

Commitment to Teaching - A Need for a Paradigm Shift

Dilma Thushari Koggalage, Senior Lecturer, Department of History,
K.A.T. Dharaneeta, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy.

Abstract

The criteria for measuring the success of a teacher as an educator can be varied as well as subjective. This is mainly due to the fact the phrase 'success as an educator' has a dynamic meaning according to socio-cultural background of a given context across the globe. Therefore defining criteria to evaluate a teacher's success level as an educator is a difficult task. However, a general definition would surely include excellence, innovation, creativity and commitment as main components in a teacher's role as an educator. In this study each of the above mentioned components were taken up by separate groups to carry out a study mainly based on secondary sources using interviews as methodology.

The aim of the present study is to look into the idea 'commitment to be an educator' and also to evaluate where commitment stands when it comes to university teachers as educators. The study area or sample consisted of university teachers from various parts of India and a limited number of Sri Lankan university teachers. The hypothesis was that there is a need for a paradigm shift in understanding commitment by university teachers pertaining to their role as educators.

The word commitment can broadly be defined as 'A feeling of obligation to follow a particular course of action or to seek a particular goal. As a result, freedom of choice and the number of alternatives in social action are limited.' (Gupta, O.P., 1982) This definition was taken as a base for this study. It can be said that the commitment of the teacher can be identified at three levels, i.e. personal, social and professional. These three levels which are common to university teachers as well, are determining factors of the commitment of a university teacher as an educator. And the other factor which determines this commitment would be the motivators and de-motivators which affect the professional life of a teacher. Although there is no concrete criterion to evaluate the effect of these motivators and de-motivators the study shows that they really affect the educator's level of commitment.

In conclusion, the need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the three levels of commitment can be emphasized with regard to reaching an optimum level of commitment to get into the role of an educator by a university teacher. And the identification of motivator and de-motivators in a given context of a teaching environment is a must with regard to achieving highest level of commitment from a teacher as an educator. The need for paradigm shift in understanding commitment of a teacher as an educator is essential. And this should be done in the areas of personality of an individual, organizing, implementing teaching methods and also the role of an individual in the given institutional framework.

Key words: *university teaching, educator, commitment*