

CHAPTER - I : THE TEACHER AND THE NEW SCHOOL

Education is an activity which is concerned both with the individual and with society. The schools being the main agencies of education, must bring out all that is best and unique in each of the individuals. They must also train the individual to adjust himself to his environment - social, economic and cultural milieu in which he has to live and from which he must derive the special colour and texture of his life activities.

The defects in the present school system

Before outlining the scope of the 'new school' for the children of our country, it is necessary to understand the defects of the present educational system. Some of the main defects are :

(1) The ordinary school in our country has failed to tap the sources of creative energies of children and to release them into fruitful channels.

(2) The life of children in our schools is always

restricted and cramped. A few outstanding causes are :

(a) The uniformity of method, the rigidity of curriculum and the narrow outlook of our schools; (b) Children are herded into a dull, bookish and passive school environment at a time when they should be playing actively and working joyously in the open air; (c) They have to undergo the trying ordeal of hours of drudgery of uninteresting book learning, the meaning and purpose of which are usually beyond their understanding; (d) There is often no provision for those creative and constructive activities, manual and mental, which give room for the expression of the children's individual talents.

(3) There is still another direction in which the wrong orientation of our school system has done incalculable damage - in the domain of cultural interpretation. It is the work of the school, as educationists have recognised in all ages, to function as an agency for the transmission and interpretation of national culture to the generation growing up within its four walls. But our system of education has not been based in the past decades on the broad foundations of national culture and does not derive its inspiration from the achievements of its past or the preoccupations of its present or the hopes of its future.

The necessity for the reorganisation of the present educational system

These factors lead one to think at once that the reorganisation of the present educational system is absolutely necessary. The schools must cater to the up-to-date needs and ideas of the society. Teachers must be inspired by a true appreciation of educational aims and an intelligent understanding of ways and means for their implementation. Teachers and others who are interested in education as an instrument for improving the quality of social and individual life must, therefore, seriously adhere themselves to the task of laying the foundations of a better, a more vitalised, a more life-giving school, the 'new school' which will take the place of the existing traditional school.

The 'New School'

Now, let us consider how the modern school or 'new school' tries to overcome some of the defects of the traditional school as it exists today.

(1) The modern school is child-centred. It attaches great value to the freedom of the child and takes its stand on indisputable psychological evidence.

(2) It seeks to replace information by experience and chooses the most significant and abiding aspects of experience for its subject matter and thereby makes school life active

and meaningful.

(3) The modern sociological view of education postulates that the school should constantly draw upon social life and activities for its subject-matter, its methods of teaching and its motives of work. Thus, the modern school seeks, primarily and above all, 'to give life to its pupils and to give it abundantly'. The children are made to participate actively in school life that is intrinsically valuable and pleasure - giving to them, exercising all their healthy, natural powers of action, cooperation and self-expression in various ways.

(4) The methods of teaching are based on child psychology.

(5) The modern school attaches supreme importance to the child's freedom and tries to secure conditions favouring spontaneity of development.

(6) The new school tries to make up for the defects and handicaps of poor home conditions of children and make arrangements in the school through co-curricular activities for their social life, hobbies, games, etc. which might under normal conditions have been left over largely to the parents.

(7) The new school tries to be an idealised epitome of

social life reflecting within it the elements of all the
worthful major activities that make up the work of the
society.

Education can bring happiness when the children are
encouraged to throw themselves into all worthy forms of
activity - literary, artistic, social and manual - so that
they may learn to get out of their own selves and cultivate
valuable objective interests which may be carried further
and developed after their leaving the school. This broaden-
ing of intellectual and cultural curiosity, this quickening
of sympathy for all that concerns human life is a continuous,
inexpensive source of happiness; it is the function of schools
and colleges to encourage all this. Thus, education should
become more practical and realistic.

This calls for a wide and comprehensive general edu-
cation embracing academic as well as practical subjects pre-
ceding specialised vocational training. The length of the
general education differs for the pupils in accordance with
the nature and demands of the vocation that they take up.
Some may branch off into work at the end of the primary
stage, others doing so at the completion of the secondary
stage, while still others carry on their studies at the
university. In most of the advanced western countries the
present tendency is to ensure some type of education for all

children up to the age of eighteen whether that education, in later stages is provided in a full-time secondary school or in a part-time continuation school. But in our country, at present, where only primary education has been compulsorily introduced on a national scale and a proper integration of the various stages of education is still being worked out, the immediate problem is to deal with children passing out of the primary and secondary schools. This has to be done with special reference to their aptitudes and the possible openings available in any particular locality. Hence the responsibilities of primary school teachers are very great.

The responsibilities of the teacher of the new school

The teacher in the new school must put the children in an active, creative environment, ^{which} ~~must~~ reflects the life of the community and above all must help children to cultivate healthy attitudes towards life and work and thus bring true happiness into their lives. This great responsibility lies on the teachers who actually work in close contact with children.

The teacher has to study carefully the stages of the child's growth, the developing phases of interest and the activities and characteristics associated with each. He should know that the natural impulses of the child are the chief instruments and raw material of his education. Education

is not synonymous with pouring in of ready-made knowledge; it is rather the disciplining of the child, the organisation and coordination of his powers and capacities towards valuable and significant ends.

After the attainment of freedom, our country is making efforts to establish in it a secular and democratic state wedded to the idea of social justice. To educate people to be worthy of this great concept and of this great responsibility is a very difficult task. People are to be trained to develop democratic ways of attitudes after centuries of autocratic rule, of which the last 150 years were a period of foreign domination. Here again, the teachers have to play a very worthy role in the rebuilding of our national life and developing in the children qualities which are needed for the successful working of democracy in our country.

Qualities essential for successful teaching in a modern primary school

It is seen then that the responsibilities of a new school are very great. The importance of the teacher as a central figure in all aspects of the educational programme is recognised. Success in the programme of guidance, curriculum building and in administration depends on the active and intelligent participation of the teacher. The teacher can teach children only when he knows them, understands their

interests, their difficulties, their hopes, fears and prejudices. He has to possess the ability, the scholarship and the zeal to make the most of the human potentialities with which he has to work. Usually pupils themselves know what the qualities of their teachers should be. A teacher's efficiency as in any other profession, demands certain physical and temperamental qualities, intellectual gifts, interests and aptitudes.

Also, the main objective of education is to develop well-integrated personalities. It is impossible for any teacher to be effective to do so, if he is not himself a well-adjusted individual typifying in his daily life the qualities of personality which the children are to acquire. The pupils must be trained in the democratic way of living. To do this the teacher must himself be sensitive to social issues and values and must be able to guide the children to participate in worthy community activities. Hence the teacher must be an intelligent and active participant in all social and civic affairs.

Research in psychology has made it clear that children do not learn one thing at a time. It is now widely recognised that much incidental as well concomitant, yet essential learning is acquired in any given school situation. Such inci-

dental learning should not be considered accidental or regarded unimportant. Rather, the teacher has to assess each prospective situation in terms of the totality of learning which it promises. He has to arrange as many situations as possible which afford the greatest possible number of desirable experiences for his pupils. Hence not only are the subject matter and the activities considered and planned, but also the manner or ways in which these activities are conducted. This requires a high order of imagination and resourcefulness as well as an excellent practical knowledge of psychology.

The teacher must have also a thorough knowledge of the subject matter he teaches. He must be able to relate the subject matter with other life activities. He should have the ability to guide intelligent though immature students.

No amount of ability or knowledge can compensate for a lack of interest in children and in their well-being. A teacher should be vitally interested in children and in their problems. He must have the willingness to help the children. If he is able to diagnose the individual's problem and the exact point at which he is having difficulty, then he can help the pupils properly. Hence a knowledge of the nature of the child and the learning process in general is essential. More than all these, he must be

patient enough to deal with young children.

Though less important a clear, well-moulded voice and the ability to speak effectively also contribute to the make-up of a good teacher or can be enumerated among the good qualities of teachers.

Selection of teachers

In view of the preceding discussion, ideally any person cannot become a teacher in the real sense. It is therefore essential to attract and retain right type of men and women in the profession, give them the necessary training and create conditions in which enthusiasm for work is maintained throughout their professional life. Only such teachers who have real love for the profession can try to render real service to the nation by training children to become worthy citizens of free India.

A number of training institutions have been started in our State to train teachers to carry on the new system of education successfully in their institutions. Table 1 gives the number of institutions which offer post-graduate and undergraduate courses in the State. But, every person who wishes to enter the teaching profession may not be suited to it. This profession involves work of a peculiarly exacting nature for which certain social and moral qualities are at least, as essential as academic attainments and intellectual capacity.

Table 1 - Number of institutions offering post-graduate and certificate courses in Mysore State

Grade	Number of institutions		Duration of the course
	Government	Private	
1 Number of training institutions for S.S.L.Cs	12	19	1 year
2 Number of training institutions for non-S.S.L.Cs	22	12	2 years
3 Number of Colleges offering post-graduate course	5	4	1 year

Moreover, in our country a majority of the members of the teaching profession have been drawn to it not by a sense of vocation but by sheer economic necessity. Hence the teacher training institutions as well as educational managements have to devise adequate and practicable methods of selecting candidates who are likely to make good teachers, for it is a recognised fact that efficiency of any system of education rests on the quality of the teachers. Without good teachers even the best of systems is bound to fail. Hence proper selection of candidates to this noble profession is very essential. A selection of candidates to schools and training institutions

based only on the S.S.L.C. examination marks does not serve the purpose. It may only test the achievement of the student in various examination subjects. So a tool which enables administrators at least to eliminate those who may not be suited for the profession at all is essential.

Next, it should also be borne in mind that it is not possible to devise a common test in one language for all the teachers in India. Not only do the States differ one from the other in language but also in economic and social conditions which also have a specific say in matters of selection of teachers. Hence the need for the construction and standardisation of an inventory for predicting teacher-efficiency is felt in each language area.

It may also be argued that though the need of selection is psychologically sound, practically there is no scope for selection when we need teachers in crores to build up new India and their availability is only in some thousands. However, this is altogether a different issue to be tackled from the economic side. Yet the need for right type of persons for teaching profession can never be denied.

It may also be said that a teacher's work is the same whether he is a primary school teacher or a secondary school teacher. He is there to teach the subjects prescribed for the pupils, in the syllabus. However, he is not dealing with

the same type of children at all the levels of education. In the primary stage he has to deal mostly with children between the age group 6 to 13. Secondary school teachers have to deal only with adolescents. Hence the problems of a secondary school teacher will be different from those of a teacher in a primary school. The primary school teacher actually lays the foundation for the education of each of the children, that goes to him. So it is very necessary that there should be a group of far more efficient and well-qualified teachers at the primary school stage. Once the foundation of education is sound, it will be very easy to produce a well-educated generation. Hence it is felt that an inventory for predicting the teacher efficiency of the primary school teachers is very necessary.

This can be achieved by devising suitable measuring instruments to select proper candidates for enrolment in our training schools. Herein we have the judicious use and interpretation of psychological tests. These tests are instruments for obtaining behavioural samples of what the testee can do or what he thinks or believes. These behavioural samples enable us to make inferences about the teacher's present status and how he will react in various situations, both present and future. These tests provide objective measures which are independent of personal opinions of the observer and they are undoubtedly far superior to the statements

one usually finds in school reports or written testimonials of casual observers. Many of the documents which applicants for posts offer in support of their claims contain little dependable information regarding the abilities required in the work and these are often subjective. A candidate's performance in a standardised test has at least the merit of objectivity and can be considerably useful.

When tests are used to measure traits such as intelligence or aptitude, it is assumed that such traits exist, that they can be measured with tests and that they are relatively stable or consistent over a certain period. By the help of tests it is possible to assess - fairly satisfactorily the intelligence, achievement, vocational aptitude, personality and interests of individuals. A proper and careful interpretation of such test results may help to select proper personnel to different professions.

The problem of selection of teachers is more difficult than and as complicated as the selection of personnel for any other profession. The selection and classification have to be made at two levels : (1) (a) Entrants' level - selection of those who wish to join teacher-training institutions for training; (b) Entrants to the teaching profession. (2) In service level - in classification of those who are already working as teachers in schools.

At present in the Mysore State, there are no standardised tests in Kannada which can be used for selection purposes. The school records also do not give any idea about the applicant's abilities and interests. But recently it has been proposed by the Education Department, Government of Mysore, that the teachers of secondary schools of our State should maintain cumulative record cards for pupils wherein they assess the intelligence, aptitude, and personal qualities of students on a point-scale. Hence, in future the entrants to teacher training institutions or to teaching profession will have a record on the basis of which selection may be made. But it will be difficult to judge whether the applicant is suited for the teacher's profession or not, only on the basis of one such record. In addition to this an inventory or test to assess the 'Teacher-efficiency' of any individual will facilitate satisfactory selection.

In the case of teachers who are already in service a Professional-Cumulative Record Card may be maintained by the heads of institutions with the cooperation of Inspecting Officers. In order to get uniformity of assessment, the following points may be considered for assessment : (1) knowledge of subject-matter, (2) professional interest, (3) capacity for organisation and management, (4) teacher-pupil relationship, and (5) personal qualities, like sociability, resourcefulness, adaptability, sympathetic, objectivity and impartiality etc. On

the basis of such a record alone, it will be difficult to maintain, weed out and promote teachers. An inventory which can help to predict the 'teacher-efficiency' may help to classify such teachers.

It may be argued that there is no use of such a classification in the case of teachers who are already in service. The educationists of our country are thinking of improving the standards of the present day schools. The school will not be very different from the quality of their teachers. When the youth have explored all other avenues - administrative business etc. they turn to teaching as a last resort. This field is open only to those young men and women who are left over after recruitment has taken place in more lucrative professions. Under such state of affairs, the quality and standard of schools can be improved only by maintaining the quality and standard of teachers. This state of affairs all the more necessitates selection by a proper selective procedure, the Teachers can be classified as under :

- (1) Those who are proficient in their work.
- (2) Those who can be helped to become efficient at their work.
- (3) Those who are not fit for teacher's profession at all.

Teachers who are proficient at their job may be at once drafted for administrative and teaching work with more

attractive conditions. Teachers who can be improved by a little help may be provided with such a help in the form of regular training courses, short term courses, refresher courses etc. and thus better quality of work may be expected. Those who are not fit to be teachers may be guided to take up some other type of work more suited to their ability. This will help to improve the quality of teachers in service to a great extent.

This clearly brings home to us the great need for an inventory to predict 'Teacher-Efficiency' that would to some extent help in teacher selection or classification.

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