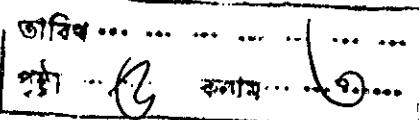


67/2012007



World Teacher's Day 2001

Teachers Are Fundamental To Quality Education

Prof. M.A. Bari

MORE than 100 countries of the world celebrated the 8th anniversary of world teacher's day on 5th Oct. 2001 just to remind the people that this day was proclaimed in 1994 by UNESCO to recognise the contributions and achievement of teachers as well as their concerns and priorities. This day the world pays its tribute in a tangible way to the teaching professionals who make contributions to move the world forward despite, some times, poor working conditions, limited resources and insufficient remunerations. There cannot be a question that teachers who undergird intellectual development in all fields should be honoured with recognition of their services to the future generation. The date 5th Oct. was chosen because of the fact that in 1966 on this date UNESCO adopted some recommendations concerning the status of teachers in a special intergovernmental conference in Paris in co-operation with ILO.

Teaching may be considered as the predecessor of all other professions and can be called as mother profession. It is essential to the civil society as the chief source of ingredients for intellectual and socio-economic development of human being in every aspect of life. It is the source of human progress and survival and well Organized Society. Education enhances activity, ability, expertise and understanding of an individual. In today's changing world of jobs and working conditions a society requires to draw special attention upon education, not only in terms of making base of knowledge, but also interns of skills and aptitude that would allow the learner to adapt to the changes taking place every moment.

This is a question swirling in the air who should teach? The answer was given by Lindley J. Stiles of University of Wisconsin in the Wisconsin journal of Education few years back "The best should teach". He said "Teaching beckons to those with the brightest minds, the finest personalities and the soundest moral and spiritual commitments". Why it is imperative that only the best should

teach? He said, "teachers are the curators of all our yesterdays and the architects of our tomorrows. Always they accomplish their mission through the minds and talents of others. To do is noteworthy but to be able to do and to devote one's knowledge and energies to helping others learn is man's noblest work. In the proclamation of "Status of teachers" in the article V-II, it has been endorsed by stating "policy governing entry in to the preparation for teaching should rest on the need to provide society with an adequate supply of teachers who possess the necessary moral, intellectual and physical qualities and who have the required professional knowledge and skills". Asstt. Director General of UNESCO Jhon Daniel on the world teacher's day 5th Oct. 2001 came out with warning that 15 million more teachers are to be hired over the coming decade and as such numerous countries will fail to reach target of universal basic education by 2015 as pledged by more than 180 countries a year ago. The teachers shortage is acute in Southern Asia and much of Africa and it also encompasses the United States where shortfall would cross two million during the same period. In the joint message on the world teacher's day 2001 heads of UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and ILO have noted "Severe shortage of qualified and experienced teaching staff" and called for "comprehensive and sustainable solutions (that) give central importance to the training, recruitment, deployment and retention of motivated, well paid and well-resourced professional teachers."

Salary increase and position over the course of a career plays a vital role in leading qualified individuals to enter and remain in the teaching profession. In Thailand, an experienced primary school teacher earns almost five times as much as a new colleague. In Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia and Jordan experienced teaching professional's Salaries are between 2.3 and 3.4 times higher than the starting Salaries. But in Bangladesh, by contrast, in maximum private

educational institutions salaries do not change much over the course of a career as expected for and position in most cases remain stagnant.

The slogan for world teacher's day of 2001 is "qualified teachers for quality education". Quality education has got an indispensable relation with the qualified teachers. In the educational objective and policies of recommendations concerning the status of teachers adopted by UNESCO and ILO in the Article 10 (g), it was clearly said that no state should be satisfied with mere quantity, but should seek also to improve quality of education and qualified educational professionals are very much meaningful to over one billion students in the world today. This year's theme encompasses dual themes of teachers as indispensable for education and are in a position of helping government and nation. Declaration to meet their international commitment of jomtein and Dakar. Declaration to provide education for all. Koichiro Matsuura Director General UNESCO, Juan Somavia Director General ILO, Mark Malloch Brown Administrator UNDP and Carol Bellary Executive Director UNICEF in their joint message for 2001 world teachers day urged all member states to follow the commitment made at the world Education forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, to enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.

Keen debate may be raised around to provide quality education. It is only possible through dialogue with educational professionals and teachers organizations who are in learning process. Students learning condition is very much linked with teacher's working condition. So pedagogical environment of the institution must be congenial.

To improve quality of teachers they should not be allowed to 'burn out' in the process, rather they should be kept in the network of continuous professional development training programme to be able to bear the responsibility to prepare the next generation, to function efficiently in the changing world.

But the fact remains in the countries like ours that too often due to lack of political wills and means Government becomes very much reluctant to accomplishment of training and pedagogical facilities, providing necessary working conditions and good salaries for teachers.

Louis Van Beneden, president and Gaston De La Haye, Secretary General of World Confederation of Teachers in their message on the world teacher's day 2001 said that only on three conditions world teachers today even more than yesterday be in a position to take up their responsibility and to fully play their role. First one is to have access to quality initial and in service training, scientifically and pedagogically relevant and open culture of peace and sustainable development. The second condition is relevant social acknowledgment through setting up decent schools and learning/infrastructure, through the social status of teachers and salary that allows a decent living. The third is the participation in the debate of education. In Bangladesh there is seldom even a reluctant practice of initial two conditions and the last one is dominantly controlled by the bureaucratic attitude.

Two themes suggested by UNESCO for this World Teacher's Day are :- (1) "Teachers are fundamental to guarantee quality education" (2) "The fundamental role of teachers in helping member states meet the objectives of recent world conferences on education...." This message stresses the essential role of teachers in the education process and it is an acknowledgment that opens doors of hope for commitment towards teachers. To materialise this theme we call upon all leaders in education, at all levels in all sectors, to give support to the teachers who are the actors and not just operators in the education process so that they can guarantee quality of education.

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