

Indian Teachers in Chakravyuh: Guru, Researcher or Contractual Worker?

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Despite the role of teachers in shaping the future generations being understood by all, the concerns for enhancing the quality of teachers and their well-being are growing worldwide. Tremendous expansion in the education sector to meet the desired gross enrollment ratio at each of the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education has led to a mammoth increase in the number of teachers. As per statistics available, there are 15.98 lakh teachers for 4.33 crore students in higher education and 95 lakh teachers for 26.52 crore students of pre-primary to higher secondary level schools in India as per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22 and Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22 reports, respectively. Undoubtedly, the overall perspective on the Indian education system calls for introspecting on how well the teachers of today are mentoring the young generations. Although the role of teachers in the

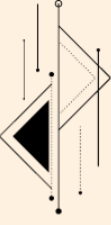
The quality of teaching-learning processes carried out by teachers in the classroom is not accounted for significantly in the assessment of individual teachers or institutions. Thus, often there are poor-performing classroom teachers with good research credentials.

Temporary teachers are unable to plan for long-duration research, which leads to the weakening of the overall research culture. Also, ad-hoc teaching arrangements deny a sense of ownership within the teachers towards their institutions, which in turn hinders the growth of these educational institutions.

effectiveness of teaching-learning-evaluation (TLE) is cardinal at all levels of education, special attention is required while assessing the tertiary level i.e. higher education where the students are reasonably mature and the rigour of their interactions with teachers can be a game changer in creating a competent human resource.

Pedagogical training: The Making of a 'Guru'

Quite often, it is felt that the overall quality of higher education is deteriorating despite educational reforms, ubiquitous availability of learning resources, innovative educational technologies, and modern pedagogical practices. A section of educators is constantly advocating for newer teaching methodologies like active learning, experiential learning,



project-based learning, etc. and numerous experiments are being done to complement and substitute the traditional approaches of teaching. Still, not much is visible concerning class quality improvement.

Given the teachers being put on the job of handling classes immediately after recruitment without appropriate pedagogical training, the weaknesses in their pedagogical practices remain predominant. The huge size of the Indian education system calls for systematic interventions for suitable pedagogical training immediately after teacher recruitment. This will not only motivate teachers to accord the highest priority to their teaching responsibilities but also lead to better performance of their students.

Researcher or Teacher?

Educational institutions have the opportunity to host young minds under the mentorship of teachers. This opens up the possibilities of conceiving and executing newer ideas through academic research. As a result, the research outputs from academics are being pushed worldwide and the performance of teachers is assessed through academic performance indicators, which have significant reliance on their research outcome. As the research outcomes contribute heavily to the career growth of teachers, the teachers prioritize their

engagement in research activities over teaching. Furthermore, the research outcomes from teachers enrich the profile of the respective institutions for their accreditation and ranking frameworks. Thus, institutions, too, back such endeavours of teachers.

The quality of teaching-learning processes carried out by teachers in the classroom is not accounted for significantly in the assessment of individual teachers or institutions. Consequentially, classroom and laboratory teaching gets relegated despite the students wanting the best educational experiences from student-teacher interactions in the institutions. Because research is prioritized over teaching, often there are poor-performing classroom teachers with good research credentials. The balance between teaching and research is critically required for nurturing the young generation enrolling in the formal education system. Teacher assessment tools ought to be remodelled to prioritize teaching over research for overcoming these challenges and making classroom teaching a high priority on the agenda of teachers.

Contractualization of Indian teachers; The 'temporary teacher' model

For quite some time, new models of recruiting teachers in the form

of temporary teachers like guest teachers, contractual teachers, etc. have come up to take care of teaching requirements. Such temporary teachers are not paid well and, also, do not have any longevity of being in service as teachers. Temporary teachers are neither satisfied with respect to the compensation nor happy with their working conditions.

Though there is no difficulty in meeting the teaching needs through temporary teachers, the sense of job insecurity acts as a deterrent in getting the best out of them. In addition, temporary teachers are unable to plan for long-duration research, which leads to the weakening of the overall research culture in educational institutions.

Adhoc teaching arrangements deny a sense of ownership within the teachers towards their institutions, which in turn hinders the growth of these educational institutions. Frequent changes in teachers do not permit the institution for systemic improvement in teaching quality, thus, being detrimental to student development. It is imperative to get rid of this concept of 'temporary teachers' and, instead, have regular teachers in the educational institutions so that their job security, self-development initiatives, serious engagement with students, and belongingness to the institution facilitate the collective growth of



the institution, students, and teachers.

Breaking the Chakravyuh: Charting a New Course for Viksit Bharat

The gigantic size of the education system catering to the aspiration of Viksit Bharat@2047 needs urgent interventions to roll out adequately educated individuals. It is inevitable to revisit the priorities. The rush to figure out well in the accreditation and ranking frameworks is pushing teaching to the backseat. Every educational institution must accord the highest priority to the quality of teaching-learning-assessment processes in the best interest of the students enrolled in them. The temporary arrangements of teachers to engage classes and the plight of temporary teachers concerning their service conditions and compensations need corrections for holistic improvement of educational deliveries. Investing resources to build the 'best teachers' from the perspective of teaching and pedagogical practices is inevitable for the education system to survive and thrive.

Also, there is a need to have different metrics for assessing the educational institutions in a country like ours having huge socio-economic diversity, in line with the philosophy of a welfare state. Student participation in the assessment of the educational deliveries from any institution is

needed for prioritizing teaching activities over other aspects. Student and other stakeholder feedback mechanisms must be strengthened and feedbacks accepted for continuous improvement in the quality of education in the institutions.

The concerted efforts towards strengthening the education system through good quality committed teachers and their wholehearted involvement towards teaching will automatically strengthen future generations and ensure the sustainable growth of our civilization. Governance and academic regulators must sincerely contemplate the challenges faced by the education system of the country and take remedial measures to ameliorate the state of affairs.

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