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Importance of professional ethics for a teacher

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Abstract

Teaching has become a very difficult and complicated job in today's society which is constantly changing day by day. The social structures established over a long period have now changed and the information has quantified many times in comparison to older periods and it is still increasing very fast. Previously attained knowledge is becoming outdated in few years and technologies are constantly upgraded. So in this situation, it seems difficult that students will have life-long learning; it is actually a way to survive. You can survive with the existing knowledge but you cannot compete with the world if you have outdated knowledge. You need to continuously upgrade it, refresh it and update it. When it comes to learning, there is teaching as well. Traditionally teachers stand on the top of social hierarchy because they process knowledge and skills to deliver knowledge. However, the change of our world has also given away teachers' privilege of processing knowledge. In this age of smart phone and social media, everyone can get knowledge because knowledge has become very easily accessible. Today the role of a teacher is no longer as same as it was decades ago. At school teachers are facing challenges with regard to academics, profession and ethics. In order to perform the duty in a well and satisfied manner, teachers need to know exactly what they are supposed to do. That is why professional ethics are so important to be followed by teachers. In this chapter the author has tried to incorporate all the essential ethics which are concerned with the teaching profession.

Keywords: Professional ethics, professionalism, and professional obligation

Introduction

Since the profession of teaching is considered as one of the noblest professions in this world therefore for a strong and effective teaching profession there should be a commitment of teacher with his/her students and an assurance for their learning. Like all other reputed professions, there are some ethical standards which are essential for the teaching profession also. The job of a present teacher in comparison to the teachers of ancient times who used to live a basic living and give due weightage to high standard of practice and good thinking. But at present the educators of modern times are expected to perform all round and diverse roles in order to make school an efficient and productive organization. In order to fulfill such roles and obligations, the modern teachers need to be extremely and exceptionally skillful and talented. But this is not an easy task as it requires excellent and highly competent and upgraded teachers in order to meet the present day requirements. The teachers need to develop his abilities in all spheres of his profession in terms of their professional learning and amid of all desires of his life. Since the profession of teaching is considered as one of the noblest professions in this world therefore for a strong and effective teaching profession there should be a commitment of teacher with his/her students and an assurance for their learning. Like all other reputed professions, there are some rules and regulations or ethical standards for each and every profession which are either self-imposed or imposed by some specific organizations. In the same manner there are some ethical standards which are essential for the teaching profession also. These are as under:

- **Care:** The ethical standards under care includes four principles e.g. compassion for the profession, interest in the teaching and an insight which is essential for the development of essential potential of the student. The teachers should be able to express their professional commitment towards their students' for their well-being and assurance of learning through the techniques of positive influence, ability of professional judgment and an empathy for the students in practice.
- **Trust:** Trust is a very essential feeling in order to maintain a good student-teacher relationship with their colleagues and parents etc. all these functions are entirely based on trust. Through these ethical standards of trust which embodies the qualities of fairness, feeling of openness and quality of honesty.

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- **Respect:** It is an intrinsic feeling of a teacher necessary to attain the ethical standards of respect and honor in order to maintain the human dignity, emotional wellness of the teacher and their further cognitive development.
- **Integrity:** It is well known fact that honesty is the best policy in every respect. There are some inherent quality e.g. honesty, feeling of reliability and specific moral actions that are embodied and essential for maintaining the ethical standards of integrity.
- **Accountability:** Every man has some specific thinking which is dynamic and keeps on changing. It is the human being who tends to change towards undue comforts and suitable cash. But within the duration of present times a man becomes careless and slowly turns into stingy and unethical profession. Therefore the skilled ethics makes a person correct if a person has an inborn tendency to do something unethical or wrong.
- **For self-satisfaction:** Self-satisfaction is very essential for a person to be happy and is said to be our inner self and our process of thought and satisfaction method. Therefore the quality of self-satisfaction is a pre-requisite and essential for leading a happy, successful and respectable life. The existing situation of the society emphasizes on the strong views towards the satisfaction as it always emphasis on the self-respect and a man who has possess some ethical principles. Therefore the feeling of self-satisfaction is very crucial for a person in order to be happy and make others happy.
- **To guide the conduct and behavior:** The conduct and behavior of an individual student is usually molded by his teachers and of conduct of teachers is govern by their rules/regulations and professional ethics. Therefore the level of professional ethics helps individual teachers for imparting and inculcate moral values in their students successfully and to nurture/promote their overall development in all aspects.
- **Balanced personality:** The society usually demands a remarkable level of professional conduct on the part or behalf of the teachers. The people who are associated with the noble profession of teaching are expected to exhibit a specifically correct behavior that is capable of setting an example for others teachers and students so that they are capable enough to follow it and hence in this way it promotes to the ethical values of the entire society.
- **To become a role model:** Since the students have a strong tendency and habit of following good deeds of their teachers and they are in contact with them every day with a totally different persona and academics and in turn they are remarkably influenced by them. If an instructor or teacher behaves in an exceptionally very positive and impressive/applicable manner, then there is a strong probability that the students will follow him and try to adopt the same.
- **Development of society:** Society is also one of the active agency of education which plays a very significant role in the development of a child and the other institution of schooling also have a very close impact and relationship that are influenced by one another significantly. Therefore in order to develop a

morally upright and correct society, it is necessary that a teachers should be capable enough to inculcate the ethical principles and values among their students which surely will have a great impact and role in this arena of declining values.

- **To follow norms and principles of the profession:** The norms and ethical principles are must for guiding the vision and process of any profession. Therefore a set of well-defined rules, which are necessary and becomes essential for the effective functioning of any educational organization or educational institution. Therefore it is considered imperative that these rules and ethical norms should be developed making a base on the concept of professional ethics in order to ensure that the objectives of education are achieved at all levels.

Professional Obligation of Teachers

Obligation of a professional is a kind of situation in which a specific kind of accountability is imposed on an individual which is enforced by him on himself. The teachers in general are expected to perform and deliver their specific duties under a teaching frame-work which is set by specific institutions like NCTE & NCERT or other higher authorities. This kind of frame work is directly related with the students, their parents and the entire society. The trauma of teaching profession is that a teacher has an obligation towards society, parents, students and all the stake holders. In addition to this, all the teachers therefore has and govern by certain obligations towards their teaching profession. The Right to Education Act for the Free and Compulsory Education of all children has bounded all practicing teachers and entrusts on them with some kind of professional responsibilities and certain obligations which are to be adopted by them within the performance of their teaching and professional duties.

(a). **Obligation towards Students:** The students and the teachers are among the most important and worth to mention stakeholders in an entire educational system at all levels. There are some of the main obligations of teachers, worth to be mentioned here towards their students are as:

- **Teaching:** It is the foremost duty of all teachers that they are expected to teach according to the best of their ability and to develop the ability among its students to the fullest extent within the stipulated time period and by using the best means with the assistance or making the use of accessible and available resources and besides it he has to assure that the students are gaining or attaining the desirable goals.
- **Emotional development:** Since it has been seen that most of the students at school level or in their adolescence stage are emotional by their inbuilt nature. So all the teachers have their sole responsibility to cater or fulfill their emotional as well as other needs of their targeted students and help them to overcome or cope with the feeling of distress, grief and depression.
- **Maintaining discipline:** The students during their school stage belongs to such a stage which is a part of their growing years which is characterized by the students, certain age-specific activities and certain habits which are not according to the rules and regulations of the school and generally they are not acceptable by the school and society. Therefore it is the

responsibility of teachers to guide their individual or problematic students and help them to adopt the correct form of behavior.

- **Inculcating decision making ability:** The ability of decision making of an individual determines their level and chances of success as well as failure in future. Most of the teachers and academicians educate, motivate and encourage their students for higher or future life, to ensure their development and progress. All this can be done in an impressive manner which is associated with what the students supposed to do and decide in their day to day academic routine. Normally the choices that students usually make should have some logical base and straight aim in their sight. All the teachers must be able to guide their students in making such well-defined choices.
- **Improving leadership qualities:** Along with other aims of schooling the development of leadership qualities among students is one of the most basic academic and personal requirements of students during their student life at any educational level. Therefore a good teacher is expected that he will take all the essential steps in order to inculcate this kind of attribute in terms of the development of leadership qualities among his/her students.

(b). Obligation towards Parents: The teachers have certain obligations towards the parents of their students also in a number of ways. They are supposed to equip and provide them the timely information about the progress of their students and other requirements of the school and their wards. Some of the important obligations of teachers regarding the parents of their students are being discussed below:

- **Providing timely information:** As a teacher he has to inform the parents of their students not only about the co-curricular and academic performance of their students but in other ways they has to be informed about their overall behavior. Every parent has a complete right to be stayed informed about their progress and other administrative decision of the schools about their wards.
- **Helping parents decision making:** Since the parents have an incomplete and limited knowledge/information about the abilities and potential of their child. Therefore it is one of the foremost duty of teachers to help them so that they are able to take an informed decision about the progress, career and future of their child since the teachers are well aware about the potential of their all students and therefore they can suggest the appropriate academic and career options.
- **Sharing the aptitude:** A teacher is completely aware about the caliber of his/her each and every students. All the teachers know to what extent their students are capable as they observe their students on a daily basis individually as well as in the groups. But a teacher is the right judge of their students' aptitude and potential and therefore all of them are expected to arrive at and share their correct and objective findings with the parents of their students from time to time.
- **Helping to improve the home environment:** A teacher is considered as the expert in his profession and therefore he can suggest the parents of their students in order to make available a favorable environment at

home to the students which is congenial to their progress. Whenever there is any specific problem arise at home which is beyond the scope of the parents the students at that time thinks that it is better to talk to these issues to their teacher and in turn the teacher guide their parents and in this way the problem is solved.

- **Creating a suitable relationship between parents and the school:** A teacher acts like a bridge between parents and school authorities as he has a duty to provide timely information to the parents about the present functioning of their school, new innovations and activities, changes in the curriculum and syllabus etc. in this way a teacher may also encourage parents in order to obtain certain valuable suggestions for the betterment of the school.

(c). Obligation towards Society: The society is also an important stakeholder or unit in the entire education system at all levels. The teacher provides his/her support and helps for shaping up the future of the entire society and thereby plays a significant role in the development of the nation and making it prosperous. There are some of the important obligations of a teacher towards the society which are being discussed below:

- **Creating awareness about the social norms:** Every society and its constituent institutions are govern by a set of certain norms and regulations framed by it. And an individual or student has to strictly adhere or abide by them. The role of teacher is very crucial in this sense also as he has to guide the students in making them aware about these norms and in this way they help them in order to maintain the law and order in the society.
- **Helping students to understand their rights/duties:** A student needs a specific kind of guidance as a member of the society about his/her rights and duties. Every teacher is supposed to guide and inculcate some specific kind of ethical principles among the students which are very much essential for them and further with the help of these norms and principles they can become dutiful and can improve their social environment significantly.
- **Imparting ethical and moral values:** As it is well-known that ethical code of conduct among students and every individual is necessary for the society and ensuring its functioning smoothly. Since the students no doubt are the future of any particular nation. Therefore it is one of the foremost duty of the teachers to inculcate these moral values and ethical principles in their students so that they'll be able to serve the existing society in the best suited and possible manner.
- **Teaching religious tolerance:** Now a days in a country like India, religious tolerance is must as it has an immense impact on the life of its citizens. Since there are so many religions and faiths in this country which creates a probability of certain kind of issues occasionally. Therefore in such a situation the role of teachers becomes very crucial as they have a foremost duty to inculcate these certain specific values of tolerance and a feeling of community living among their students. If the students are inculcated these values properly then surely it will ensure peace and an environment of tolerance in the society and country.

- **Promotion to national integration:** National integration is an important and essential prerequisite for the process of ensuring nation building. Since a divided society can never build a prosperous and strong nation. As India has extreme diversity among its community in terms of their languages, existing customs and different sects. It is the duty of all teachers to make their students aware about the concept of national integration and teach them the ways of promotion of unity and integration. There should be a provision of regular debates and extra-curricular activities that can be held or organized in this regard.

(d). Obligation towards Profession: The profession of teaching is considered as one of the noblest and great profession. Along-with the other obligations of the teachers there are some specific ones towards his/her profession which are very much essential for all teachers. The some of the obligations of teachers as a professional towards their profession are being discussed below:

- **Enhancing their professional expertise:** As a professional it is the foremost duty of a teacher that he must never forget that the nature of the world is dynamic and which considers the teaching profession as noblest one. Therefore it is expected from all teachers as they are supposed to stick to the optimum level to their professional code of conduct. Further they are expected that they must always follow an extreme professional behavior and outlook within and outside the classroom.
- **Honoring the profession:** The teachers are expected that they must respect the profession of teaching on every occasion and all the time. It can't be denied that there are certain barriers which a teacher has to face but in spite of this all the teachers should take their profession with extreme respect and in high esteem. In order to help the professional growth, a teacher has to ensure the sharing of one's knowledge and experience with other teachers. The teachers are expected to carry out research from time to time and their findings can be published in the related magazines and important journals.
- **Improvement in the work culture:** A healthy work environment is essential for increasing the productivity in any profession, for this a suitable work culture is important for its growth and teaching profession is no exception. Therefore all the teachers are expected to maintain a cordial and a healthy relationship with their colleagues inside and outside the institution. They are therefore expected to make it sure that they'll participate in all related professional meetings and help them to formulate suitable policies.
- **Maintaining confidentiality in the organization:** The environment of discipline is an important and essential aspect of profession of teaching. There are certain kind of restricted and confidential information such as academic policy matters, general record of students, confidential examination performance, content of question papers, and assessment of answer scripts etc. These issues should not be discussed at any cost with any person which is not authorized to do so and also it should not be disclosed before time decided to do so. All the teachers is expected not to do anything which is

expected to bring any harm or disputation to their profession.

(e). Obligation towards the Higher Authorities: There are certain obligations of teachers also which are adhered to the higher authorities. The teachers are expected that they should coordinate with higher authorities in their actions with the higher authorities as per their dynamic needs which are very much essential for the effective functioning and the development of their organization as a complete unit. Some of their important obligations are being discussed below:

- **Giving due respect to rules and regulations:** The teacher should abide rules and regulations of an institution framed by higher ups in the authorities on time series basis to maintain uniformity, development and discipline among the staff and students as well.
- **Acting as a link between higher authorities and other stakeholders:** It is known to all that there are a lot of educational and non-educational policies which are normally formulated by the higher authorities in the field of education which is very much essential for the all-round development of their students and the institution as a whole. Therefore a teacher has to understand these specific policies and has to act as a link for the conveyance and implementation of these policies.
- **Providing strategic information:** In the field of education basically there is always a constant flow of information and a teacher has to act as an active source of providing this kind of important information between various stake-holders i.e. students and higher authorities with the help of which suitable suggestions could be invited and further in this way true picture can be sketched. In this way the teachers are able to plan and execute their suitable policies effectively.
- **Ensuring the effective implementation of the policies and programs:** The successful implementation of any plan and policy is a combined and collective effort or a team work of all stakeholder e.g. policy makers, organizers and teachers. The role of a teacher as an executor is very crucial as he/she has to act as a link effectively for the smooth implementation and execution of these specific policies and programs.

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