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Teacher's Positive Influence On Learner's Character Formation

Gaurav Sachar*

Assistant Professor* P.K.R Jain (P.G.) College of Education, Hisar Road, Ambala City. Mobile

E.Mail Id:-drgauravsachar@gmail.com, gauravsachar2012@yahoo.in

ABSTRACT

It is rightly said that we are all born as just a bright eyed child unaware of what this world has to offer with no idea of which we are, we begin our journey into discovering our character. Character is basically the consistency between child's action and his attitude to his surroundings and the basic foundation of good moral character are values and virtues, nurturing social and interpersonal relationships. The educator plays a very crucial role towards the achievement of highest degree of self awareness and personal illumination among children/learners. This paper throws a light on how teachers play their role in building good character of the learners by acting as a role model by the way they live their life. They must be truthful as they teach truth, loving as they teach love, honest as they teach honesty to them. In this way teacher can inculcate values among children/learners which will help them to form good character and develop the personality of the learner as a whole.

Keywords: Character formation, Teacher, Moral development, Students/learners, Habits.

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INTRODUCTION

"Reputation is the shadow. Character is the tree." Our character is much more than just what we try to display for others to see, it is who we are even when no one is watching. Good character is doing the right thing because it is right to do what is right".

----- Abraham Lincoln

The basic foundation of good moral character is values and virtues, where virtues are good habits cultivated from within the individual and help in the improvement of intelligence and character like hard work, sincerity, courage, perseverance etc. whereas values helps in searching for purpose of living on this earth and motivates the human being to act. According to Stanley I. Greenspan, " If your child is going to develop a healthy personality with the capacity to remain intact and grow, he/she must learn how to test reality, regulate his/her impulses, stabilize his/her moods, integrate his/her feelings and action, focus his/her concentration and plans". After home school is the only place where Teacher plays a vital role in character formation of the students thereby helps in the overall development of the individual.

MEANING OF CHARACTER

Before discussing the role of teacher in character formation firstly we should look into the meaning of character. The term "character" refers to the tendency to act in ways that are consistent with what one understands to be morally right. The person having good character will always act morally in all situations of life. According to Lictona (1991), "The character is a universal phenomenon descriptive of people who possess the courage and conviction to live by moral virtues". A person of character has the wisdom to know the right and wrong, is always honest, trustworthy, fair and respectful, responsible, admits and learns from mistakes. He/she is always committed to whatever they do.

Need of understanding the Children/ Learner's:-It has been rightly said that

"When you sow an action, you reap a habit,

Sow a habit, reap a character,

Sow a character, reap a destiny"

So schools are the laboratories which produce the future citizens of the country and teachers play a vital role in such laboratories. Students understand character as 'who you are' and have a set of core values that shape their moral identity. They have the sense of learning and changing overtime, becoming a better

person and taking responsibilities for their growth as human beings. They have a strong sense of values but they are not able to put them into practice. Here education plays a vital role in formation of character of the students. The good relationship between teachers and students helps in the character formation of students which is based on trust and respect. Teaching is very complicated business in today's scenario as students are unexpected blend of character, personality and background. A teacher should always influence the life and character of his/her students and give ideas/values which will help them to become important citizen of the country.

Stages of character development:-

A teacher must know the various stages of character development then only he/she will be able to help them in proper manner. These are:

1. **Amoral stage:** This stage is in infancy period. At this stage child does not know what is right and what is wrong or what is good and what is bad. He/she do things just to fulfill his physical necessities and do not have control over their emotions. This stage remains for two years.
2. **Self centered stage:** This stage of character development comes in early childhood period (2-6) years. Here child identifies the personal and group interests. He/she recognizes the values but never bothers about any rules and regulations and just tries to satisfy themselves and is self centered.
3. **Conforming conventional level:** This stage remains from 6-12 years. Here children follow rules because they feel that going beyond that will lead to dangerous consequences.
4. **Irrational conscientious level:** This comes at adolescence period. At this stage children are under the control of emotions and leaves logic. That is why they become irrational.
5. **Rational Conscientious level:** This stage comes in Adult period. Here the individual follows logic. His behavior is based on logic and understanding. They always do things which are logical.

This stage is the highest level of character formation.

Role of Teacher in positive influence on Learner's character formation:-

In this modern world teacher's role has become more challenging and demanding. They are more than entrusted with the task of moulding the character of the child and making them productive members of the society. Parents have limited contact with their wards because of hectic life and earning money to secure the future of their child. It is the teacher who fills this vacuum as authority figure, friend and Guide. School going children in their early stages are still in the process of physical and mental development. Teachers represent role models for them and they are in a unique position to influence and guide their students. If they perform their role well the student will realize the importance of the positive traits and values being imparted to him.

Teacher as role model who sets Good example for his students:-

Teachers must educate their children the importance of selecting a good company. They must show excellent example to the learners. According to Sanger and Fenstermacher (2000), students become virtuous by having a teacher with a virtuous character as an exemplar and a guide for engaging in their own virtuous actions, shaping their character. This involves the development of virtuous habits and skills, emotional sensitivities and dispositions, as well as the motivational characteristics that lead one to do what is virtuous, with the appropriate attitude and emotions. The virtuous teacher, as a moral educator, provides a model for all of these things, as well as instruction and guidance in their development." The moral character of teachers then plays a central role in the transmission of virtues to his/her students – which Campbell (2008) considers to be an inescapable potential of being moral models and exemplars. Teachers should eliminate what is bad and strengthen what is good. They should also remove whatever is negative and weakening their minds.

FORMING A CARING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

Character formation always begins with caring relationship. This relationship first begins at home by parents and then it is extended to school by teachers. Any child who is being cared for will likely to care for others and will engage as citizen in the moral life of the community. According to Chain (1972), "The quality of early teacher-student relationships can have a strong influence on academic and social outcomes that persist through eighth grade". In particular, teachers who have high expectations tend to have students who get better grades but who also pursue goals, take responsibility, and show a commitment to mastery learning. Conversely, teachers who are harshly critical and are perceived to be unfair have students who do not act responsibly with respect to classroom rules and academic goals. Caring school climates encourage social and emotional bonding and promote positive interpersonal experiences, providing the minimum grounding necessary for the formation of character (Gramsci, 1971).

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Another way for the character formation of the learner/ child the teacher should develop social and emotional skills in them. He/she should be able to sublimate their emotions in good direction else they will not be able to form good character.

- **Follow High ideals:-** If a student follows high ideals then they can form good character. For this teachers should teach students about the people who have high values and morality and always encourage them to follow their footsteps.
- **Good habits:-** Habits are a powerful force controlling our mind, body and emotions. They are acts performed regularly without conscious thought or effort. Habits dictate our thoughts, feeling, behaviors which in turn dictate how much money we earn, our health, relationships and all other areas of our lives. Habits ultimately shape our character and destiny and form who we are most of the time. Therefore, to succeed in life, we must learn how to develop good habits that will bring about our success and eliminate poor habits that are holding us back.
- **Training for developing will power:-** Teachers should train the students to develop will power and tell their students that it comes through self discipline. A strong will power will always lead to formation of good character.
- **Love and affection:-** For character formation children should be encouraged with love and affection within limitations so that they follow teachers comfortably.
- **Rewards and Punishment:-** Rewards and Punishment is also another way of training character development. If students are rewarded time to time for their good deeds they get energized and follow their teachers and sometimes punishment also helps in character formation if given judiciously to bring improvement in child.

Educational Implications with respect to moral development and character formation:-

Educational practices in the schools should be well coordinated with development of the students:-

Young children have an intuitive sense of morality, they do not have full understanding of fairness nor do they have understanding of the function of conventions in social systems. Educators/ teachers in order to foster moral and social growth in children need to match the educational practices with the development level of the students.

Moral and character formation can be developed by moral discussions and moral problem solving:-

Teachers should always encourage their students to participate in discussions and be asked to arrive at resolutions of a moral problem which will be fair for all people. In this manner they will develop good habit of listening to each member of the group and solving the problem simultaneously. Discussions can be stimulated by readings as well as actual events and is not limited to subject matter theoretically only.

Opportunities for self reflection can be used to foster moral character:- Teachers can give various classroom activities and assignments to the students that reflect what they actually are and what they want to become. These types of activities can be productive only when students view them as serving their own internal interest in learning about themselves. In this manner students can examine themselves and develop communication skills too.

General school climate should encourage fairness and respect for others:- Moral development and character formation are not related to academic subject areas only but should be infused throughout school life. There should be mutual respect for all people. Rules of the school should include student's safety and promote respect for others. Policies of the school should be firm, fair and flexible. There should not be any harshness/ rudeness in the behavior of the either the school authorities or teachers towards students.

Students should be given roles that require moral responsibility:- Teachers should provide opportunities to the students to build a sense of themselves as moral being Activities like N.S.S., N.C.C. Scout guides etc. should be an integral part of the curriculum. Moreover they should be involved in active participation of giving suggestions about the needs of the school and community which will help students to construct a moral sense of self.

From the above discussion we can conclude that although parents are the primary adults in the life of children and they provide emotional and physical bond and bring about overall development in the child, Teachers too have great impact on the life of children. According to Shumaker and Heckle (2007), most children are more receptive to the information imparted upon them by teachers as compared with parents because not only is there a clear authority behind the information and often clear consequences for failing to learn, but also the student is in a more active learning mode than when they are at home or in other contexts. So teachers can play a vital role in positively influencing character formation in students.

CONCLUSION

A new born baby does not know about anything. The environment which we given to a baby he slowly slowly adopt the same. A teacher should be a role model in this process. He can do this by telling him/her about love, truth and honesty. Character builds up hard work, security and courage etc. He can also make him/her able to recognize what is good and what is bad. He can teach a student how to test reality. When a student inculcates this he will always act morally in all the situations of life. He / She will learn from his mistakes and always be truth worthy, respectable, responsible to the society and world. In this process of character building a teacher should also understand the students/learners as per their emotions, actions and behavior and slowly give a change is required. Secondly there is a great need to create good activities in students so that by these activities good habits grow up in students and good habits are only called character and good character people only can develop a country. Good relations of students and teachers create trust and respect. By that a student respect others also and adjust with society which is the primary aim of education of the whole world. A teacher should also take care of age of the learner during character formation as age factors consideration is very important matter in this process. At the infancy age 1-2 years a child should be physically cared and developed. 2-6 years of age a child learns the values but never bothers of that. 6-12 years of age children follows rules and they come to know the rules breaking consequences. In the age of adolescence children feels irrational. In adult age they learn the level of character formation. At school level a student/learner requires caring environment so that they feel easy in their minds and working process. Students/Learners should be equipped with high ideals, good habits, high will power, love and affection, rewards and punishments which are very much required for the students in character formation. So, conclusively we can say that a high level environment of home and school and good ideals of a teacher are very much required to form a good character.

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