

INNOVATIONS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR NATION BUILDING - 'CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION'

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ABSTRACT

Quality and innovation in the education sector are the major initiatives of the Government of India in its plans. To achieve the outcome of enhanced quality at all levels of education, Govt. of India has been focusing its attention on quality and excellence in higher education and teacher education. Teacher quality has produced voluminous studies that lie in many a research libraries. Discussion on what it is, how it is developed, and its connection to student achievement have become the feature of educational slang in the 21 st century. These seek to look at teacher quality in a way in which it brings: as a means to review how the terms excellence and quality are shaped by policy, identify how educators perceive teaching quality and to review how quality is cultivated in teachers. Within this scope, this paper provides an overview of teacher education and evaluation in India and lastly we discuss about issues and challenges in teacher education. The success of a student depends most of all on the quality of the teacher. With the advent of standard based reforms, the quality of teachers has become a major concern of policy-makers, college and university presidents, especially at the colleges of teacher education and the public in general. Every child deserves a quality teacher. In an era of increasing standards and accountability in education, teacher quality and teacher training will be more important than ever. Several studies related to classroom environment and teacher behavior in selected subjects are referenced. In addition, the potential use of teacher profiles to drive staff development and academic improvement is explored.

INTRODUCTION

The funniest thing is that the teacher education centers and the curriculum followed in the teacher education have very little focus on new trends in education. The SSA training programs have excluded the teacher educators and have been confined to in-service teacher training alone. The pre-service teacher education sector has been kept away from the SSA and therefore, the teacher aspirants passing out of the B.Ed colleges get exposed to the new curriculum only when they join the schools. Teacher education institutions have been proliferating and mushrooming all over the State with profit motives until the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) with its headquarters in Bangalore, came up with and insisted on mandatory norms and standards for these institutions. As a result of their intervention, many institutions have constructed buildings with classrooms and procured infrastructure to meet their standards. These institutions were even

forced to increase the salary of teacher educators to the basic amount in the government scale. But later, the effectiveness of NCTE intervention reduced and the powerful lobby of private education institutions had their way in running their teacher education shops. There has been a great expansion of higher education over the years. Kothari commission remarks "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms." No doubt education plays a significant role in nation's development but the quality of education is greatly determined by the quality of teachers, therefore, great efforts were made and still are being made to improve the quality of teacher education.

BACKGROUND

Education has continued to evolve, 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".

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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, came out with a Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (Curriculum Framework hereafter) in 1998 and placed it before the nation.

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 necessitating review and reform of Indian teacher education. Taking a serious note of these developments, agencies responsible for education from nursery to tertiary and professional education have reviewed/ revised their programmes and courses of study. 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. 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.

NEED OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teachers are the backbone of education system in any country. The need of teachers' professional development has been accepted weighty for the improvement of education all over the world. Therefore the expectancy for quality in teacher education is becoming higher with every day. In Pakistan teacher education is also considered underpinning for the improvement of

entire education system. But the traditional methods of teacher training are not serving the requirement. The present programs have failed in preparing teachers that are required in a real classroom because the stress is on theory and not the practical. The link between the theory and practice cannot be denied. The curricula of teacher education need to be improved so that the expectations can be met. This study was designed to see the impact of lack of practicum in teacher education on the teaching practices in classroom. A survey was conducted to find out the perceptions of novice teachers, and experienced teachers with and without professional qualification about the problem faced by the teachers due to lack of practice in pre-service training. Results have supported the idea that practicum has a positive effect on teaching practice of teachers.

OBJECTIVES

1. Imparting an adequate knowledge of the subject-matter: The objective of teacher education is to develop a good command of the subject matter of the assignment given to him in the colleges.
2. Equipping the prospective teachers with necessary pedagogic skills: The main objective of teacher education is to develop a skill to stimulate experience in the taught, under an artificially created environment, less with material resources and more by the creation of an emotional atmosphere. The teacher should develop a capacity to do, observe, infer and to generalize.
3. Enabling the teacher to acquire understanding of child psychology: The objective is to understand the child psychology so that the teacher is able to appreciate the difficulties experienced by children so as to bring about new modes and methods of achieving the goals in consonance with the reactions of the children.
4. Developing proper attitudes towards teaching: One of the major objectives of

teacher education is to develop proper attitudes towards teaching as a result of which he will be able to maximize the achievements from both the material and human resources. There is also development of a proper perception of the problems of universal enrolment, regular attendance, year-to-year promotion.

5. Enabling teachers to make proper use of instructional facilities: The objective of teacher education is to develop the capacity to extend the resources of the school by means of improvisation of instructional facilities.

CHALLENGES

1. Deficiencies of small time period provided for teacher's training: In India, this period is of one year after the graduation - the effective session being of eight to nine months. The main purpose of teacher education programme is to develop healthy attitude, broad based interest and values. It is not possible during the short duration of nine months.
2. Incompetency of students and teachers: The existing training programme does not provide adequate opportunities to the student teachers to develop competency because the organizers of teacher's training programme are not aware of the existing problems of schools. Therefore there should be a close matching between the work schedule of the teacher in a school and the programme adopted for teacher preparation in a training college.
3. Defects concerning papers: A student teacher should know the meaning of education, its objectives, the socio-cultural and politico-economics background, the principles that guide construction of curriculum etc. But a proper preparation towards a good orientation is impossible in a short duration.
4. Problems of practice teaching: Inspire of all kinds of elaborate arrangements regarding

practice in teaching, student teachers are non-serious to the task of teaching, deficient in sense of duty irresponsible, aimless, indifferent to children, lacking innovative measure in teaching which are great obstacles in the development of pedagogical skills.

5. Problem of supervision of teaching: The supervisory organizations for practice teaching aims at bringing improvement in the instructional activity of the student teachers by using various techniques and practical skills in teaching and help them to develop confidence in facing the classroom situations.
6. Lack of subject knowledge: The B.Ed. programme does not emphasize the knowledge of the basic subject. The whole teaching practice remains indifferent with regard to the subject knowledge of the student teacher.
7. Faculty methods of teaching: In India teacher educators are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching. Their acquaintance with modern class-room communication devices is negligible.
8. Isolation of teacher's education department: As has been observed by education commission, the teacher education has become isolated from schools and current development in school education. The schools consider the teacher education department as an alien institution and not a nursery for the professional development of school teacher. These departments only observe the formality of finishing the prescribed number of lessons no caring for the sounders of pedagogy involved in the procedure.
9. Lack of proper facilities: In India, the teacher education programme is being given a step-motherly treatment. About 20 percent of the teacher education institutions are being run in rented buildings without any facility for an experimental school or laboratory, library

- and other equipments necessary for a good teacher education department. There are no separate hostel facilities for student teachers.
10. Lack of regulations in demand and supply: The State Education Department have no data on the basis of which they may work out the desired intake for their institutions. There is a considerable lag between the demand and supply of teachers. This has created the problems of unemployment and underemployment.
 11. Inadequate empirical research: In India, research in education has been considerably neglected. The research conducted is of inferior quality. The teacher education programmes are not properly studied before undertaking any research.
 12. Lack of facilities for professional development: Most of the programmes are being conducted in a routine and unimaginative manner. Even the association of teacher educators has not contributed anything towards development of a sound professionalization of teacher education in the country.
 8. Institutes of low standards should be reformed or closed.
 9. Conditions for affiliation should be made strict.
 10. Regular and rigorous inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis.
 11. Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with common entrance test and marks should be introduced.
 12. Duration of teacher education should be increased to two years.
 13. More emphasis should be given on practice teaching till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.
 14. Internship should be of sufficient time (six months) and student teachers must be exposed to the full functioning of the school.
 15. Evaluation in teacher education should be objective, reliable and valid.
 16. Teacher pupil ratio should be ideally 1:8.
 17. Several types of co-curricular activities should be included in the curriculum.
 18. Professional development of teacher educators as ongoing ritual.
 19. Refresher course should be organized frequently for teacher educators.
 20. Research in teacher education should be encouraged.
 21. Number of teaching days to be increased to 230 per year.

SUGGESTIONS

There are some suggestions here for improving the condition of teacher education:

1. Teacher education, like higher education and technical education must be the responsibility of the central government.
2. Uniformity among teacher education institutions must be ensured and maintained in terms of curriculum, duration and timings of the programme.
3. Curriculum development on a continuing basis to keep pace with current trends.
4. Government should look after the financial requirements of the institutions.
5. Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency.
6. Teacher educators to be trained in the use of ICTs.
7. Privatization of teacher education should be regulated.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it may be said that, teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigour of programmes should be appropriately enhanced. Teachers in the contemporary society need to be

through professionals fully equipped with both, high academic standards, Pedagogical and practical skills and ethical and moral values. However, it is unfortunate that teaching is still in a transitional stage and is experiencing serious occupational identify crisis. The debate on whether teaching can be called a profession dominates the educational scene even at the fag end of twentieth century. Teachers, often themselves are uncertain as to the nature of their occupation and to which category they belong non-professional, semi-professional or professional. There is a feeling among teaching community that they have been accorded a second class status while being given first class responsibilities. Teacher educators as a world wide group also seem to lack clarity on the professional identify of teaching and the preservice or inservice levels. Such confusions may be damaging for the teachers and their occupations. It may also create an obstacle in delineating the professionalism expected from them for the emerging society. Therefore, it is high time teaching is accorded the status which other professions like medicine, law etc. enjoy. In

sum, the dream of a learning society can become reality only when the dream teachers are well equipped with moral, professional intellectual, practical and communication skills to convince the students through their efficient teaching. We can also conclude with the quote: —To be a good teacher, you have to have heart for the kids, integrity to push for excellence and a lot of creativity.

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