



## **TEACHING PROFESSION AND TEACHER ETHICS IN PRESENT EDUCATION STATE OF AFFAIRS**

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### **Abstract**

*In the fast changing world of 21<sup>st</sup> century education is also changing. As a part of the change, role of schools and education will also be different both in educational system and in the society. The role of the Teaching Councils is to regulate the teaching profession and the professional conduct of teachers, to establish and promote professional standards, to support the continuing professional development of teachers and to promote teaching as a profession. Also the teachers reveal their professional aims and needs for the future. The paper maintains that the current era, marked by a new global economy transforming economic and social development, has created the need for a reorganisation of teachers' representation. It sensitise the policy framer to come up with the Professional Code of Ethics which aims to create a sense of professional identity and unity among teachers and it further addresses in the ethical frameworks of what it means to be a teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching Profession, Teacher Ethics and Education*



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### **Introduction**

It is increasingly recognized across both developed and developing countries that education quality is of concern to more than ministries of education. It is observed that governments, business, and the general public have begun to recognize that differentials in the academic performance of a nation's student body have broad ramifications. With continued globalization, comparative educational attainment is manifested in comparative economic improvement. The increasing use of comparative achievement tests, permit direct comparisons among the youth of different countries, with the potential that prospective international investors can gauge the relative level of expertise of different national labour forces. Likewise, national examinations permit comparative judgments about the quality of labour forces both between and within countries.

Although the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) ushered in a decade of growing recognition of education's vital role in national development and the preparation of young people for active and productive lives in the knowledge-based societies of the twenty-first century, many governments have continued to regard public expenditure on education as an area of potential savings rather than as an investment in the future. In consequence, improvement in the material rewards for teaching and in teachers' status generally have not been priority concerns of educational policy. In most regions of the world, few (if any) informed observers believe that the status of teachers has improved in recent years; the majority believe it has declined. Moreover, it has not just been teachers' salaries and status which have failed to benefit in recent years from policies towards public expenditure on education. Teaching and learning conditions and the material situation of the schools generally probably a majority of countries, have also failed to benefit.

Globalization is a process, which has affected many areas of human life, one of those being education. Education is undergoing constant changes under the effects of globalization. The effects of Globalization on education bring rapid developments in technology and communications are foreseeing changes within school systems across the world as ideas, values and knowledge, changing the roles of students and teachers, and producing a shift in society from industrialization towards an information-based society Education systems are reacting differently to the changes in the world's new economic, political and cultural orders. Globalization has become an influence in nation-states' social reforms as education sectors adjust to the new global environments that are characterized by flexibility, diversity, increased competition and unpredictable change. Understanding the effects of globalization on teaching and learning is essential for any policy maker, reform designer and educational Professionals.

According to Carnoy, the approach which governments take in reforming their education sector and its responses to globalization depends on three key factors:

- i) the government's objective financial situation,
- ii) its interpretation in that situation,
- iii) Its political-ideological position regarding the public sector in education.

Teaching is the noblest of all professions. In order to maintain their professional status, teachers have to own certain responsibilities both as individual and as members of a respectable profession. It is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should also have its own Code of Professional Ethics which indeed is a prerequisite to ensure its dignity and integrity. It is also significant that the Right of Children to

Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some onerous professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Good Teachers are the Cornerstone of Quality Education.

### **Teacher Ethics**

The movement to articulate and define what it means to be a teacher has political roots. The teaching profession has evolved out of negotiations among demands of different stakeholders in education. The Education International campaign presents an alternative vision of what it means to be a teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and counters the overall critical discourse pursued in educational policy and filtering into public perception. The construction of a code of ethics for teachers can be seen as part of global social movement, which represents a bipartisan and bilateral way for the teaching profession to reunite as a global epistemic community.

### **Teachers: Creating hope for tomorrow**

Each day, over 60 million teachers care for 1 billion children, cultivating their souls and minds. Any process that attempts to improve the quality of education promote peace and harmony and eliminate discrimination requires teachers. Teachers work with children who will be the leaders of tomorrow. But for teachers to be effective, they must be well-trained, motivated, have a decent work environment, good pay and an attractive career path, professional, social, ethical and material concerns. The professional ethics of a teacher requires a new pedagogy for the global world with the context sensitivity.

**According to Swami Vivekananda**, “The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the students, and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through the student’s eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher and none else can really teach. A teacher’s work should be guided primarily by love and not by any selfish motive, such as money or name and fame. The teacher should impart man-making and character-building education to his students, through his good conduct and ideal behavior.”

**Mahatma Gandhi**, (Young India, 24 January 1925) emphasized that “the teacher himself must possess the virtues that he wants to inculcate in the students. This means that the teacher must practice these virtues himself, otherwise his words will have no effect.” He further highlighted (Young India, April 1929) that “the teacher should be able to establish a heart to heart contact with the students...”

About the ethical duties of the teacher, **Sri Aurobindo** says, “The teacher is not an instructor or task-master; he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does

not call forth the knowledge that is within, he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to raise to the surface.”

It is considered important that the Code of Professional Ethics constantly evolve and is adopted by the teaching community. For the purpose of this Code, the term “teacher” covers all school teachers, whether in government or private schools, on full-time or part-time basis, at the elementary and secondary levels and the teachers holding administrative and supervisory positions.

As teachers have profound influence on the lives of children, there are high expectations from them. They're required to serve as strong role models and demonstrate ethical behaviors as they interact with students, colleagues, parents and others. So, developing and following a professional code of ethics can go a long way in ensuring that teachers act in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

### **A Framework of Principles for Teaching Professional:**

The Code of Professional Ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to be followed in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the ethical principles governing the teaching profession is extremely important to ensure ‘professionalism’ among teachers.

- a. Recognizing that every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality;
- b. Recognizing that every child has an inherent potential and talent;
- c. Recognizing that education should be directed to the all round development of the human personality;
- d. Recognizing the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism; Recognizing the need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity;
- e. Recognizing that teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people;
- f. Recognizing the need to enhance self-esteem of teachers;
- g. Recognizing the need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites;
- h. Recognizing that the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers’ professionalism;
- i. Recognizing the need for self-direction and self-discipline among members of the teaching community.

The present Code of Professional Ethics for school teachers is an attempt to provide direction and guidance to the teachers in enhancing the dignity of their professional work.

### **Working with Students**

A teacher's primary job is to provide quality education to all students irrespective of his or her caste, religion, gender or ethnicity. A professional code of ethics must address this issue, stating that teachers in any instance must not show favouritism or discriminate against students. Teachers also must interact with students appropriately without taking any advantage of students in any way, bullying them or putting them down. Also contact with students outside the classroom or school building must be minimal and a teacher's primary focus should be on school-related activities and events.

### **Student Safety**

In addition to a teacher's job to help all students to learn, a professional code of ethics also addresses a teacher's responsibility to keep students safe. Teachers must abide by all school and classroom safety procedures to ensure student safety. It's also a teacher's responsibility to report instances of bullying and harassment. If teacher suspects cases of abuse or neglect, or a student confides in a teacher in cases of abuse or neglect, the teacher is required to report it to the proper authorities, even if the student requests otherwise.

### **Professional Ethics for Teacher while teaching Students**

- a. They should treat all students with love and affection.
- b. They should respects the value of being fair and impartial to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex, economic status, disability, language and place of birth.
- c. They should facilitate the student's physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and moral development.
- d. They should respect basic human dignity of the child in each and every aspects of school life.
- e. They should make planned and systematic efforts to facilitate the child to actualize his/her potential and talent.
- f. They should transact the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- g. They should adapt their teaching to the individual needs of the students.
- h. They should maintain the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispenses such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it.
- i. They should refrain from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse, and mental and emotional harassment.

- j. They should keep a dignified disgrace or commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

### **Professional Ethics of a teacher towards Parents, Community and Society**

- a. They should establish a relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students.
- b. They should desist from doing anything which is derogatory to the respect of the child or his/her parents/guardians.
- c. They should strive to develop respect for the composite culture of India among students.
- d. They should keep the country upper most in mind, refrains from taking part in such activities as may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious or linguistic groups.

### **Professional Practice**

Teachers must absolutely maintain ethical behavior in professional practice by accurately representing and maintaining certifications, licenses and other qualifications. Applying for a teaching certificate with fabricated information or lying about meeting the requirements to renew the certificate can lead to a loss of teaching privileges. In addition to qualifications, teachers must be ethical in his or her behavior when it comes to reporting grades and handling assessments. Misrepresenting grades or changing student responses on assessments can lead not only to the loss of a job but pressing of criminal charges as well.

### **Working with Colleagues**

In a school, teachers must work together with administrators, fellow teachers and other employees in order to provide a safe, positive and insightful learning experience for students. A teacher must follow the direction of administrators, even if rules or expectations seem unreasonable, in order to avoid undermining an administrator's authority and also in order to set a positive example for students. When differences come up between teachers, they must handle the disagreements in private and refrain from talking negatively about colleagues and especially in front of students. In addition, teachers must also engage in appropriate relationships with colleagues, keeping personal feelings and adult behaviors out of the confines of the school.

### **Interacting with Stakeholders**

Aside from colleagues, teachers also have a responsibility to interact in a positive manner with parents and other stakeholders in a child's education. Contact with parents must be kept strictly professional, free from arguments and physical contact. If a teacher has any issue with

a parent, another teacher or administrator must be present during all meetings. Teachers also must avoid being unduly influenced by parents and other stakeholders while grading students.

**Professional Ethics of a teacher towards the Profession and Colleagues:**

- a. They should strive for his/her continuous professional development.
- b. They should create a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders.
- c. They should take pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity.
- d. They should refrain from engaging himself/herself in private tuition or private teaching activity.
- e. They should refrain from accepting any gift, or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
- f. They should refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues or higher authorities.
- g. They should avoid making derogatory statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of students, other teachers, officials or parents.
- h. Respects the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues.
- i. They should maintain confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispenses such information only when authorized to do so.

**Effect of Globalization on Teaching Profession**

As a consequence of the introduction of technology into the classroom in the era of globalization the teaching profession across the globe has underwent numerous changes. The nature of delivering instructions to students is gradually evolving as a new form of electronic literacy is on the rise. More programs and educational materials are made available to students in electronic form and also teachers are preparing materials in electronic form; and students are generating papers, assignments and projects in electronic form. Blackboards are being replaced by Video projection screens, books with storage device servers and CD ROMs and on-line digital libraries. Even exams and grades are gradually becoming available through electronic means and notebooks are being replaced by laptops within the confines of the classroom. Computer managed learning systems can come handy in examining the students and also tutorial exercises can be done on a computer rather than in a classroom. Such development in education marks a kind of major shift from industrialization to information-based societies. As a consequence, technology is foreseeing a change in the education environment towards increasing dependence upon electronic sources to deliver



material. With the emergence of video conferencing and the Internet in this globalized world, the barriers of distance have broken down at a rapid rate to a considerable extent. In our current globalized world Children and adults can now learn in a variety of ways and no longer need to be physically present in an education institution in order to learn. The rapid growth of television services, with their immense influence as media of mass communication, has been very prominent in the new technological shift. Other large contributions to this shift include the transistor and space satellites. Emergence of Internet, which is a massive network of computers located throughout the world, hints at major technological advancements.

These days often computers are used to maintain libraries of text, images, computer software, and other forms of data that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, at any time. This implementation of technology and communication to be successful and to educate a society, both the students and teachers need to be technologically literate and provisions should be made to train them in this particular aspect. Communication technology offers new challenges for students of all abilities as they can discuss issues of concern with their fellow students from around the world, thus developing communication and interpersonal skills, fostering a mutual understanding across countries and cultures. Developments in the delivery of education are allowing individuals to enquire deeper into new areas of learning and thinking that could not be done with pen and paper. They are discovering knowledge through inquiry and experimentation rather than memorizing facts in a teacher dominated classroom setting like in the earlier period. In fact, students no longer need to be physically present to learn as educational material is becoming readily available over the Internet, through video conferencing, and tape recordings. Institutions are now rapidly turning towards the use of the Internet to deliver courses to students. A shift in education is becoming evident where more responsibility is being placed upon the student and not just on the teacher. Naturally it follows that the teachers themselves also need to be highly technologically literate as they need competence and confidence to prepare students for a global information society. Globalization and technological advancements imply greater access to knowledge. Another important point to be kept in mind is that while education institutions in western societies are embracing technology, developing countries are once again left behind being too weak and fragile to implement development programs for education. While third world countries encourage their citizens to seek more education, severe limitations in delivering basic services are a problem. A lack of infrastructure and funding makes it difficult to implement any technological and communication advancements in developing countries like India. However, despite differences in economy, political, culture and society, second and third



worlds have also tried their best to adopt educational ideals from western thought and are anxious to appear modern and therefore promote education as a symbol of modernity and development to their own population and the foreign countries.

The spread of education internationally, as a result of globalization, has clearly had serious impacts on cultures worldwide. The capitalist society is gradually becoming global with a strong emphasis on free trade. Educational institutions have reacted accordingly, by becoming increasingly more market oriented, focusing their energy more on creating funds rather than providing sufficient well-rounded education for students. Due to this increasing free trade around the globe as a result of breaking down of protective regimes in many sectors; education is increasingly being drawn into this global capitalist competition.

The Internationalization of education has become one of the major themes of educational policy and planning in the 1990s. In the face of integration of worldwide capital and labour markets; educators are being forced to respond to a new set of challenges. The internationalization of education, particularly higher education, is an emerging phenomenon. Universities and colleges around the world are being increasingly forced to compete in the global capitalist market and engage in entrepreneurial activity to sustain themselves in an increasingly uncertain and competitive world.

The role of education has become rapidly more connected to globally competitive positions. Subsequent changes in university functions have lead universities toward direct entrepreneurial activity to sustain themselves. This in turn produces a change in institutional approaches to the development of overseas education. University courses must now be cross-cultural in content, which is in association with the growing number of students, particularly in the 1990's, searching for higher education outside of their own country. Education is becoming more invaluable to individuals. In today's environment, education provides individuals with a better chance of employment, which in turn leads to a better lifestyle, power and status.

The changes in the global world must be accompanied by certain prominent changes in the realm of education as well. In this current globalized world the role of the teacher must also undergo number of changes. A teacher's role should not be confined merely to imparting knowledge of particular disciplines. He/ She also try to make his/her students better citizens of this globalized world. If a teacher performs this role efficiently soon a day will come, when all the people will be equipped well to negotiate in a meaningful manner with the global world.

To sum up this encroaching phenomenon called globalization has more or less impacted upon every possible aspect of our present world including the teaching profession. Therefore, it falls upon the teaching community to evolve along with the changing times. Also, I would like to reiterate that despite massive changes in our society in the wake of globalization certain things have remained somewhat same. The concept of a teacher in a modern society has remained same like in the past to considerable extent. Even in terms of attire, teachers in the Indian context have shown a greater inclination towards ethnic wear. In the course of my paper I have argued how a teacher should employ a code of professional ethics to grapple with our present globalized reality.

The code of Ethics therefore needs to be constructed as a powerful statement about teacher identity that addresses issues of gender and representation that confront the profession. By reaching out to global organisations that have used teacher ethics as a way to unite the profession at the global level, local organisations can align themselves to powerful coalitions that give greater capacity for teachers to empower their own profession and be a force in determining what it means to be a teacher in the new century.

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