

B.ED. IS A DEGREE OF TEACHERS AND NOT OF TEACHING

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During First World War a military officer asked an Oxford University Professor "What are you doing here in the University when all the British people have staked their lives in the war?" The shrewd Professor replied, "We are creating the culture here for the preservation of which you people are fighting". This statement underlines the glorious role a committed teacher plays in the life of a school as well as in the life of a nation. This is why he is labeled as the "king-pin" of the school education enterprise. None can deny that notwithstanding books, buildings and laboratories which act as facilitating factors for the education of the child, the teacher stands always on the centre of the stage. His knowledge can make a difference but his ignorance can be an irreparable loss.

The million dollar question is : How to produce good teachers? Are good teachers born or made? In the beginning of the present century the general belief was that the teachers are born not made. But with the increasing knowledge about child psychology and advancement in science and pedagogy, training has become sine-qua non for all varieties of teachers. But it is regrettable to note that our teacher's training colleges are riddled with multi-dimensional problems and as a result they are virtually in shambles. In the wake of such grim situation the B.Ed. degree imparted by our training colleges is fast losing its validity and sanctity. It is truism to say one major anomaly stifling the whole programme is concerned with over emphasis on examinations to the extent of neglecting competencies. It is a fact that students are given training in the context of examination expectations rather than of job-expectations. That is why B.Ed. degree has not remained a degree of teaching. In reality, it has become a mere bit of parchment with useless degree scrawled across it. Its main utility is to serve as a passport for enabling student teachers to be employed as teachers. Majority of the student teachers consider that they have no stakes in the present scheme of things. The most pressing problem of our teacher education colleges is the problem of dissonance. In other words the theoretical knowledge provided by them does not fit into the actual school situation. Even theory is outdated and outmoded. Due to laying over emphasis

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upon theory, the practical aspect is not given due importance. Besides, the method of teaching adopted by the teacher educators leaves much to be desired. They generally dictate notes and the students jot down and learn to reiterate them in the examination. Illustrating this obnoxious practice, a scholar has said:

"If I say good morning to a group of graduate students, they return the greetings, but if I say good morning to a group of college students they write it down". This practice makes the required to present every blade of grass which they have cropped and swallowed instead of concocting it into wool and milk. Hence too much lecturing and note giving programmes have resulted in relegating professional studies to subordinate position and subjecting them to be treated as an educational Cinderella in the panorama of our educational system.

Our colleges face the problem of admitting right type of student teachers. In our teachers training colleges, most of the student teachers come to be admitted as a last resort after being rejected from all walks of life. Majority of them lack adequate background of content, knowledge, skill, aptitude etc. Emphasizing this point E.G. Pierson had said, "You cannot make a 22 carat wedding ring out of 9 carat gold. You cannot produce first class teachers from second class people, no matter how good the education and training programme you provide for them." In short, the problem is how to retain the brightest and the best in education department and filter out the incompetents who lack intellectual ability, scholarly background and personal qualities needed for being successful teachers.

It is a un-adulterated truth that inspite of the introduction of entrance test for admissions in our colleges of education, we are not getting suitable, worthwhile and motivated students. The quality of the entrance test needs to be improved. We must first clearly visualize what type of qualities we want to develop in our prospective teachers for helping them to become capable teachers and then plan out testing these abilities through these tests which should consist of such aspects like general awareness, mental ability, teaching aptitude, teaching attitude, language proficiency both in English and Hindi, knowledge of at least two teaching subjects and oral test etc.

Unfortunately the quality of teacher educators in our training colleges barring a few exceptions is not of a very high order. It may not be an exaggeration to say that most of the teacher educators are badly educated, poorly informed and are an ineffective group of men and women. Everybody will agree that a teacher must act like a traveler who finds out his way through new territory. For emphasizing the significance of study habits, Arnold's reply to a question is pertinent. "Why do you spend so much time in preparing for the class?" The reply was "I prefer that my

students should drink water from a running stream rather than from a stagnant pool”.

Moreover, our training colleges face the problem of vitalizing student teacher which is rightly regarded as the sole anchor of teacher training. In spite of its immense significance, it does not get its due place in the scheme of our teacher training. The fact is that it is organized in an artificial atmosphere and has been reduced to a mere formality to be gone through. This is why people regard it as a prerequisite for evaluation and not for sufficient teaching. Over and above, the evaluation of the student's teaching leaves much to be desired. The external examiners are under duress and forced to give first class or maximum marks to every Tom, Dick and Harry overlooking all the teaching abilities or skills and this is why many scrupulous teacher educators avoid working as external examiners. The practical examination of B.Ed. class has assumed ludicrous proposition these days.

Added to all these is the mushroom growth of self financing training colleges which are exerting cascading influence with regards to teachers' training. These colleges have become synonymous with indiscipline, corruption, fraud, chicanery and politicking and symbolize rotten apples placed in soggy baskets. The managers of these colleges grease palm at suitable places and get the permission to run the show sans qualified teachers, library building and other essential infrastructure. Motive is to mint money through the facade of giving sham training to the prospective teachers. It needs to be added here that I have not come across a single self financing college which is equipped with a single qualified teacher educator in my home district Ghazipur U.P.. I was shocked to know that most of the teachers in the sub-standard institutions are not endowed with even B.Ed. degree. Could there be any more scandalous phenomenon and why is the NCTE or the Government not taking any corrective step to stop this brazen loot by the managers of self-financing institutions.

In sum, it can be stated that our teachers' training colleges face the problem of fulfilling certain philosophical expectations. In fact they do not have any sound philosophy. As a result the student teachers fail to develop a sort of challenging personality in themselves and are satisfied with being cramped in traditional frame. They are satisfied if they get degrees which serve as a passport for getting employment space. There is an urgent need to take a realistic stock of these problems and try out suitable solutions to spare spectacular collapse of the colleges in not too distant a future. In fact, there is no other alternative to escape from the inevitable.

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