UNIT 5 PERSONALITY OF A TEACHER

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having understood the school system in our country, it is now necessary to think about the teaching profession. In Block 1 we have studied the importance and place of school in a society. We have also read about the structural and organisational, hierarchies of a school system.

Let us try to classify schools of our country in broad categories. One mode of classification is by levels viz. primary and secondary schools. Other classification is private and public, English and regional language medium schools, schools with almost all the required facilities and schools with hardly any infrastructure facilities available and so on. In all categories of schools, a team of teachers is working to achieve the national goals of education through the media of different curricular and co-curricular activities. Apart from this, the student clientele is drawn from different strata of society. Students differ from one another in many respects, like socio-economic background, educational background of the family, interest to learn and so on. Such situations demand from a teacher an understanding of the complexities involved in the teaching profession. What makes teaching a profession? How is teaching different from a vocation? What different roles has a teacher to play in order to achieve the goals of education? In this unit, we shall find answers to such questions.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define the concept ‘profession’;
- list characteristics of a profession;
- differentiate between a profession and a vocation;
- list the characteristics of a teaching profession;
describe different roles that a teacher is expected to play while carrying out teaching effectively; and

- describe the need for the integrated personality of the teacher.

### 5.3 Teaching as a Profession

In order to understand teaching as a profession, let us first understand what is meant by a profession.

#### 5.3.1 What is a Profession?

A profession can be defined as an occupation which requires some specialised study and training, and the purpose of which is generally to provide skilled services and guidance in lieu of a definite fee or remuneration. However, some professionals may provide services without asking for payment.

A profession is a calling and it implies acquisition of a fund of knowledge, range of skills and their application in the service of humanity. The service rendered by a professional may be direct as in the case of teachers and doctors or indirect as it is in the case of teacher educators, i.e., teachers of teachers. Further, this service may be rendered for a limited segment of the population or for a limited period of time or phase of life. This service is not rendered to the entire student population which gets graduation or post-graduation, but, it is rendered to those who have aptitude for the profession. It is rendered for a limited period of time in the sense that an individual is expected to go through training before taking up the profession and then, is expected to update his/her knowledge and skills after a regular interval of time.

There is another way of looking at the same situation. Any professional person provides professional service for a limited period of time when his/her clientele are in an institution or within the institutional framework; for example, a teacher who is a professional person renders his/her service for a period of time when students (clientele) are in educational institutions and within the institutional framework, of a school, college or university. A profession can be practiced independently or within an institution or both. This means if teaching is accepted as a profession, a teacher can teach either independently to students or within a school along with a team of teachers.

So far, we have learnt that a profession is based upon specialised study and training, it provides skilled service and guidance for a definite purpose to a limited section of the population for a limited period of time and can be practiced independently or within an institution.

#### 5.3.2 Characteristics of a Profession

A profession indicates certain specific characteristics. They are:

i) A profession demands possession of a body of specialised knowledge and extended practical training.

ii) A profession renders an essential social service.

iii) A profession demands continuous inservice training of its members.

iv) A profession has a clearly defined membership of a particular group, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the profession.

v) A profession involves a code of ethics.

vi) A profession sets up its own professional organisation.

vii) A profession assures its members a professional career.

As stated above, a typical profession exhibits a complex of characteristics.

Let us try to understand them with the following clarifications.

The forming of a professional organisation, developing a code of ethics, offering a life career to its members, or even granting of action are all shared by trade associations or guides. Then
where is the difference? There are two criteria that are basic to a profession. A profession "professes" to do two things: one is to serve and the other is to serve with conscious understanding and efficiency. While all other vocations also serve, the profession not only serves but makes service its prime motive. Even when there is a conflict between the interests of the client and that of the society, selfish interest recedes in favour of the professional interest. The profession and other vocations differ in the sense that a profession is well grounded in its sound knowledge and expertise. It has good qualities like altruism and longing for authentic knowledge on the part of the members which differentiates a profession from a trade.

5.3.3 Characteristics of a Teaching Profession

In this sub-unit, we shall try to elicit the characteristics of a teaching profession and then try to understand why teaching is called a profession.

The following are the characteristics of a teaching profession:

i) It essentially involves an intellectual operation.

ii) It draws material from science.

iii) It transforms raw material for a practical and definite end.

iv) It possesses an educationally communicable technique.

v) It tends towards self-organisation.

vi) It essentially performs a social service.

vii) It involves a lengthy period of study and training.

viii) It has a high degree of autonomy.

ix) It is based upon a systematic body of knowledge.

x) It has a common code of ethics.

xi) It generates inservice growth.

Having identified the characteristics of a teaching profession, let us analyse each of these characteristics in detail.

i) It essentially involves an intellectual operation

Teaching, it has been said, is not mere talking. This is so because teaching requires conscious organisation of learning activities, deliberate creation of a conducive and supportive learning environment. While providing learning experiences a teacher has to constantly analyse and evaluate classroom climate and evolve a suitable plan of action to achieve the pre-specified desirable change in the behaviours of a group of learners who are constantly varying with respect to their interest and understanding speed. All such operations, which are to be carried out by a teacher, are intellectual operations.

ii) It draws material from science

Teaching is not only an art but also a science. On the basis of this assumption, a teacher can be trained. The moment it is accepted as a science, it has definite steps which are followed in training a teacher.

iii) It transforms raw material into a practical and definite end

In teaching profession, the learners constitute the raw material. These learners are prepared to teach in a continuously evolving society which has varied expectations. Learners are trained into a practical and definite end by means of providing practical training in teaching and other pedagogical courses.

iv) It possesses an educationally communicable technique

As teaching is a science, teaching techniques are systematic and have definite steps to be followed. It is easily communicable.
v) It tends towards self-organisation
It is self-organised in a sense that the personels who are engaged in teaching profession are sensitive towards growth and development. They evolve a definite mechanism to sustain and promote the standards of teaching profession.

vi) It essentially performs a social service
Teaching is a social service. It has generally been accepted that education is potent tool to bring about changes in any nation. The obvious evidence of such a statement are the developed nations like U.S.A., U.S.S.R. These and other nations have been able to constantly develop because of high rates of literacy. It is through teaching that a society develops.

vii) It has a lengthy period of study and training
Teaching cannot be learnt in a year or so. A person willing to take up this profession has to study for a number of years and acquire a mastery over the contents of the subject matter. After this he/she has to undergo training in teaching.

viii) It has a high degree of autonomy
In our earlier discussion, we mentioned that definite steps have to be followed in teaching as it is a science also. However, there is a high degree of autonomy in teaching profession right from curriculum development, planning activities of a year, identifying instructional objectives, deciding upon the method of teaching, deciding upon the use of media, identifying evaluation criteria, using appropriate evaluation techniques to deciding upon the admission and promotion rules, and autonomy in planning and execution of co-curricular activities. Ultimately, all these activities are planned keeping in mind the goals of education which are to be achieved in a limited period of time.

ix) It is based upon a systematic body of knowledge
Teaching profession is based upon a systematic body of knowledge which has been derived from social, psychological, historical, political and economical spheres of life. It is also influenced by the religious and spiritual beliefs of a society.

x) It has a common code of ethics
All over the globe, teaching profession has a common code of ethics, the details of which are described in sub-unit 5.4.

xi) It generates inservice growth
In teaching profession, the teacher is learning at all the stages of teaching. This leads to growth of a teacher while inservice.

Apart from these, education is a dynamic discipline. New knowledge is continuously being generated with regard to teaching methods and other foundation courses of teaching. A teacher with a professional training before becoming a teacher, needs to get oriented to the new knowledge and also update the already acquired knowledge and skills of teaching. For this inservice training is essential, which would ultimately lead to performance of the expected tasks by a teacher in an effective way.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the teaching profession has the distinct characteristics for it to be termed a profession. It is a complex profession in the sense that it has to take into consideration needs and expectations of an ever changing society. It is affected by the political ideology of a nation, and is influenced by the economy of a nation. It learns from the history of not only a nation but other nations too. Students, who are the clientele, vary with respect to such variables as interests, ability, socio-economic background etc. With all such and many other complexities, teaching is a noble profession with the prime motive of rendering service to society.
Check Your Progress

Notes:  
a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. List the distinct characteristics of a profession that distinguish it from a vocation or a trade.

2. “Teaching is a complex activity.” Discuss.

5.4 PROFESSIONAL TRAITS OF A TEACHER

Professionally, a teacher should possess the following traits:

i) Mastery over content
ii) Knowledge of teaching skills
iii) Other attributes

**Fig. 5.1**
Mastery over content: Unless one has mastery over content of a subject one can not become an effective teacher. Content mastery can be achieved through various ways like reading books, magazines, periodicals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers etc., attending seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, public meetings; discussing with colleagues, experts, authorities; meeting leaders and other professionals, observing the happenings in and around the environment; and so on.

Knowledge of teaching skills: The knowledge and use of a set of skills facilitates teaching-learning process. These skills are known as instructional skills. Instructional skill is defined as the cluster of behaviour manifested by a teacher which can be acquired through practice. The list of instructional skills that help a teacher to carry out instructional process effectively is given below:

i) Introduction
ii) Questioning
iii) Probing
iv) Reinforcement
v) Explanation
vi) Illustrating with examples
vii) Recognising attending behaviour of students
viii) Using audio-visual aids
ix) Using blackboard
x) Silence and non-verbal cues
xi) Stimulus variation
xii) Achieving closure

Other attributes: Alongwith content mastery and knowledge of instructional skills, the other effective attributes of a teacher are sense of responsibility, showing concern for students, acknowledging and appreciating the effort of students, accepting each student as a distinct individual, loving and caring etc. These help a teacher to understand students as they are.

Over and above the aforementioned three essential personality traits i.e. content mastery knowledge of instructional skills and other attributes, a teacher needs to be guided by professional ethics since he/she is a member of a professional group.

Professional Ethics of Teachers

For developing professional ethics, teachers and teacher-educators must be able to distinguish between philosophy of education and philosophy of teacher education and also the difference between social and historical frameworks of the teaching profession. A teacher has to be an example for his/her students and society and therefore the value system he/she holds should be clear, precise and ethical. He/she should be honest not only when he stands to gain by being honest but in situations where he/she is likely to suffer a loss. In such cases, his/her conscience to do the right thing must determine his/her behaviours. He/she must exemplify the dignity of labour and professional commitment, however stressful the circumstances may be.

Teachers must be an embodiment of eternal values – values that remain the same, however much the circumstances may change. Truth, love and goodness are values that are admired across creeds, cultures and religions. He/she should be a sheet anchor for society amidst the tumult of social change. He/she should be conscious of the accountability to profession of teaching by being accountable for effective teaching and effective learning of students. He/she is accountable to society and this aspect must be channelled through an appropriate hierarchy of competent professional authority.

The profession of teaching reflects a high degree of academic excellence, repertoire of teaching skills and practical wisdom on the one hand and a well-integrated value system on the other, both being oriented towards altruistic service. The personal development of a teacher is the core of professionalisation and forms the base for professional ethics.
The concept of professional ethics for a teacher can be summed up in the words of Rabindranath Tagore “In our ideal life we must touch all men and all times through the manifestation of a truth which is eternal and universal.”

5.5 TEACHER AS A PERSON

In this section, we shall learn about the expectations from a teacher ranging from his role in classroom environment to his role as a citizen of the country. As one of the pivotal person in the process of education, a teacher is supposed to be performing different tasks.

5.5.1 Teacher in a Classroom

The main responsibility of a teacher in the classroom is to ensure that goals of education are attained. These can be specified as learning in terms of predetermined knowledge, skills, and attitudes in specific subjects. It is through these subjects that a teacher strives to achieve school goals as well an all-round development of students, which is the broader goal of education. In order to achieve this, a teacher creates an artificial environment in the classroom for facilitating learning of students. He/she provides instruction to the students, motivates them for learning, helps them to rectify their mistakes, guides them in different situations and evaluates their performance, etc. In other words, a teacher uses content as a medium or tool not only to enable students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes but also to help them in the all-round development of their personality which is what education stands for.

To ensure the all-round development of students, a teacher has also to organise such co-curricular activities as games, sports, quizzes, debates, excursion, tours, field trips, etc.
5.5.2 Teacher as a Colleague

A teacher is one among many in a school, all of whom are striving towards attending the same goals of education. In fact, teachers have a collective role in the teaching-learning process which is a social activity. Moreover, for the school to function smoothly there is a need for a group of teachers to work in harmony. The constant interaction and close working together helps teachers not only in understanding their students and their problems but also in their own personal growth as teachers. Indirectly, it also leads to the development of the attitude of "openness" among students.
5.5.3 Teacher in the Community

In a country where nearly half the population is illiterate, a teacher is looked upon as a leader in a community, especially so in rural areas and small communities. In some of the educationally backward rural regions, a teacher is even now the only literate person who is given high respect and is expected to be the leader of community. A teacher’s teaching expertise is used for spreading literacy, for providing educational leadership, and for providing services during elections, collection of census data and other large scale national activities which require trained educated persons. Teachers are counted upon for responsible and important tasks of public service.

5.5.4 Teacher as a Citizen

As an educated person and a person who educates others a teacher provides a model for future citizens. A teacher enables the functioning of democracy by participating in the democratic processes, acts as an unbiased objective critic of the society and is sensitive to events in the country like corruption, scandals, riots, exploitation etc. which hamper the growth and development of a nation and mobilises resources to check anti-social and anti-national activities.

Fig. 5.5

Over and above these, a teacher has to be:

A Friend, Philosopher and Guide of Students. He/She has to inspire students to achieve this best and serve the nation.

5.6 NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED PERSONALITY

From the preceding discussions, it is clear that a teacher has to have multiple roles which have to be performed differently in different circumstances. To achieve the broader goals of education, these roles need to be properly integrated.

Let us take an example of the variety involved in a school system. The constituents of school are teachers, students and infrastructure facilities. Students have varying backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, interests, motivations and attitudes. Infrastructure facilities vary in terms of their availability, quality and quantity. For instance, some infrastructure facilities like furniture, classroom, maps, charts, apparatus and materials required to perform science experiments, mathematical instruments, TV, video, computer, slide and film projector etc. may
be or may not be available. They may be sufficient in some cases in number while in others these may be insufficient. Similarly some of these may not be in good working condition. A teacher has to decide upon what and how to carry out his/her duties in different conditions so as to achieve the goals of education.

Also, formal schooling involves a time bound programme which is expected to be completed in stipulated time that has been decided upon as academic term.

Moreover, curricular framers have prescribed the weightage to be given to different items of content in terms of hours of teaching per week.

A school with its organisational structure, physical and human resources and management goals also provides a framework for the teacher to function. The functioning of a school in general and a teacher in particular is also governed to a great extent by expectations and needs of a society, political decisions and cultural heritage of the nation at large.

A teacher will be able to efficiently perform different roles with and other educational experiences that he/she has gained. This educational experience adds to a teacher’s thinking, observation, ability and skills of management. A teacher who performs these roles in an INTEGRATED manner is able to perceive the need for the all-round development of student’s personality and provide appropriate learning opportunities to achieve the pre-specified goals of education.

**Check Your Progress**

**Notes:**

a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. List the characteristics of a teaching profession.

4. How can one acquire instructional skills?

5. Describe various modes through which a teacher can acquire mastery over content.

6. Why should a teacher play different roles?

7. Explain the need for the integrated personality of a teacher.
5.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have focused on the characteristics of teaching as a profession, which differentiate it from a vocation or a trade. It is a profession with primary motive to provide service to the nation at large. A teacher is required to have content mastery, knowledge of instructional skills and desirable attitudes.

As one of the key persons in the field of education, a teacher is expected to exhibit a multi-dimensional personality, like a classroom teacher, a colleague, a member of the community and a citizen.

Under different situations, a teacher has to work to bring about a desirable change in the behaviours of learners.

5.8 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

1. Analyse professional expectations of a teacher. Suggest the ways to fulfil them.
2. List desirable behaviour for the instructional skills.
3. Compare the personality of a teacher with other professional persons like a doctor and a lawyer.

5.9 POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If your peer student-teacher (or teacher-trainee) is not confident in content mastery, how will you help him/her to acquire the same.
2. If you are put in a school as a science or a language teacher and the school does not have the infrastructure facilities required by you, how can you perform the expected roles successfully?

5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The distinct characteristics of a profession that distinguish it from a vocation or trade are:
   - the prime motive of a profession is service
   - the profession is based on sound knowledge and expertise
   - the profession has highest qualities like altruism and expertise
   - the profession has highest qualities like altruism and desire for authentic knowledge on the part of members.
2. Teaching is a complex activity because of the following:
   - it requires conscious organisation of learning activities.
   - it requires deliberate creation of a conducive and supportive learning environment
   - while teaching a teacher has to constantly analyse and evaluate classroom climate and a suitable plan of action to achieve the pre-specified desirable changes in the behaviours of learners who are constantly varying with respect to their interest and understanding.
   - over and above these, the facilities available vary from school to school. These facilities in school play a major role in facilitating learning environment in school.
3. Characteristics of a teaching profession are:
   - it involves an intellectual operation it draws material from science
   - it transforms raw material into a practical and definite end
Teach - Role and Development

- it possesses an educationally communicable techniques
- it tends towards self organisation and performs social services
- it has lengthy period of study and training
- it has a high degree of autonomy
- it is based upon a systematic body of knowledge
- it has a common code of ethics
- it generates inservice growth

4. One can acquire instructional skills through:
- understanding the components of each skills
- practising them in simulated situation
- continuously evaluating own performance improving upon those aspects which need refinement.

5. Various modes through which a teacher can acquire mastery over content are:
- reading
- discussions
- participating in seminars, workshops
- observation

6. A teacher should play different roles to take care of all-round development of students and to help the community/society to develop and progress.

7. Need for the integrated personality of a teacher can be described in terms of the following:
- teaching profession is complex
- learners vary with respect to certain variables like interest, motivation level, socio-economic background, etc.
- social, political, religious, economic factors affect education
- a teacher has to function to achieve the broad goals of education.

All these necessitate an integrated personality in a teacher.

5.11 SUGGESTED READINGS


