

Editorial

Is Teaching a Profession?

- 1. Is teaching a profession in the same sense as Medicine, Law and Company Secretary are? In all these professions, one has to fulfill three conditions : 1. Acquiring the prescribed knowledge and skill, (2) Practicing this knowledge and skill under the guidance of a senior practitioner for a specified period; (3) Undergoing training in practice / application of this knowledge & skill. But for teaching, acquiring the prescribed skill and knowledge, i.e. M.E. / Ph. D. degree, is considered as the only requirement. It is interesting to note that these degrees do not have any element of the teaching profession for which this condition has been laid down. The complaint in respect of lack of norms and standard/quality of the Engineering Education System can be attributed to this. What is true for Engineering Education (EE) is also true in respect of Higher Education (HE) teachers. A student, who obtains ME, MA, M.Sc. / Ph. D. today, can become a teacher, the very next day. These degrees, and even Ph. D. degree, the highest one, have no element which imparts any knowledge / skill of the profession, i.e. teaching and learning, yet M. Phil./Ph. D. degree is considered adequate for entering the teaching profession. As a result, today all such un-trained soldiers are fighting our battle in HE / EE system today.*
- 2. Efforts are on in Europe to elevate teaching in higher education / Engineering Education to a professional status. The IGIP – International Society of EE, now based in Switzerland, has taken steps in this direction.*

The IGIP Register “ING-PAED” lists qualified teachers whose academic qualification, training and experience in engineering education meet the minimum standards laid down by IGIP. Those registered also have the right to be called “European Engineering Educators”, and to use the title “ING-PAID”. (We have here registration Nos. assigned to Medical Practitioners by the Indian Medical Association; in case of law, a certificate is issued by the Bar Council of India; without such certificates one is not allowed to practice his profession).

The IGIP formula for the title is :

Engineering Qualification
+
Engineering Education Qualification
+
Practical Work / Exp. In EE

3. *It is encouraging to know that MHRD (and Also Tech. Education Dept. Govt. of Maharashtra) are thinking of making induction course mandatory for all teachers working in Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics. We urge authorities in MHRD and Directorates of Technical Education at State level to adopt the ING-PAED, IGIP pattern, with instructions in engineering pedagogy, followed by teaching experience under supervision of peers. Those meeting all these requirements deserve to be accredited, and their names entered in a register of qualified teachers who may be entitled to the title "Indian Engineering Education".*

This job of registration may as well be assigned to ISTE / Engineering Education Foundation / or any other professional body.

Once this done, all our teachers will be professional teachers right from day-one of their service and thus will contribute substantially to the rising of the quality of teaching in Engineering Education system and it is only then that Engineering Education can play its role to fulfill our national dream of "Developed India by 2020", at least, as far as Engineering Education is concerned.

We wonder when our Policy Makers, Planners and Administrators will realize the need for elevating the teaching to a professional status?

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