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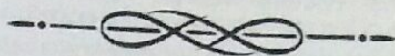
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CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIAN TEACHERS

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Introduction

Teaching is a difficult profession. There are many problems for teachers that make the profession more complicated than it has to be. This does not mean that everyone should avoid being a teacher. There are also substantial benefits and rewards for those who decide that they want a career in teaching. The truth is that every job has its own unique set of challenges. Teaching is no different. These problems sometimes make it feel as if you are constantly fighting an uphill battle.

Professional Status of Teaching

However, most teachers find a way to overcome this adversity. They do not allow obstacles to stand in the way of student learning. However, teaching would be easier if the following are seven problems could be resolved. Teaching is not considered as one of the most sought after career in India; hence the primary challenge is to raise the status of teaching as a career choice. This stems from the general perception that people harbor about this profession which is, that anyone can become a teacher as it takes minimal skill and is nothing but glorified baby-sitting.

Well, to some extent it is true as a non competitive teacher really has minimal skills whereas a good teacher has leadership skills which can even challenge a senior manager of a company. This status can also be attributed by our hiring process in B.Ed programs.

Financial Compensation

As mentioned in my previous article teaching is one of the most underpaid jobs barring some schools which strictly adhere to pay commission of scales. Even appreciation in form of financial incentive is not a very popular culture.

These problems are not restricted to government or low cost private schools but also to posh international schools where the average annual fee structure of a student ranges from Rs.6 Lakhs to 10 Lakhs. The school management and board of directors mostly prefer cheap labour. Again this is because of the low professional status of teachers in our society. The teaching profession is dominated by women and we see very less men who prefer being a teacher. Women are not considered as the primary breadwinner of a family and hence their compensation is abysmally poor compared to the fee structure that these international schools charge.

Commercialization of Education

The general Indian mentality believes that privatization is the solution to everything dysfunctional in our country. This public perception stems from the status quo that an Indian family enjoys when they send their children to these 'Modern temples of education' which have air conditioned classrooms, buses and infrastructure equivalent to a five star resort like tennis court, swimming pool. It gives immense pride to parents and an opportunity for them to gloat about the fact that their children go to school where students are well dressed, their classmates come from the elite strata of the society and most important they are 'English medium schools'.

Lack of Motivation and Support

Teachers don't have a voice and have no say about educational policy. The concept of motivated teacher is also a flawed one because most of them feel that a motivated teacher is one who is regular to school every day, follows official protocols blindly without questioning and if necessary provide information that management team wants! The real focus shifts from student learning outcomes to complying orders as fount fit by the administrative department relegating teachers to a mere stature of puppets who have no voice.

Professional Development and Teacher's Needs

Education sector is a very dynamic industry. A good teacher needs to be constantly updated with the best practices practiced across the world. This means reevaluating and reflecting one's pedagogical skills by adopting rigorous study, practice and self – improvement. The high performing countries keep professional development and training as the top most priority and they conduct in-house trainings every month in addition to regular classroom observations and feedback by peers and line managers.