurity and Poor Remuneration of Contract Teachers

Contract teachers are poorly paid. They get approximately one-third/one-fourth of the salary paid to regular teachers. This demotivates contract teachers to put in their best. This is adversely affecting their performance in the classroom. Besides, they suffer from job insecurity as they are appointed initially for a specified period. Their term of appointment is extended on year-to-year basis. By appointing contract teachers, state

governments are saving a lot of researches. But they are doing so at the cost of quality of education. Mostly, children from marginalized and poorer sections of the society are studying in government schools.

Teaching is a Profession

“Teaching is a profession and not an occupation. A profession is defined as an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary”. (Vollmer and Mills, 1996). A profession is based on a systematic theory which continues to increase with the advancement of knowledge in the field. Further, the practices of a profession are improved on a continuing basis over a period of time. A professional is required to acquire knowledge and skills from the body of theory prevalent in the profession. Acquisition of these skills requires a prior mastery of the theory underlying these skills. Therefore, preparation for a profession involves considerable understanding of the theory and practical training for which each professional has the approval from the government. Each profession has its own code of ethics which the professionals are required to adhere to.

In view of this, no individual can be termed a professional unless he/she has acquired the requisite professional qualifications and skills. An individual appointed on contract basis who is professionally untrained cannot be called a teacher. This is robbing education off its professionalism.

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Professionalism Need for Fostering it among Teachers

*-Ram Pal Singh**

These days everyone wants to become a professional. Many people still think that one can become a professional simply by acquiring professional degree or diploma. Besides, many think that if one does one's job over and over again in his/her life, he/she becomes a professional. This notion is erroneous. This is because simply doing a job over and over again does not make one a professional. These statements raise the issue as to what is professionalism? How a profession differs from an occupation?

1.0 What is Professionalism?

Different people are having different views on this subject. "A profession may perhaps be defined as an occupation, based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary" (Vollmer and Mills, 1996).

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Cogan (1953) defines that “a profession is a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding”. The practices of a profession undergo modification over a period due to advancement of knowledge in the field.

2.0 Elements of Professionalism

Ernest Greenwood identified a few essential elements of professionalism. He maintains that we can distinguish a profession from non-professional occupation with help of certain elements. These elements are:

- A basis of systematic theory;
- Authority recognized by clientele of the professional group;
- Broader community sanction and approval of this authority;
- A code of ethics regulating relations of professional persons with clients and with colleagues; and
- A professional culture sustained by formal professional associations.

2.1 Systematic Body of Theory

Each profession has a systematic body of knowledge. This

body of knowledge increases substantially over the period due to advancement of knowledge in the field on account of continuous research. Non-professional occupations do not have a body of knowledge. The main difference between a profession and non-professional occupation is that the former has superior professional skills than the latter. The performance of a professional service involves a series of complicated operations. For acquiring proficiency in these skills, one requires lengthy training. For instance, a surgeon is required to acquire skills to perform operations.

A professional is required to acquire knowledge and skills from the body of theory of the profession. Acquisition of these skills requires a prior mastery of the theory underlying these skills. Therefore, preparation for a profession involves considerable understanding of the theory. This feature is virtually absent in the training of individuals in non-professional occupations.

Since understating/mastery of the theory is essential for acquiring professional skills, preparation for a profession is both an intellectual and practice experience. On-the-job training through apprenticeship, which is sufficient for a non-professional occupation, becomes inadequate for a profession. An orientation to theory can best be provided through formal education. As such, there are professional schools/colleges. Further, to acquire mastery of theoretical knowledge is more difficult than operational procedures. For instance, it is easier to learn to repair an automobile than to learn the principles of the internal combustion engine.

There are however, certain freelance professional pursuits such as acting, painting, dancing and the likes. In these pursuits, academic preparation is not mandatory. However, , various schools/institutes have come up in these fields over the period. But, these schools/institutes are not running on academic lines. They place more emphasis on practical training than on theory.

2.2 Professional Authority

A non-professional occupation has customers whereas a professional occupation has clients. What is the difference? In a professional relationship, the professional decides what is good or bad for his/her client. The client has no choice but to submit to the professional judgment. This is due to the fact that the client does not have the requisite theoretical knowledge to judge whether the decision/judgment of the professional is right or wrong.

2.3 Sanction of the Community/Government

Every profession wants the community/government to recognize/approve its product. For this purpose, the government constitutes regulatory bodies. The Government of India has set up the National Council for Teacher Education for the maintenance of standards in teacher education. The All India Council for Technical Education has been set up to exercise control over professional colleges/engineering colleges, etc. to maintain standards in technical education.

These regulatory bodies exercise control over courses being run in colleges/institutes/ schools/universities through an accreditation process. By granting or withholding accreditation, regulatory bodies exercise control over the quality of the course(s) being run in an institution. For the purpose, they develop norms in respect of infrastructure facilities, teaching and non-teaching staff, etc. and enforce them effectively. These regulatory bodies prescribe minimum qualifications and experience for different teaching and non-teaching positions. They also prescribe minimum entry requirements for different professional courses. No one is allowed to use a professional title that has not been conferred to him/her. On the other hand, anyone can call himself a carpenter, locksmith, barber, etc. if he feels so qualified. But an individual who assumes the title of a physician, nurse, surgeon, lawyer, or an architect, etc. without having earned it becomes an imposter.

2.4 Regulative Code of Professional Ethics

The monopoly enjoyed by a professional vis-a-vis his/her clients can be abused. A professional may place his/her own interest above the interests of his/her client. To protect the client from the misuse of monopoly by a professional, every profession has a built-in regulative professional code which the members of the profession are required to adhere to.

Codes of professional ethics vary from profession to profession. However, some features of these codes of ethics are common to all the professions. The professional must place

clients' interest above his/her own. The professional must, under all circumstances, provide quality service to his/her client. Again, the professional must be prepared to render his/her services, upon request, even at the sacrifice of his/her convenience.

Adherence to code of professional ethics by members of the profession is achieved through self-discipline and professional associations. Professional organizations exert pressure on their members to adhere to the code of ethics.

Each profession has certain values and ethics. Teaching too has its own set of ethics. Adherence to the professional ethics can contribute significantly to enhancing teachers' status and self-esteem and increasing respect for the profession in the society. In turn, it impacts students' learning outcomes.

The All India Primary Teachers' Federation (AIPTF) has developed a Code of Professional Ethics for its members. The Code specifies desirable behaviours of teachers in relation to students, parents/guardians, society and the nation, profession and colleagues, management and teacher associations.

The AIPTF has published the Code in English, Hindi and other regional languages. It has organised a number of programmes for teachers to sensitise them about different provisions of the Code and to urge them to observe the Code of Professional Ethics in letter and spirit. The AIPTF is continuously exhorting its members to depict the highest degree of ethical conduct in all formal meetings and conferences.

2.5 Professional Culture

All professional organisations generate a professional culture. A professional culture is distinct from a non-professional culture. The culture of a profession comprises of its:

- a) Values
- b) Norms
- c) Symbols

Professional culture includes career concept. The term career is, as a rule, employed only with reference to a professional occupation. We do not talk about the career of a brick-layer or of a mechanic. But we do talk about the career of an architect, teacher, doctor, etc. At the heart of the career concept, is a certain attitude towards work which is peculiarly professional. A career is essentially a calling, a life devoted to good work. Professional work is never viewed solely as a means to an end. It is an end in itself. For instance, curing the ill, and educating the young ones are ends in themselves. A professional performs his/her services primarily for his/her psychic satisfaction and secondarily for the monetary considerations. It is the devotion to the work. The absorption to work is not partial, but complete. The work life invades the after-work life, and the sharp demarcation between the work hours and the leisure hours disappears. To the professional, his/her work becomes his/her life. The same cannot be said of a non-professional occupation.

To succeed in one's chosen profession an individual must make an effective adjustment to the professional culture. Therefore, the transformation of an individual into a professional is essentially an acculturation process wherein he/she internalizes the values, behaviour norms and the symbols of the professional group.

It is however, worthwhile to mention that all those in any profession are not professional. If so, who is a professional? There are certain set standards and behaviours that persons in any profession are expected to exhibit. There are certain expectations from each professional. If a person behaves the way, people expect a professional to behave she/he is accepted as a professional.

3.0 Teaching is a Profession

Considering all the elements mentioned above, it is quite evident that teaching is a profession and not an occupation. Teaching involves thinking and feelings, i.e. head and heart. Those who use their head and heart in helping their students to learn, are highly successful in promoting learning outcomes on the part of their students. Instilling professionalism in teachers goes a long way in fine-tuning teachers' proficiency and thereby, improvement in their classroom processes. This in turn results in better learning outcomes on the part of their students. Thus professionalism in teachers raises the quality of education at all the levels.

4.0 Qualities of a Professional

A professional needs to possess/demonstrate certain qualities. These qualities may somewhat vary from profession to profession. However, some of these qualities are common to all the professions. Mentioned below are some qualities/behaviours that a truly professional, say a teacher, must reflect in his/her behaviour.

Knowledge and skills of her/his profession; commitment to self-improvement of knowledge and skills; pride in the teaching profession; accountability for her/his work; punctuality; proper preparation for teaching; the ability to enjoy her/his work; personal integrity; capacity to work with others with team-spirit/ a good team player; adherence to code of professional ethics; belief that all students can learn; human values; excellence in teaching; sense of responsibility; empathy; commitment to service

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Changing Image and Role of a Teacher

- *Vinay K. Kantha**

Perhaps never in the past ages teachers were faced with so many challenges as they do today. They are still admired and adored by many (at least on some special days!), even though they are bullied and threatened by others in all sorts of ways. They have access to a variety of aids for teaching as never before, and at the same these aids could become their rivals and surrogates. They are not the only- not even the most informed or prolific- source of knowledge any longer. A great variety of information, perhaps knowledge too, can be accessed with a simple click of the mouse. Teaching has become one of the most unenviable professions now, if you look at it as a profession. Fortunately, as always, it continues to be more than just a profession.

Realm of Knowledge and its Production

There was a time when the teacher was considered to be

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the repository of all knowledge and the one who could have distributed it among some, withholding it from others. He was both producer and custodian of knowledge with a large measure of control over its dissemination and distribution. With a series of successive transformations in the society accompanied by important technological and institutional changes in the more recent centuries, the role and status of the teacher has been redefined comprehensively. If technology has made possible instant processing and communication of knowledge crossing barriers of space, then the positive nature of knowledge and the modes of its production have also been affected immeasurably. A different type of knowledge is privileged, which is usually marketable and utilitarian, putting ordinary teacher at a great disadvantage. There are no end to specializations, and the institutional setting of knowledge production has also tended to get special. Much of the knowledge is being produced in research laboratories or research centres now days, where no teaching-work is undertaken. On the other hand there is market for knowledge from the business point of view again precluding a role for the traditional teacher.

Changes in the Role of a Teacher

The role of a teacher has diminished apparently and his status is lowered too. the teacher seems to be displaced from the center of the process of education. The teacher, who was often considered a role model worthy of emulation or a crucial mediator between the learner and the world of knowledge is more of a professional or a paid employee today. Salary enhancement, security of career or improved

service conditions, even if assured, are poor compensations for this immense loss.

Every teacher has to prove himself or herself as no other professional has to. Maybe proving is not the right word, perhaps a teacher has to remain active, vibrant and responsive when interacting with students. He is not mere an instructor, he is a guide and counselor, a reformer of sort. His role is multidimensional, and sometimes, even unpredictable, unforeseeable. However, educationists and managers of educational system have tended to define and redefine his role, sometimes unreasonably. A look at some of the educational experiments and lately at the new legislation on Right to Education (RTE) passed by the Indian Parliament may illustrate the point.

Educational Experiments and Teacher

An increasing tribe of educationists favor a child-centered system of education with an apparently reduced role for the teacher. Rousseau's stress on naturalism induced many later thinkers to work out a different role for the teacher in relation to his pupil. Pestalozzi's pedagogy is emphatically child-centric. Froebel's kindergarten system also looks for a teacher who does not impose himself, rather works towards removal of hindrances to the self development or "self-activity" of the child. Montessori method also emphasizes the child's need to escape from the domination of parent and teacher. Yet in all these pedagogic principles there is an implicit reliance on the teacher, greater perhaps than in the traditional system. The teacher must know the child better, has to be far more sensitive and perceptive and at the same time, will have to be trained up more sys-

tematically to play his new role more purposefully.

Whatever be the suspicion about his potentially oppressive position, no viable alternative arrangement of education has yet been convincingly demonstrated which excludes the teacher or the instructor completely. Friere equated a teacher with an oppressor, prescriber or manipulator of things, but the success of his method too depends critically on the person responsible for the conscientization of the learners, who is apparently some kind of teacher once again.

Teacher at the Receiving End

Teacher is the most maligned figure in the system of education today. He is often blamed for most of the ills of the system. Notwithstanding his pivotal role, his status is lowly in the governmental hierarchy and many types of extraneous tasks are cast upon him, which may include duties relating to census or elections or health programs. He has no say in the policy making. An average teacher especially in a government school, is likely to be a demotivated person incapable of innovations, listless inside the classroom limiting himself to the sole concern of somehow completing the syllabus, almost never taking up any activities beyond what is officially forced upon him. He may have lost all interest in learning or acquisition of new knowledge and skills. He may have developed insensitivity to the child and may have settled into the habit of disciplining the children in his class in a harsh manner. Still no worthwhile change in the system can be effected without his cooperation and support.

The new RTE Act leans heavily on the teacher for its implementation, without, alas, giving any thought of his well being. Nineteen out of thirty eight provisions of the Act (precisely half!) relate to teachers and schools, casting all responsibilities on the weak shoulders of teachers, rather than on the formidable central and state governments. He is supposed to complete the syllabi, as decided by the academic authority, ensure and maintain record of progress of every single child, and do much more without any assurance regarding his service conditions etc. He is a permanent suspect of giving corporal punishment or causing mental trauma to the child learners, and instructed to impart instruction without stress or anxiety to the child. It is true that once in a while a black sheep in the teaching community treats his pupil shabbily or sometimes even causes bodily harm, and possibly their numbers are rising, but the existing guidelines were not considered enough. We expect a lot from him, without giving him much, by way of social recognition or freedom of action.

The question is how to make him play the role scripted for him in any educational planning. It is common to prescribe programs of teacher education, both pre-service and in-service in order to help him develop professional competence. No doubt some of these programs are relevant and can be very useful, especially when properly planned and conducted, but they are by no means sufficient. Kothari report (Year?) had identified four major factors impeding progress, namely, the weakness of the average teacher, the failure to develop proper educational research on teaching methods, the rigidity of the existing educational system, and finally, the failure of the administrative

machinery to bring about a diffusion of new and dynamic methods of teaching. There is not much of perceptible improvement in respect of any of these factors even as there have been occasional ad hoc attempts made now and then. Lately, an added emphasis is being given to the interaction with and support from the community to bring about improvements in the school and that is a good sign, if it does not degenerate into another instrument of oppressing the teacher.

Teacher and Principle of Freedom

Kothari report had rightly stressed the need of elasticity and dynamism in the educational system which, it noted, was contingent upon ‘the freedom of its basic units - the individual pupil in the school, the individual teacher among his colleagues and the individual school (or cluster of schools) within the system to move in a direction or at a pace which is different from that of other similar units within the system without being, unduly hampered by the structure of the system as a whole’. One significant observation made there was that ‘the pupils can rarely be freer than the man and women who teach them.’ It is important to create the right kind of environment for the teacher. In his famous experiment at Yasnaya Polyana School, Leo Tolstoy had laid maximum emphasis on freedom. He once remarked that the only test of pedagogy is freedom and the only method is experience. The principle of freedom applies to the child to begin with and yet it may not bear fruit without a corresponding emphasis on freedom allowed to the teacher.

Given the rigidity of the existing system - which has often

been butt of criticism but never amenable to change in the past, it is difficult to visualize how the ethos of educational administration can change. Yet, what is needed is to harp on the need incessantly so that at some point of time, change, even in some measure, does begin. What is apparently the more manageable area, even if it is often elusive, are the strategies relating to teachers and teachers' education.

Experiences of a Worthwhile Teacher

Despite all the challenges faced by a teacher today, and quite often owing to the challenges themselves, a worthwhile teacher always enjoys teaching. My own experiences as a teacher for over four decades have been most fulfilling and rewarding in more ways than one. It is always refreshing to interact with young minds and the teacher keeps on learning a great deal in the process. Sometimes you have to prepare in advance for lectures, sometimes you would need to think on your feet, inevitably the process of teaching and learning goes hand in hand for both the teachers and learners. It is this extra bit which is the most exciting part of a teacher's life. Transacting a lesson or completing a course is the routine part, the real task lies beyond that - to inspire, to motivate, and to partake in the entire process of making of a personality or shaping of a mind. The true calling of a teacher begins outside classrooms, whether it is the school or the college. If values take shape usually when a child is young, he or she decides his or her place in the world at a higher age, and teachers have a directive larger role vis-à-vis the society rather than some individual children.

A teacher is not mere professional, a larger responsibility is cast upon him and it is impossible for a true teacher to ignore that altogether. In one way or the other, in varying degrees, every teacher worth his salt has to perform that extra role, and that is the excitement and highest reward for him. Finally, every teacher is a perennial student, he has to learn and change, reflect on changes and rediscover himself and his students. Teaching still remains one among the noblest professions, even as a profession.

Why Good Teachers Are a Rarity?

Despite all its aura, even if diminishing, and growing challenges, why are we not getting good teachers today? Why teachers are neither being trained properly, nor treated well? There seems to be a large divergence/mismatch between need, entitlement and demand on the one hand and between demand and supply on the other hand. Market for teachers is the most imperfect. Teachers constitute a highly heterogeneous group, schools vary in terms of facilities and children are from different backgrounds. State is supposed to be a major provider, but there is reluctance on the part of planners and civil servants to give them what they deserve or even their need. The introduction of non-formal education as a replacement of school with low-paid untrained instructors or para-teachers substituting teachers made the matters worse, diluting the role and importance of teaching cadre. In fact in many states the regular cadre of teachers is gradually being wound up with units/posts of teachers being surrendered on any regular teacher superannuating. In Bihar for example regular posts are getting surren-

dered and in their place niyojit shikshaks on fixed pay are being appointed.

Further, the system of accountability is undefined, and attempts to set the parameters of performance measurement end up in degrading the role of teachers, especially his independence and autonomy. Training has become only ritualistic and mechanical. Mere examination and certification are the primary responsibility of teachers, rather than teaching and learning. Their preparation for the job/tasks is inadequate and faulty, so even if they have potential it remains unutilized. Policy makers and educational administrators go on defining and redefining their role ad nauseum, allowing little freedom to innovate or experiment, and yet holding them responsible for the continuous slide down of the system. In the new socio-political context an average teacher does not quite understand how to conduct himself. There are large and conflicting expectations, with little possibility of reward whichever way he goes. His remuneration is often abysmally low, while responsibilities and expectations tend to multiply. Then why should anyone opt for such a thankless job?

Still, while one can think of a teacher without an institution, but not otherwise. We have to think with an open mind about teachers, if we have to change the character and quality of work in school.



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Teacher Involvement in Policy Making for a Successful Reform in Education

*-Dr Poornima M**

Reform measures are part of the society since the time men started living together as a community. In the context of education, reforms are meant to transform the functioning of the schooling system or the way the education system functions. Education reforms are initiated worldwide with the intention of bringing about changes in the education setting and for achieving the goals of education for all. However, the success of such reform measures depends upon many factors. In India, it can be observed that programmes are initiated by the government to make education a reality for all. Goals are set up by the government every 10 years, but the targets are shifted every time. Various schemes like Operation Black Board (OBB), Non

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Formal Education (NFE), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), etc., were launched to promote basic education. Despite such measures, public schools remain weak organisations with ambiguous goals, unclear technologies, uncoordinated activities, and loosely connected structural elements tenuously linked to organisational outcomes (Weick, 1976).

In such a scenario, it is critical to understand, why such measures fail? A meticulous reflection on the efforts taken on the front of education would reveal that the involvement of teachers, who are integral part of the schooling system, is quite limited, when it comes to policy making. In a recent report published by OECD, it has been highlighted that, reform measures in education can work only with the active support of teachers, as they are not only the implementers, but also the architect of change (OECD, 2011). Thus, for any reform measure in education, in order to succeed, the policies and programmes should be bottom up, with active involvement of key players, the teachers in particular. At the same time, there is also a need for strong commitment, involvement and willingness on the part of the teachers too.

Involvement of Teachers in Policy Formulation

Teachers are generally considered as a set of people instrumental in implementing educational policies. Their role in policy making is quite negligible, though in recent years some of the

countries have taken efforts to involve them in policy formulation too. Having the expertise in teaching and having exposed to different children from diverse sections of the society, they in fact are the apt people to design educational policies or programmes, as they have better understanding of the educational needs of children. Understanding that the teachers can also contribute in designing educational reforms, many countries have started to involve them in consultation processes and have constant dialogues with teachers. Institutional arrangements are created by some countries, which serve as a forum for policy development, wherein the legitimate concerns of teachers are recorded and discussed. In Sweden, the Principle of consensus strongly operates and at the central government level, representatives of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the teachers' unions often participate as experts in government committees or consultation groups on school policy (OECD, 2011). In other countries, consultative mechanisms are available which makes constant interaction with teachers and their views are fed into the policy. Such involvement of teachers can be found in the countries of Ireland, Chile, etc. In Ireland, it can be observed that the 'Teaching Council', comprising mainly of registered teachers, based on its research and consultation activities, advises the Minister for Education on issues of teacher supply and a range of other professional matters. Similarly, in Chile it was observed that teachers played a key role in developing a model for teacher evaluation, based on a consultation with the Ministry of Education and Municipalities (OECD, 2014).

Precarious Condition of Teachers in India

Such experiences of other countries show the autonomy enjoyed by teachers both in managing classroom practices and also in voicing their views in crucial decisions. Unfortunately, in India, such consultative mechanism engaging teachers in policy formulation and development is quite dismal. Teachers in India are just expected to be involved in classroom practices. From time to time, they are also expected to carry out census work, survey work or engage in election processes. Thus consultation mechanism is quite weak in India, and teachers' voices rarely reach the policy makers, let alone feeding the voices of teachers in policies.

Further, in India, it can be observed that teachers are usually overloaded with lot of teaching as well as non-teaching activities, which makes their life monotonous. The PROBE report gives a clear picture on the wide range of activities undertaken by teachers. The PROBE catalogues the range of non-teaching tasks that teachers are expected to undertake like "the decennial census, the cattle census, antipoverty schemes, health programmes, literacy campaigns and vote counting" (PROBE, 1999). Right from creating awareness about the use of plastic to the awareness campaign on AIDS it becomes a teacher's duty. This leaves the teachers with little time and hence they are unable to pay full attention to the education of children. The teachers are even made to clean the toilets and in certain government schools the teachers also pool in money from their pockets to pay for the conveyance of school children failing which they drop out from schools leaving the teacher's position in miser-

able condition who becomes answerable to the higher officials when they come for inspecting the schools. Such situations lead to teachers losing interest in their profession creating the problem of teacher absenteeism and so on. The condition of teachers working in the government schools should be improved so as to reach the target of UEE. Further, the creative role that teachers can play in policy formulation should be recognized, rather than treating them as mere executors of the policy of government.

Examples of Teacher Involvement in Educational Initiatives and Policies

This section is based on the views given by teachers, when survey was carried out in Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan¹ on two of their initiatives under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), viz. Activity Based Learning and Rajasthan Education Initiative, respectively. Generally, the teachers expressed the concern that they are hardly consulted in the process of policy formulation. They asserted that, it is just that orders are received from the bureaucrats or higher authorities and the teachers just have to execute such orders.

Tamil Nadu: Involvement of Teachers in Activity Based Learning

¹ *In Tamil Nadu the study was carried out in 2008 and in Rajasthan, the study was carried out in 2012, as part of academic pursuit of the author.*

Breaking the regular school education system with lecture method, a system was evolved in Tamil Nadu called the Activity Based Learning (ABL) in 2006. In order to make education attractive to the school children and to lure the attention of the out-of-school children, the ABL Method was introduced which is an innovation of the Rishi Valley Foundation. The underlying principle is that nothing should be taught to the children by force, which was also stressed by Gandhi whose philosophy is to teach children by play way method. Though this method was an innovative initiative, it hardly captured the interest and attention of the teachers. During the survey, it was revealed by the teachers that they were not aware of the initiative before it could be introduced. It was only after launching it in a formal way the teachers came to know about this method. It was observed that the teachers in the government schools who are used to the lecture method of teaching were interested in maintaining the status quo. They were not flexible enough in accepting the innovation even though it is very easy for both the teacher and the children to follow this method. On the other hand it can be stated that, since such measures failed to build consensus on the part of the teachers, they hardly showed any interest in implementing the same.

Rajasthan: Involvement of Teachers in Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI)

The Rajasthan government in 2005 introduced the Rajasthan Education Initiative, which is an example of Multi-Stakeholder Partnership approach, wherein partners from the private sector and civil society organizations involved with the Government

of Rajasthan, in providing quality education to children. Both ICT and non-ICT interventions such as computer aided learning, interactive radio instruction, quality education, etc. was aimed at, by involving partners such as Microsoft, Intel, Azim Premji Foundation, Education Development Centre, etc. Under this initiative, though various interventions were introduced, the teachers of government schools did not have any awareness on most of the initiatives undertaken. For instance, Interactive Radio instruction was introduced to provide spoken english training to classes I to IV, which was broadcasted by All India Radio. However, during the survey, it was found that the teachers were not very keen in making the children listen to radio programme on spoken English. When teachers were asked about the radio programme, it was the response of majority of the teachers that they do not use it and some admitted that they were not aware of it. Those who knew about such initiative, considered it as a futile exercise and presumed it to be an unwanted programme.

Another initiative under this programme was the adoption of poor running government schools by private players, as part of corporate social responsibility. Again it was found that, in such government schools run by the private player, the government teachers were replaced by private teachers. Though such measure was protested by the teachers, their voices were turned down and the teachers were transferred to other schools.

Thus, in terms of policy making and development, under the programme of REI, it was found that though there is involvement of various partners under REI, only the top level

officials of the state, market and civil society players were involved in policy planning. The teachers, who are the key players in shaping the education system, were never involved in any of the consultations held. Only the direction was given to them from the top level. In fact, most of the teachers who are actually the main implementers were not even aware of the objectives and hence lacked motivation to carry forward the work.

It can thus be observed from the examples cited above that teachers, who have the expertise in teaching and education are distanced from the active involvement of policy formulation.

Conclusion

The target of achieving education for all has been set on the stage both at the international arena, as well the country at the national level. While the Jomtien or the Darkar framework or the Millennium Development Goals talk of providing education for all by 2015, the Right to Education Act of 2009, has set the momentum, to provide free and compulsory education to all children. However, one crucial aspect which is needed for strengthening the education system has been given least importance, which is giving considerable attention to the teachers. Thus, the critical aspects, which are needed for active involvement of teachers in policy making, making the teachers competent and keeping the motivation level high is left loose. On the contrary the teachers are dehumanized, de-professionalized and are overburdened with lot of other works apart from teaching. It has to be understood that policies and

programmes formulated by the government need to have the inputs of teachers, without which, the sustainability of such intervention and effective implementation of the same is a question. Consultation, discussions and dialogues with teachers should be practiced on a regular basis before scaling up a major activity. Thus, any reform measure in order to be successful or effectively implemented, the approach should be bottom up or at least there should be involvement of people who actually implement it.

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TEACHING AS A VOCATION

*-Prof. Amrita Sastry**

Walt Whitman, in his poem ‘An Old Man’s Thought of School’, presents a vignette on teacher’s challenge:

“And these I see, these sparkling eyes,
These stores of mystic meaning, these young lives,
Building, equipping like a fleet of ships, immortal ships,
Soon to sail out the measureless seas’
On the soul’s voyage...”

When mind meets the heart it creates a ‘horizon’ of excellence. When one infuses life into this ‘horizon’, it is the ultimate. Is it really possible? Yes, but only by a Teacher. The nobility, the purity and the discipline associated with this image, the faith, the comfort, the confidence that oozes from this name says it all... and how does he/she manage this? Of course,

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through his/her “Teaching”. The essence of Teaching lies in its austerity and its uniqueness. And this simplicity and dedication of the vocation has attracted me to delve deeply into the problems and possibilities of “teaching as a vocation” in today’s time. And in this context Teacher encompasses the entire gamut of human endeavour and contributes to the growth and development of every individual. But in recent years, the teachers have faced unprecedented challenges to their autonomy, to the validity of any ethical view of “calling”. Today the role of teacher is not assessed by his/her personal qualities and dedication towards the vocation but by the Teacher’s competencies, such as subject expertise, coordination, collaboration, management and supervision. This is the new assigned Social Identity. This gives way to a commodified experience, that is; there is nothing about what makes a quality teacher and these commodified discourse strikes the roots of teacher’s commitment. Many critics have raised questions about whether today’s teachers are up to the job; whether teaching has become a second tier profession for those with no better options and many more. The view of teacher and teaching as a sacred profession has lost its value. Rather in this world of commercial extravaganza the vocation of teaching has become an apology for teaching itself. It has lost its divinity as it is no more acting as a “calling”, because teaching as a profession is no more determined by the choice but by compulsion. This makes me think, that, whether Teaching today is a vocation? Vocation is different from profession. What one does and how one does it are immensely important for ones definition of life project. For example; when we speak of a vocation, we often tend to suggest, that, there is an inner calling and one feels restless to pur-

sue that. It is in this sense that at times we come across, say a poet who would say 'poetry is my life, I can't imagine my existence without poetry' in other words here vocation means passion, intellectual and emotional engagement and a symmetrical relationship between self and the sphere of the world. We do realize that with growing modernization, specialization, fragmentation and alienation, not many find their true vocation. We may have profession but it is not always in tune with inner calling. People can conduct themselves professionally but may not consider their work as a 'calling'. But when a work is regarded as a vocation it derives its identity from an inner motivation that allows one to shape his/her roles rather than merely occupying it. The idea of profession stresses public recognition, greater autonomy and larger rewards; vocation focuses inward to the core. The sense of vocation then finds expression at the cross roads of public obligation and personal fulfilment. Vocation presumes a sense of adventure to engage the world. Thus, teaching as a vocation presumes a hopeful outward looking attitude of devoting oneself to the activities of teaching that stems from the inner urge to venture out and devote oneself to work first hand. In other words, a sense of adventure with all its unpredictability and uncertainty is inherent in the notion of teaching as a vocation. It is in this sense that one has something to contribute, that, one can make a difference and that one can shape the world and not just be shaped by it.

Most of the time, professions are being measured, valued hierarchized on the basis of 'social respectability'; and in our times when market forces become the most driving factor- a close link is often being established between a 'Respectable

Profession' and a 'lucrative financial opportunity'. Under this circumstances, teaching as an engagement suffers. It has neither money nor power in the sense, defined by the system. In today's time God's grace seems to have fallen out with teachers. The Maharishis of Gurukul were once the most sought after bridegrooms. Their knowledge and intelligence was unsurpassed. Indian tradition is witness to the facts of epitomizing and eulogizing teacher and teaching. But the fleeting moments say it all. In the present time our education system has undergone a complete overhaul. Western influence calls for a symbiotic relation between teachers and students. The teacher teaches and is paid for the livelihood. The spirit is on the wane. The entire scenario is aggravated with the inroads made by the forces of Globalization and Liberalization. It has led to unbridled consumerism, killing of local industries in the name of competition and efficiency and arrival of MNCs in a big way in the name of FDI and technology without actual investment in the field of core sectors of economy like roads, power, communication and basic utilities of life and induction of technology in the field of consumer industries only. This is a new era of slavery to borrow the phrase from Nietzsche. Thus in this new era, teaching is no longer regarded as an elite or one can say a 'sort after profession'. The reminiscences from the distant past, when teacher was viewed as 'a perfect' person from all angels, merely bewilder us.

Many sociologists have also reflected on the role of teacher and sociology of education, as a sub discipline examines the social context of learning, and situates educational and pedagogic practices in the wider context of social institutions.

It is therefore, not surprising that sociology of education, deals extensively with the vocation of teaching. There are, some major questions relating to the vocation of teaching which are being raised. What is the relationship between the teacher and the taught and how does one understand this relationship in the context of power dynamics that prevails in an institutional setting of a classroom? How do teachers perceive themselves with reference to other professionals and how does this self-perception affects every day practice of teaching or for that matter how does the larger society look at the vocation of teaching. In this context, I have chosen to reflect on the contributions of Emile Durkheim, Karl Mannheim, and Paulo Freire. We know their timings and contexts were different. Yet, when we look at their contributions one can see a striking commonality. All three assigned immense responsibility to the vocation of teaching. In fact, their works on education, are full of remarkably sharp insights relating to the practice of teaching/ the role that teacher has to play in generating new conscience, bringing about morality and ethics and arousing critical consciousness for transforming the society. In a way in their writings, we see ideals relating to the vocation of teaching.

Emile Durkheim: Teacher as an Agent of Moral Education

Durkheim's intellectual project was to establish Sociology as a legitimate field of enquiry, distinguished analytically from Philosophy and Ethics, whilst by no means devoid of philosophical and moral context in its implications. He was also pre-occupied with the changing basis of social solidarity which in

his views was inextricably intertwined with the social role of norms and values. For Durkheim, it is the society that defines the structure and content of education. Thus, the functionalist approach which Durkheim has used seeks for the social function performed by school as an institution that is to say the part played for promotion and maintenance of social cohesion and social unity. For him society cannot be reduced to parts, as it is independent of individuals. And one of the major role played by the 'schools' as an institution in the society is to make the child realize and internalize the moral power of society. While talking in terms of 'morality' he meant- 'Discipline' and 'Regularity' of conduct and authority. Discipline, here doesn't mean sheer constraint but individuals' need for restraint, enabling the individual to reach the goal. 'Morality' as per Durkheim, "Pre-supposes a certain capacity for behaving similarly under like circumstances and consequently it implies a certain capacity for behaving similarly under like circumstances and consequently it implies a certain ability to develop habits, a certain need for regularity"(Durkheim,1961:27). Thus for developing this morality the 'role of teacher' comes into play. The teacher who has the moral authority. "What there is in the conception of rules beyond the notion of regularity: the idea of authority? By authority we must understand that influence which imposes upon us all the moral power that we acknowledge as superior to us".(1961:27) Here, Durkheim wants to show that, how teacher, helps the child to interpret morality of the society and act as a medium between the larger society and the world of children. He doesn't agree to the fact that this moral education can be imparted in family and eliminates the church as well. Because as per him a sound morality must be found in reason

and revelation. The family is out since the indulgent warmth of kinship ties is incompatible. Thus, the task of moral education develops upon the school and here teacher's role is crucial; as an agent to impart this moral education. Thus, the teacher should be a man of character as it is the teachers' task to discipline the child. "In order to develop in them a taste for discipline, it will not do to impose it by force or to accustom them to it mechanically. The child must come to feel himself what there is in a rule which determines that he should abide by it willingly. In other words, "he must sense the moral authority in the rule which renders it worthy of respect". (1961:154)

The teacher should be decisive and have some will power; and should really feel in himself and authority. But for Durkheim, the source of authority of the teacher doesn't come from physical power with which he is armed but it has a moral character and moral value. This means the authority which punishes itself recognized as legitimate.

Thus, the "Teacher must believe not perhaps in himself or in the superior quality of his intelligence or will, but in his task and the greatness of that task. It is the priest's lofty conception of his mission that gives him the authority that so readily colours his language and bearing. For he speaks in the name of a God, who he feels in himself much closer than the layman in the crowds he addresses... he also is an instrument of great moral reality which surpasses him and with which he communicates more directly than does the child, since it is through his intermediation, that the child communicates with it".(1961:157)

The teacher is like the priest (as he is the interpreter), is the interpreter of great moral ideas of his time and country. The significance and the authority attributed to them, and everything that comes out from him, embodies in the eyes of the children have the tendency to equate the rule with the persona of the teacher. Thus Durkheim's teacher must therefore be committed to presenting it, not as his own person doing but as a moral power superior to him of which he is the instrument not the author. He must make the students understand that it imposes itself on him as it does on them.

Karl Mannheim: Teacher as a Facilitator

His views with regard to sociology of education in Britain in particular, played a significant role in influencing its direction in the first two decades after World War II. To him, it seemed as if the new mood of reconstruction offered a new role for democratic social planning and hence a more central role for sociology. In this context he explained that education must play a central role in shaping a society free of its old, deforming conflicts. Education takes place everywhere in modern times, starting from family, neighbourhood etc to schools.

Mannheim's notion of teacher is a child-centred teacher, who should act as a catalyst. Teacher should be an initiator engaged with the child to understand the world in a better way. And there should be an egalitarian and symmetrical relationship between the teacher and taught. More attention should be given on the children and the way in which they learn. The learning should be not only acquisition of knowledge which

can be recalled and analyzed but a part of the personality whose range goes far beyond what he knows with his intellect. As Mannheim, would say it, “Educating must now represent the richest possible contact between people and the recognition of the relation between persons and the society in which they have grown up. The coat must be cut according to the cloth, but it must also be cut according to the would be wearer”. (Mannheim, 1962:32) While talking about a democratic process, Mannheim says, that, democratic procedures in politics have led to democratic procedures in education, which can be seen both in relation to the rights of men to have educational opportunities with the corresponding compulsion to attend schools. While stating the teacher as an institutional leader in the first, he views that prestige is attaches to the office than to the person. “He is supposed to be the acknowledged superior in the pupil-teacher relationship and authority rests not so much in him as person as in the laws and traditions of his office. Obviously with a successful teacher, the element of personal leadership will grow greater and greater as time passes but this kind of acceptance he has to seek after and to deserve for it entails a presentation of a personality enlarged beyond the classroom and not wholly to be contained within it”. (1962:139) Thus, Mannheim’s faith was equally distributed between the teacher and the student. Here, teacher acted as a facilitator, believing fully on the students’ potential and boosting their self confidence to move along.

Paulo Freire: Teacher as an Emancipator

For him, education is not reducible to a mechanical method

of instruction. Learning is not a quantity of information to be memorized or package of skills to be transferred to students. Classrooms die as intellectual centres when they become delivery systems for lifeless bodies of knowledge. Instead of transferring facts and skills from teacher to students, a Freirian class invites students to think critically about the subject matter.

Freire's teacher is a 'problem poser' who asks thought provoking questions and who encourages students to ask their own questions. Through problem-posing, students learn to question "answers" rather than merely to answer "questions". Thus, in this entire process, students experience education as something they do and not as something done to them. They are not empty vessels to be filled with facts, or vacant bank accounts to fill with deposits from required syllabus. Thus, for him the prevailing educational practices by and large exacerbate the dehumanized state of the world. It is in this context Friere's teacher is acting as a liberator for the student in the dialogic form of education. Freire's famous metaphor for traditional education, the 'banking method', focused on the shifting of creative and critical thought in mass education. In "*banking education*" as Freire said, "Education thus becomes an act of depositing in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and "make deposits" which the students patiently receive memorize and repeat...In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing...The students alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teach-

ers' existence- but unlike the slave they never discover that they educate the teacher...The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.”(Freire, 1972:47)

Thus, as per Paulo Freire, instead of banking education which domesticates students, problem-posing offers a search for knowledge. In this mutual search the teacher and students develop ‘co-intentionally’, that is, mutual intensions, which make the study collectively owned, not the teachers’ sole property. This mutuality helps students and teacher overcome the alienation from each other developed year by year in the traditional banking classrooms; where a one way monologue of teacher-talk silences students.

In banking system, the students develop authority-dependence; they rehearse their futures as passive citizens and workers by learning that education mean listening to teachers, who tell them what to do and what things mean. Rejecting this, Freire gave his notion that is ‘dialogic education’. His pedagogy includes the goal of “critical consciousness”. He is of the opinion that “dialogue” dissocializes students from passivity in the classroom. It challenges their learned anti-intellectualism and authority dependence (that is waiting to be told, what to do and what things mean). It interferes with the student’s silence, submission and sabotage which they learn in traditional classrooms. Freire is insisting upon a rigorous dialogue, the teacher poses problems and ask questions, while encouraging students to do the same. But, the critical teacher who teaches for democracy

and against inequality also has the right and responsibility to put forward his or her ideas. The problem posing teacher is not mute, because he initiates and liberates the students, as the students reflect on the lives they lead, asking questions to discover their meaning and value. They no longer live unreflectively in relation to their lives. Their experiences include a self reflective dimension because of problem posing around generative themes from daily life. With dialogic reflection among their peers, they gain some critical distance on their conditions and can consider how to transform them. This reflective posture is what, Freire calls as an epistemological relationship to reality that is being a critical examiner, questioning and interpreting life and education rather than merely walking through them.

Thus, Freire's teacher, very vividly acknowledge and accepts the true nature of teaching. The student here is an inquisitive learner, questioning everything, wherein the teacher comes as a liberator. So for him knowledge grows not only by dissemination but discussion.

'Teaching' as every thinker has admitted above, is a very challenging and complex activity. Unless one delves deep into the world of teaching and learning at the same time, keeping an alert eye on the teaching learning trends and tendencies particularly related to teacher pupil poignancies of thought and action, the whole world of teaching and learning suffers from utter frustration and disappointment. And it reaches the pinnacle, becomes dull and drab, mechanical and artificial, when it is being wedded to a crazy 'utilitarianism'. Today, the task of

the teacher is not confined simply to transmitting information or even knowledge in the form of a statement of problems, putting the problems into perspective helping the students to link their solutions to broader issues. The 'teacher- taught' relationship aims at the full development of the students' personality with emphasis on self reliance; from the point of view of the authority vested in teachers' is always paradoxical, since it is not based on the pre-cognition of legitimacy of knowledge.

Hope Amidst Despair

But with changing world, the human element of teaching have given way to a commodified experiences and there is nothing about what makes the 'quality' teacher', rapport with the students, enthusiasm in what they are teaching etc. This commodified discourse strikes at the roots of the teacher's commitment – giving a feeling of sickness about how it is all going. In this context, Giddens provides a useful references point when he argues that in current state of 'late' or 'high' modernity as he calls it, global trends impact on the 'self' in unprecedented ways. Much of everyday life used to be based on high degree of trust between people, but now trust is less personalized and more invested in processes and abstract systems. We also live in a culture of high consequences, of risks of global origin, which contains opportunity as well as danger. These developments have in a way have brought about the separation of time and space and disembedding or lifting out of social relation from local contexts and their re-articulation across indefinite tracts of time-space. In educational system, these developments have been reflected in the growth of economic rationalism and

technicism, an emphasis on marketability, efficiency and performativity etc. These processes demand attention as the teachers have been forced to reconsider their beliefs, values, roles, biographies and ambitions in a way, that, they had never anticipated. It can be seen that underlying thread about the educationists' views about teaching, teacher, and teacher-taught relation and over all education is almost same. They all view, teaching in school is more challenging than in colleges or universities, as the formative part of the child's life is spent in school. The child when enters school, has the idea about himself like C.H.Cooley's "Looking Glass Self" that is what others perceive about him. Thus, here, the role of teachers put a deep impact on the entire personality of the student. And this personality base further builds up the super structure. The role of teacher is important in this context of the 'Labelling' the student which in turns helps in larger nation building.

However, teaching as a vocation has not hit the hard ground of destitution. An evident effort is on the way to salvage the 'nobility' of this profession. This effort is often neglected as belonging to the 'twilight zone'. But such people often ignore the fact of life- this twilight evidently and ritually lead to daylight, to a new hope and a new resolution. 'Far away from the madness of the cumbersome trio of Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization the temple bell has started ringing. Genuine warmth for teaching has touched upon certain concerned teachers. They are putting their best foot forward as a matter of contribution to its improvement. In fine, the '*diya*' of teaching is becoming brighter unlike common perception; it does not always come at a price.

“Drops of water make a sea”. An intense reflection and its thoughtful implementation can stir a revolution. It may sound utopian, but the teacher is the stimulant to bring about this knowledge revolution. Teachers form the spine of any knowledge society. This fact needs to be reinforced. No creative man puts rights before duties. For the teachers, duties come before rights. If duties are well performed rights will follow. Not only rights but social esteem and influence will come in the wake of self-less and enlightened pursuit of the mission of transforming the society. Thinking mind and an enduring personality can make for a good teacher.

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PART II

Overview

Teachers and Communities are important stakeholders directly responsible for making every school a place for societal integration, inclusiveness and quality learning. The RTE Act, 2009 has recognized their roles and responsibilities in its different sections. The first deadline for the implementation of RTE Act has passed in March, 2013 and second deadline focused on regularization of teacher's and teacher training is coming to an end in March 2015. However, not more than 10% schools are presently fulfilling the important provisions of the Act.

While the duties of the teacher have been explicitly outlined in the RTE Act, little thought has been given to their welfare. Grievance redressal mechanism for teachers is still very weak and there is hardly any place where they can go to- with their own set of problems. Moreover, there is hardly any systemic support provided to them. There is still multiple evidence that suggests textbooks and learning materials still don't reach the classroom on time (that is, at the beginning of the academic year), infrastructure and teacher unavailability leading to many single teacher schools in the country continue to exist, contract teachers who teach the same number of hours but are paid less and not provided any training despite provisions for teacher

training and vacancies for recruitment.

The situation of the teachers, frontline workers of the RTE Act, has worsened over the years. The biggest problem faced by them, that is also shifting their focus away from teaching, is the amount of spent on doing non-academic work. On account of their daily interaction with the community, they have become the sole recipients' of most of the blame that is currently directed towards the system at large. Resultantly, the relationship between the teacher and the community (traditionally held in high regard) has diminished over the years and is currently characterized by absolute distrust (on part of the community towards the teacher) and angst (by the teachers towards the community). The direct outcome of this failed relationship is the total absence of dialogues, discussions and joint initiatives that are required at the micro-level, to make the school fully functional.

On the other hand, School Management Committees (SMC) under Section 21 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides a unique opportunity to people to take direct ownership of their local schools by becoming a part of the planning and monitoring process. Based on the premise that parents are one of the biggest stakeholders within the education system, with direct incentives to see a fully functional school, the RTE Act mandates the creation of SMCs as the basic unit of decentralized governance for the education system (at the community level); entrusting the SMC with the task of planning, implementing and monitoring the school and its related activities.

While the actual composition and functioning of the SMCs varies across states, generally guided by state notifications and guidelines, broadly it is composed of parents, teacher, head-teachers and local officials. As per the RTE Act, the primary responsibilities of the SMCs include- ensuring the proper utilization of funds provided to the school, preparation/ providing recommendations of School Development Plans, monitoring the functioning of the school- checking infrastructural provisions like functional toilets, keeping a watch on teacher absenteeism, checking mid-day meal provision and so on

Despite clearly defined roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders within the framework of the RTE Act, the implementation of the Act is fraught with multiple challenges, especially with respect to micro-level functioning. The situation is further exacerbated by the absolute lack of synergies at the community level, especially among the different stakeholders imparted with the responsibility to efficiently implement the RTE Act.

While notifications have been issued in most of the states regarding the guidelines for the creation of the SMCs, stage two of the implementation process: checking whether the SMCs have truly been formed (or not) through fair election processes; and stage three: ensuring the smooth functioning of SMCs- as per state guidelines, still remains a challenging task. A glaring problem with the recently published data by the MHRD is that it attaches a percentage point to the number of schools in which SMCs have been created, a figure hardly indicative of anything concrete. For example, it suggests that SMCs have been

constituted in 88% of the schools in India. However, election processes, participation, membership, membership selection, SMC functioning, frequency of the meetings, agenda and discussion points, still remain questionable with hardly any evidence to make any claims. The identity of the body that was envisioned to provide a common platform to the parents as well as teachers for mutual discussion of school related issues has been greatly compromised in the process. There is plentiful evidence pointing to the absolute lack of awareness regarding the functions of SMCs (often among SMC members). There are instances where SMCs have been created and names have been nominated for membership without the knowledge of the parents.

Taking note of the present situation with respect to different stakeholders: what their envisioned role was (as per the RTE Act) and what is actually happening, it was felt that a common stage needs to be provided to the stakeholders at every level, starting from the grassroots to the National level, wherein they can come together and jointly discuss issues of common concern. Therefore, workshops were organized by National RTE Forum in collaboration with various other organizations at Bhubaneswar (29th and 30th of July, 2014), Patna (10th to 11th May, 2014), Ranchi (12th May, 2014), New Delhi (20th October, 2014) and Dehradun (15th February) to understand the concerns and challenges encompassing the efficacious implementation of Right to Education from the perspective of the teachers and to discuss the collective role of teachers and SMC in school development. The events saw participation of esteemed dignitaries including teachers and representatives of various civil society organizations.

Bihar

The success of elementary education is determined by two crucial educational indices — high enrolment ratio and low dropout rate. The performance on these two indices, in turn, is mostly influenced by the availability of educational facilities like schools, teachers etc. This is particularly important for the state like Bihar where most of the families dwell in rural areas and depend on government schools for their educational needs.

According to the Economic Survey (2013-14) of Government of Bihar, the total number of primary and upper primary schools in Bihar rose to 68,323 in 2010-11, from 67,865 in 2007-08. During this period, many primary schools have been upgraded to upper primary school. The Student-Teacher ratio is an important indicator of quality education. The number of teachers needs to be increased with the growth in enrolment ratio. In 2010 -11, taking together primary and upper primary, this ratio was 59. Bihar has improved significantly in this regard during last few years, but the ratio is still high compared to the norm set in the Right to Education (RTE) Act. The number of teachers at primary and upper primary schools rose to 3.38 lakhs in 2010-11, from 3.19 lakhs in 2007-08. The annual growth rate in primary enrolment in Bihar was 2.6 percent

during 2007-08 to 2011-12.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a flagship programme of the central government to ensure the universalization of elementary education for the children in the age group of 6-14. It is jointly funded by the central and state government with a share of 65:35 respectively. To ensure education for all, among other, SSA include objectives like capacity building of teachers and providing adequate number of teachers and bringing teacher - student ratio to the desired level. Bihar Government targets for the Teacher Pupil Ratio in Elementary Education: 40:1 based on enrolment and 30:1 based on attendance by 2017.

Bihar is the least performing state as far the progress against key inputs of SSA is concerned, which includes teacher appointment, teacher training (20 days), teacher recruitment, 20 days annual in-service training and induction training of teachers. The women enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment in a State is the lowest in Bihar (24.50%).

The teacher, who was often considered a role model worthy of emulation or a crucial mediator between the learner and the world of knowledge is more of a professional or a paid employee today. His role apparently has diminished and his status too is lowered. He seems to be displaced from the center of the process of education. Salary enhancement, security of career or improved service conditions, if any, are poor compensations for the loss. In fact increasingly, even such compensations are being denied to him.

Every teacher has to prove himself or herself as no other

professional has to. Maybe proving is not the right word, perhaps a teacher has to remain active, vibrant and responsive when interacting with students. He is no mere instructor; he is a guide and counselor, a reformer of sort. His role is multidimensional, and sometimes, even unpredictable, unforeseeable. However, educationists and managers of educational system have tended to define and redefine his role, sometimes unreasonably.

Still teacher is the most maligned figure in the system of education to-day, often blamed for most of the ills of the system. Notwithstanding his pivotal role, his status is lowly in the governmental hierarchy and many types of extraneous tasks are cast upon him which may include duties relating to census or elections or health programs. He has no say in the policy making. An average teacher especially in a government school, is likely to be a demotivated person incapable of innovations, listless inside the classroom limiting himself to the sole concern of somehow completing the syllabus, almost never taking up any activities beyond what is officially forced upon him. He may have lost all interest in learning or acquisition of new knowledge and skills. He may have developed insensitivity to the child and may have settled into the habit of disciplining the children in his class in a harsh manner. Still no worthwhile change in the system can be effected without his cooperation and support.

The new RTE Act leans heavily on the teacher for its implementation, without, alas, giving any thought of his well being. Nineteen out of thirty eight provisions of the Act (precisely half!) relate to teachers and schools, casting all responsibilities

on the weak shoulders of teachers, rather than on the formidable central and state governments. He is supposed to complete the syllabi, as decided by an academic authority, ensure and maintain record of progress of every single child, and do much more without any assurance regarding his service conditions etc. He is a permanent suspect of giving corporal punishment or causing mental trauma to the child learners, and instructed to impart instruction without stress or anxiety to the child. It is true that once in a while a black sheep in the teaching community treats his pupil shabbily or sometimes even causes bodily harm, but the existing guidelines were not considered enough. We expect a lot from him, without giving him much, by way of social recognition or freedom of action.

Yet in all fairness teachers will need to do a self introspection, because their failure is writ large. If the education system does not work, the major part of blame has to be laid at his door. He may have legitimate grievances against the system or about the policies or service conditions, but nothing can explain adequately or justify his own failure in respect of children. His defaults are unconscionable, and he has a role in finding ways to correct the situation.

Given the problems as outlined above and the fact of sharp deterioration in the quality of education, particularly in schools, it is imperative to take a hard look at the role and performance of teachers, discuss them in depth and seek the ways to remedy the situation. Thus, a two days' consultation meeting on the issues of Teacher was held at Patna Bihar on 10th to 11th May, 2014. Prof. Daisy Narain welcomed the participants,

among them school teachers constituted a majority, followed by academicians and social activists.

Mr. Kedar Pandey, MLC, a former teacher and the General Secretary of Bihar Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh began the discussion by observing that while on one side a lot of extra responsibility is given to the teachers, on the other side administration has no faith in them. The question now is to save his/her identity as a teacher. He believed that desire to become a teacher is necessary qualification, and yet a good teacher should prepare for the class. Willingness to become a teacher is an important pre-requisite. Unfortunately there are people among us who are too impatient, who want everything overnight, but are not willing to go and teach honestly inside class rooms. There are many who are oblivious to their social responsibilities, which are no less important than teaching children. More so perhaps because we are living in a difficult period of history, for which a new discourse is required.

Dr. Janaki Rajan laid stress on the contemporary relevance of “Nai Talim”. Teacher cannot be viewed as ordinary government servants even today, when they are the frontline soldiers of RTE Act. Dr Rajan pointed out that in the fifties all children would attend the same school, which was a government school, but they were all from the middle class. Today more children go to schools and a system of private schools has come up, which is increasingly preferred by the middle class. Government schools were both neglected and demonized, and now large number of government schools is being closed, as more and more children are diverting away. The situation calls for

examination and corrective strategies. She also drew attention to the problems arising out of liberalization, recruitment of para-teachers and lack of linkage of school education with higher education.

Mr. Ambarish Rai raised the issue of common school system and felt that the law deliberately ignores it, as the State seems to show a preference for corporate control over schools. Since school is essentially a place for socialization, privatization will be counterproductive. He reminded the participants that about three fourths of our children still study in government schools, and it is important to check their deterioration. But the government does not appear to be serious even about the implementation of an Act which is rather unambitious in its approach. This gives credence to a doubt that there is a hidden agenda to dismantle the public system of education and promote marketisation in its place.

Mr. Daya Ram, who was in the chair during the second session, started by briefly outlining some salient points. He referred to Mckenzie Report which came some years ago to highlight the emerging educational market in India. The Report had assessed the size of market to about 20 billion USD. This is a stark reality that cannot be wished away. So the real challenge is how to counter such rapid privatization. However, it remains true that our education system is not doing well, and so it needs to be proved that they can do well. Among other things, this calls for a more effective recruitment policy and better service conditions of teachers.

Mr. Galib with his long association with BGVS brought into discussion the social aspects of school education, as education should be basically a process of reconstruction of society. That is why social consciousness and social process are important in this context. He, therefore, emphasized on ideological orientation of teachers and the educational system.

Mr. Rabindra Singh of AISTA raised the issue of teachers' dual salary structure and irregular payments. He suggested that an assessment should be made regarding the minimum requirement of a family to run a household and ensure at least that teachers are not given a salary below that. While even a SAP Jawan gets around fifteen-sixteen thousand in addition to his pension, how do we expect a teacher to run his family in a lower salary, more so when even this is not paid in time on a monthly basis. Mr Singh regretted that old Associations have not effectively taken up the case of niyojit shikshak.

Dr Janaki Rajan reiterated a point raised earlier that ideological ramifications of education cannot be ignored. We have to keep in mind what kind of future we are going to hand over to our next generation. In fact teachers need to unlearn and relearn in the light of new emerging realities in education and there is no short-cut. Regarding the pre-Service training of teachers Dr Rajan laid emphasis on three things, namely, curiosity to learn, free debate and respect for children. We should not see children as toys, but their individuality needs to be respected. In different parts of world four years pre-service training is fairly common now, and we should also increase its duration. Without practice training is of little value. Further, in place of

over emphasis on psychological theory of learning and development, it should be combined with sociological foundations, while philosophy of education will still remain relevant. It is time to go beyond Bloom's taxonomy and encourage innovations by teachers.

Ajay Choubey, an educationist from Delhi, discussed some theoretical issues of education and emphasized on the need of demolishing many earlier myths. He believed that teaching is a process and it is erroneous to think merely about cadre of teachers. Earlier teachers took pride in their work and enjoyed greater freedom. With the introduction of a mechanical model of accountability, a possible middle class conspiracy, teachers are being seen as problems. Their self image, a component of their identity has acquired negativity. Critique, however, is necessary because that can help explore possibilities as well, a process adopted by Friere in his theory of conscientization.

Dr. Gyandeo Mani Tripathi drew attention to the neglect of teachers' training for full fourteen years in Bihar. Lately, large numbers of B.Ed colleges are opening in the private sector and the State is also promoting training colleges for elementary school teachers. But regarding these colleges particularly the private ones, the less said the better. They are established only to award degrees and earn money. He recalled the famous story of Premchand Idgah and averred that education can be well explained by the learnings of Hamid in the story- observation of burning of hand leading up to buying of a chimta , dilemma faced by a child and its resolution. He said that today there is a need that everyone should learn and move ahead. Teachers

should find ways and means for innovation in the context of local needs and specific requirements of the learners.

Prof Daisy Narain extended the discussion to include issues relating to higher education. This was important at least for two reasons. First, because elementary education cannot be separated from secondary and higher education, they are all organically linked, affecting one another. Secondly, teacher education is a task taken up in the tertiary sector of education. That is why the malaise of higher education will inevitably flow into elementary education as well.

A lot of discussion followed the key presentations in different sessions. About 40 teachers participated and presented their viewpoints forcefully. Apart from the issues raised above, several new suggestions were given or new dimensions were added to the debate. Some of these are mentioned here.

i. Sustaining and strengthening Public system of education- It was strongly advocated by all participants that in view of the constitutional mandate, social implication of universal school education and inherent problems of privatization of basic education, it is necessary to sustain and strengthen the public system of education. State is duty bound to provide adequate finances for their upkeep and it should be ensured through public vigil.

ii. Quality improvement in govt. schools- It is imperative to work for quality improvement in schools today, but the concept of quality has to be properly understood in the light of

ideas of past thinkers and educationists. Accordingly it will need to be broadened and enlarged, going beyond the contemporary prescriptions and measurements. Strategies for quality improvements can be worked out accordingly, taking into account the larger and longer educational discourse. However, some of the factors and facilities which influence quality and are included in the basic infrastructural requirements of a school in the RTE Act, will have to be addressed. These are desirable, and almost necessary in the contemporary context, but not sufficient.

iii. Teachers remain the key players in school education- Without support of teachers it is not possible to ensure quality of education, hence the need of right kind of recruitment process, decent emoluments & service conditions and effective training. System of para-teachers, or dual pay structures for teachers must stop forthwith, while allowing them to take up the full responsibility, needless to add that this has to go with their accountability to the children. Indeed teachers and parents need to come together to help the child realise her potential, which is neither limited, nor uniform, and can be best judged by child, parents and teachers collectively. Teachers are easy targets for an attack on the system and are held responsible for its ills. From the high pedestal where they were perched, they have come down to become a low level government functionary, who can be deputed for odd jobs, and criticised for the weaknesses in the schools. Media is often unfavorable, all too ready to ridicule them. Such an attitude towards them needs to be combated today. At the same time they have to become more pro-active to mull over the problems of system, analyse them as intellectuals and devise strategies to rectify the wrongs and

introduce new ideas for betterment. They should be encouraged to put their own experiences to use to make strategies realistic and workable without losing sight of larger goal of good education.

iv. System of training needs revamping- Both pre-service and in-service training programmes have become largely ritualistic, and need a complete overhaul. The duration of pre-service training should be longer, and must be grounded in reality and combined with adequate practice of class room transactions. Personal qualities of teachers, including sensitivity to the child and awareness of social responsibilities have to be developed along with professional skills of teaching and domain knowledge. A good teacher will contribute to the ongoing debates and researches on education, and will devise his/her own strategies for teaching and interaction with children. While we need more pre-service training institutions in states like Bihar, it is even more important to ensure quality of training in these institutions. Some pace-setting State institutions will be necessarily needed for the same with full autonomy, and regulatory mechanism comprising teachers, members of civil society and officials will have to be put in place to prevent crass commercialization.

v. Civil society must come forward and join hands with teachers- Schools should forge links with society as envisaged in NCF 2005, while civil society should come forward to ensure that the government schools are running well. School Management Committee is one mechanism provided in the Act, their federations will be effective social groups, while teachers

associations and citizens groups can be created at different level to extend support to the cause of teachers and education. If the State is reluctant to work for the betterment of government schools in the context of increasing privatization and parental preferences, campaigns and movement can also become desirable as children of the poor still depend on government schools and commercialization can introduce several distortions in education.

vi. Change of mindset and enhancement of teachers' capacity- In the interest of teachers as a class and society at large, citizenry and teachers should join hands. Unfortunately, at the ground level teachers generally resent the involvement of citizens and social organizations, taking it to be unnecessary interference. Government functionaries and orders come first for them, even after realizing that they are superfluous, unrealistic and unimplementable. They are reluctant to take any risks through innovations or experimentations, because machinery neither allows them, nor reposes trust or faith in the teachers. This calls for a change in the mindset, especially of the teachers, because for quality education or guarding the interest of teachers this has become very important now. However, teachers have to fulfill their own responsibilities well. They should not only enhance their capacity, but also deliver quality education to the best of their ability to win the confidence of parents and society.

The two days' consultation came to a close with a resolve to continue with deliberations and attempt innovations locally in all kinds of ways. Teachers' Associations should also prepare their plan of action for themselves and institutions.

Jharkhand

Over the years, Jharkhand has shown improvement in the field of education. The government of the state has taken up several initiatives for enhancing the academic standard and literacy rate of the state. There are 17,304 existing primary schools (including the upper primary and secondary schools with primary sections) in the state, which, given the low population density (338 persons per sq km) and vast geographical area (79,714 sq km) with plateaux, hills, forests and undulating lands, is woefully inadequate. Each of the primary schools on average caters to an area of 4.6 sq km

An important issue is the shortage of teacher which needs to be addressed. In Jharkhand alone, there are 5700 single teacher schools. Poor financial condition of the families generally forces the students to drop out of schools at the primary level. Apart from this, there are several other socio-cultural reasons responsible for school drop outs. The inadequacy in the number of schools along with the poor number of teachers per school adds to the severity of the problem of the primary schooling system.

According to latest official estimates, Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) at the elementary level is at present 41, which is below the SSA norms of 30 for primary level and 35 for upper pri-

mary level. There are 29,624 vacancies for government teachers in elementary schools. The vacancy for para-teachers is even higher at 41,516. But according to the survey done by LEADS (Life Education & Development Support), Ranchi, data reflects that the PTR ratio is 66:1. Alarming, 65% teachers (both regular and para- teachers) are not aware of the Right to Education Act, 2009. This just shows the discrepancies in data - government data states that 92% schools in Jharkhand have availability of water but survey undertaken by LEADS shows that only 65% schools have facility for drinking water.

Scheduled tribe children are particularly at a disadvantage as education is not imparted in their mother tongue. All the tribal children being taught by non-tribal teachers says that they understand little of what the teacher teaches. It is imperative for the Government of Jharkhand to implement the policy of imparting education in the mother tongue at the primary school level to both enhance the learning of young children and maintain linguistic diversity in the state. The state government is planning to recruit teachers through an examination to teach in 18 languages in various districts of the state. The languages are Kurukh, Kharia, Santhali, Mundari, Bhumij, Ho, Asur, Birhor, Malto, Kurmali, Nagpuri, Panch Pargana, Kortha, Bangla, Odia, Bhojpuri, Maghi, and Angika.

Given the problems outlined above, it is imperative to jointly introspect the role of teachers and the challenges faced by them in the context of the RTE Act, 2009 to overcome the challenge of deteriorating quality and devise mechanisms to revitalize the education system in the state. Thus, a Consultation was or-

ganized in Ranchi on 12th May, 2014 to understand the concerns and challenges encompassing the efficacious implementation of Right to Education from the perspective of the teachers, specifically in the Jharkhand scenario. The consultation included a session in which people working on RTE shared their experiences, problems and hindrances as well as a session of group discussion on the major issues related to education, based on which recommendations were given by the groups. The event saw participation of esteemed dignitaries including teachers and representatives of various civil society organizations.

Mr. Madhukar, Salahkar Sampadak, Khabar Mantra, shared his views in the context of the educational status of Jharkhand and raised his concerns on several burning issues of Jharkhand. He stated that shortage of teachers is a major problem faced by Jharkhand and lack of sufficient and qualified teachers is a cause of concern. According to RTE act 25% seats in private schools has to be reserved for marginalized people in the vicinity, but it is hardly implemented in Jharkhand. Books and uniforms are provided free of cost in government school, but its disbursement is not done timely. He further highlighted that the dropout rate of SCs and STs in Jharkhand is 27% and analyzed that in such a scenario, the implementation of RTE Act is not possible. He regretted that the government of Jharkhand does not seem to be in favour of providing education to deprived people of the society and thus recommended that teachers, union and civil society should work together to solve this problem.

Mr. Ambarish Rai, Convener, National RTE Forum, shared

his experiences on the implementation of the RTE Act and raised attention to the attitude of teachers in the implementation of RTE Act. Initially, the teachers refused to support RTE Act, as they felt that the Act was formed to overburden them. Highlighting on the issue of privatization of education sector, he explained that because of poor quality of government schools, people who could afford send their wards to private schools. The market of education sector is about 3 trillion dollars and the government is thinking to privatize the education sector. And thus, the corporate sector has an eye on government schools and they try to take over it and replace the teachers with professionals.

Ms. Sneha Palit, Research Coordinator, Right to Education (RTE) Forum, gave an overview of the current status of implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. She stated that since the implementation of the RTE Act, 43, 668 schools, 7, 00, 460 classrooms, 5, 46, 513 toilets and 34, 671 drinking water facilities have been made available in schools across India. The number of schools that fulfils the RTE norms increased from 38.9% to 45.3% Moreover, as per DISE data, 88.37% schools now have SMCs and 28 states have successfully completed the revision of their curricula, in line with the NCF, 2005. She reiterated that the last deadline (March, 2015) for the complete implementation of the RTE Act, 2009 is soon approaching. However, multiple problems continue to plague the education system. For example, 5 lakh teacher posts remain vacant, 6.6 lakh teachers remain untrained and currently, 11.79% schools in the country are single teacher schools. 59.67% children are enrolled in primary schools that fail the PTR norms or in other words,

60% children are enrolled in primary schools that fail to adhere to the PTR norms of 1:27.

In Jharkhand, 65% secondary education is privatized and only 20% children are going to government schools. The percentage of children going to government school is gradually decreasing. Further, he stated that the objective of the RTE Act was to bring together children from all segments and form submissive society. Though, the government data shows that RTE Act has been implemented in most of the states, but the survey conducted by RTE forum reveals a different picture. There are only 8% schools as per compliance with the RTE Act. He concluded by stating that teachers play an important role to save the public system because the dependency of poor children's education and future is on government schools. Hence teachers have to come forward and prove themselves in front of the government by making their schools a model school or else this will go into private hands.

Prof. Ramesh Sharan, HOD, Dept. of Economics, Ranchi University, expressed his view on the status of teachers. While the teachers of olden days used to be committed to their work and were torch bearers, the teachers at present are more focused on procuring their pay and are busy with strike for increment and promotion. He further raised concerns on the non-teaching activities performed by teachers and brought to light the differences in salary of the regular and para teachers, which creates discrepancy between them. He said that in spite of pumping huge money to government schools, the quality of education and school infrastructure has not improved much. He un-

derlined that the private schools are constructed in the government land and thus avail all the government services. He concluded his remarks by stating that, the status of government schools will improve when the bureaucrats send their children to government schools.

Mr. Parshuram Tiwary, Chief State Coordinator, JRPSS, made a comparison of the commitment of teachers in earlier days and that of the present day. The teachers of earlier days earned self-respect and had internal consciousness towards their responsibilities. Thus if standards of schools are raised by inculcating quality education, there would be more crowd in schools. Further, he stressed his attention on the sloppy attitude of the government, for carelessly making announcements for teaching posts without knowing the actual requirements. When the requirement was for 1,25,000 teachers, vacancy was announced only for 18,000 posts. Further, he emphasized on the attitude of parents towards the education of children and said that parents show no seriousness in getting admission for their children. While sharing his concern on the status of missing children in Jharkhand, he highlighted that 335 children are missing, 33000 are being trafficked and 47000 are engaged in child labour as per government data.

Mr. Rishikesh Pathak from Jharkhand Para Shikshak Sangha (JPSS) highlighted the difficulties faced by para- teachers in Jharkhand. He stated that although para-teachers have become the backbone of the government schools (Jharkhand has more para-teachers than permanent teachers), when the para- teachers ask for equality in terms of wages, their voice is suppressed

and demands neglected. He stated that the work conditions of para-teachers are extremely poor. They are recruited in excessively low wages and their working hours are not discussed during their recruitment. Although they work equal number of hours as compared to regular staff, they face disparity in treatment at almost every level. He recommended that the government should provide them equal wages. They have been undergoing training as per government norms since the last two years and some have even passed the TET. Thus, they are as efficient as permanent teachers and hence should be regularized urgently.

Ms. Ranjana Singh, Member of JSCPCR (Jharkhand State Commission for Protection of Child Rights) highlighted the different types of schools that are presently functioning in the state. She stated that they are four types of schools as per the RTE Act. In addition, schools are categorized as tribal schools, non residential, minority schools and schools run by NCLP (National Child Labour Project). Accordingly, the salary of teachers differs, as per their schools. There is no uniformity. In fact, despite similar types of resources being available in government schools, the salary of teachers vary. It must be noted that if the teachers are active, schools are automatically efficient and the quality of learning is automatically high. Therefore, teachers cannot be neglected. However, presently, there is growing number of incidences where the teachers do not follow the norms as per the RTE Act, 2009. They are often found to fake attendance rates. Despite getting all kinds of training, teachers lack the discipline that is required which in turn is reflected in their flawed performances. As a result, most of the children leave government schools and become child labourers.

She further added that the SDP plan is often ignored by the BEEO (Block Elementary Education Office). Despite provisions for bottom-up planning, the plans that are prepared by the BEEO are implemented. This leads to a situation of helplessness among the SMC members and local requirements of the school are often neglected. There is a big confusion between private and minority schools and proper benchmarks have to be set in place to distinguish between the two. Despite 25% of the seats being reserved for poor children, the unit cost of reimbursement has not been decided. As a result, the provision is not being implemented properly.

Mr. Vinod Tiwary, President, JPSS (Jharkhand Para Siksha Sangha) stated that poor children can only afford education at government schools. Their parents cannot send the children to private schools. The government schools are their only source of hope and hence, the responsibility of the teacher in government schools is immense. The current status of massive shortage of teachers presents a gloomy picture. It is time people accept the important role played by para-teachers in schools. Today, schools cannot function without them. Initially, the para teachers were asked to identify those children who were not going to schools and bring them back within the education system. However, later on, they were asked to work till 2 pm in schools. As the shortage of regular teachers increased, the para-teachers were asked to take full time classes. However, despite teaching full-time, para teachers are only paid ₹6000 while regular teachers get 40,000.

Mr. Binay Pattnaik, Education Specialist, UNICEF stressed

on the importance of teachers union and stated that the representatives of the Union can directly talk to the government. They can connect the SMC and government together. The teachers have to come together with parents and members of the community to tackle child marriage, child trafficking, child labour, migration and violence. He stated that the responsibility of RTE compliance is in the hands of the teachers union. He highlighted some of the achievements of Jharkhand in comparison to other states. As compared to other states, the cooperation from the SMC is much better. Despite the unavailability of books, in few districts of Jharkhand teachers and SMC created book banks. In these banks, old books are collected and are given to the students when the book is not delivered on time by the government. In Jharkhand there are 250 schools complaint with the RTE norms and both teachers union and civil society people support each other. ICE materials of Jharkhand are much better than other states.

The panel discussion was followed by an interactive session and group work activities. The participants were divided into nine groups and given topics. They were asked to write the major challenges faced in the given areas and give appropriate recommendations.

Group 1: School Management Committee (SMC)

Challenges	Recommendations
Lack of coordination and cooperation among teachers and SMC	Friendly environment in school and village
Irregular SMC members in meeting	There should be transparency among teachers, SMC and parents

Low interest level among SMC members and unawareness	Realization of SMC about their duty.
Selection process of SMC members are not done properly	The selection process of SMC members should be done by meeting in gram sabha. The training of SMC members should be done after paddy cultivation.

Group 2: Learning level of children

Challenges	Recommendations
Language problem	In class 1 & 2 regional teachers should be recruited
Regular attendance of both teachers and student	Books should be published in local language
Friendly environment for students school	Strengthening of AWC
Regular training of teachers	Coordination between teachers and students
Teachers engagement in non teaching activities	SMC member should be felicitated for their good work
Gender inequality in teaching staff	Play way teaching method
	50:50 male & female teachers in schools
	There should be one teacher for every class

Group 3: Administrative Hurdles

Challenges	Recommendations
From the department verbal orders are passed.	Written order should be given by the departments
Interdepartmental coordination is missing	SMC should be capacitated on their role and responsibilities.
Involvement of teachers in non teaching activities.	There must be will power and availability of resources for strengthening SMC
SMC are not capacitated and there is lack of knowledge given among them	Teachers should be not be financial transaction works so that they can focus only in proving quality education.
Time consuming and harassment by department for meagre works.	
	Teachers rationalization in state
	There should be proper coordination among the BDO,BEEO,DSE,MO
	Make government officials sensitive on educational issues and society
	In decision making body teachers union and organization working on education e.g LEADS should be incorporated

Group 4: Training Needs and Government Plan

Challenges	Recommendations
Non functioning of CCE	Teachers should be properly trained on CCE and proper implementation of CCE
Teachers are not trained according to new syllabus	Proper orientation of teachers and academic calendar should be published for teachers
Lack of quality training	Quality trainers should be appointed for teachers training
Lack of training materials	There must be good budget for training of teachers
	Quality materials should be provided to teachers.

Group 5: Teachers Union and Media

Challenges	Recommendations
Corruption in media and only profit making	Media should highlight the news with transparency so that there are chances of improvement.
Lack of transparency by media	Media should not expect and ask for money to releasing any news.

Transforming School Education: Role of Teachers

Media is taking money for releasing the news	They should cover the good school and teachers performing good.
There is no coverage by media at the grass root level.	Media and NGO should come up jointly for educational issues and work in coordination and cooperation.

Group 6: Privatization of school

Challenges	Recommendations
If school will be go in the hand of private sector then 60% children will be detached from education.	Community should be made aware about the demerits of privatization.
There will be ample space for Mafia interfere in education system.	Promotion of pressure group.
The culture of nation will be at stake	
Unemployment will increase	
Education will become distant dream for common mass	
The foreign culture will spread	
Due to inequality inner war will start	

Group 7: Community and School

Challenges	Recommendations
Lack of coordination	There is a need of capacity building of SMC
Lack of co ordination between CSOs/RTE forum and teachers union	Regular consultation for improvement in quality education between CSOs/RTE forum and teachers union
Internal disputes among teachers union	Document good practices and share it school and national level
There is no co ordination between schools and NGOs at grass root level	Design strategic plan for teachers development and teachers education
Students and teacher association is not in a good position	
Insensitive for education	There should be meeting with parents for increasing their participation.
Poverty	New formation of SMC
Engagement of girl child in household chores	

Odisha

Teachers and Communities are important stakeholders directly responsible for making every school a place for societal integration, inclusiveness and quality learning. The RTE Act, 2009 has recognized their roles and responsibilities in its different sections. However, the first deadline for the implementation of RTE Act has passed in March, 2013 and second deadline focused on regularization of teacher's and teacher training is coming to an end in March 2015. However, not more than 10% schools are presently fulfilling the important provisions of the Act.

According to the Economic Survey of the State of Odisha, during 2012-13, there were 55,329 functional Primary Schools/ sections (Government and Local Bodies-51,655 Government Aided -468 and Un-aided private/others schools -3,206) in the state with 1.35 lakh teachers and 43.41 lakh students. Position of Primary School teachers has increased marginally over 2011-12. In 2012-13, there was a primary school per 2.8 sq. km on an average. The average teacher pupil ratio which was 1:30 in 2011-12 has increased to 1:28 in 2012-13, is better than the national norm of 1:40.

Due to sustained efforts of the Government, the number of upper primary schools/ sections increased to 24,234 with 53.8

thousands teachers and 20.81 lakh enrolment by the end of 2012-13. Elementary education made visible strides in last seven years between 2005-06 and 2012-13. The pupil-teacher ratio fell sharply from 38.68 to 26.95 during the same period. Under the Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan (SSA), 1,37,823 teachers have been trained to enhance the knowledge in various subjects. To attain universalisation of secondary education, 9,614 qualified teachers have been engaged on contact basis to maintain pupil-Teacher ratio in secondary schools. 609 contract teachers who have completed 6 years of satisfactory service have been regularized. 1,702 contractual teachers are appointed for existing Government / non- Government high schools.

The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha regulates various types of examinations. These include high school examination, teachers' certification, Hindi teachers' certification and the certificate course for physical education. There are 78 (63 elementary and 15 Secondary level) Teachers Education Institutions (TEIs) under S&ME Department. By the end of 2012-13, 478 teachers and existing staff of DTET (Directorate of Technical Education & Training) are deployed in these 78 TEIs.

While the duties of the teacher have been explicitly outlined in the RTE Act, little thought has been given to their welfare. Grievance redressal mechanism for teachers is still very weak and there is hardly any place where they can go to- with their own set of problems. Moreover, there is hardly any systemic support provided to them. There is still multiple evidence that suggests textbooks and learning materials still don't reach

the classroom on time (that is, at the beginning of the academic year), infrastructure and teacher unavailability leading to many single teacher schools in the country continue to exist, contract teachers who teach the same number of hours but are paid less and not provided any training despite provisions for teacher training and vacancies for recruitment.

The situation of the teachers, frontline workers of the RTE Act, has worsened over the years. The biggest problem faced by them, that is also shifting their focus away from teaching, is the amount of spent on doing non- academic work. On account of their daily interaction with the community, they have become the sole recipients' of most of the blame that is currently directed towards the system at large. Resultantly, the relationship between the teacher and the community (traditionally held in high regard) has diminished over the years and is currently characterized by absolute distrust (on part of the community towards the teacher) and angst (by the teachers towards the community). The direct outcome of this failed relationship is the total absence of dialogues, discussions and joint initiatives that are required at the micro-level, to make the school fully functional.

On the other hand, School Management Committees (SMC) under Section 21 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides a unique opportunity to people to take direct ownership of their local schools by becoming a part of the planning and monitoring process. Based on the premise that parents are one of the biggest stakeholders within the education system, with direct incentives to see a fully functional

school, the RTE Act mandates the creation of SMCs as the basic unit of decentralized governance for the education system (at the community level); entrusting the SMC with the task of planning, implementing and monitoring the school and its related activities.

While the actual composition and functioning of the SMCs varies across states, generally guided by state notifications and guidelines, broadly it is composed of parents, teacher, head-teachers and local officials. As per the RTE Act, the primary responsibilities of the SMCs include- ensuring the proper utilization of funds provided to the school, preparation/ providing recommendations of School Development Plans, monitoring the functioning of the school- checking infrastructural provisions like functional toilets, keeping a watch on teacher absenteeism, checking mid-day meal provision and so on

Despite clearly defined roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders within the framework of the RTE Act, the implementation of the Act is fraught with multiple challenges, especially with respect to micro-level functioning. The situation is further exacerbated by the absolute lack of synergies at the community level, especially among the different stakeholders imparted with the responsibility to efficiently implement the RTE Act.

While notifications have been issued in most of the states regarding the guidelines for the creation of the SMCs, stage two of the implementation process: checking whether the SMCs have truly been formed (or not) through fair election processes;

and stage three: ensuring the smooth functioning of SMCs- as per state guidelines, still remains a challenging task. A glaring problem with the recently published data by the MHRD is that it attaches a percentage point to the number of schools in which SMCs have been created, a figure hardly indicative of anything concrete. For example, it suggests that SMCs have been constituted in 88% of the schools in India. However, election processes, participation, membership, membership selection, SMC functioning, frequency of the meetings, agenda and discussion points, still remain questionable with hardly any evidence to make any claims. The identity of the body that was envisioned to provide a common platform to the parents as well as teachers for mutual discussion of school related issues has been greatly compromised in the process. There is plentiful evidence pointing to the absolute lack of awareness regarding the functions of SMCs (often among SMC members). There are instances where SMCs have been created and names have been nominated for membership without the knowledge of the parents.

Taking note of the present situation with respect to different stakeholders: what their envisioned role was (as per the RTE Act) and what is actually happening, it was felt that a common stage needs to be provided to the stakeholders at every level, starting from the grassroots to the National level, wherein they can come together and jointly discuss issues of common concern. Therefore, a workshop on Collective Role of Teachers and SMC in School Development was organized by National RTE Forum in Collaboration with AUPTF and Odisha RTE Forum on 29th and 30th of July, 2014, at Bhubaneswar,

with around 140 participants.

Mr. Ambarish Rai, Convener, RTE Forum raised his concern about the present state of non-implementation of RTE Act in India. It is a matter of concern that there are only 10% RTE compliant schools in India at present and government schools have miserably failed to attract children into schools. As a result parents are attracted towards private schools. Both central and state Governments are careless while planning education and their focus is more on model schools which cater to a particular group of children and their number is very less. Government is spending huge money (more than 10 times expenditure from general schools) for running central schools, but it is reluctant to spend money in general schools which creates disparity in the society.

Prof. Anita Rampal from University of Delhi, who spoke about the 'Transformative Agency of Teachers: In School and Society', said that teachers must come to the profession by choice not by compulsion. In some countries like Sweden, Cuba, Chile, Finland and other Scandinavian countries, the best students come to the teaching profession. In Japan, Korea, Cuba, teaching is given most importance. We hear that teachers build the nation, but we don't see that. They lack the required will-power enthusiasm. She shared that Yash Pal Committee said that the children are not drop-outs, they are push-outs. They have been pushed-out by the system. Children are suffering because teachers are not available. When teachers were asked about this they said they are not adequately paid for their work. They are no-doubt building the nation but when it comes to

remuneration, they are being discriminated against. So even if we talk about increased enrolment, increased attendance, no actual progress takes place. According to Prof. Ram Pal, a vigilant attitude of the community members can ensure quality education to our children. Teacher can create best out of every student. Motivation comes from a teacher's praise. Terms like bright student or slow student should be banned. Equal treatment should be given to each and every student. Every student should be equal in the eyes of a teacher. Enrichment classes should be given more priority than remedial classes. The standard of all schools should be at par with Kendriya Vidyalaya. The parents should have faith in the child and not in any private organisation. Further, discussing about the issue of language and education she remarked that a policy has been made for tribal people. They'll learn tribal language first, then Odia, then any other language subject. The schools should not allow their students to memorise or write continuously. The phonetic should be given more emphasis. The only medium of learning a language is by understanding it. And there is no relation of the number of years and the excellence in a subject. All that matters is how you learn and, therefore, a lot of thought should be put to decide the right language.

Mr. Debi Prasad Mishra, Minister of Schools and Mass Education started with a positive note that government will try to reach children of all sections of the society. Whatever suggestions will come from this consultation, they will try to implement them. He informed to the house that SMC guidelines have been revised and will be implemented soon. Efforts have been made to involve community, PRI and other in the management

of the schools.

Mr. Kanhu Charan Mohanty, Secretary, AUPTF spoke about the challenges faced by teachers after the enactment of RTE Act, 2009. He said that the Government only appoints teachers on contractual basis and there is salary discrimination. Teachers have been engaged in activities such as MDM management, purchase of uniform, construction of school building etc. Besides, they have to maintain a number of records and teachers get very less time for teaching and overall improvement of schools. Instead of giving importance to the existing government schools, Govt. is giving much priority for the opening up of 100 model schools

Dr. Mohit Mohan Mohanty, Former Director, SIEMAT, gave a presentation on the challenges faced by the teachers in Odisha, especially with respect to systemic hurdles. He explained that a teacher should be reflective, qualifications do not mean everything and there should be an active thinking process in the teachers. Abiding by the given rules is not the ultimate limit. Every teacher should think of every child as unique and employ different methods of teaching for different students. In Odisha, teaching has become the last resort. Those who had other aspirations but couldn't achieve them, they became teachers. So the challenge here is teachers' training. There should be proper training and monthly experience sharing meetings. For all new things that come to light, they should be shared through the monthly meetings. There should be "peer learning" and meetings per month for encouragements. When national level meetings are held, there is a lot of enthusiasm but

everything is back to square one. No one actually bothers about the training of such teachers. If a good teacher is not trained well, who'll help to develop the education of a student? The syllabus should be upgraded too. Exchange of experience between teachers would help in problem solving and finding of new methods. But every decision is made at the central level and is handed down to the teachers.

Dr. Uday Nath Dash, Former Professor of Psychology, Delhi and Utkal University discussed what reading means, what are the basic reading skills and a few basic considerations. He explicated that teaching is a profession that teaches all other professions. Development must yield outcomes at the individual level. Intervention in post 67 years of independence, we have not yielded desired results. A possibility could be that we do not know the right methods, despite having good intentions and commitment. So, to improve our level, we must have common system of education; have an educational planning 20-30 years ahead. There should be integration of book view, field view, and file view of development. The top down and bottom up must always tally. While listening and reading are receptive language skills and can be done at home, speaking and writing are expressive language skills to be done formally in schools. And education through mother tongue is the best method. The teaching should be pictorially driven, inductive, de-contextualised, as the learner is more important than the learning process itself. There should be attention to all minor and major details. If a student faces problem in learning to read, teacher should promote the basic readiness skills. (if I can't learn the way you teach, teach me the way I learn...!) Not help-

ing a child to learn violates constitutional rights.

Dr. Manmatha Kundu, Former Chairman, NCTE talked about the challenges to learning: availability of learning materials and maintained that there is a lack of quality materials and he located loopholes in the Odia Primer, prepared by DPEP (District Primary Education Programme). He criticized the book saying that activity related teaching cannot be done with such low quality texts. There is tremendous difference between the materials and methods of the past. The people who created such books were not classroom teachers. We need creative thinkers to write a textbook. Transactional aspects are to be taken care of during experimentations while writing a textbook. Odisha has a lack of opportunities and therefore teachers should protest together to bring about changes in the system.

Mr. Pravat Sutar, Chairman, KDF presented the major issues contributing to the improper working of the SMCs in Odisha. He first explained the structure of the SMCs and gave a few rules regarding the processes of member selection of the SMC. He showed that the tribal people of Keonjhar and Sundargarh were still not aware of the SMC program and reiterated the importance of tribal representation as essential so as to maximize the effective working of SMC; considering 58% of the Govt. Schools are located in rural areas. He emphasized on the value of evaluations, saying that mid-term evaluation reports were very important in the development of the government schools. He also talked about the SSS - School Support Scheme, saying that anyone could help in the betterment of a school by giving donations to the concerned headmaster. But

he also subtly remarked that if donations were made, the donating party can never claim any use of the school belongings or premises for his personal usage and that the governing bodies will take annual reports of the proper working of this system.

Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, former professor, JNU, and founder chairman, NMRC, talked about the Importance of MLE (Multi-Lingual Education) and challenges in implementation. Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) has been started by the Govt. of India to help with the language problem of the students and to improve the efficient working of the teachers. It will be made available only in schools where 100% of the students belong to one language background. The Mother tongue language (ML) was the only language that a child, right from birth, was bound to be perfectly accustomed with because he learnt the language by “listening, looking, repeating and associating” at home. Therefore, if he was taught in the same language from class 1-5, he could actually do better in his class. Those who study in their mother tongue do well than those who study in other languages. Those who can't understand lose interest and 50% of them drop out. As India has multiple languages, there is a tussle as to who'll study in what language and many people think that as Hindi is the national language of the country, it must be given primary importance. But actually that's not the case. There is no national language in India. He said that knowing a lot of languages will help in the development of a child. When question arose as to how to make students learn multiple languages, he replied that more emphasis should be given to the child's mother tongue. Also if a child learned in mother tongue for 1st

five years, he could easily learn another language like English and his level would be equal to an English medium student. But if one language is developed, another will go ahead as well. Both can't be learnt with equal finesse. But as the government system is not tallying with the actual number of schools where MLE is being given, the number is only 45 compared to the 544 schools originally planned by the government. Also the ratio of students and teachers should be 27:1 as per govt. policy, which is also not followed.

As a conclusion, Mr. Anil Pradhan asked the teachers and SMC members to unite in the fight for education, saying that if the power of these two forces combined, the demands of RTE Forum would become stronger and the Government will be forced to meet their justified demands. He also talked about the most crucial problem of privatization saying that 60% of the schools in Kerala have already been privatized and that 90% of people in Odisha were still dependent on government schools. If the remaining schools are privatized, the demand and value of both government jobs and government teachers will decline tremendously. Therefore, the goal of the SMC and teachers should be to find ways to increase the student strength in government schools.

We have a great weapon in the form of RTE and we must act intelligently to put an end to the diversities and disparities.

Delhi

Perhaps never in the past ages teachers were faced with so many challenges as they do today. They are still admired and adored by many (at least on some special days!), even as they are bullied and threatened by others in all sorts of ways. They have access to a variety of aids for teaching as never before, and the same aids could become their rivals and surrogates. They are not the only- not even the most informed or prolific-source of knowledge any longer. A great variety of information, perhaps knowledge too, can be accessed with a simple click of the mouse. Teaching has become one of the most unenviable professions now, if you look at it as a profession. Fortunately, as always, it continues to be more than a simple profession. Once both a producer and custodian of knowledge with a large measure of control over this dissemination and distribution, he has lost that privileged status. There are specializations no end, technology has a pervasive presence and the institutional setting of knowledge production has also tended to get special. Much of the knowledge is being produced in research laboratories or research centres where no teaching work is undertaken. On the other hand, a different type of knowledge is privileged, and there is market for knowledge from the business point of view precluding a role for the traditional teacher.

Education system in Delhi comprises of government, gov-

ernment aided and private institutions of which 40 percent belongs to government. There is a tremendous pressure on the education system to provide quality education at affordable price and improve literacy rate. In 2010-11, Delhi had 2613 Primary schools (including Pre-primary Schools), 588 Middle schools, 248 Secondary schools and 1392 Senior Secondary schools.

It has been more than four years since the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 on 1st April, 2010. The first deadline for the implementation of this Act has passed in March, 2013 and now we are heading towards the second deadline on March, 2015- related to the regularization and training of teachers- as per the provisions of Act, 2009. Undoubtedly, teachers play an essential role and are centric to the entire education process. Though the RTE Act explicitly provides for the minimum qualifications and responsibilities of the teachers under Section 23 of the Act, its implementation is marred at the micro level with variations at regional and district level.

Teacher training institutes all over the country (including Delhi) continue to remain in a bad shape. In Delhi, around 9000 posts of primary teachers are still vacant. However, guest teachers continue to be appointed by the government in clear violation of RTE Act, 2009. In fact, the appointment of teachers on contractual basis with indefinite and low salary has become a countrywide phenomenon which in addition to exploitation of teachers is adversely affecting the quality of education in schools.

It's astonishing to see the lack of any substantial efforts on

the part of the State to build an adequate support system for the teachers along with a child- friendly learning environment. Unfortunately, today teachers' position is exalted only on occasions like teachers day etc. Most often, they are seen as paid employees or professionals; and no longer considered repository of knowledge. Teachers continue to be the centre of blame for multiple issues ranging from children's admission to retention, poor performances; lack of quality and increasing drop-outs.

The experiential journey into schools and discussions with the parents or guardian on the poor learning levels highlight the inability and incapacity of the teachers to deliver effectively in the class, their absence from their classroom and their pervasive engagement in non-academic and non productive work. What fails to generate attention are the overcrowded classrooms or classrooms with students of multiple grades merged together in one, to fill the staff shortage. Almost a blame game is evidenced where the administrators are found criticizing the teachers for their insensitivity towards the children, teachers blaming the educational system and the one-sided RTE Act, 2009 for their misfortunes, and parents blaming both the system and teachers for playing foul with their children dreams and future.

Since the teachers come from varied basic educational qualifications and background (for e.g. DIETs, private teacher training institutes and distance mode of education), they often lack adequate exposure to the classroom process in schools. Moreover, they lack the necessary managerial skills, attitudes and behaviors needed for child-friendly and innovative classroom

processes. This problem gets exacerbated further when technical support institutes are dysfunctional, marred by delays in the appointment of requisite faculty and fail to provide the inputs and support mechanisms required to strengthen the system.

Given the problems outlined above and the looming challenge of a sharply deteriorating quality of education, particularly at the primary and elementary level, it is imperative to jointly introspect the role of teachers and the challenges faced by them in the context of the RTE Act, 2009 to overcome the challenge of deteriorating quality and devise mechanisms to revitalize the public education system in India. Thus, a Consultation was organized in New Delhi 20th October, 2014, to understand the concerns and challenges encompassing the efficacious implementation of Right to Education from the perspective of the teachers, specifically in the Delhi scenario, which saw participation of esteemed dignitaries including teachers of South, North and East Delhi Municipal Corporation and representatives of various civil society organizations.

At the outset of the session, Mr. Sudhir Bhatnagar CEO, Society For All Round Development (SARD), compared the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, to a weapon which ought to be functional in ensuring education for all and asserted that it is marked with lots of inherent challenges which need to be addressed. He raised the issue of mergers and closures of schools which tend to have negative implications on the access to education infrastructure. Though there have been pervasive talks on the mainstreaming of chil-

dren as well as enhancing the levels of learning outcome of the children and building schools of model excellence, very little have been contributed to the capacity building measures of the teachers. While observing the variety of technical training institutions, both private as well as government, he criticized the lack of quality infrastructure of such institutions which cannot be described as “State of the art”. Hence, merely blaming teachers is not a solution. Therefore, he affirmed that such an event of consultation is an earnest attempt to provide a platform to the teachers and other stakeholders to coordinate and integrate their efforts towards optimal utilization of resources and improve the overall quality of education system.

Mr. Ambarish Rai, Convenor, National RTE Forum emphasized that such workshop is an attempt to bring forth certain key issues amongst the teachers who are not only the citizens but key stakeholders in ensuring quality education forward in the country. He highlighted the second deadline of March 2015 which requires training and recruitment of contractual teachers as regular teachers and stated that there are almost 6 lakh contractual teachers (19,500 contract or temporary teachers employed in Delhi government schools) and almost 5 lakh vacancies (in Delhi Municipal Corporation Schools, 1290 posts of primary teachers, 283 posts of nursery teachers and 978 posts of special educators are vacant which are targeted to be filled by March 2015). He identified privatization as a challenge to the education system and exemplified that there is a proposal to hand over 55 schools of South Delhi Municipal Corporation to some corporate giant for a lease period of 15 years to ensure quality education in the government

schools. This privatization has resulted in establishing social hierarchy in Indian education system. Now-a-days, schools are earmarked as schools of rich and government schools for poor children. He urged that the 7 million teachers should unite against this privatization of education and save the Public System of Education. Additionally, he mentioned that one such model of Public system of education was the Common Schools System as envisioned by the Kothari Commission in 1966 which was never implemented. He warned the teachers about the upcoming threat of mergers and closure of schools which has resulted in to major flouting of the convention of having a neighborhood school within the radius of 1km and has forced school children to go up to the distance of 3 to 5 km for acquiring their primary education. He admitted that there are inherent gaps in the act as it fails to address the issue of Pre Primary education and absence of any committed provision for minimum financial allocation for education. He concluded with a note that education is a tool for making human being and it cannot be reduced to a mere instrument to measure the learning of child in language and mathematics. Hence he stressed on the solvent that universalization of education should be placed on the political agenda for its effective implementation.

In the keynote address delivered by Mr. Santosh Panda, Chairman, National Council for Teacher Education, he submitted that education is essential for promotion of egalitarian society and to nurture human beings. He emphasized that there is a need to study and propose innovative reforms in RTE act, beyond 2015 that can ensure effective functioning of the education system in a sustainable manner. Thus, while expressing

his opinion he proposed certain changes like the need to prioritize and ensure permanent and good quality teachers with changes in the Degrees at the Bachelors/Masters/Diploma in Education as well as revision of the Diploma in Physical education. Additionally he proposed that there should be six months compulsory internship for teachers with a focus on continued Professional Development. He also advocated that Physical education should be included in the RTE. Further, he stressed on the need for a content /context and subject specific pedagogy in the curriculum along with professional and environment ethics amongst the teachers and the efficient use of Information and Communication Technology in learning processes. There is a need for tracking and monitoring of each student with an efficient assessment mechanism in place. Finally, enhancement of understanding and hands on application on CCE need to be ingrained in Teachers training along with blending of proper teaching methodology -either face to face or net based teacher training.

Mr. Alisher Umarov, Programme Specialist in Education, UNESCO-New Delhi, initiated with stating that Good Teachers are costly but bad teachers cost mostly. He highlighted that India is not a signatory of Convention on Status of Teachers, hence there is urgent need to create a conducive environment where India could sign the Convention. This convention will provide to create a platform that could bring forward the voice of teachers. He established “systemic change” as the essential requirement for the current education system of India and sought concrete actions for teachers. He discussed best practices of education systems across different developing countries that

need to consolidated and disseminated for ensuring quality education system.

While discussing education as a political agenda, Mr. R.C. Dabbas, General Secretary All Delhi Teachers Prathamik Sangh discussed about the issues related to planning and management in the education system. He expressed that the system is mis-managed from the grass-root level to the planning level, in the divisions of infrastructure development as well as curriculum development of schools. He suggested that teachers and parents should be politically united to raise their voice about issues related to mismanagement of the education system.

Mr. Manish Sisodia, Former Education Minister of Delhi, discussed the importance of education and emphasized that the aim of deliverance of education in the current Indian society is preparation of human resource. He stressed on the need to empower teachers which cannot be a mere wishful thinking, thus concrete steps need to be taken like giving a platform to voice their opinion and ask question against the challenges they face in their schools to the concerned officers. He further highlighted that changes are required in Delhi Education Act 1973 and the controversy around 'no detention policy' needs to be addressed.

In the next speech, delivered by an esteemed Educationist, Mr. Dayaram, he expressed the need to ponder why our schools are not functioning well. He expressed that there is a disconnect between teachers and the society and the key responsibility for ensuring school readiness and preparedness lies on the teachers, parents and society to unite politically. While express-

ing his opinion he proposed certain recommendations like integration between teaching and learning, better relation between teachers, parents and society with a change in the attitude of teachers towards SMC and No Detention policy. There is a need to customize the training for first generation learners and parents in order to bring more value addition in training. Moreover, there is an urgent need to increase the budget allocation and its prioritization in the Teacher's Union agenda.

Mr. Jaisram Kaim in his speech introduced another dimension of the challenges and expressed the importance of small family size and mass media intervention. He also expressed that mere appointment of teachers does not determine effective teaching standards. There is a need to clarify the meaning of "child centered approach" as well as there a need for an intensive selection procedure of the teachers.

Finally, Professor Dubey identified the teachers as the most vital players of the economy as the driver of the education system and Ms. Angela Taneja expressed the urgent need to effectively implement RTE act to prevent further privatization of school education.

Uttarakhand

Development of any nation and society is dependent upon its education infrastructure and primary education acts as the base which further feeds students to secondary and higher secondary levels. All over the world, education is viewed as the medium to scale new heights of development and creation of a new and just society based on progressive and scientific values. But evidently inequality in access to education is causing hindrance in producing qualitative change in our society

Right to Free and compulsory Education Act, 2009, has come up as a guarantee to provide reforms in our education sector and thus extend quality education to all. But lack of will power and inappropriate allocation of financial resources, RTE, even after 5 years of introduction, could not be implemented effectively. Till now only 10% schools are compliant of the RTE norms. Away from the important recommendation of Kothari commission to allocate 6% of GDP to education sector, not more than 3.5% is being allocated. Moreover, despite of a deadline prescribed by the RTE act, 12 lakh posts of teachers are vacant throughout the country. This is leading to appointment of teachers at lowers salary and remunerations and even appointment of temporary and contractual teachers in place

of regular trained teachers. Further, there is an overall lack of quality in Teachers Training Institutions among which 90% are privately owned and managed. Therefore, for ensuring quality education the role of teachers cannot be undermined and the issue of poor training facility needs to be highlighted in public domain.

Uttarakhand has been the centre of education since the ancient times. Workplace of Dronacharya and composition of Meghdoot by Kalidas indicates this. Today, some of the best private educational institutes of India are located in Dehradun, Nainital and Mussoorie which are still the preferred choices when it comes to school education. But the other side of the picture of the education infrastructure of the mountainous state, i.e. the government schools, is foggy. With the advent of globalization and liberalization, the phenomenon of privatization of education sector has escalated, thus has cornered our public education system and is posing new challenges for the disadvantaged sections of the society.

According to latest official estimates, in the 13 districts of the state, number of Government Schools (Primary and upper Primary) in Uttarakhand are 20300 with 72540 teachers. Among these schools, the number of schools having single teacher are 3129 with 94240 students. Moreover, the number of schools having single classroom are 348 where 9599 students of standard 1 to 8 study.

According to Uttarakhand Annual Plan 2013-14, the cost of service delivery in Education sector in Uttarakhand is al-

most 2 to 3 times than the national average. The cost per child is highest in Uttarakhand (₹16,881/- p.a. per child) as compared to any other state. Reimbursement of fees paid to the Private Schools for 25 % students admitted under RTE is placing a heavy burden on the State. Moreover, with drastic reduction in SSA funding, implementation of RTE has suffered a lot.

Given the problems outlined above, it is imperative to jointly introspect the role of teachers and the challenges faced by them in the context of the RTE Act, 2009 to overcome the challenge of deteriorating quality and devise mechanisms to revitalize the education system in the state. Thus, Uttarakhand RTE Forum and National RTE Forum recently organized a one day State Convention on RTE with the support of UNICEF on 15th February, 2015. The theme of the Convention was Right to Education and Role of Teachers. More than 80 representatives from Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, Rajkeye Madhymik Shikshak Sangh, Teachers, SMCs, and Uttarakhand RTE Forum participated in the convention along with CRC, DEO, State Coordinator Pedagogy, educationists and social activists. At the event, the dignitaries discussed the concerns of education in Uttarakhand and the real status of implementation of RTE Act throughout the State.

At the convention, Dr. Arun Bisht, State Coordinator Pedagogy, put forth the government orders issued to implement Right to Education State Rules after the introduction of RTE Act, 2009. He shared some important amendments like Section 38 amended by notification no. 469 on 2nd July, 2013 and notification no. 844 on 16th July, 2014. The section 9 of RTE Act, talks about

rights and duties of the official -BEO, DEO, CRC, teachers, Primary Education Director, but no powers and responsibilities were assigned to the PRIs. Thus the notification no. 844 has made some amendments in this regard which are yet to be implemented. Therefore, the children of age 6-14 should be provided education without any hindrance and this is responsibility of the local authority.

The mountainous state of Uttarakhand has a rule to open a school in the hilly terrain where there is at least a population of 200 and in the plains at least 40 children. The children who have dropped should be given special training to make them capable enough to study at the age appropriate standard. Such institutions are functional in Udhamsingh Nagar, Haridwar, Nainital and Dehradun. Additionally, there is a facility of multi-purpose vehicles which goes village-to-village and identify the drop-out children and leads them to these training centers and further ensure their admissions in schools.

According to the notification of state government on 8 July 2011, government banned capitation fees and donations and also talks about no-detention policy for students. Similarly, Article 17 of the RTE Act bans corporal punishment and section 28 prescribes that no teacher can provide private tuitions to students.

He shared that in 2014-15 the state government paid 48 crore for 19,169 children to private schools and further expressed his concern about the inclination of children towards private schools which is acting as a challenges for the govern-

ment schools. Thus quality education needs to be extended in the government schools so as to retain students.

Mr. Raghu Tiwari, State Convener of Uttarakhand RTE Forum expressed that the education scenario at national level is facing sever challenges. On one hand we have a progressive law in the form of RTE Act, which talks about ensuring quality education for every child and on the other hand its implementation is very poor. We should not forget that there is an important role of education and health sector in the development of any nation.

The motive of introduction of the provision of reimbursement of fees to the Private Schools for 25 % students admitted under RTE was to harmonize and bridge the gap between different sections of the society. But inevitability it had negative impact on the government schools as the students were looking forward to take admission in private schools thus further fueling segregation and discrimination in the society. Therefore there is an urgent need to redefine this provision and stop privatization of education.

Since 1990's, increase in privatization, has also introduced a debate on voucher system for education but it could not provide education to poor. We need to bring forward the public system of education in order to rejuvenate the society and nation. For this we need to enhance to capabilities of the teachers. Thus the appointment of 12 lakh teachers in India is an important issue. While RTE act is going to complete 5 years of its introduction, the schools need to follow and implement the PTR

norms as mandated by the act in order to provide quality education.

All these issues are interconnected across the issues related to education, teachers, employment and thus overall human development. Therefore, all these issues need to be thoroughly debated and through teachers it needs to be brought in public domain.

In the state of Uttarakhand, there are approximately 18000 vacancies for the post of teachers in government schools which are still required to be filled. For this, there is a need to engage the teachers union in discussions because it is not just about promotion, jobs and transfers rather it needs to incorporate concerns over quality education and overall education system. The transfer policy of school teachers in Uttarakhand needs to be deliberated because a lot of teachers are not able to utilize their capabilities and work efficiently due to some issues. And finally, the role of teacher is very important for the successful implementation of RTE.

Mr. Vijay Bhatt, Social Activist, working in the field of education presented a historical context and journey of RTE act. He started with criticizing the notion of education in modern era as one which is based on bookish knowledge and examinations as a test of ability of mugging up information. He explained that we need to realize the relation between education and knowledge and for that we need to analyze the roots of problems in the education sector.

Initially, humans acquired the skills and knowledge by the virtue of its struggle for existence. This gradually led the society towards the path of development. With the gradual change in society the means of acquiring knowledge have also changed. Yet the stratification of society over various dimensions made education available to only a section of society. Thus a large segment of society was deprived of education. But with the advent of colonial rulers and industrialization, education system witnessed shift according to the need for new type of labourers by the colonial rulers. The novel education system is well known as Macaulay education system. This new system of education acted as a catalyst in the rise of middle class between the colonial rulers and subject. This further initiative various social reform movements throughout the country promoting women education and Dalit education. In 1870, at Britain, Compulsory Education law was passed and in 1882, the point of making public education system compulsory was raised in front of Indian Education Commission. Later, in 1906, Shri G.K. Gokale demanded Right to Education, which was rejected. During National Movement, Gandhiji also talked about “Nai Taleem”. Thus, historically, the RTE Act, 2009 is also a part of this struggle.

Stratification within education like the stratification in society is further leading towards disparity. With the introduction of neo-liberal policies, economic and social disparities have swelled in our society. As evidence, after 1980’s different types of schools and education institutions for different economic classes has emerged. Thus the sole motto of education as medium to introduce inclusion needs to be conceptualized. If edu-

education acts as a medium of exploitation then we don't need such an education.

We need to struggle for such an education system that promotes equity in society and is not envisaged only as a medium to deliver information. Rather it is a tool of change to develop an inclusive society.

Mr. A.P. Semwal, DEO (Basic) Tehri Garhwal district, expressed his views and talked about the dilemma of constituent assembly of India to deliver Right to Education as a Fundamental Right or other constitutional right. Further, talking about the historical development of the RTE act, he shared that in year 1917, during WW1, Patel Act (Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act, 1917) was passed which can be envisaged as the First Right to Education Act of India. But this law lacked provision for implementation.

As a conclusion of the consultation, the following resolutions were drawn:

1. RTE Act, 2009 is going to complete 5 years of its introduction on 31st March, 2015. We demand recruitment of appropriate number of teachers as per the PTR Norms spelled in the RTE Act for its ground implementation.

2. The Convention/House agrees that provision of 25% seats for the children of disadvantaged section in Private Schools was intended to bridge the gap between different layers of society promoting harmony but we strongly feel that the process

is unable to attain its goal to bring equity and harmony and the finances involved in the process is ultimately making the common people more burdened. We demand to strengthen the Public System of Education which is the only way to eliminate discrimination and bring equity in the society.

3. A regulatory mechanism for private schools must be ensured with prescribed fee structure, minimum salary for the teachers and they must be brought under purview of the State government for monitoring.

4. Government Teachers' Training Institute should be strengthened in spite of promoting private training institutions. New training programme should be introduced based on Child Psychology and new dimensions of Pedagogy. These innovative trainings should be systematized in accordance with the provisions of RTE Act and role of teachers should be defined in this process. State should increase and allocate adequate budget for Training Institutions associated with Public System of Education to ensure quality training of teachers.

5. The recruitment of permanent and trained teachers as per RTE norms should be ensured and ongoing recruitment of Guest Teachers, Para Teachers or Contract Teachers violating RTE norms should be strictly prohibited.

About RTE Forum

Right to Education Forum (RTE Forum) is a platform of educational networks, national networks, peoples' movements and prominent educationists with a combined strength of 10,000 NGOs from all over India. Its members include, among others, CACL, CRY, NCE, Oxfam India, PCCSS, Plan-India, Save the Children, UNICEF, Voluntary Forum for Education, SCORE, Rajasthan State Consortium, UNESCO, AKF, World Vision, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, Room to Read, AIF, Welthungerhilfe, Action Aid India, NEG FIRE, TDH, VSO, Water Aid, Skill Share International and 18 State RTE Forums. It has been working towards building a people's movement to achieve the goal of equitable and quality education to all children through the realization of the Right to Education Act, 2009 in the true spirit. The Forum is envisioned to strengthen the National Public System of Education funded by State.

The Act was notified by the Government of India on April 1, 2010. The RTE Forum considers the Act, with all its limitations, a progressive step because it constitutes an improvement over the prevailing reality in several States and offers scope for addressing the gaps in teacher availability and teacher training, bans discrimination and corporal punishments, ensures compliance with school infrastructural development, provides for community participation and involvement through School

Management Committees (SMCs), etc.

Given the federal nature of India's polity, it has a presence at both centre and states. At the State level, the Forum has 19 state (and UT) chapters in Delhi, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Informal linkages have also been established in Assam, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The intent is to bring together all likeminded civil society in support of the Act's implementation across the country.

The six broad thematic areas of its work around the Act include:

1. Systematic Readiness and Redressal Mechanism
2. Issues of Teachers
3. Community Participation
4. Quality
5. Social Inclusion
6. Private Sector

The Forum has been taking stock of the implementation of RTE Act since 2010; where participants from different states come together on a common platform. On this occasion, the status report on the implementation of the Act is also shared with everyone.