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Reforms of Collegiate Education And Accountability of College Teacher

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HRD Minister Smriti Irani said in FICCI Higher Education Summit (date 13.11.2014) that key regulators in the higher education sector, like UGC and AICTE, are being reviewed keeping in mind the challenges of the future. She wants to 'redefine India's destiny' through reforms in the education sector. The HRD Ministry has already set up a panel to restructure UGC, thus putting in motion an initiative for carrying out an overhaul of the higher education sector. We hope that the new reforms of UGC bring a challenge to collegiate education. As a college teacher I support and realised that collegiate education needs reforms as well as UGC.

Of course, a considerable growth is seen in Assam at the higher education sector. The State has about 20 Universities, including IIT, NIT and private Universities, and more than 500 colleges affiliated to three affiliating Universities. There are 94%

students of higher education in the affiliated colleges in Assam. In recent times, college education in Assam presents a gloomy and dismal picture. Although, there has been a remarkable rise in the number of higher educational institutions in Assam, collegiate education has come under severe stress. Access to higher education in Assam is very low and quality development and relevance is becoming a challenge in the era of globalization. Most of the colleges are not eligible to provide high-quality, professional and job-oriented education to the youth. Only one college was granted autonomy and few colleges are declared with potential of excellence in Assam. Although the number of institutions and enrolment in higher education seems to be high, only 13.4 percent of youth in the age group of 17-23 years have access to higher education, which is far below the national average of 19.4 percent. Above all, our colleges have not been able to transform our human resources into assets. Unfortunately, the college teachers have not come out from conventional thinking and teaching.

The general degree colleges should give more importance on professional skills as well as soft skills which shows the greatest disconnect for employers. It is equally true that the collegiate education fails to teach team work and communication skills. There are some essential skills for an employer like – integrity, reliability, teamwork, willingness to learn, entrepreneurship and communications skills. The continuous and comprehensive evaluation procedure in semester system emphasizes some skills. The course structure of Dibrugarh University is also reliable but it has a question mark if every college takes step to transact it. Unfortunately, the college teachers are not teaching the students these skills and teaching only how to pass examinations. Semester system means the change of the attitude and mind-set, but some college teachers think that it means taking examination and checking copies. It was published in 'A scheme for implementation of semester system at under graduate level of the general degree

colleges of Dibrugarh University' as a challenge to change mind-set of the stake-holders, teachers, students and parents/guardians. But, after first batch students are out, how can we change ourselves?

Quality of education depends on the quality of teachers. But, top priority is not given to select right kind of person for this profession in keeping with the importance and responsibility associated with their work. In our Assam, because of corruption, the government has changed the selection procedure of college teachers. Circumstances compel many candidates to take recourse to legal action. Many colleges suffer in this problem for many years. It is really speaking that some of the college teachers create this problem in their personal interest also. Shortage of teachers is another problem for which some colleges appoint part-time teachers. In this regard, can we manage standard of teaching and continuity of learning? It is true that the service condition are not satisfactory for teachers in Assam, many provincialised colleges are deprived from essential facilities. After the introduction of semester system at under graduate level, the college teachers have become busier, though many colleges are unable to provide opportunities for teachers to work in a productive way. Universities have introduced the semester system but the government has no attention in this matter. For effective implementation of semester system, the colleges will require additional infrastructure and manpower. There is also a need to reform in the administrative system of colleges. Only dedicated and knowledgeable persons should be included in governing body.

At last, we hope that good days are coming. The HRD ministry takes this matter seriously. But, can I establish myself a quality teacher? The progress of a nation largely depends upon the dutifulness of its teachers. It is the teacher community which has always given a right shape to a nation's destiny. Adaval (1979) has rightly remarked that "As a person he (teacher) imbibes, interprets and disseminates the relevant items of culture, strength

social and economic fabrics of the country. His position is unique and second to none." So, the accountability of college teachers is necessary for giving quality education in semester system and to bring reform.

What is accountability? It is used in terms of responsibility, dutifulness, liability etc. Teacher's accountability is a devotion to the teaching profession and a commitment to impart knowledge and skills to the students. It is an obligation to discharge one's duty with sincerity and dedication. Hence to be accountable implies a sense of moral thinking and an ethical consciousness. By and large, teacher accountability implies that a teacher is ultimately responsible to the students, to the heads, to the society, to the nation and to own self.

Teacher accountability isn't determined by the HRD Ministry or the UGC. It brings reform to collegiate education if every college teacher is accountable. Teacher accountability is behavioural in nature. It is measured by in terms of following dimensions: 1) Classroom teaching 2) Professional growth 3) Personal qualities 4) Attitude towards profession 5) Interpersonal relationship 6) Occupational socialization. In this day of globalization, every college teacher should follow these dimensions of accountability to shape our nation's destiny. Only accountable teachers are able to transform the human resources into assets.

Today, higher education is considered to be the driving force of modern civilization and the colleges are the epicentres of higher education. With the passage of time our approach and attitude to higher education has undergone change. The market economy which has swept the world, transforms higher education from 'service' to 'business'. In such a condition, we are bound to change our mindset, both the ruler and ruled. The collegiate education and the college teachers also need reform.

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