

CHAPTER - I

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

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1.1.0 Education : It's Quality and Teachers

The educational tradition in India is long. Two thousand years ago the internationally reputed universities of Nalanda and Takshashila were established. And Banaras has been a centre for learning from time immemorial. The most scholastic tradition of India is known by the term 'guru-sisya parampara'. Accordingly the aspiring student attaches himself to a guru (preceptor or teacher) and learns all that he teaches by oral communication.

The Guru or teacher was used to enjoy a special status and was held in high esteem by the society. He was an embodiment of knowledge and the abode of spirituality. He was the torch bearer of the society. Students look up to him with faith and hope and they seek counsel in matters temporal or transcendental. Hence, the teacher at all ages was considered as the nation builder.

The progress of our country depends largely on its education. Realising the importance of education for national development, Education commission (1964-66), has aptly remarked that,

'the destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms'.

The National policy on Education (1986) also states that:

'Education has always been accorded an honoured place in Indian society. The great leaders of the Indian freedom movement realised the fundamental role of education and throughout the nation's struggle for independence, stressed its unique significance for national development'.

Education as a process involves two human elements - the teacher and the taught. The teacher is considered to be the kingpin in the educational process. However, good a curriculum may be, it would not be effective unless there is a competent teacher to implement the curriculum. How a teacher teaches in the classroom matters as much as or even more than what he teaches. The teacher will be effective if he loves teaching, loves students and respects his profession. If he can not look upon the teaching profession with appreciation he may fail to be effective in the class room. In other words, good education is the result of the activities of teachers; who have a positive attitude towards the profession.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that, the importance of teacher in the process of education is of greatest value. The quality of education largely depends upon the teacher. In this context, the Education commission (1964-66) has remarked that,

'Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and it's contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant. It gives a desirable shape to the individual character and promote quality in the person'.

1.1.1 Role of the Teacher-Educators

Teacher - educators are the teachers of teachers who educate the student in the colleges which are specifically meant for teacher education programme. They are the real architects behind the creation of quality-teachers. Teacher-educators have a great role in this respect. Society expects a lot from them. Their committment, devotion, preseverance in performing their duty is of great value. Though they come under the teaching community, they are distinct in some way. Among all educationists and educators, they are the ones whose job is 'education' and whose profession is 'education'. So to say the whole system of education, for its progress and

and enrichment depends on the teacher-educators. Because their qualities, sincerity, sobriety have a great impact upon the teachers who has to shoulder the responsibility of future education (Mehrotra, 1990). The status of teacher-educator is closely linked with (a) the status of teachers and the teaching profession in general, and (b) the status of teacher education in the educational world. Teacher-educators are only a part of the total educational force of a society and teacher education is a part of the teaching profession.

A teacher-educator produces competent teachers, with commitment to teaching, love for students, healthy attitudes above all good citizens.

1.1.2 Need for Research in the Indian context

In any society, the status that a particular group enjoys, depends to a large extent, on the contribution that the profession makes to the development of the society; this in turn depends on the nature of their work and the work ethos of the persons in that profession. The teaching profession contributes to societal development by way of imparting and generating knowledge and preparing suitable manpower for key positions in economic and social life.

The nature of teachers work emanates from the role visualised for the education system. Educational system depends solely on time, temper and ideology of a country. The situation in our country has been changed since Independence. The country is moving towards a new direction i.e emergence of a developed India. The development can only be achieved if the teachers are in a position to push the wheel of progress. On the contrary, in recent years probably no professional group has been criticised as frequently or as intensely as teachers. The list of grievances is long. Our society perceives the present generation of teachers as mercenary, unprofessional, irresponsible and lacking in the dedication and commitment which teachers of previous generation were reputed to possess (Misra, 1986; Raza & Fernandes, 1987).

As a matter of fact, it is a matter of great concern. But why a sizeable portion of a community lacks motivation and commitment to its profession - an inquisitive question needs reasonable answer. No doubt something must be wrong somewhere. In this context, Waller (1982) has observed that most of the innovative programmes for the rehabilitation and improvement of the school have foundered on the rock of teacher apathy and teacher resistance.

Very recently, however, teachers and their problems have been attracting a great deal of attention in the west, especially in the U.S.A. Teacher stress and burnout become topics of increasing public and professional concern (Misra, 1986).

This problem of stress and burnout does not seem to be confined to American teachers only. In our country also a good beginning has been made to study social and psychological aspects of teaching profession.

Misra (1986) studied the meaning in life, stress and burnout among secondary school teachers of Calcutta and found 55.6% teachers, out of the total sample are working under stress and as many as 30% teacher experience high burnoutness.

The impact of stress and burnout, on the quality and consistency of education is easily imagined, and clearly serious. As Sarason (1977) has pointed out: 'if it becomes increasingly the case that professionals experience a widening discrepancy in work between expectations and satisfactions, the negative consequences for their lives will have ramifications far beyond the spheres of their individual existence. The societal implications are great.' In the face of growing public criticism, we should try to understand why young enthusiastic teachers turn into bored and aloof professionals in a few years of time? Why many of our teachers are apathetic and uninvolved and make no effort to improve their scholarship and skill? While some others, placed in the

same working milieu are enthusiastic, committed and show a constant desire to grow professionally. (Misra, 1986)

In this context, probably work orientation of teachers plays a vital role. What motivates these teachers in their work is not for mere basic subsistence but for transforming their environment for a better living. The work becomes 'ingrained' in their 'selves'. There is also a general trend of losing one's purpose in life/meaning in life in 20th century human kind. Viktor Frankl has asserted that each person needs to find meaning in his/her own existence which is unique. This 'will to meaning', is fulfilled through self-transcendence. A self-transcendent life is directed to something other than the self, a cause to serve or another person to love. Does this widely prevalent attitude, "the malaise of the modern age" affect the present teachers? Does the meaning in life affect the work orientation of teachers? Is it that those who have a high score in meaning in life are also positively oriented to work? What is the extent of burnout and gloominess in the teaching community? Do teachers suffer because work exposes them to emotionally laden situations? Teacher educators as a group of whole teaching community are not free from these maladies. Nation expects a lot from them because they are the real architect of quality teachers' if they do not have high meaning in life or are burned out or lack in work orientation, then they may not be able to produce better teachers.

That, conceptually if we think deeply, we may try to find the factors contributing to the person high in work orientation (Ach. orientation), institutional ethos may be one but the basic factor is meaning he attaches to his job. If the person is burned-out then his work orientation will not be from his self-motivation but from ascribed role. The person having high score in meaning in life will manifest greater concern in work orientation. At one point the investigator arrived at a thought that meaningfulness is a latent state of mind of a person and work orientation is its manifestation.

1.1.3 Significance of the study

Under the circumstances, the investigator felt that a systematic study of meaning in life, burnoutness and work orientation of teacher educator was needed. The investigator intended to establish the relationship between meaning in life and burnoutness. At the same time it was also necessary to establish the differential work orientation of teacher educators.

A number of studies have suggested a positive relationship between attitude to life (meaning in life) and attitude toward work (meaning in work) (Brayfield, Wells and Strate, 1957). The concept of meaning in life is based on Viktor Frankl's philosophy that an individual always tries to find a meaning or purpose in life. If he succeeds in finding a meaning in his life, he will continue to grow inspite of all indignities and will be able to bear much hardship, misfortune and stress.

Frankl (1960) gives his views on meaning of work. Work usually represents the area in which the individual's uniqueness stands in relation to society and thus acquires meaning and value.

Experiencing constant dissatisfaction with a job has many repercussions for the individual's adjustment at work as well as in personal and social life and may have negative impact on individual's total personality. On the other hand a person spending major portion of his working hours with satisfying job or occupation may have a sense of accomplishment, success and self actualisation (Pandey, 1972)

Frankl contends that it is not the actual occupation as such but the manner in which one does the work, that makes it meaningful.

Frankl hypothesizes a positive relationship between meaning in life and meaning in work. We can also presume a

negative relationship between meaning in life and burnout arising from his work situation.

Sargent (1972) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement and meaning in life and found significant correlation.

Sultana (1983) found meaning in life to be related significantly with certain areas of adjustment.

Teacher-educators as a group of teaching community are not free from criticism. The phenomenon of teacher burnout arresting the attention of general public and planners. So it is matter of importance to determine the factors which are leading to burnoutness and the factors associated with work orientation. The findings may prove valuable for educational administrators, policy makers and to teacher themselves to plan coping strategies for preventing burnout. It would be of interest to study the degree to which the teacher experience meaning themselves and the way it helps them in work orientation. Therefore, the investigator wants to find out through statistical devices the relationship between meaning in life and burnoutness, and through case studies factors contributing to the meaning in life and work orientation of teacher educators in Orissa.

Answers to these questions will go a longway in improving their orientation to work, meaning in life and overall mental health of teachers. So that they will become more committed to their work, take pleasure in their work. After knowing the prevalence of burnoutness among teacher educators the educational administrators may arrange some remedial measures.

1.1.4 Statement of the problem

Considering the yet unexplored areas of meaning in life, burnoutness and work orientation of teacher-educators in India and in view of Frankl's hypothesis regarding relationship

between meaning in life and meaning to work, the investigator was inspired to undertake the study of the following problem,

'A STUDY OF MEANING IN LIFE, BURNOUTNESS AND WORK-ORIENTATION OF TEACHER-EDUCATORS OF ORISSA'.

1.1.5 Scope of the study

The present study is an explorative and descriptive, involving both qualitative and quantitative approach. The study has used interviews for case-studies as well as standardised tests and statistical analysis and interpretation.

The study is limited to teacher-educators of teacher training colleges of Orissa only.

As burnout is both a process and product, ideally study should have been a longitudinal one. However, such a study is not possible within the time constraint of a Ph.D programme. Hence the study is limited to an exploratory survey and in-depth study of a small number of extreme cases.