

Quality Teacher For Quality Education

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IN his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela, the founding father of the nation of South Africa said, "Education is the great engine of personal development. Education is the engine of productivity and creativity." What kind of "education" makes the great engine? Needless to say, it is only Quality Education. Quality Education means that certain minimum standard must be maintained in each class, in each course. The teacher must be capable of teaching the curriculum by maintaining a certain standard. The student must prove, by honest evaluation, that he/she has achieved a minimum level of learning. Education involves three critical steps: (1) teacher's ability to teach, (2) honest evaluation of the student and (3) the student's ability to learn. Steps 1 and 2 involve the teacher. A Quality Teacher will be able to fulfill the needs of these steps. It is therefore, very important to have Quality Teacher to have Quality Education.

To have Quality Teacher the recruitment procedure has to be such that it can filter out the poor quality teachers. Currently the schools themselves recruit teachers, sometimes in

the presence of a representative from the Education Board. Often an interview is all that is taken. The interview board may comprise of school managing committee members some of who may have little or no education. The board can barely evaluate a teacher, who may have much higher education. Such recruiting committee can hardly appreciate the importance of selecting a Quality Teacher. Rarely it can stand the pressure of local lobby. In this and many other ways ultimately the wrong kind of teacher gets recruited. For his own survival the wrong teacher will always maintain "links" with the influential people of the community. He will care little for Quality Education. Bad teacher produces worse students who in turn become worse teachers. This generates a vicious cycle, which multiplies and perpetuates over many years. Given such a situation a nation's future may be in jeopardy just because of bad teachers. It is time that attention is paid to having Qualified Teachers do the teaching for it is only they who can deliver Quality Education.

It is suggested that to ensure

hiring of Quality Teachers an Education Service Commission (ESC) be established. While the Education Boards are busy with school's operation and conducting examinations it will be ESC's goal to improve the quality of education by recruiting able teachers. Rules, laws commensurate with this goal will be formulated. ESC will evaluate teachers teaching in classes nine through twelve. It will hold examinations and maintain a list of qualified teachers. Only ESC qualified teachers will be eligible to teach in classes IX through XII. Continuous upgradation of teachers' knowledge and skill is vital to the quality of education. They need to be trained in newer curriculums and teaching methods. Every five years the qualified teachers will be reevaluated for quality. A teacher will be given three chances to pass the re-evaluation. In case he/she cannot pass the re-evaluation he/she will be barred from teaching in the designated classes. ESC will start holding examinations three years after its formation and functioning. Three years from the holding examinations it will be mandatory on the schools to

hire teachers from the ESC qualified teachers' list. They will be hired through the usual process of recruitment procedure as required by the Education Boards. The teachers who are on the school's pay roll now will have three years to pass the examination and have themselves included in the qualified list.

The government is making serious effort to improve literacy. It is also aware of the importance of Quality Education. Formation of the ESC will be a step in that direction. No body will expect that quality of education will improve overnight. But, over a period of time, ESC will be able to make significant contribution towards Quality Education. Every body, including those educated in the present system, feels that there is urgent need for improvement in educational quality. As the government finances a large part of finance of the schools it can rightly ask for quality. It is Quality Education that the nation needs not the other kind.

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