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Training The Teachers

— M. Nurul Karim

Education is said to be an investment in human resources. Proper education of our younger generation has much to do with the economic and social growth of the Nation. But it all depends on the quality and dedication of our teachers through whom nation building ideas are transmitted to the younger generation. It has been said that no system of education is better than its teachers. Hence the training of teacher is essential and on that account Teachers' Training Institutions play an important role in a progressive system of education.

Teaching is a kind of social service of a very high order. The type of student that our schools produce depends largely on the type of teachers coming out of the training institutions.

The main purpose of teacher education, therefore, is to develop competence of the teachers in the method of teaching and widen the scope of their knowledge and outlook in the hope that they will improve instructions in their respective subject in the classroom.

The question of the training of teachers concerned with the teaching of students, specially of the Primary, Secondary and Upper Secondary levels has been considered necessary since days long past in almost all the developed and developing countries of the world. But with the enormous annual increase in the roll strength of students and the consequent shortage of trained teachers some of the developing countries like India, Pakistan, Thailand and Sri Lanka have taken recourse to a sort of distance education of teachers through a direct open university course at a minimum cost with maximum advantage of teacher education. The concept of such an open University is said to have originated in Britain towards the later half of the nineteenth century and subsequently the idea spread to U.S.A. and other countries. The importance of an open University was discussed in the last Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers held in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, and Bangladesh placed a proposal there in favour of an open University for distance education. The advantages of distance education have frequently been discussed in the Press and on T.Vs and hence these need not be reiterated here.

The necessity of such a University in Bangladesh is keenly felt at the moment. I am, however, here interested to make my observations on the distance education project taken up by the Institute of Distance Education under the aegis of Dr. K.M. Sirajul Islam through the patronage of the Ministry of Education in Bang-

ladesh and by the direct recognition by the Rajshahi University so far as its courses of study for B.Ed. and the award of B.Ed degree are concerned. It is the only multimedia based institute with capacity to produce and use various types of media services like slides, film strips, audio/video cassettes, still and movie pictures and also with facility to distribute some audio-control console sets to secondary school and though it can also manage periodical broadcast for Primary and Secondary schools and school Teachers (to the benefit of Distance Education Teachers as well) and maintains programmes for Adult education etc. Still its merit is primarily assessed and appreciated through its formal B.Ed. course of study. It awards B.Ed degree of the completion of two years' course of study divided into four Semester term courses.

This year as many as 1675 candidates have been awarded B.Ed degree, whereas the total number of successful B.Ed candidates of all the existing ten B.Ed training colleges of the academic year 1985-86 happened to be about 3000 (results of 1987 have not yet been out). This is a significant contribution of the institute in its initial stage with its existing financial constraint. It started with 3211 untrained graduate in-service secondary school teachers including ten staffs from the Army Corp, on July 1, 1985, out of which at the end of two years in this year (1987) 1675 have come out successful.

Dearth of suitable text-books for the Teachers' Training Colleges to meet the requirement of B.Ed syllabi was always keenly felt in the past. But this Institute has done a yeoman's service in this regard by preparing a set of text-books on various subjects by engaging a group of scholars which not only serve the purpose of the education of the institute but also have become a source of information for the trainees of the existing ten Teachers' Training Colleges of the country. Selected number of untrained in-service teachers are taken from recognised schools to whom text-books are supplied with necessary instructions and with arrangement of periodical classes in the regional training colleges during vacations. Suitable arrangements for practical demonstration classes are also held in regional Teachers' Training College according to the convenience of the candidates during vacations.

I happened to have been connected with the final practical and viva voce tests of B.Ed of T.T. Colleges and also of the recent B.Ed final of Distance Education Institute and had a chance to form a comparative estimate of the performance of the two

types of candidates of B.Ed Courses of study.

The Distance Education candidates were generally found more care-free and confident than the Training College candidates. This is perhaps because of their long standing teaching experience in school, whereas most of the candidates of the T.T. Colleges lacked in previous teaching experience and were unemployed outsiders or fresh from the University. The candidates of the T.T. Colleges, on the other hand, were mostly found comparatively good, methodical, particular in the observance of the procedure of the method of teaching, whereas in the case of the Distance Education candidates omissions in methodical procedure were noticed in most of their cases. This is because of the practical course of training for a period of 2-3 months with lesson notes preparation on the part of the candidates of the T.T. Colleges which are wanting in the case of the Distance Education Candidate. So, if more arrangement of practical classes with lesson notes preparation for the Distance Education candidates can be made, the more benefited they will be in this regard.

As regards the outward personality show of teachers, I could notice no difference between the two sets of teachers of the two separate course of study. They are all found to be neat and clean and smartly dressed as compared with the teachers of days past who were mostly known for their simplicity and dedication and devotion to the cause of education rather than for any kind of outward display.

Common Feature

But the striking common feature which I noticed in both types of B.Ed trainees was their uniform lack of deep knowledge of the subject of their teaching. They seem to depend on the class text-book and fail to supply additional information to their students, nor can they inspire them with high ideal of their future advanced course of study. In other words they fail to arouse curiosity in the mind of their pupils to learn more and more. A teacher has much to do with the future learning of his students. The depth of knowledge of a teacher is destined to create a learning tempo in his pupils. A scholarly teacher is always remembered by his students. Of course, we have got our limitations, we have dearth of such qualified teachers for our school. It is not possible for us to have the services of scholars in schools as are mostly found in the Primary and Secondary Institutions of advanced countries of the world.

In order to make the Teachers'

Training Colleges attractive to scholars attempts were made here in Bangladesh in days past by posting scholars of repute at such Training Colleges. Thus for example, Prof. Shamsul Huq, ex-Foreign Minister, Science Scholars like late Dr. Surat Ali Khan (Ex-Project Director, J.U.), Mr. Ferdaus Khan, (Rtd. Adl. Secy. Edu), Dr. Abdullah-al Muti Sharifuddin (Rtd. Secy. Scientific Edn.), English Scholar late Mr. Fazlur Rahman (Ex.D.P.I), famous Psychiatrist and Philosopher Mr. M.U. Ahmed (Ex-Member P.S.C.) all had their assignments in Teachers' Training Colleges as Professors, Vice-Principal, and as Principals. I was also induced to follow in the footsteps of these scholars assignment by accepting an assignment in the Premier Dhaka Teachers' Training College as Vice-Principal in the Senior Educational Service on transfer from Dhaka College (where I was then Professor of History and Vice-Principal) and as Principal Rajshahi Teachers' Training College at the fag end of my service career.

When I joined the Dhaka Teachers' Training College in 1963, I could find the Teacher trainees in moribund conditions, suffering from chill penury and frustration of life caused by failure to have suitable employment elsewhere. I tried my best to inspire them with the higher ideal of teaching profession and to make them conscious of the noble profession of 'man making business'. At the same time I tried to encourage them to have ambition for higher degree by personal efforts. Because of my persuasion I had the satisfaction to see some such trainees as College Teachers in subsequent years.

Now-a-days teachers are handsomely paid and even non-Government teachers get 70 p.c. of their pay from the Government fund. They are now recognition in society. All that is needed is their dedication to the cause of the community irrespective of caste and creed. In order to have a dignified position in society a teacher should have depth of knowledge, an attitude of being a real friend, philosopher and guide of his students. He should have a philosophy of life and must be conversant with new techniques and methods of teaching of the advanced countries of the world just to make his lessons fruitful in the class room. If a teacher thinks that his Master's degree or Bachelor degree is enough for his job and further study is not needed he will live a fools' paradise. He will have to march with the clarion call of education of other enlightened countries of the world so that he may make significant contribution to society as a teacher.