

Utmost importance of healthy teacher-taught relationship for achieving the goals of education in the present context

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Abstract

In Indian religion and culture the '*Guru-Shishya*' relationship was the tradition of a spiritual relationship, which was based on the mutual respect and trust between the two. With the passage of time this healthy relationship, started deteriorating and have currently reached to the level of total break. If not dealt properly at the moment it would be very detrimental to the overall healthy development and growth of education sector in our country. In the present paper a stock of this relationship through different phases has been taken and also some practical measures has been suggested to improve this urgently required most neglected and important area, without which it will be practically impossible to achieve our educational goals in the present context.

KEY WORDS: *Guru-Shishya* relationship, total break, educational sector, education goals.

The *Guru-Shishya* relationship was the tradition of a spiritual relationship and mentoring in Indian religion and culture where teaching was transmitted from a *Guru* (teacher) to a *Shishya* (disciple). It was considered that this relationship was based on the genuineness of the *Guru*, and the respect, commitment, devotion and obedience of the student and was the best way for conveying the advanced knowledge. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the *Guru* embodies. '*Guru*' used to manage for food and lodging of students and owned every responsibility of taught. He always tried to develop the qualities of his students to make them higher than himself. The students in return used to do the service to '*Guru*' such as necessary jobs of keeping the '*Gurukula*' tidy. While living in '*Gurukul*' the students life was of an ideal, simple and well regulated by strict discipline. Thus, in the ancient time teacher-taught relationship was apparently very close and it was rather son and father like relationship.

This healthy teacher-taught relationship started to deteriorate with the emergence of bigger institutions like '*Nalanda and Takshshila*'. When

judged by rules of respect governing the teacher-taught relationship in ancient and medieval India it was more between God and man, than between man and man. It was intimate more in physical than in real sense. Further during the British era, this relationship was more authoritarian and bitter. It was relationship of dominance and exploitation of Indians by Britishers. In independent India the situation changed but we the teachers among other things failed to part our centuries old authoritarian mentality. Even after more than 67 years of independence students are still struggling for getting their due sympathy and understanding by their teachers. Since, the learning is a process that involves cognitive and social psychological dimensions and both processes should be considered if academic achievement is to be maximized (Hallinan, 2008).

We the teachers need to understand one thing very clearly that our activities both inside and outside the class room are being watched and monitored very minutely and only and only determines whether we deserve to command students' respect or not. Good teaching followed by sympathy and good behavior wins the respect and admiration for a teacher from students. A positive relationship between the student and the teacher though is difficult to establish, but can be found for both individuals at either end. The qualities for a positive relationship can vary to set a learning experience approachable and inviting the students to learn. A teacher who has the qualities of good communications, respect for students both in and out of classroom, and shows interest in teaching from the point of view of a student will establish a positive relationship with his students.

The first and foremost thing a teacher should do is to focus on his relationship with the students because without it there is no chance of managing the classroom efficiently. Students should be aware that the teacher wants them to be successful both in and out of the classroom. The best way for a teacher to show students this desire is to exhibit a personal interest in all aspects of their life. A

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personal interest can be revealed by a variety of simple tasks including cheerfully greeting students, talking informally, attending various co-curricular activities and acknowledging the students' participation and achievements in those activities. Student lives and emotions outside the classroom should be valued by teachers because students are more likely to respect themselves by having a personal touch.

The students want them to be felt important, noticed, heard and worthy. As a teacher it is our duty to notice every student deeply and bring his/her voice out of the shadows into the fore front of the classroom. S/he should matter in class; their words should matter, thoughts and opinion should matter. We need to create a safe space i.e., the one where a student need not fear ridicule from either by our side or his peers. When students don't feel safe, the fight or flight center of the brain become active and students then become survivors vs. learners (Nussbaum, 2012). We don't want our students just "surviving" in our classes rather we want them thriving. Students who feel valued and respected are more likely to be "cooperative and motivated" (Sprick, 2006). Ultimately, courtesy, kindness and acknowledgement work to build relationships. However, teachers can embed strategies which inherently serve as instructional tools while also fostering positive relationships. The most important role in teaching is played by teachers whose task is not merely to make the students study but, more importantly, make them learn (Pathania, 2011) for which better teacher-taught relationship is the first requirement.

A positive teacher-taught relationship can make a world of a difference for achieving our educational goals

Teachers' abilities to form positive relationships with students are impacted by their personality type, experiences, and the quality of their own personal relationships (Baker, 2006). However, there is always a scope for improvement and here are some practical measures suggested for the improvement of this urgently required most neglected and important area, without which it will be practically impossible to achieve our educational goals in the present context. One can always add some more just by giving a serious thought to the idea which are as under:

- 1. Setting the rules for class room interaction very clearly on the first day of your teaching:** Set the rules that will be followed during your teaching in the beginning of academic year in the first lecture itself to your students so that it is crystal clear to everyone, what is one expected to behave like.
- 2. Rules should be equally applicable for everyone:** Most of the time the students claim that a teacher is biased. If you create such an impression, chances are more of your losing students' confidence. Hence, equal and fair treatment must be given to all the students
- 3. Having a command over the subject:** What I believe is the first and foremost important thing that makes your acceptability by your students is indepth knowledge of the subject. Otherwise there more chances of losing the respect in the eyes of the students.
- 4. Wining the confidence of students:** As a teacher we must be seen as knowledgeable, trustworthy, honest, loveable, respectful, and genuine that will make teacher more acceptable by students and in turn students feel more comfortable when communicating with the teacher. They should see the teacher someone who will take care even of their emotional needs. This can also encourage a healthy teacher-student interaction and participation during classes.
- 5. Listen to your students:** Biggest problem with the teachers is that we are rarely ready to listen to others as we are in the habit of lecturing. Many times our students want to speak to us but because of lack of connectivity they fail to do so, thus having a negative implication. More positive interaction with students will create a sense of belongingness. This is one of the best ways to develop a healthy relationship with students, just give a listening ear.
- 6. Appreciate the efforts of your students:** Never ever hesitate to appreciate the good work done by your students howsoever the small that may be. This helps to build self-esteem and gives the student a sense of worth. The students will respect the teachers for their praise and admiration and will even work harder next time which will foster team spirit and good relationship.

7. **Treat your class as your family:** The teacher should not limit his teaching in class to simply a mechanical routine job rather should use a collaborative and human touch approach. This will encourage more class participation.
8. **Show students that they are important:** Everyone loves to be felt important and valuable. Make your students feel that they are valuable to you. Encourage them to be respectful by showing them respect. Communicate high expectation to them and help them to maintain such standards by being there to help whenever the need arises. This has to be done in an atmosphere of love and care. Mutual respect must be supported at all times.
9. **Call your students by their names:** Calling the students by their names is very important. Out of my years of teaching I can assure you that nothing is more magical word in this world than our name which we have been hearing since the time of our childhood. Students feel attached and happy when they are called by their name, I have even experienced that how so ever the notorious a student may be he is diluted if called by his name.
10. **Keep yourself away from dirty student politics:** This has become more relevant today as some of the teachers take keen interest in student politics for small petty thinks gains, thereby compromising teaching ethics. As we all know that student politics is very closely knitted around the political parties, which may drag you in dirty mud and unnecessary controversies.
11. **Learn to forgive:** Forgiving attitude should be their as this approach will definitely bring good dividends in fostering better teacher-taught relationship.
12. **Warm enthusiasm and Industry:** These are indispensable traits of a great teacher. Enthusiasm and industry will bring in you dynamism which will crown your efforts with success and will instill in your students the confidence in your abilities and thereby motivating them to work hard with a great energy.

Let's together make a new beginning to make a better environment in our educational institution for making a better and bright India, our country a real world power in true sense and revive the olden golden era where we were honored and respected as world 'Guru'. As it is commonly said that no country can rise above the level of its teachers the time has come to give a fresh look to many issues concerned with teachers including the teacher-taught relationship. If the nations like Singapore, South Korea and Finland can do well in education the time has come to give a serious fresh look to our low performance in education field internationally. Also, India is the largest democracy of the world and it needs a proper education system having a healthy teacher-taught relationship to nurture democracy as a way of life among its future citizens (Gardia and Singh, 2013). Hence, healthy teacher-taught relationships are of utmost importance for achieving the goals of education in the present context

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