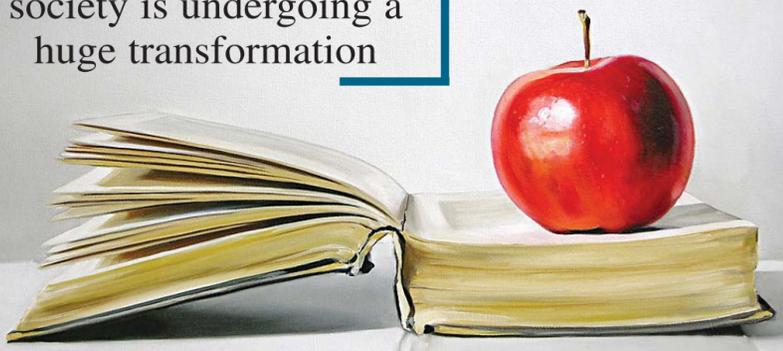


## Towards an Educated India: Role of Teachers in a Knowledge Society

The role of teachers in the society is undergoing a huge transformation



THE educational system across the world is at crossroads. This is evident from the various efforts towards convergence, internationalization, and refreshing reforms to improve quality. The calls of President Obama for reforms in educational system in USA, the Bologna declaration in the European markets are some of the important developments in this regard. All these reforms in the space of higher education will, however, have no relevant and tangible impact if the wider canvas of all contours of higher education is not looked into.

It is in this context that the role of the teachers assumes significant importance. The teachers constitute the most important stakeholders in the gamut of higher education. As reforms take place with reference to their well-being & creating conducive climate for their better performance including significant increase in salary structure,

teachers should appreciate the reality that their role itself is undergoing a massive transformation. This change is in view of the transition of the society to a knowledge hub, the evolving nature of educational institutions and

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the changed role the teachers are expected to play in such a transformed arena.

Indeed the envisaged role of the teachers in such evolving times has to hover around the "knowledge assets".

Some of the roles the teachers are expected to play in this changed context are:

**1. Creation of knowledge:** This is going to be the crux of everything. Insti-

tutions of learning are expected to be thought-leaders through creation of new boundaries of knowledge that others including the corporate can follow and practice. The teachers are, therefore, expected to play a stimulating role

in terms of germinating seeds of innovation, creation of new theories / paradigms and lead nations and society in their journey towards a new era. Conducting research - fundamental as well as applied - as also creating of a teaching paradigm whereby new thoughts / innovations / inquisitive minds (of students) are created will be the hallmark of a good teacher.

**2. Championing of Knowledge:** After

creation, the next logical role will be to act as the champion of the same through the process of transmission of the created knowledge to the productive sectors (agriculture / manufacturing / service) of the economy as well as society at large. That is the way the teaching community through their agents (the students in different roles) will be instrumental in creating both economic as well as social wealth. Thus, good teachers should act as facilitators of growth of community and civilization towards their strive for reaching greater heights.

**3. Custodian of knowledge:** In this role the teaching community will act as the custodians of the knowledge society through ensuring that proper checks & balances are in place so that the heritage of innovations / developments are passed on to the next generation without any deficiency. This is also important from the context of survival of the society, at large, as any knowledge passed on to the wrong hands might lead to disaster and possible extinct of humanity. The character & value system of the teachers assumes a great deal of criticality in this regard.

**4. Counselor of Knowledge:** In a knowledge society, the counseling role of a teacher will undergo a radical transformation, as the very definition of campus will change. Students will predominantly become off-campus (away from physical campus) community and therefore, the teachers' role will be to offer virtual mentoring to a diverse global group of students through cyber media, may be through synchronous or asynchronous mode or combination of the both. Even the research guidance

may be through the virtual mode alone. There is every possibility that the teachers and students will shake hands in a virtual classroom without any single physical meet. What it means is that the mindset of the teachers has to dramatically alter from "chalk & talk" to "click & tick". That will be the biggest challenge and how the teachers adjust to this new rule of the game will be an issue.

Whether all these changes will come together or in sequential mode and whether some of these changes are far reaching imagination for a country like India is a matter of debate. What is, however, important is to realize that teaching profession and the tools/ techniques/principles/ processes involved therein will undergo a substantial transformation in days to come. The earlier the teaching fraternity understands the reality and is attuned to the change, better for them. Otherwise the profession itself will be at stake!

(This article has been authored by Dr A K Sen Gupta, Founder and Convener, Higher Education Forum (HEF). He may be contacted at aksen-gupta51@gmail.com.)

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## ANIMAL INSTINCTS!

India is home to the world's largest livestock population and now this category is also providing a growing career opportunity

BY KAVERI ROY

"I always had pets - dogs, cats, parrots, and tortoise. My interests for animals turned me into a strong animal lover. Though I would always want to help sick and ailing animals but found myself helpless without the knowledge and expertise in that field. That was when I searched for various career-options and choose to be a veterinarian," recollects Dr. Shalaka P. Salvekar, an assistant professor of Veterinary Surgery at Nagpur Veterinary College. Dr. Salvekar is one among the many professionals who have made it their job to improve the health of the animal-world in many ways. Veterinarians or vets are professionals who are driven with passion and equipped with persistence and patience.

The first and foremost quality every veterinarian must have is their undying and unconditional love for animals. A vet with lots of patience, dedication, good observation skills as well as technically sound knowledge will help in giving the right advice / treatment. "All one needs is to love, to not be afraid, be dedicated and committed." Says Dr. Shefali Shah, M.V.Sc (Medicine). Being a vet is perceived to be among the many fancy ideas animal-loving people generally nurture while growing up, but the economics are now helping them to turn their wishes into reality. There is an estimated 500 mil-

lion heads of livestock in India, comprising 15% of the world population. With the markets opening up to firms dealing with animal food manufacturing, pharmaceutical, diagnostic and vaccine production, there is no more stopping one's innate desire to be a professional in this sector. "The best thing I love about being a veterinarian is the satisfaction of doing something for the animals who cannot speak/express for themselves. Getting the time to spend doing what you like the most is the best thing of all," relates Dr. Onkar Pawaskar, a private practitioner.

It is a myth that a Veterinarian is only

lead to better diagnosis and successful treatment of the animals," explains Dr. Salvekar.

The prospects for a vet have suddenly swelled in numbers. On one hand pets have become a lifestyle requirement in the urban world, while on the other the unprecedented growth in the dairy and poul-



### CAREERS

involved with the treatment, care and handling of domestic pets - in fact, they are also involved with the livestock, animals in the zoo, laboratory, sporting animals or animals with the government's animal husbandry departments. The present day scenario has undergone a sea change and opportunities are many. "Many of the treatment protocols have been changed and with new diagnostic technologies and newer drugs, upcoming drug delivery-systems, the farm owners, and pet-owners can afford better diagnostic aids. They are ready to go in for expensive drugs, which

technology animal products' technology sector, establishment of livestock business and marketing are gaining huge momentum. "There are a lot of modes of income. Vets can even open up pet shops, grooming parlours, spas, have a total emergency clinic, boarding and lodging for pets, etc. Apart from the medical aspect, one can even have other facilities as an add-on," according to Dr. Shah. A fresher out of veterinary school can opt for further studies or get into a career as being a practicing veterinarian either on their own or with an experienced vet. Pharmaceutical companies also employ vets in sales, technical or research fields. A teaching job at the vet college is also another option. The starting salary in either case can be Rs.10,000/ pm onwards. The upper limit will depend upon individual capabilities.

As Dr. Salvekar elaborates, "There is a lot of scope for vets in India, from lab to land. The opportunities are vast in a number of fields such as food inspection, poultry, biotechnology, research work-

ers, clinicians, private practice, milk and milk products, meat and meat products, zoonosis, preventive medicine, government jobs, pharmacological industries, microbiology & immunological studies, rural development, extension activities."

### Becoming a vet?

"One needs to complete class XII (science) with more than 50% marks in Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English to qualify for admission to Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc & A.H) course. Howev-

er admissions are based on merit in the MHT-CET competitive exams. The time-duration of the degree course is five years consisting of 10 semesters including one semester of internship." Says Dr. Onkar Pawaskar.

"Veterinarians have to go through a five years bachelor's degree course and then 2 years Masters Degree (M.V.Sc.) course for specialization in areas like medicine, surgery, anatomy, bacteriology, biochemistry, cardiology, dermatology, microbiology, molecular biology, anaesthesia, gynaecology, pathology, toxicology, virology pharmacology, etc." Says Dr. Shalaka P. Salvekar.

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The Pre-primary section of Abhay Public School (ICSE), Vikhroli, has conducted the Fancy Dress Competition on behalf of Independence Day on 13-08-2010 and the theme was based on "National Leader". The programme was performed by the Tiny-Tot of Abhay Public School. The glory of the programme was increased by the presence of Director of Abhay Shikshan Kendra, Mr. Tushar E. Gaikwad, Sub-Editor of "Sakal Newspaper, Mr. Sonawane, Principal of K.J.S.P. College of Edn. (D.T. Ed. & B.Ed.) Mrs. Rupali Sadare & Lecturer Mrs. Varsha Sonawane. Vote of thanks was given by Principal of Abhay Public School Mrs. Arti Chavan.

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- College of veterinary-Hissar
- College of veterinary sciences-Bangalore