Chapter – 1

Introduction
Chapter – 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The term ‘professionalism’ is used to describe the methods, manner and spirit of a profession and of its practitioners. Each profession has its own culture derived from the role of its practitioners and the expectations that society at large has with respect to the professional service. Unless teacher educators perceive their role as professionals and unless conditions for professional practice become a reality in schools, lasting qualitative improvements are unlikely to occur. The need for reconceptualising the role of state agencies towards this objective is emphasized. The teacher plays a vital role in the teaching learning process upon whose competency and efficiency the quality of education depends. He is obliged to transplant the best in the student in order to make him a better human being, who can suitably fit himself to socio cultural in lieu of the country. One who does it more usefully and forcefully can claim to be an effective teacher and who fails to do so is little considerations as such. It causes changes in the overt and covert behavior of the learner, for learning is nothing but a change in the behavior of the pupils suiting the social and cultural expectations and norms of the society of which he is a member.

The importance of the quality of teachers cannot be overemphasized because the strength and success of an educational system depends on them whether they teach in schools, colleges, or universities. Actually, the quality of a nation depends on the quality of its citizens and in turn the qualities of the citizens depend on the quality of their education. The quality of their education reflects, more than any other single factor, the quality of their teachers. A teacher’s personal qualities, educational qualifications, his professional training, managerial skills and the place he occupies in the school and in the community contributes to the quality of his teaching. The education of a teacher is
not complete on receiving a degree or diploma from college or university. Pre service education or joining college or university department is only the first stage in the continuous growth of a teacher in his profession. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, “a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continuous to burn its own flame.”

The education of a teacher is never complete. The teacher is prepared for his profession before he enters it, but he must also be prepared again and again to keep abreast of the latest developments. Satisfying this need is the purpose of in-service/continuing education. Every teacher, whether he is a beginner or a veteran, needs to be aware of the rapid cultural and social changes, advancements in educational theories, methodologies and range in the interests and abilities of students and the reunification of the role of education due to changes and advancements in science and technology. The frontier of human knowledge in various fields expands rapidly. Therefore there is a need for continued study and growth that would raise the competence of the teacher on the job and in turn, increase the standard of the whole educational system.

Professionally adjusted persons enjoy creating something new and useful for the welfare of organizations rather than being confined to routine work only. Every next morning they plan how best they may contribute to their profession and in the late evening, they evaluate their contribution. They analyze their weaknesses and sort out measures for their improvements; however they continue improving their own performance by self criticism. They have immense patience and plan their work according to the time available for it. All the time, they try to communicate smoothly with students helping them to acquire and grasp new progressive conditions. They have democratic approach and maintain healthy relations with the students, school authorities, colleagues, staff members and guardians. They are best adjusted personnel
in the work culture of school. They participate in extracurricular activities, provide extra time to weak students, enjoy classroom interaction/session, like the school activities and do not make excuses for evading extra work assigned by the principal or management for their leisure time or in the absence of any other teacher. They are aware of professional courses, trainings seminars run for students and teachers, conducted by other schools. They take part in these programs and implement these policies over students in their institution for providing best quality of education. Their integrity is not doubtful, they are completely devoted to their duties, temperamentally humanitarian and self-disciplinarian for their genuine demands, they do not go on strike or indulge in filthy politics in the institution or take help of any foul means, but get their demands fulfilled by constructive thoughtful measures. He believes in being wise and tactful watch, wait but not forsake. He does not work due to fear of termination from services, etc but he performs his duty because he enjoys, feels happiness, gets internal satisfaction and is fully convinced that this alone will create conditions of general welfare.

1.2 Background of the Study

A united secular India, a modern Nation, a productive people and a human and caring society and for their proper fulfillment of which education must mediate, the teacher’s role assumes great significance today the average teacher’s perception of his role and responsibility is far too limited and is concerned with his own immediate tasks, namely the teaching of the 3 R’s, and later, covering the subject matter prescribed for the examinations. The teacher must actively and feelingly associate himself, as an essential and responsible partner, in the great tasks which face the nation. If the four national goals are to become the actual motive force and the ideals that every man, woman and child in our land would live by, the teacher must intervene in a big way. The formation of character, a character evolved in response to the national goals, would institute his primary work. He will indeed prepare students for examinations and open to
them the world of knowledge. But these will went for little unless he was helped them become person’s of character. There is the personal aspect of character building qualities like honesty and integrity and there is the social aspect which defines national character, such character identification must not be leased on cultural and religious traditions of any one group but must fine acceptance by all sections of the people.

In spite of our own personal experiences in being profoundly influenced by mentors and teachers who were eccentric, unique, or otherwise showed a distinctive character, there has not been a lot of attention directed to his important subject. In a classic handbook for teachers, Arthur Jeslid (1955) was among the first of modern day educators to focus attention on the connection between the teacher’s personal life and her or his professional effectiveness. Jeslid maintained that understanding yourself is the single most important task in the growth toward developing healthy attitudes of self acceptance.

In the 1960s, during the brief moments of “The Great Society” and relevance in education, the time was ripe for paying attention once again to the more human aspects of teaching. Among these humanistic educators, psychologist Carl Rogers wrote extensively about the need for teachers to be process-oriented rather than exclusively content-oriented in their approach.

The 1990s may provide, at last, a more fertile field for attending to the human aspects of what it means to be a teacher. There are several signals indicative of a grassroots readiness and demand for attention to the human side of the educational endeavor. The current call for restructuring and reform in education is now based on the shared convictions of teachers and administrators that unless educators are empowered to shape the personal and professional dimensions of our nation’s educational enterprise, there will be no durable reform in education.
There may be considerable debate among educational theoreticians and practitioners about the optimal curriculum, the most appropriate philosophy of teaching for today’s schools, and the best methods of instruction or discipline, but there is virtually universal agreement about what makes a teacher even if these characteristics are uniquely expressed.

On personal list, or on most anyone else’s agenda, is a collection of those human characteristics that are common to the best teachers. These are the attributes that, regardless of a person’s subject area, instructional methods, and educational setting, supply the energy behind his or her ability to influence others in constructive ways. The extent to which you can work to develop these same human dimensions in yourself will determine how effective you are (or will be) as a mentor to others, and how satisfied you will feel with your choice to be, or to continue to be, part of this profession. While scholars may argue as to whether qualities such as charisma are ingrained or can be learned, we would prefer to sidestep that debate and offer that anyone (and especially any person who has devoted his or her life to service) can increase charismatic powers and thereby command attention in the classroom. This is true whether your inclination is to be dramatic or low key in your representations loud or soft. This involves gaining access to your own unique assets as a human being, which allows you to create a style of communication that is authentic, compelling and captivating.

The principle of professionalism is a standard of personal conduct by a professional in his business dealings. While guidelines for acceptable and expected behavior vary from industry to industry, personal principles typically focus on ethics, code of conduct, appropriate personal interactions and workplace integrity.

**Integrity**

Professional integrity includes demonstrating fairness in decision-making processes, acting in the best interest of the company and its clients, and treating colleagues with
respect. Being a person of high integrity means consistently behaving in an ethical manner, in every professional action or exchange.

**Respect**

Principled professionals show respect for others and avoid harsh criticism of their colleagues' work. This professional allows others the chance to speak and participate in workplace debates and carefully considers opposing points of view before making decisions. Courtesy guides an individual in personal interactions, even contentious ones. Respectful individuals do not divulge personal or professional confidences or talk about others in derogatory terms.

**Ethics**

An ethical professional does not take advantage of others, claim credit for others’ work, or misrepresent his own performance or the performance of his company. An ethical person does not participate in inappropriate or unlawful behaviors and strives to maintain an unblemished reputation for honesty and fair business dealings.

**Responsibility**

A principled professional takes responsibility for his work product, his own performance and the performance of the teams he leads. This type of professional also acknowledges mistakes or shortcomings and works to correct problems and situations to the best of his ability. A responsible professional doesn't place undue blame on others, make false claims or statements or pawn off personal responsibilities on others.

**Commitment**

A committed professional dedicates himself to his responsibilities in all ways possible. This includes every effort to do his best work, whether independently or with a team, and to positively represent a company in public settings. Commitment to a profession means avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest and honoring all contractual obligations.

**1.3 Need of the Study**

The study of profession and professionalism has a long standing tradition in sociological research from the beginning of the 20th century. Sociologist has tried to verify the specific values that are connected to professions and at the same time tried to identify criteria to separate professions from other types of occupations.

As in most debates on professions and on professionalism the characteristics of professions are connected to positive and prestigious elements, many occupations have tried to identify their professionalism, thus trying to become part of the elite. This
applies also to teachers. In many publications that are focused on teachers, the use of the term educational professional is used deliberately to indicate and emphasize the prestige and status of the teacher. Teacher policies are full of ‘professional standards’, ‘professional development’, ‘professional communities’, etc. In many of those publications it is unclear whether the concept of teacher professionalism is considered as an indication of the status quo or as an ideal concept that is worthwhile to strive for. As a result the concepts of profession and professionalism have become diffuse and lack conceptual clarity.

In this paper we will use the following definitions (Evetts 2009, Koster 2002, Hargreaves 2000):

- **Profession**: a distinct category of occupational work
- **Professionalization**: a process in which a professional group pursues, develops, acquires and maintains more characteristics of a profession
- **Professionalism**: the conduct, demeanour and standards which guide the work of professionals.

In the past century, the sociological discourse on professions and on the professionalism of teachers has used different and shifting perspectives, emphasizing different aspects of professionalism (Evetts 2006).

In present study of relevant literature on professions, we have identified five different needs:

1. Limited exposure and lack of professionalism among secondary school teacher
2. Weak teaching and instructional facilities
3. Processes and standards in institutional system need to be strengthened
4. Training and learning programme lack professional approach
5. Strategy for untrained teachers needs to be revisited

### 1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the status of professionalism among secondary school teachers of Meghalaya?
2. Do they differ regarding their professionalism on the basis of their sex, social category, professional qualification (trained and untrained), and teaching experience?
1.5 Statement of the Problem: As the present study tends to study the professionalism among teachers it is formally stated as ‘A study of professionalism among secondary school teachers in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya’.

1.6 Operational Definitions of the Key Words:

Professionalism: In present study ‘professionalism’ includes three key components of teaching profession i.e. competence, skill and professional conduct of teachers.

- **Skill of teaching** – the ability of the teachers to teach in the classroom.
- **Teaching Competency** – refers to the teacher’s knowledge of their subject area, as well as their understanding of teaching methods.
- **Professional Conduct** – it includes behaviour, language, personal appearance, as well as attitude and dispositions.

**Secondary School Teachers**: It refers to the teachers teaching at secondary level (9+10) in government, deficit, ad-hoc and private schools affiliated to Meghalaya Board of School Education.

1.7 Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the professionalism among teachers in terms of:
   a. Skill of teaching
   b. Teaching competency
   c. Professional conduct of teachers (behavior with colleague, teacher and principal)
2. To find the difference in professionalism among teachers on the basis of
   a. Sex.
   b. Social category (tribal and non tribal).
   c. Professional qualification (trained and untrained).
   d. Teaching experience.