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# Promoting Wellness Lifestyle through Stress Management in Education

Amita Pandey Bhardwaj\*

In the rapidly changing context of growing concern for health and wellness in the global world as at present, it has become imperative to revisit Teacher Education Programs and the courses of studies, their content, methodology and approaches to ensure optimum development of the power and potential to realize self-fulfillment and developing new relationships. It may be mentioned at the very outset that competency-based teacher education courses although necessary, have not delivered results in respect of making available competent and effective teachers needed to man our schools, colleges and universities. It sounds natural that revisit of teacher education programs at this juncture has to be undertaken mandatorily in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficacy of both the content and process of education.

In the present paper an attempt has been made to highlight the concern for stress management as a useful concept for promoting wellness and via that augmenting a sense of happiness and quality of life and living so essential for our present day society. It is in fitness of things to underscore the role of stress and stressors in the spectrum of life as also in the manifest professional ethos and culture. One stress expert has rightly pointed out that, "the most elementary acquaintance with history, with anthropology and above all with literature reveals the rarity of tranquility in human existence." This is rather a gloomy opinion about wellness and possibility of human peace.

Life is changing fast and it requires adjustment in view of the fact that stressors are ever present. In this frame of reference adaptation is a continuous process and a person responds to the demands arising therefrom with ease and familiarity. In other words, stressors remain facts of life with no ill effects but as pointed out by Walt Schafer 'adjustment can exact a toll in wear and tear on mind and body'. Physical upset or emotional turmoil often result when this happens. Stressors become dis-stressors. Keeping in view the importance of stress and stress management

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in life and educational setup as of today, at all levels of education primary, secondary and tertiary, the courses prescribed therein and being followed have to be redesigned with an eye on promoting wellness through effective stress management. In this perspective it is deemed desirable to clarify the conceptual foundation of stress and stress management and the concept of wellness as being advocated and as also articulated long back in our Upanishads and ancient literature.

## Defining Stress

Although definitions are neither right nor wrong, an attempt to do so brings clarity and specificity in understanding the various dimensions of the concepts and their indicators.

Lazardus & Folkman (1984) have defined stress, "as a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/her resources and endangering his/her wellness". This definition has focused on only the negative side of stress. Hans Selye a pioneer in the stress field observed as far back as in the year 1974 that "the stress is the non-specific response of the field of any particular demand made upon it". Imparting a new perspective Walt Schafer (2000) asserted that, "stress is the arousal of mind and body both in response to the demand made on them". According to this averment stress is ever present, a universal feature of life and is multi-faceted in nature. In this framework it is obviously neutral but it tends to emphasize that stress can become positive or negative. There are three type of stress which are as follows:

- (a) **Neutral or Neu-Stress** which is neither particularly helpful nor harmful.
- (b) **Distress**-when arousal is too high or too low and usually leads to physical and psychological disorders.
- (c) **Eustress**-is a positive stress and is useful in performing well under pressure. This type of stress helps realize potential of a person over a period of years in his/her career and it brings zeal and variety in daily life.

In this formulation Walt Schafer has focused on an integrated 'whole person' life style approach and



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पीयर-रिव्यूड रेफर्ड जर्नल

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शिक्षा जगत की शोध एवं विचार केंद्रित पत्रिका

खंड-5, अंक-3; चैत्र-ज्येष्ठ, 2079/अप्रैल-जून, 2022



केन्द्रीय हिंदी संस्थान, आगरा

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—अमिता पाण्डेय भारद्वाज

## भूमिका

शिक्षा की सर्वमान्य सर्वकालिक एवं सार्वभौमिक मान्यता एवं अवधारणा यही है कि शिक्षा दी जाती है। परंतु विद्या 'ज्ञान' प्राप्त किया जाता है। प्राथमिक स्तर से लेकर उच्च स्तर तक शिक्षा अपने देश और काल की परिस्थितियों में निश्चित और निर्धारित किये गये मानकों के अनुसार प्रदान की जाती है। शिक्षा क्रमशः जब उच्चतर ज्ञान की ओर अग्रसर होती है—उस स्थिति में विद्या स्वाध्याय तथा स्वप्रकाशन की स्थिति में पहुँचती है। इसीलिए शिक्षा और विद्या को एक दूसरे का पर्याय मान लिया गया है।

## प्राचीन भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था

प्राचीन भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था के अध्ययन से यह ज्ञात होता है कि विद्या प्राप्ति के लिए स्वयं प्रयत्न किया जाता था इसीलिए भारत में प्राथमिक विद्यालय, माध्यमिक विद्यालय, महाविद्यालय एवं विश्वविद्यालय शब्दों का प्रयोग अद्यावधि प्रचलित है। किसी भी स्तर पर शिक्षालय के प्रयोग का प्रचलन नहीं किया जाता। आधुनिक विद्यालयों में विशेषकर उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में हम सभी वह शिक्षा देते हैं। जो हमें बताया या पढ़ाया गया है। उस शिक्षा में मौलिकता के अभाव का कारण यह है कि उच्च शिक्षा स्तर तक विद्या अथवा ज्ञान प्राप्त करने की पिपाशा, अभिलाषा अथवा उद्यम अकांक्षा का अभाव है। इसी अभाव का कारण वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली के परिणाम को जीविकोपार्जन अथवा रोजगार पाने की उपाधि के साथ जोड़ दिया गया है। ऐसी स्थिति में उच्च शिक्षा का जो सहज स्वाभाविक मौलिक उद्देश्य है उसका विलोपन हुआ है। परंतु संपूर्ण उच्च शिक्षा की व्यवस्था में दस प्रतिशत ही ऐसे छात्र हैं जो ज्ञान की पिपाशा अथवा मौलिकता के प्रति उद्यम अकांक्षी हैं। प्राचीन भारतीय उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में प्रश्नोत्तर विधि ज्ञान की जिज्ञासा को जागृत करती थी अध्ययन में आचार्य का व्यक्तिगत स्पर्श निरंतर गुरु और शिष्य के सानिध्य के कारण बना रहता था इसलिए उच्चतर ज्ञान की जिज्ञासा बनी रहती थी। इसलिए प्राचीन विश्वविद्यालयों के आचार्य एवं शिष्यों को समाज उनके ज्ञान और आचरण का सम्मान करता था।

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# Decision-making in the Context of Classroom Transactions: Styles and Needed Perspectives

Amita Pandey Bhardwaj\*\*

The total teaching act may be construed to emerge from the point of decision of a teacher to teach a particular item to a particular group of pupils and end at a point where in retrospect, she/he can analyse the events which swayed the process of interaction with pupils. The decision-making process which largely involves a planning strategy on the part of a teacher is called the *pre-active* stage, the implementation phase where the teacher and pupil action are inter-related in terms of content with the help of perception, diagnosis and action on the part of both is known as *interactive* stage and the reflection on the events and activities of the self and the pupil(s) during the interactional setting constitutes the *post-active* stage. The nature and quality of mental activity and the skills involved in each of the three stages differ in a substantial manner. The activities of teaching and learning may also be organized at various levels of abstraction ranging from the use and application of simple mental powers to the most complex ones viz. Memory, Understanding, Reflection, etc. During all these stages and levels of teaching, decision-making figures as an important activity. The quality of decisions adopted in the pre-active stage influences to a large extent the quality of interaction in the face-to-face setting among the teacher, the students and the subject matter. The results accomplished during the process of interaction exercise a direct and indirect influence on the post-active operations of the teacher.

Basically, decision-making involves a choice among two or more available alternatives. Considering the teacher as a leader, decision-making assumes a pivotal role: Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "Nothing is more difficult and therefore, more precious than being able to decide". This holds good in respect of explaining the predicament of a teacher as well, *mutatis mutandis*, in respect of planning, organizing, monitoring and managing classroom transactions in general and the activities which accompany the classroom roles in particular. In the present paper,

an attempt has been made to examine the decision-making processes attempted by a teacher during classroom transactions and to lay bare the determinants and styles adopted by him/her with a view to making teaching-learning systems effective, efficient and quality-oriented. The focus of the present paper has been on improving the decision-making processes germane to effective teaching-learning systems. As such, the emphasis has been laid on the styles of decision making as in vogue largely in management systems. It is believed that the approaches to designing an effective educational system will gradually reflect and facilitate a paradigm shift for making education a useful and powerful instrument. Towards the end, a few suggestions have also been offered in order to highlight the attenuation of hindering forces and accentuation of driving forces with a view to render our classrooms the most useful and autogenic space for ensuring learning outcomes.

## What is Decision-making?

Teachers and educational administrators need to recognize and rely on their emotions as well as their reasoned thinking if they are to make decisions that can hold up in the wake of growing complexities in planning and organizing today's diverse and unpredictable contexts. There is increasingly inadequate input, conflicting information, resource crunch, time pressures, heterogeneous cultural and social forces and technological inroads that tend to cloud the issues and threaten the quality of decisions. Viewed in this context, the process of decision-making is quite complex. There are several factors which impinge during the decision-making process that will be examined here in terms of the most important ones in relation to teachers' role in organizing these teaching-learning processes.

It may be pointed out that decision-making is both rational or emotional, intellectual or intuitive in nature. The well-known psychological instruments such as MBTI (Myers Briggs type indicators) validate these dichotomies by describing decisions as based on a significant preference for either thinking or feeling. With the emergence of Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

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## Teacher Empowerment: Need of the Hour

Amita Pandey Bhardwaj\*

We all know that teachers are the backbone of the education system, the heart of the teaching-learning process, and the true implementer of curriculum and educational policies. They play a pivotal role in imparting education and shaping the lives of the students. They also inculcate knowledge, values, and ethics in students' lives and prepare them for further education. Consequently, the role of teachers cannot be overlooked as they contribute immensely to ensure the learning of students which is the sole objective of teaching. Besides this, to address the challenges of the fast-changing educational scenario, teachers must be empowered with the right knowledge, attitude, skills, and competencies in a continuous way. The importance of being empowered is reflected in the fact that how much teachers are capable, sensitive, motivated, enthusiastic, creative, determined, and energized in performing their educational work. As teachers truly shape the future of students thereby future of education, therefore, teacher empowerment is very essential to achieving the goal of real education, linking education with life, and making education meaningful. Against this backdrop, the present article attempts to clarify the conceptual meaning and process of teacher empowerment along with the needed areas of interventions for empowering teachers.

### Teacher Empowerment: Conceptual Meaning & Process

Teacher empowerment is a relative term and consists of two words — 'Teacher' and 'Empowerment'. 'Teacher' means a person having teaching skills and possesses certain professional qualities of teaching while 'Empowerment' refers to some criteria. The empowered teachers have the knowledge, skills, and values which help them to act in a given situation and bring improvement in it. Needless to mention, that Knowledge is a means of teacher empowerment rather than of gaining power. Hammond (1997) has rightly said that— "*empowerment must occur through knowledge rather than through new controls that would enfranchise teachers at the cost of others, especially parents who have a deep interest in children's success.*" It is considered as a development of skills which make teachers more confident, and self-reliant and development of abilities which help to make self-decision. The values help the empowered teachers to gain the opportunity in decision-making.

According to Bolin, "Teacher-empowerment means investing teachers with the right to participate in the determination of institutional goals and policies and to exercise professional

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