

## Teacher education institutes scenario in India

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### Abstract

Teacher education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of a nation. The constitutional goals, the directive principles of the state policy, the socio-economic problems and the growth of knowledge, the emerging expectations and the changes operating in education, etc. call for an appropriate response from a futuristic education system and provide the perspective within which teacher education programmes need to be viewed.

**Keywords:** Scenario, Teacher Education and Problems.

### Introduction

The need for improved levels of educational participation for overall progress is well recognized. The key role of educational institutions in realizing it is reflected in a variety of initiatives taken to transform the nature and function of education -- both formal as well as non-formal. Universal accessibility to quality education is considered essential for development. This has necessitated improvement in the system of teacher education so as to prepare quality teachers.

Various Commissions and Committees appointed by the Central and the State Governments in recent decades have invariably emphasized the need for quality teacher education suited to the needs of the educational system. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) observed that a major factor responsible for the educational reconstruction at the secondary stage is teachers' professional training. The Education Commission (1964-66) stressed that 'in a world based on science and technology it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people' and that 'a sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education.'

India has a large system of education. There are nearly 5.98 lakh Primary Schools, 1.76 lakh Elementary Schools and 98 thousand High / Higher Secondary Schools in the country, about 1300 teacher education institutions for elementary teachers and nearly 700 colleges of education / university departments preparing teachers for secondary and higher secondary schools. Out of about 4.52 million teachers in the country nearly 3 million are teaching at the primary/elementary level\*. A sizeable number of them are untrained or under-trained. In certain regions, like the North-East, there are even under-qualified teachers. As far as in-service education is concerned the situation is not very encouraging. It is estimated that on an average 40% of the teachers are provided in-service teacher education once over a period of five years. Regarding non-formal education, though a number of models are in vogue in various states in the country, much more needs to be done to prepare teachers and other functionaries for the system.

The Programme of Action (POA 1992) has emphasized teacher education as a continuous process, its pre-service and

in-service components being inseparable. The POA, among others, has pointed out the following in respect of teacher education-

1. Professional commitment and overall competencies of teachers leave much to be desired;
2. The quality of pre-service education has not only not improved with recent developments in pedagogical science, but has actually shown signs of deterioration;
3. Teacher education programmes consist mainly of pre-service teacher training, with practically no systematic programmes of in-service training, facilities for which are lacking.
4. There has been an increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices; and
5. The support system provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the University Departments of Education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level.

In pursuance of the NPE 1986 a major step was taken by the Central Government to enhance the professional capacity of a large number of teacher education institutions. Nearly 430 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) have already been established by 1997-98. The DIETs are charged with the responsibility of organising pre-service and in-service programmes in addition to being the nodal resource centres for elementary education at district level. Likewise, Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutions of Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) have been given the responsibility of introducing innovations in teacher education programmes at the secondary and higher secondary stages and in vocational education.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as a non-statutory body (1973-1993) took several steps as regards quality improvement in teacher education. Its major contribution was to prepare Teacher Education Curriculum Framework in 1978. Consequently, teacher education curricula witnessed changes in teacher preparation programmes in various universities and boards in the country. A similar effort was made in 1988.

During the last decade, new thrusts have been posed due to rapid changes in the educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels. Curriculum reconstruction has also become imperative in the light of some perceptible gaps in teacher education. Teacher education by and large, is conventional in its nature and purpose. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system still remains inadequate. Teachers are prepared in competencies and skills which do not necessarily equip them for becoming professionally effective. Their familiarity with latest educational developments remains insufficient. organized and stipulatory learning experiences whenever available, rarely contribute to enhancing teachers' capacities for self-directed lifelong learning. The system still prepares teachers who do not necessarily become professionally competent and committed at the completion of initial teacher preparation programmes. A large number of teacher training institutions do not practice what they preach. Several of the skills acquired and methodologies learnt are seldom practiced in actual school system. This highlights the need to bring realism and dynamism in the curriculum.

### **Teacher Education and Problems of the Nation**

It is universally acknowledged that education is an effective means for social reconstruction and to a great extent it offers solutions to the problems a society is faced with. These problems may be economic, social, cultural, political, moral, ecological and educational. Since the teachers play a major role in education of children, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Teacher education must, therefore, create necessary awareness among teachers about their new roles and responsibilities.

Education of teachers needs to strengthen and stress upon the main attributes of a profession, such as, the systematic theory, rigorous training over a specified duration, authority, community sanction, ethical code and culture, generating knowledge through research and specialization. It is acknowledged that formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct.

### **Economic Problems**

Poverty, unemployment, and low rate of growth and productivity are some of the major economic problems of the country which have led to the compulsions of the backward economy. These problems seek immediate solution and demand a realistic co-ordination between economic planning and manpower planning. Education can help find solutions if it is properly coordinated with manpower needs. Introduction of work education and vocationalization of education in secondary schools will have to be given a modern and meaningful direction. The attitude towards the work culture needs a transformation. The Indian society needs education with special emphasis on science and technology, vocational inputs and realistic work experiences. Teacher education curriculum, therefore, has to promote such attitudes as are necessary for the emergence of a new economic order. Along with the vocational competencies and skills a new work culture will have to be created which necessarily involves the inculcation of dignity of work, the spirit of self-reliance and

scientific temper among students. The courses of teacher education need to be enriched to enable teachers to understand the attributes of modernity and development.

### **Social Problems**

Casteism, communalism and regionalism are some of the problems in the body politic of the society which misguide the youth. Increasing delinquency, violence, terrorism and fissiparous tendencies and use of inappropriate means to get one's ends served are threats to the national integration and social cohesion. Democracy, violence and terrorism cannot coexist. Education has to develop a peace loving personality and the programme of teacher education has to contribute in this regard.

The explosion of population with all its allied disturbing trends is not only neutralizing the economic gains but also creating many problems for the country. Indian society still suffers from evils like child labor, child marriage, untouchability, discriminatory treatment to women, violation of human rights, etc. and most of the people are unaware of their legal rights.

Modern model of development which puts man against nature by making it an object of exploitation has disturbed the harmony and equilibrium between the two. Its consequences are visible in serious environmental degradation, pollution and ecological imbalances.

Strengthening national and social cohesion in a diverse and plural society, accelerating the process of economic growth, improving the life of the downtrodden and the people living below the poverty line, removing the widely prevalent ignorance, superstition and prejudices from the masses, inculcating scientific temper and developing a critical awareness about the social realities of Indian life are some of the issues which call for immediate attention. Teachers and the teacher educators have a special role to play in such efforts.

### **Problems of Cultural Reconstruction**

Education is the process of transmission of dynamic and responsive components of cultural heritage and its continuous enrichment. There is a need to reinterpret the Indian culture in its distinct identity and composite strength. Its capacity to absorb the sublime from the other cultures needs to be highlighted. The teachers will have to play their role in cultural transmission and reconstruction.

### **Crises of Values and Morality**

There has been a persistent erosion of values in the society. In the present day context certain values need to be redefined and reinstalled. There are situations when the values imparted and inculcated in schools are not generally practised in society. Value education demands a planned and purposive approach. It is through education and as of necessity through teacher education programmes that the task of inculcating values can be substantially accomplished. Whereas values are emotive, the other related significant dimension is that of moral education which is essentially conative in character. Morals are situation-specific and demand immediate decision and action and yet there are morals which are considered to be eternal and universal. Through committed teachers, the art of ensuring moral development in a secular, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society needs to be cultivated.

### **Over Activism of Distance/Open Universities**

Some of the distance and open universities have become over activists in the context of teacher education. These have a notion that they can open their teacher education extension centres anywhere. To give birth to infinite is their right, but who will rear their babies. Such distance and open universities have resulted into the dilution of teacher education.

### **Overgrowing Establishment**

Establishment has overgrown enrolment in most of the teacher education programmes. But, at the same time there is uneven distribution of the teacher education institutions. Teacher education regulations, norms and standards though latest visited during 2009, have further scope for perfection. There is a need to have demand and supply estimates. Blanket "NO" and even blanket "YES" can be grossly harmful in the public interest. The States need to justify, substantially, case-wise their stand for objection or no objection with due respect to the establishment of teacher education institutions. There is a need to find out teacher education institutions required countrywide, program-wise and state-wise, at present, and in future. Surveys need to be conducted to find out the present status and requirement. These projections ought to be in tune with the growth of school education. Also, futurological studies need to be conducted to make forecasts of teacher education.

### **Poor Research Scenario-**

One of the major inputs towards enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools as well as the teacher education institutions would be the extent to which research outputs and the outcomes of innovations are utilized by the system. Researches on teacher education have been and are being conducted in universities, national level institutions and other establishments but their utility for the teacher educator or the classroom teacher remains rather low. Majority of the researches are undertaken to obtain a degree and hence the focus on its possible utility and relevance gets misplaced. The situation is compounded by non-availability of appropriate dissemination mechanisms, like journals, publication of findings in different forms and opportunities to the target group to get an access to these. Institutional capabilities and resources need to be augmented, enabling them to undertake relevant researches.

There is a definite requirement of bringing in research methods and methodologies in appropriate form in teacher education at preservice and inservice programmes. To an extent, it finds a place in master level courses in education though in some universities the same is not insisted upon. The structure and design of future courses and programmes need to take this aspect into account. Preparation of teacher educators can no longer be completed without adequate grounding in various aspects of research. Researches must respond to policy issues, curriculum issues, evaluative procedures and practices, training strategies, classroom practices etc. The areas of teacher preparation for children with special needs, gifted children and children from groups with specific cultural, social and economic needs can no longer be ignored. Surveys and studies also need to be encouraged. These may be exploratory or diagnostic in nature. The new initiatives and innovations need to be encouraged and studied. Wherever considered

appropriate, these could be brought into the system of teacher education for wider and gainful use.

The concept of field interaction and laboratory area approach in the context of establishment of DIETs is indeed timely. Researches, innovations and surveys must become an integral part of the training programmes of teacher education institutions irrespective of the stages. The trainees need to be familiarised with innovations in general and innovative practices in teacher education in particular.

### **Conclusion**

Every fault of Teacher Education is attributed to the National Council of Teacher Education. Rather than finding faults let us try to meet the gaps between our policies and programmes, vision and mission, wish and will. The foregoing analysis highlights the malaise plaguing the Indian Teacher Education System. It calls for revolutionary changes. There should be open forums and public debates on Teacher Education Policy, rather than leaving it to some selected committees, and commissions.

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