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Teachers are the Windows to Knowledge: An Analysis of Albus Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

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Abstract:

Teachers are the ones who abolish darkness in the mind of each child to light the lamp of knowledge. Teachers should uphold various qualities to ensure better learning experience and exposure to each learner, in order to structure their behaviour to suit the changes in the environment. Even though, the teachers in our society possess sufficient skills to manage the students, majority lack the qualities which are necessary to revitalise the current generation children. They perform their duty for the sake of doing without dedication and passion. Hence, it negatively affects the current generation and the education system. J.K Rowling through her renowned series 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' clearly introduces an ideal teacher before the readers. Professor Albus Dumbledore plays not only his role as the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but also reflects the image of an ideal teacher who is ready to fight against dark forces to protect his students and the whole world. This research paper aims to examine various ideal qualities of Albus Dumbledore as a teacher of Hogwarts which helped him to contribute more to his students' life and to the school of magic.

Keywords: Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter, Teacher qualities.

Introduction:

“Education is the movement from darkness to light”. It has the power to change and to determine the quality of an individual's life. Teachers play a major role in imparting proper knowledge to children. They not only teach in schools but also act as a guiding light throughout their lives. An efficient teacher acts as a companion to the learner to figure out the proper path which enable him to achieve goals in his life. Teachers' main task is to prepare children for better tomorrow rather than providing boring lectures in a technical way. They should be closet companions of the children by providing moral and emotional support. They

should encourage students to grow more as they often look for support and guidance of teachers. Timely encouragement and motivation enable them to accomplish significant achievements without losing their innate and acquired qualities. It is well said that, "The future development of a nation truly lies in the hands of good teachers". How one leads his life depends on the education he gains in his childhood. Teachers impart information to the children to analyse the situation and to figure out solutions to overcome challenges. They make the children more knowledgeable and enable a proper flow of knowledge from one generation to another hence, they are often stated as the social engineers of society.

Teacher-pupil relationship is a crucial factor for a child's learning. Positive and supportive relationship between a teacher and student generate a sense of belongingness and motivates students to engage in learning activities. It ensures academic success as students who possess a strong bond with their teachers do perform better when compared to others. It develops self-worth especially for those with learning difficulties and with low economic status. It also glorifies teachers' innate abilities through professional growth. It helps them to improve their interpersonal and professional skills. Teachers should develop a deep understanding of each learner so that they can contribute to their physiological and psychological growth which enable them to grow beyond academics.

J.K Rowling is a British author, film producer, screenwriter and philanthropist. 'Harry Potter' series is a renowned set of works that contributed to the fame of Rowling. It has won multiple awards and sold more than 500 million copies, becoming the bestselling book series in history. The series take place at Hogwarts School of Witch and Wizardry. It highlights the life of Harry, Albus Dumbledore, Voldemort and others at Hogwarts. The story highlights the incidents taking place at the school of magic and clearly portrays the importance of teacher pupil relationship that helps to protect Hogwarts from evil forces. Even though, it highlights rivalry between good and evil forces, it also lay emphasis on school education. It showcases how teachers act as a guiding light to students to overcome various challenges in each stage of life. Albus Dumbledore plays a remarkable role in Hogwarts as he acts as a moral compass of other characters. He is notable for his generosity, dedication, guidance, experiences and compassion for the students. How he treats his students is clearly pictured through the series 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone '. Dumbledore acts as a model for the present day teachers as the character clearly portrays how a teacher or headmaster should be, to rejuvenate the educational institution and the standards of students. By examining the character, the reader who peruse to become a teacher can clearly identify the characteristics a

teacher should possess in order to support his students as well as to develop professionalism. The main aim of this research paper is to examine various ideal qualities of Albus Dumbledore as a teacher of Hogwarts which helped him to contribute more to his students' life as well as to the school of magic.

Teachers are the Windows to Knowledge and Experience:

“A good teacher can make a world of difference in a student's life, impacting everything from their classroom learning to long term success” says David Jonassen. Formative year experiences of a child mould them into the person they will become and teachers play an important role in contributing knowledge necessary to face challenges in each stage of life. The truth is, outside of their own home, one of the biggest role model for a student is his teacher as teachers open student's eye to view things in different perspectives. They inspire their students to work harder and push themselves. Nowadays in many educational institutions, the qualities and accomplishments of teachers are degrading. Lack of interest, dedication, in-service, pre-service courses and other refreshing courses lead to the degeneration of quality education and the level of teacher-pupil relationship.

Notable qualities a teacher should possess to establish a good relation with the pupil to improve the status of education and of the institution are as stated. A good teacher should be a strong communicator. He should communicate not only the lessons but also things happening around the society. Through communication, a teacher should influence the mind set of his students to grab his attention to the subject. Communication thus plays an important role in generating a strong bond between teacher and student. Great communication doesn't stop when the teacher is done talking. Listening well is one of the most important skills needed to be a teacher. “Teachers that are skilled in listening and observing often pick up on what isn't being said, such as any anxieties a student may have, and can then help the student build their skills and confidence levels”, says a survey conducted among students. A good teacher should always be engaging. An engaging teacher takes his student beyond the four walls of the classroom. He adds humour to the lessons, makes class attractive and seek creative ways to bring learning in to real world. Another key to influence students and to improve their interest to learning is to treat each student as an individual, by being empathetic and understanding their inner traumas and struggles. Patience is another important quality that embellishes the attitude of a teacher. A teacher should patiently listen his students to understand their problem and to resolve various challenges facing by them. Moreover, they

could encourage their thoughts and ideas and guide them to attain greater heights in life. Teacher should share best practices with his students. A willingness to share knowledge and experiences with others is necessary to improve and influence learners around him. A great teacher should be warm, approachable, accessible, enthusiastic and caring. He should be approachable, not only to students, but to everyone on campus. Moreover, he should have positive relation with the community. That is, he should understand the importance of building supportive and collaborative environments to provide community based education to students. A best teacher establishes a healthy relationship between the students. They know to effectively provide guidelines and assign roles to inculcate every student's help and participation. Hence, each one feels like they are an important part of their class and can contribute well to make classroom learning more interesting. Studies show that a teacher's expectations have a huge impact on student achievement. Teacher should encourage each student to bring out his potential to substantiate the upcoming developments in the field of education and in society. He should have high expectations for all his students so that he can encourage and motivates them to improve their level of learning. A good teacher should have the ability to develop strong relationship with students. To establish successful learning environment, great teachers should have the capability to build caring relationships with the students. It is the caring student-teacher relationship that facilitates the exchange of information. Thus, qualities of a teacher are beyond words and can't be caricatured in a nutshell. Every teacher should possess remarkable qualities as they are the ones who mould the character of every generations.

Through Harry Potter series, J.K Rowling presents a notable teacher at Hogwarts. Albus Dumbledore, the remarkable Headmaster of school of magic reflects the qualities that a teacher should exhibit in order to mould and develop the physical and mental attributes of each student to ensure harmony and peace in the world. "He is friendly but distant authoritative figure. He is a celebrity in the wizarding world, but he also has a kind and humble heart. He not only supports Harry, the one who lost his parents due to the act of evil forces but also every student of Hogwarts" (Cristy A). He acts as a shield to protect Hogwarts from Voldemort by risking his own life. He models for the students to make them understand how magic can be used for good in the world. He is a renowned professor as well as a powerful person that other wizards admire and encourage in ordertoremain as a guiding light to abolish darkness.

Discussion:

Harry Potter series are pictured at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The first series 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' caricatures the life situations of Harry with his Uncle, the incidents that unravels the life history of Harry, the events which drive Harry to Hogwarts School of magic and how he overcomes the dark forces that tries to gain power over entire humanity. The major highlights of this series is the way of presenting the beauty and mystery of Hogwarts and the enigmatic teachers dwelling in the magical land. It clearly depicts how a teacher should guide his students to unravel the shadow of ignorance to enjoy the bliss of knowledge. On the contrary, it also reflects the rage, anger and revenge dwelling in the mind of a teacher which negatively affects the student in the school of magic. One of the notable character in the entire series of Harry Potter is professor Albus Dumbledore, who is an English half-blood wizard once worked as Defence Against Dark Arts Professor and later as the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Even though he appears at almost the end of the first series, he plays a remarkable role in Harry's life by generating a polished base of knowledge and wisdom in Harry which helps him to encounter various challenges brought out by dark forces.

Appearance of Dumbledore is notable as he doesn't possess any ornamentation that highlights his position as Headmaster of Hogwarts. He often dresses in long, purple robes and wears half-moon spectacles and his silver hair and beard are "both long enough to tuck into his belt". His attitude towards life and his incredible wisdom are reflected in his appearance. J.K Rowling states that, she enjoys writing Dumbledore because he is the epitome of goodness. She says that, "Dumbledore speaks for her, as he knows pretty much everything about the Harry Potter Universe". Harry learns about Albus Dumbledore on his way to Hogwarts when he come across his biography on a chocolate frog card. The welcome speech of Dumbledore makes Harry think that he is eccentric. But later, each day at Hogwarts reflects the goodness and wisdom of his Headmaster which helps him to understand things beyond the four walls. Dumbledore proves himself an efficient responsible instructor through the guidelines provided to the students who joined Hogwarts. Without generating much confusion and fear in students, he made them understand the importance of being away from the forest and other restricted corridors in Hogwarts. His compassion to the students dwells in his words which made them follow the rules without much stress and strain. Dumbledore's compassion and empathy to Harry enabled him to overcome his sorrow for the loss of his parents. The invisible clock he gifted to Harry during Christmas paves way to his encounter with Mirror of Erised through which he sees his father and mother and the ones who love

him. Dumbledore's compassion and love for Harry urges him to sit along with him on the floor in front of the mirror and explains the delights of the mirror. Dumbledore clarifies the doubt of Harry about why others fail to see his parents through the mirror by clearly emphasising the facts related to the speciality of the Mirror with the intention that it will help in his future to overcome the challenges enforced by dark forces. Moreover, with utmost kindness he warns Harry to not to go in search of the mirror again after it is moved to another room as he points out that, "it does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live"(HPPS 157). He advises Harry to dwell on the present than being in the past so that he can be more productive and efficient in his school life. In addition, Dumbledore resolves Harry's question, "what do you see when you look in the Mirror?"(HPPS 157) in a humorous way without getting offended. Thus, he handled each situation in an effective way without altering his peace of mind and that of others.

Even though Dumbledore fails to be with Harry during his encounter with Voldemort, he obstructs the chance of Voldemort to get the Philosopher's Stone from the Erised Mirror. Thus, his role as a teacher is well played by protecting the world from the evil forces without getting his student hurt. He ensures Harry's well-being at the right time and clarifies the doubts and confusions within him through his philosophical perspectives about life. Dumbledore clearly states how evil works on human mind in opposition with the wisdom embedded within him which often leads to destruction and chaos that is, "the two things most human beings would choose above all-the trouble is, humans do have a knack of choosing precisely those which are worst for them"(HPPS 215). Moreover, he doesn't worry about his friend's death as, he says, "to the well organised mind, death is but the next great adventure"(HPPS 215). In spite of everyone's fear in Hogwarts to utter the name of Voldemort, Dumbledore insists Harry to utter the name without fear as he says, "Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself"(HPPS216). His powerful thoughts strengthens the mind of Harry to face further challenges awaiting him in coming days. Thus, he motivates and influences Harry's thoughts and actions which help him to get adjusted with the unexpected circumstances and events occurring around him. By explaining the value and authenticity of love to Harry he emphasizes how love acts as a shield to protect the entire humanity from evil forces. He clearly states that, "it was agony to touch a person marked by something so good"(HPPS 216) hence, one should keep goodness within to protect himself from dark forces. He mildly prevents Harry's further enquiry without hurting his emotions by saying that, "truth is a beautiful and terrible thing and should therefore be treated with great

caution”(HPPS 216).He promises Harry that he will reveal the truths and facts related to various incidents occurring around him when he has a good reason not to. Thus, he ensures that the harsh realities won't affect his student's state of mind. Moreover, he clarifies Harry's doubt regarding how he got the Stone out of the Mirror by demystifying the mechanism of the Mirror. Harry shares with his friends his gratitude towards the most admirable teacher who encouraged the curiosity of the students rather than preventing them from doing things. He says that, “Dumbledore is a funny man. I think he sort of wanted to give me a chance. I reckon he had a pretty good idea we were going to try, and instead of stopping us, he just taught us enough to help”(HPPS219). As a teacher he makes an attempt to cheer up Harry by giving him a leather covered book that contains the photographs of his parents. The sight of his parents waving hands at him cheers his emotions and inspires him. Dumbledore gives the book to Hagrid rather than giving it to Harry in order to avoid hurting the feelings of Ron and Hermione. Thus, he empathises with one of his student without hurting the emotions of others. Through his humorous speech at Hogwarts, he clearly summarises the incidents occurred within an academic year and appreciated Harry, Ron and Hermione for their efforts they took to prevent Voldemort from getting the Stone. In addition, he appreciates Neville, the one who is often considered as irresponsible by other teachers, for standing along with his friends even during life threatening situations. Thus, he expresses his admiration and gratitude to each one of his students irrespective of the role and risk they took to support each other and the school. Thus, Dumbledore turns out to be a good motivator who always do things to protect his students as well as Hogwarts from evil forces.

Conclusion:

Henry Brooks Adams said “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops”. This quote turns into reality through the acts of Professor Albus Dumbledore. In spite of the battle between good and evil forces, J.K Rowling clearly caricatures an ideal image of a teacher through her famous character Albus Dumbledore. She emphasises the role of Dumbledore in the life of Harry and of the school of magic. How a teacher acts as a protector of knowledge and goodness is unfolded through the first series ‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone’. Dumbledore identifies individual merits and supports his students to fight against the dark force. He took efforts to understand each student, not just in terms of seeing who they are, but also seeing who they could turn in future. Harry gets the support and help of Dumbledore to face Voldemort even from his younger age. As J.K Rowling states Dumbledore as,” A very wise man who knows that Harry

Potter is going to have to learn a few hard lessons to prepare him for what may be coming in his life". Hence, Harry sees Dumbledore as his mentor, guide, facilitator and supporter. Thus, he inculcates notable qualities of an ideal teacher which are almost diminishing from the present society. Qualities such as compassion, patience, good listening, perceptiveness, trustworthiness, empathy and good interaction skills are reflected through the role of Albus Dumbledore in each series of Harry Potter. These qualities present him as an ideal teacher among other teachers at Hogwarts.

The present generation teachers in our society lack essential qualities that are necessary to upgrade the current system of education and the level of cognition. A teacher should have the capability to stimulate the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learner. He should be talented to perform various roles at a time in the classroom to support the learner not only in the process of acquisition but also in real life situations. A teacher should act as a mediator of learning, controller of students' behaviour, parent substitute, confidant to students, judge of achievement, public servant, agent of social change and community leader. These roles help a teacher to generate harmony in society by moulding the character of the present and upcoming generations. Teachers are quoted as social engineers who are responsible for the negative and positive attributes of each child. Hence, the character, Albus Dumbledore who assimilates remarkable qualities can be placed as a model for the teachers to identify and improve their innate and acquired teacher qualities to protect our current generation of students in a society under moral degradation.

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