



TEACHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Education is the national agenda and is the catalytic tool that can transform the future of our children and youth. It is a universally accepted truth that the teacher plays a vital role in whole education process. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, ethos, knowledge, skills and traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest technological advances in education and pedagogy. Teacher Education is a crucial area which urgently needs focus in order to develop the standards of pedagogy in India. Unfortunately, it is suffering from many deficiencies and structural issues. Economic survey of 2016 has also observed that increasing investment in human capital is a key requirement to improve productivity of the population, adding that there is a need for professionally qualified and educated teachers.

Teacher Education is an activity that requires interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, the formation of dispositions and values and the development of practice under the best mentors.

The quality and efficiency of school education programme depends to a great extent on the quality of the teacher. India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Besides the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and government aided institutions; private and self-financing colleges and open universities are also engaged in teacher education. Though most teacher education programme are nearly identical yet their standard varies across institutions and universities. Education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demand of the system, but also functions as a bridge between schooling and higher education. In certain areas, the supply of teachers far exceeds the demand while in others there are acute shortages as qualified teachers which results in the appointment of under qualified and unqualified persons. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally reorganized. But teacher education in India, because of its history and also due to various factors beyond its control, has by and large been confined to school education only.

The quality of education is a direct consequence and outcome of the quality of teachers and teacher education system. The task of bringing qualitative change in institutional efficiency of the teacher education system in itself is a huge challenging one. Thus proper teacher training programmes will help the teacher to become an enriched, dedicated and committed professional. Over the years the quality of teacher education has deteriorated hence changes in all aspects of teacher education need



to be made to face the challenges of the global society. Thus a process for improving the quality of teacher education and quality of products of the educational enterprise is essential and a need of the hour. Assessment and accreditation of educational institutions will certainly enhance academic and educational quality thereby giving us competent, committed and dedicated teachers.

Reforms in Teacher Education System

There is an urgent need of revitalization of Teacher education System through radical action, in order to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy and high quality to the teacher education system.

- Restoring integrity and credibility to the teacher education system.
- Bringing efficacy and high quality to the teacher education system through strong education departments in multidisciplinary colleges and universities.
- To integrate teacher education with overall education development in the States;
- The need for expansion of capacity of teacher education institutions, especially in some of the deficit States of East and North-Eastern Region;
- Address the problem of large number of untrained teachers and the possibility of large number of persons being recruited (because of the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) specified in the RTE Act) without possessing the prescribed professional qualification;
- Expanding institutional capacity to provide in-service training for secondary school teachers in light of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA);
- Strengthening the decentralized structures of BRCs and CRCs to provide adequate institutional support for professional development of school teachers on a continuous basis;
- To link elementary teacher education with the higher education system
- To develop and put in place a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Scheme on various physical and financial parameters with pre-defined outcomes for improving the overall quality of various activities of the teacher education institutions.

Therefore, everything necessarily has to be done to ensure that our teacher education institutions produce teachers of high quality and caliber. Conscious initiatives are necessary to influence the quality of teacher education at various levels.

Quality Issues in Teacher Education Programme:

New methodology and Teaching-Learning material

There have been tremendous advances in science and technology, and more so in information and communication technology (ICT). All these developments have brought about substantial changes in the methodology of teaching and instructional materials. Unfortunately, our teacher education



institutions have not been able to keep pace with these developments. Researches on classroom processes and present practices of teaching indicate that teaching in our schools remains didactic and that emphasis is still on memorization of facts, and assessment of these through achievement tests.

ICT literacy

Today our classroom processes are mostly based on .chalk and talk. This Quality Enhancement in Teacher Education has to change. All teachers have to be made ICT literate. All pre-service and in-service teacher education programs should include intensive training in the use of modern tools of ICT including off-line and on-line electronic resources such as CD-ROMs, multi-media, Internet and world-wide-web (WWW).

Stage-specific teacher education programs

It is known that children must be talked to at their level of understanding and provided learning experiences they can process, respond to and make meaning of. There exist significant qualitative differences at various stages of school education, ie. pre-primary, primary, upper primary and secondary, because learning abilities and learning capacities of children at these stages are different. Thus teacher education programs have to be stage-specific to be useful and effective. This is not happening in our country. For example, teacher education for middle classes (VI to VIII) is neither covered by B.Ed nor by primary level teacher training. Stage-specific pre-service teacher education (PSTE) programs should be launched without any further delay. After stage-specific PSTE programs such as M.Ed (Pre-school), M.Ed (Elementary) and M.Ed (Secondary) are launched for teacher educators, the norms and standards in respect of teacher educators should be revised and made stage-specific. For example, M.Ed (Elementary) should be prescribed as the essential professional qualification for elementary level teacher educators.

Learner-centred pedagogy

We have been talking about child-centred or learner-centred pedagogy for the past well over 16 years; but even today our classroom practices mostly remain what they were 25 years ago. Large over-crowded classes, ill-trained and untrained teachers, poorly equipped classrooms, single teacher schools, and multi-grade teaching are some of the stark realities that severely restrict the use of learner-centred pedagogy. It is high time that we switch over from teacher centred education to learner-centred teaching and learning. Teachers need to be trained and facilitated to handle learner-centred pedagogy.

Inclusive education

Another central concern of teacher education relates to what is known as inclusive or integrated. Education. Inclusive/integrated education is a pre-condition for social justice and empowerment. It is a growing concept and evolving practice, and it needs to be supported in every way and by all means. At present, the capacity of teacher education programs to take care of disabled and disadvantaged children in inclusive/integrated settings is quite limited. To do justice to inclusive/



integrated education and to provide it to the challenged learners in the manner it was conceived, teacher education programs have to be suitably strengthened incorporating relevant components. Needless to add that challenged learners receiving inclusive education should be facilitated in their learning by providing them with necessary equipment and customised learning materials.

Para teachers

The scheme of appointing para teachers started in the 1980s when Rajasthan started the Shiksha Karmi Project in 1987 to overcome the problem of dysfunctional schools due to teacher absenteeism. The main purpose of this project was to achieve universalization of primary education and improvement in primary schooling by adapting the form and content of education to local needs and conditions. Unfortunately, of late, para teachers are appointed under several schemes and for a variety of reasons including financial. In some States like Madhya Pradesh para teachers are appointed even up to higher secondary stage mainly to economise on teachers. Para teachers are not adequately qualified academically and they are totally untrained. No scheme of appointing para teachers should be resorted to as an economy measure. It is estimated that there are more than two lakh para They pose a serious threat to quality-related aspects of school education. No para teacher should be regularized as a teacher against a regular post unless he/she acquires the qualifications prescribed for that post.

Subject-specific teacher education programs

Quality in pedagogy largely depends on the professional competence of teachers. Competence here includes academic qualifications, pedagogical skills and commitment. In the years to come, teacher education programs may have to be more and more subject-specific. The teacher education institutions may have to offer more specific programs separately to prepare teachers in the areas of science, social science, languages, physical education, and vocational streams. Such subject-specific courses in teacher education will provide greater scope and appropriate opportunities to delineate and discern suitable theoretical inputs and conceptualization in relation to practices in education. They will facilitate the process of bringing theory and practice together.

Imbalances in teacher education

Teacher education in India is plagued with imbalances and mismatch. There are large variations in the States/UTs in respect of teachers. There are also variations in the parity and cadres of teachers and teacher educators, and transfer. Such differences are bound to exist in a large system of education in a country like India, which is a huge subcontinent. However attempts should be made to bring them to comparable levels at least in respect of the major dimensions of the teaching profession. Data on the existing variations should be collected State-wise and then suitably collated with a view to bring them to comparable levels.

Education in human values

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multireligious society. The pluralistic nature of Indian society needs to be reflected in the pedagogical approaches to make learning meaningful. We need



to develop culture-specific pedagogy for the various stages of education. In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Prospective teachers have to be made aware of the critical issues facing our society and have to be consciously exposed to education in human values.

Quality Enhancement in Teacher Education

It is time to initiate a process of continuous curriculum changes in the teacher education programs. Regular discourses and discussions should be held to enrich the academic and pedagogical inputs of teacher education at various levels and stages. Coordination of in-service and pre-service teacher education programs: At present, there is hardly any coordination between in-service and pre-service teacher education programs. To be effective, these two categories of programs should supplement and complement each other. Teachers need to continuously enrich their competencies and enhance their professional performance. Efforts should be made to actualise mobility of teacher educators across the various stages of education. NCTE initiatives: The NCTE was established as a statutory body on August 17, 1995. This is perhaps the most significant development that has taken place in the field of education after India became independent. The main objective of the statutory NCTE was to achieve planned and coordinated development of teacher education throughout the country and to ensure proper maintenance of norms and standards in the entire teacher education system. During the past years of its existence, the statutory NCTE and NAAC has taken several initiatives to take care of the quality aspects of teacher education at all levels. Unfortunately, it is not at all adequately equipped to carry out the mandate given to it.

To conclude, numerous are the issues relating to the quality aspects of teacher education. The current debate in teacher education is on quality. We have to bear in mind that quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort. Quality is essentially the product of adequate investment of capital, talent and hard work. Quality is not a destination; it is a continuous journey. We never reach there. We have to keep on upgrading the quality of teacher education on a continuing basis. Assessment and accreditation of teacher education for quality assurance has become imperative to help maintain and further improve the quality of teacher education. It is great that the NAAC and the NCTE are working together closely to achieve this purpose.

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