

TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS, CONCERNS & SUGGESTION

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Abstract:- *The intent of the present paper is to enhance the teacher education PROBLEMS, CONCERNS & SUGGESTION. 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. Various issues of teacher education namely, institutional inertia, brand inequity, quality crisis, overgrowing establishment, rare humane and professional teachers, poor integration of skills, alienated and incompatible modes of teacher education, little contribution to higher education, domain pedagogy mismatches, identity crisis, rare innovations, stakeholders' non-alignment, inadequate technology infusion, little choice base, poor research scenario, vision and vision mismatches, non-scientific manpower planning, illusive laboratories, over activism of distance/open universities, invalid recognition and accreditation and no teacher education policy have been dwelt on in this paper. The paper concludes that teacher education system in India calls for revolutionary changes.*

The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognized. 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. Evidently the quality of education is a direct consequence and outcome of the quality of teachers and teacher education system.

Keywords: *Teacher Education, Problems and Concerns , NCTE, Vocational Education*

INTRODUCTION

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

“The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage.” This shows that it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers, so that the future of a nation is secure. The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as – A curriculum of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

Though most teacher education program 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.

Teacher education is based on the theory that “teachers are made, not born” in contrary to the assumption, “teachers are born, not made”. Since teaching is considered an art and a science, the teacher has to acquire not only knowledge, but also skills that are called “tricks of the trade”. "Education has continued to grow, diversify and extend its coverage since the dawn of history. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of time". These words of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 subsequently revised in 1992, give direction to Indian Education. The policy further emphasizes that “the Government of India will also review, every five years; the progress made and recommend guidelines for further development”. In the light of the aforesaid statements, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body, established by the Government of India for the maintenance of standards and improvement of the quality of teacher education in the country. During these years, large scale and far reaching developments as well as changes have taken place on the national and international scenes in social, economic, cultural, scientific and technological spheres as well as in information and communication technologies. These developments have affected education, including teacher education call for review and reform of Indian teacher education. The National Council for Teacher Education has to initiate suitable measures to make teacher education at various levels responsive to such developments as well as to quality concerns in future. The manpower planning is practically absent in teacher education. 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. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognized. Its objective is man making and producing enlightened citizens. 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. Teachers serve education, which is an effective instrument of man making. The teachers learn this art through pre service teacher education program. A weak program of teacher education cannot serve this purpose. It is with the objectives of raising the professional status of teachers, developing among them greater commitment to society, their students and their profession, increasing their professional competencies and performance skills and empowering them

Indian teacher education system has been strengthened a lot during the past couple of years. The NCTE Regulation 2007 were revisited and modified by the NCTE and notified in 2009. The Elementary School Teachers' qualifications were worked out and notified in August 2010. The TET inclusion in qualifications has been widely appreciated, wherein, it was provided that even after obtaining the necessary

qualifications the teacher will have to obtain at least 60% marks in TET. Norms and Standards for Two Year Diploma in Performing and non-performing Art Education were worked out by the Council and notified in August 2009. Teacher Education New Curriculum

Framework was designed and released during March 2010. The Study of Demand & supply of trained teachers in States and Union Territories at primary, upper primary, and secondary levels was completed by the Council in 2010 and was published in 30 volumes. The recognition of sizable number of below standard Teacher Education institutions was withdrawn.

Education has its own identity. No body should try to superimpose and dictate education. Earlier the Society was governing the Society, then the State started governing the Society, now the Economy is overarching, both the State & Society. The private & corporate sector has more of commercial motive. Education has been largely commercialized. Return on investment is being estimated in terms of material profit rather than in terms of all round development.

There is public private dichotomy in teacher education. There is a pathetic indifference in public sector institutions and rampant commercialization in private sector. The teacher education degrees conferred by the various universities and institutions are non-comparable. Are TETs, SETs and NETs the solutions? If the input and process norms are grossly wanting, then how can the quality be ensured. What could be greater loss than educational institutions questioning the legitimacy of their own products? Enrolment in teacher education program varies from region to region. There are some areas in India where the enrolment in Teacher Education is near full, but, the physical presence in the face to face mode is nearly nil. These are exclusively commercial centers than educational. There should be immediate ban on these institutions, whether, these institutions are under the purview of the NCTE or not. There are well specified teacher education curricula by the NCTE. Even then in significant number of institutions there is under coverage. The quality of product and placement criteria for teacher education program varies from university to university. There is evident disregard with respect to the NCTE Norms and Regulations. The question is whether to revise the norms or the parameters or both.

QUALITY CRISIS

There are problems of quality perception, quality scaling and quality differentiation in Teacher Education. There is a significant variance between expected and actual quality. Alas, this gap is widening. This is exemplified by the successive entrance tests for higher level, be it Graduate, Post-Graduate or Doctoral Level. There has to be adequate focus on all the systemic parameters input, process and output. The degeneration of quality of Teacher Education can be attributed more to the private sector. Unless the teacher education norms are observed sincerely by the society, nobody can help.

OVERGROWING ESTABLISHMENT

Establishment has overgrown enrolment in most of the teacher education program. 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 INTEGRATION OF SKILLS

The term skill has become a misnomer, particularly, in education. All the skills, such as, life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, techno-savvy skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human development skills, spiritual skills need to be integrated in teacher education.

ALIENATED & INCOMPATIBLE MODES OF EDUCATION

There is little parity amongst various modes of education, such as, distance mode, e-mode, and face to face mode. Distance mode is diluted, e-mode is in infancy, whereas, the face to face mode is stagnant. There is no network amongst the various modes of teacher education. These are functioning more or less in isolation.

LITTLE CONTRIBUTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Teacher Education has not been in a position to come out of school education. It has made very little contribution to higher education. Educationists have been over obsessed with school education intensively for complexity, enormity, and the large number of the schools and students, but this is at the cost of neglecting higher education.

DOMAIN PEDAGOGY MISMATCHES

There are mismatches between the subject and pedagogy. There are mismatches amongst the profiles of the learners and their education. Every subject has its own structure and functions. Each subject has its own ethos and discipline. Every Education level has its own tenderness. In spite of the presence of all the global and regional attempts we have not been in a position to even sustain the identity of elementary education. When is education said to be universalized? Every moment there are slogans and predicaments to universalize education. Has the Education really been universalized? Has the Right to Education ensured Education? Have we really been strong enough to provide differentiated differential inputs? Subject specific differential pedagogy demands scientific bases. We ought to make sincere & exhaustive attempts to realize the match

IDENTITY CRISIS

Every teacher education institution ought to have valid identity. Valid identity means valid institutional land & plant, valid settings, valid inputs, valid processes and valid products. Each & every teacher & teacher educator ought to have a unique identification number. The self-disclosure exercise being done by the teacher education institutions helps in realizing identity.

RARE INNOVATIONS

Teacher Education is a discipline which educates the progressive generations on what has gone by, where we are, where we want to go, and what we like to create, observing healthy, meaningful and long life. Innovations in Teacher Education are very rare. It may be attributed to various factors. Novel ideas do not incubate because of the adverse external conditions. There are wide gaps between the visionaries and actors. So, very often the innovations have short life and die down in the institutions, where these originate. Sometimes, the most innovative programs fail in the formal system, because, these are beyond the view & purview of the apex bodies. Four year integrated secondary teacher education program need excellent teacher educators who are philosophers of basic disciplines, as well as, education. Such a combination is rarely found. In addition to this, there is a need to have scope for vertical mobility. Activity based, personalized teacher education program though originated with zeal, yet need to struggle to sustain themselves in the forms envisaged.

LITTLE CHOICE BASE

Options are not substitutes for choice based education .Choice by whom i.e. students, teachers, or by both? The issues involved relate to the systemic correction, as well as, developing the right attitudes to make it a success. Though we have introduced optional areas in teacher education, but the choice is very limited. There is a need to employ choice based credit system in teacher

POOR RESEARCH SCENARIO

Research in education is replicate and repetitive devoid of freshness, either of problem or of approach or of methodology. The national agenda for research needs to be developed in alignment with the developmental objectives. A prospective plan for research and innovations should be framed with regional and national developmental priorities. The research methodology must be compatible with the local problems. There is a need to be innovative. There are mismatches between research trends and problems.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Some suggestions to remedy the problems of teacher education

- (1) The courses of studies both in theory and practice should be reorganized. For this a pragmatic research should be conducted by some universities to see what is the course structure which will be helpful for the realization of the goals of teacher education. A comprehensive job analysis of teaching in our schools should necessarily be made the basis for recasting of courses in teacher education.
- (2) The method of teaching in the teacher education departments should be such that it inspires a sense of appreciation among other departments of the universities and colleges: A teacher education department should, therefore, conduct special innovative programs in the following directions: Seminar, combining of seminar and discussions with lectures, team teaching panel discussion and projects sponsored by the faculty members for improvement of learning in various spheres.
- (3) For development of professional attitude it will be advisable to recognize the college of education as unit in themselves. Such an institution should be equipped with facilities for organizing various types of activities such as daily assembly programs, community living, social work, library organization and other curricular activities, which promote the democratic spirit of mutual appreciation and fellow feeling.
- (4) The admission procedures of B.Ed. should be completely systematised and steps should be taken to make it full proof against tampering and meddling as far as possible.
- (5) There should be a planning unit in each State Education Department. The function of this unit should be to regulate the demand and supply of teachers at various levels of schools. This unit can also be given the responsibility of projecting future requirements of teachers in various categories.
- (6) It will be in the fitness of things if at the time of setting up a teacher education department, a demonstration school is made an integral part of it and a definite norm should be followed for certain facilities such as laboratories, libraries and other important audio-visual equipment.
- (7) The practicing schools have to be taken into confidence. For this the members of the staff of teachers' colleges should be closely associated with the schools. The course of studies and the practical work and practice teaching can be easily moderated in such a way that they will have useful implications for improving school practices.
- (8) The teacher education program should be organized on the basis of evidence obtainable from researching such areas as follows: "Teacher behaviour "Developing conceptual framework and a theory of institution." Innovative practices of teaching such as microteaching, simulation and interaction analysis procedures.
- (9) The teacher education department should be made a nucleus for research on teaching curriculum and evaluation in the regular university departments. It can also be entrusted the responsibility of sponsoring programs for extension, such as bringing the community into close contact with the university academicians. There should be a free exchange of scholars from one department to the other. This will improve the quality of teacher education programs immensely.
- (10) For professional growth of teacher educators there should be seminars, summer institutes and research symposia at more frequent intervals.
- (11) There is a paucity of round textbooks and reading material, including reference books in Hindi and regional languages in the field of teacher education.
- (12) The State Government should make adequate provision of funds for teacher education departments. Special assistance should be given for running an experimental school and holding of practice teaching sessions in various schools.
- (13) Correspondence courses in teacher education should be provided, with a strict and high screen for admissions and a rigorous manner of assessment.
- (14) Libraries are needed to be enriched with complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with all available journals for use by all the researchers.
- (15) Uniformity among teacher education institutions must be ensured and maintained in terms of curriculum, duration and timings of the program Curriculum development on a continuing basis to keep pace with current trends.
- (16) Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency and to be trained in the use of ICTs.

(17) Conditions for affiliation should be made stricter. Regular and rigorous inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis. Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with the common entrance test and marks should be introduced.

(18) The internship should be of sufficient time (six months) and student teachers must be exposed to the full functioning of the school.

(19) Professional development of teacher educators as ongoing ritual. Refresher course should be organized frequently for teacher educators and Research in teacher education should be encouraged.

Since the teacher is the pivot of the entire educational system and is the main catalytic agent for introducing desirable changes in the teaching learning process, all attempts need be made for motivating teachers to become innovative and creative. It goes without saying that a self motivated and really industrious teacher can utilize his own resources to keep himself abreast of new knowledge and skills.

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