

# Innovative Practices in Teacher Education

*Mrs. Lopamudra Sardar*

Research Scholar (Ph.D)

Education Department,

University of Kalyani, Nadia (West Bengal)

**Abstract:** The teacher training in India was first started in Vedic period. In that period the senior students among the Brahmins were given the chance to teach junior students and thus were trained in teaching. The modern teacher training in India was first started by European missionaries. Due to globalization, we have shown paradigm shift in teacher-education program. It has been recognized that this programme is restructured to deal dynamically to the problem and challenges faced in the field of education. Today there are new expectations from teachers as they are future leaders to ensure suitable education. The main purpose of this paper is to indicate main changes that has incurred in teacher education in India and also provide as overview of trends, reforms and innovations in teacher education. It also discusses the need of teacher education programme to be innovative and various practices that can be included. It has been recognized that teacher education programme should be structured and modified in a way that enables them to respond dynamically to the new problems and challenges in the field of education, then only teacher can help in national development.

**Key Words:** *Teacher education, Innovation, Educational standards.*

## Introduction

Teachers are the significant pillars of societal development. There was a time when teacher education meant that any person who knows the subject matter could be a teacher. Now-a- days, a sound teacher must have knowledge about pedagogy, attitude, traits, personality and exceptionality of children. Thus teacher education is the professional preparation of a person in to a teacher. In last few years the definition of a teacher has changed completely, now the modern teacher must be viewed as a “change agent”. He is not only information provider but also a supporter, motivator and facilitator in teaching learning situation. So the quality and learner’s achievement are determined by the competence of teacher and motivation provided by him. At the present scenario education system was facing so many challenges due to high technology, globalization, economic transformation and international competition, so teacher education institutions should have made many educational reforms. Now-a-days innovative technological development has commonly revolutionized our society. An unanticipated result of this revolution has been the development of a generation of children dependent on multidimensional, interactive media sources, a generation whose understanding and beliefs of the world differ greatly from that of generations preceding them. Thus revitalization of teacher education program is the powerful mean for improving the education system of a country.

## Meaning of Innovative Practices

Etymologically the word 'Innovation' is derived from Latin word 'Innovate', which means 'to change something in to something new'. It is a promotion of new ideas and practices in education and tanning. Over the years there have been many changes in the way education is designed and delivered in parts of the world.

Innovation in education encourages teachers and students to explore research and use all the tools to uncover something new. It involves a difficult way of looking at problems and solving them. Innovative teaching is where good teachers are inventive and creative-where they continue to discover and devise new methods and content to ensure that students always get the best learning experiences.

## Innovation in Teacher Education

Education is the foundation of our economy. What and how we learn in school determines that what we will become as individuals and our success throughout our life. In today's world, innovation, economy and education becomes even more important for developing the next generation of innovators creative thinkers.

Innovation should be done in each and every aspect of teacher education, like methodology, curriculum, research and evaluation. Many countries are using different kinds of innovations, such as school clusters, fields based trainings, school self review and development, distance learning methods and visiting advisors.

Various innovative programs in teacher education have been initiated from time to time to bring quality improvement in the system.

- Some of this program are as follows-

1. Master of Educational Technology (computer application) by SNDT University, Mumbai.
2. Four years, integrated program of Teacher Education, kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (1955).
3. Four years, integrated program of Teacher Education, RTE, NCERT (1963).
4. HSPT Training teachers, Eklavya, MP (1982).
5. Comprehensive Teacher Education program, Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan college of Education, Mumbai University, Mumbai (2000).
6. Indian institute of Teacher Education, Gujarat (Bill 4,2010)
7. IGNOU Institute of Professional Competency Advancement of Teachers (IIPCAT, 2009), IGNOU, India.
8. Two years, B.Ed Program of Secondary Teacher Education by NCTE (2014).

## Some Innovative Practices in Teacher Education

Following are some of the innovative ideas thus need to be focused:

**a. Team Teaching:** Team teaching involves a group of instructions working purposefully, regularly and cooperatively to help a group of students of any age learn. Teachers together set goal for a course, design a

syllabus, prepare individual lesson plans, teach students and evaluate the results. They share insights, argue with one another, perhaps even challenge students to decide which approach is better. The team-teaching approach allows for more interaction between teachers and students. Each member of a team responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement.

**b. Reflecting Teaching:** Reflecting teaching is a self assessment of teaching, wherein an instructor examines their pedagogy, articulates reasons and strengths for their strategies, and identifies areas for revision or improvement. Reflecting teaching operates as an umbrella term denoting a variety of practices, including teaching inventories and observation protocols, self-assessment and consideration of student evaluation. It is a natural process that facilitates the development of future action from the contemplation of past and current behavior. When teaching reflectively, instructors think critically about their teaching and problem-solve for solutions to recurring issues, rather than relying on unchanging, established personal norms.

**c. Constructivism:** Constructivism is basically a theory, based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experiences. Constructivist learning is based on student's active participation in problem solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity. The teacher is facilitators who guide the student's critical thinking, analysis and synthesis abilities throughout the learning process.

**d. Blended learning:** Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online education materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student control over time, place, path. Blended learning is often also referred to as 'hybrid' learning, and can take on a variety of forms in online education environments. While some organizations may only use blended learning technique on rare occasions, other might utilize it as a primary teaching method within their curriculum. Use of the web in such settings provides many affordances for the teacher and students in the form of communication channels, information sources and management tools. It is projected that blended learning will enrich students learning experience; at the same time it also demands that the teachers should be trained as online facilitator.

**e. Soft Skills:** Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationship with other people. In the work place, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologist may use the term soft skills to describe a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ). It includes attributes and personality traits that help people interact with others and succeed in the work place. Soft skills are mostly related to teacher education program, thus the curriculum of teacher education could add to the holistic development of human capital that can nurture economic, social and personal development. Installing the soft skills in the curriculum of teacher education is the need of the profession for it to be successful.

**f. Information Communication Technology (ICT):** ICTs have become the most basic building block of modern industrial society in a very short time. Mastering information technology, understanding basic skills and concept of ICT are now highly regarded by many countries. ICT has been used at amazing rate for instruction among teachers.

❖ ICT can work in a number of ways as follows:

- It can be used to train students in skills, which they will need for further education and as an ongoing learning process throughout the rest of their lives and for future jobs.
- It can provide access information and communication outside the classroom via internet.
- It can be used to support teacher's development via external networks.
- It can support and potentially transforms the teaching and learning process.

Both students and teachers need to learn to trust the technology. Teachers need to be confident enough in using various ICT tools to build their trust in technology. Without teacher's competency, ICT cannot be put to a good use for instructional delivery. In this regard, a teacher should be able to use various ICT tools and the students are also encouraged to use internet resources for collecting information, use projector for presentation, and participate in synchronous meetings through chat, video-conference etc.

### **Barriers to Innovation**

Although there are so many innovative practices existing in Teacher Education programme in India, but still there are some resisting factors in our education system which prevents the teacher education institution from being innovative and they are:

- Many institutions are suffering from paucity of funds and physical facilities, like infrastructure, laboratories, equipment, and man power. They are not able to put things in to action.
- Teacher education is not able to imply innovations in their institutions as there are no support from the management and administration.
- Many teacher educators are not aware of modern trends in their field as they are not allowed to attend any refresher/orientation courses, workshops and conferences to avoid and disturbances in their rigid routine work.
- Sometimes teacher educators are not willing to practice new ideas as there is no motivation for this.
- There is no flexibility in curriculum and examination system of teacher training institutions. They work in a rigid framework which is the biggest stumbling block in practicing innovative ideas.
- Professional enmity, lack of cooperation among teacher educators and lack of expertise are some important factors in preventing innovations in institutions.
- Pupil teachers are not having required aptitude as well as attitude to give desirable output.

### **Suggestions**

The above observations clearly indicate that teacher education programme needs to be examined critically in terms of its innovativeness. Here are some suggestions which can be used to overcome these problems-



1. Identification of innovative research could be done if all the Departments of Education countrywide contribute in this area. They may periodically produce the Research Abstract of the Studies, which may be made available on the World Wide Web.
2. Every Teacher Educators may be given Unique Identification Number. It will facilitate Manpower Planning in Teacher Education
3. There should be networking amongst all the Teacher Education Institutions to learn from the innovative practices of each other.
4. Physical facilities and funds should be adequately provided to the institutions by the government, local bodies and organizations.
5. The internship model of practice teaching should be adopted.
6. Relevant methods of institution such as tutorial, discussion seminar, team teaching and interactive teaching learning should be adopted.
7. Modern technological gadgets like computer, video, mass media, OHP should be used at the time of instruction
8. Counseling and follow-up programs should be initiated and made effective.
9. Teacher educators shall be given proper incentives for the professional growth.
10. Publication and subscription to professional journals by the institutions should be encouraged.
11. Research wings in the university department and selected government colleges should be started.
12. A healthy relation among teaching staff would evolve new procedures and move towards new goal.
13. The management and administrators should be watchful in maintaining the health of the institutions so as to make them innovative and progressive.

## Conclusion

At the end of the discussion it can be concluded that in today's era of information and communication technology it is imperative to develop teacher for growth of society as well as for self. Education system should not be looked at provider of education only rather it should be treated as a means of achieving social elevate but also as a motive of progressions in a period of knowledge and research dominance. In India, teacher education is at new stake as far as new policies are concerned. Teacher education needs to orient itself to face new challenges. However college of Teacher Education and IASEs have been given the responsibility of initiating innovations in teacher education at secondary level. NCTE has also various steps to bring quality in teacher education. To meet the challenges of new millennium various attempts have been done through ICT mediated constructivist approach. Hence, attention should be given to such innovative methods and new ideologies and should be incorporated in teacher development programmes.

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