

An empowered teacher educator: A new dimension

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Abstract

Teaching is a noble profession which require synergetic portrayal of people skills, content and pedagogical knowledge. In order to enable teachers with such attributes, it is essential to reform role of teacher educators in teacher education program. It is essential to understand that teachers cannot be manufactured in an educational factory. Teacher educators should empower pupil teachers in such a way that the whole program leads them to larger involvement of soul rather than mind. Teachers must strive continuously to re-invent curriculum on the basis of their teaching competence as education is a dynamic phenomenon. Hence, in order to empower pupil teachers with such attributes, it is essential to empower teacher educators simultaneously at various dimensions to achieve desired outcome. The present article aims at exploring answers of the following questions:

- Why teacher educators need to update themselves with right knowledge, skill and attitude?
- How empowerment of teacher educators can be ensured?
- What are the constraints impeding empowerment of teacher educators?

Keywords: empowerment, teacher educators, constraints

1. Introduction

Joyce Meyer rightly quoted “Teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges”. Teaching is a noble profession where great power comes with great responsibility. The most prominent responsibility shouldered by teachers is empowering students to give direction to their intrusive, unwanted and uncontrolled thought for a better life. But the dilemma lies in the fact that no considerable discussion has been taken up for the empowerment of teachers as there is a huge gap between professional practice and institutional support. The Effectiveness of teachers has directly proportional relationship with teachers’ empowerment where continuous learning, unlearning and relearning is required.

Among many other issues, diluted curriculum and practices of teacher education program has attracted the attention of various stakeholders. But the way pupil teacher are being educated is a matter to be looked upon in a holistic way from the perspective of teacher educators. The overall experience of teacher education should be such that it will provide nourishment that will help to achieve ultimate potential rather than moulding. Currently teacher education is actually focused on training rather than educating. Notwithstanding the need of the situation it aims at producing good teacher but not the reflective one as there is no opportunity given to think. In order to expand perception, consciousness needs to be expanded. We should never forget that teachers can never be manufactured in an education factory. But currently teacher educators are expected to prepare pupil teacher as a tool that could be used in a larger machine of an education factory for business purposes. Teacher educators with such a purpose are the dangerous possibility in teacher education. Teaching as a teacher educator is a complex enterprise, as teaching at this level need to be inspirational not instructional. Hence substantial right to participate in the determination of goals

and policies and exercising professional judgement need to be provided for the accomplishment of empowering teacher educator. Empowerment of teacher educator will definitely bring paradigm shift in the program where focus will be concentrated on revamping course into resource and pupil teacher will be pulled rather than pushed to understand the essence of teaching learning procedure.

2. Empowerment

Empowerment is multi-dimensional as various facets of teaching learning process need to be accomplished to attain personal and professional objectives. Empowerment is a pre-requisite to develop competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve challenges by developing a feasible mechanism. Therefore, for education systems to be improved the teacher is one of the most important variable that must be changed (Eleonora, 2003). Teacher educators must possess confidence and power to contemplate, reflect and make appropriate instructional and administrative decisions to ensure successful educational process and practices. Teacher empowerment is a complex process as it develops competence and ability to provide perspective and penetrate the understanding gained to guarantee voice in the educational affairs to improve quality of education as well as students.

Harpell & Andrews (2010) ^[5] sees the teachers perceptions of the improvement in their students learning then translate into a change in teachers attitude and beliefs as an attitudinal shift which leads to increased intrinsic motivation that is necessary for the creation of an empowering environment.

An empowered teacher educator is always motivated to perform, finds the profession meaningful, feels competent to perform and consider his/her efforts have an impact. He/she is continuously willing to learn as well as teach. Owing to dynamic nature of 21st century, empowerment of teacher

educators at various paradigms should be at concurrent list. Therefore, teacher empowerment is inevitable for educational reforms and re-structuring educational system as a whole in order to keep abreast with the dynamic nature of society.

3. Need of Empowerment of Teacher Educators

- To develop competence of being responsible for their own professional development.
- To develop strategies for the resolution of everyday challenges faced by the teacher educators
- To develop capacity building by fostering skills required for collaborative decision making and democratic understanding.
- To enable teacher educators to exercise power judiciously and refrain control that may prove counterproductive over their educational and professional lives.
- To develop better understanding about their area of specialization.
- To enable teacher educators to work closely with the administration especially on matters that affects them individually and collectively.
- To enable teacher educators to update and upgrade new knowledge for the accomplishment of educational objectives and impact students to excel in their work.
- To enable teacher educators to take responsibility for establishing links between theory and practice.
- To develop competence for understanding the value of a task before giving their efforts to it.
- To develop the capacity to adapt technology and integrating it in pedagogical practices.

4. Strategies to ensure Teacher Empowerment

Educational institutions and teacher educators can contribute towards their empowerment by implementing following recommendations:

- Initiate opportunities to create, influence and implement the curriculum in order to improve academic quality.
- Participation in school, community, national and international level discussions related to the academic development of students.
- Provide sufficient access to various resources such as opportunity, time, finance to ensure effective learning of all the students.
- Consider continuous and comprehensive evaluation for judgments about teacher effectiveness in place of making judgments on the basis of student performance to ensure objectivity and not to demoralize teacher educators
- Provide specific courses that are aligned to the areas of improvement by identifying strengths and weaknesses of teacher educators.
- Sufficient motivations and support need to be provided in the form of financial and promotional assistance.
- Collaboration of affiliated institutions and university is necessary for continued support to improve teacher effectiveness by organizing induction, orientation, refresher programs, etc. time to time
- Build confidence to try new techniques in the classroom and that must be followed by discussion among concerned people in order to determine and analyze applicability of the techniques to ensure better results.
- Encourage collaborative approach to bring significant

changes by listening and learning from each other .

- Develop transformative vision by participating in decision making and realizing accountability to re-structure the organization in a better way.

5. Impediments to Teacher Educators Empowerment

In 21st century with too much emphasis on Information and Communication technology, teaching has become a challenging endeavor. We are heading towards standardization of teachers educators work by increased control in curriculum and teaching learning process, resulting neglect of exploring professional abilities which consequently leads towards decline in their status. In order to improve their status, teacher educators must empower themselves not only with the use of ICT resources rather being able to create one. Otherwise interactive simulation and learning apps will soon replace teachers in the classroom. Hence, empowering teacher educator with creation of technology based resources should be an important agenda to be accomplished in in-service training, so that they can incorporate their learning in pre-service teacher education curriculum.

Another challenge is lack of training in capacity building of teacher educators. It fairly hampers decision making process and ability to handle diverse situations. Often it has been observed that few who are involved in decision making process as being favored by the administration. Lack of moral support from colleagues and administration may make them relatively disempowered and unwilling to enhance their skills and ability to perform.

The legacy of bureaucracy in educational institutions, especially in administration contributes a lot towards disempowerment of teacher educators. Power relation between teacher educators and administrator, teacher educator and pupil teachers need to be focused from a different perspective.

6. Conclusion

Incorporation of all the stake-holders is essential for success of any organization. It will develop sense of efficacy and self-worth of the professionals. Harmony and mutual support among members will surely support capacity building. But institutions need to be prepared for the possible delays or lack of efficiency due to teacher participation in management (Mentell, 1993) [2].

Furthermore, there is need to make teacher educators aware of their central position in education process and need of working collaboratively with all the stake holders to accomplish shared goals. In a nutshell, we can conclude by saying in order to make teacher education a rewarding experience, teacher educators should always strive to incorporate new paradigms towards their empowerment.

7. References

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