

**RESEARCH PAPER****Challenges of Teacher Education in India: A Study****Pratibha Khandelwal**

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Received: 20th Feb. 2023, Revised: 10th March 2023, Accepted: 20th March 2023**ABSTRACT**

With the launch of Educational Development Programs like, Operation Black Board, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, there is an increase in the demand for teachers in India. The goals of these programs cannot be achieved by born teachers and so the increased demand has led to unprecedented expansion of Teacher Education Institutes during the last few years. However, this expansion has taken a heavy toll on many quality parameters. The major challenges can be broadly understood by looking at its various components like effectiveness of teacher training programs, physical conditions of teacher training institutes, quality of teacher educators and potential of teacher students. The major concerns of Teacher Training Programs are: Lack of uniform curriculum, inflexible and traditional curriculum, isolation of Education Colleges, regional imbalances in terms of number of colleges, improper selection criteria of student teachers, imbalances in number of humanities and science students teachers, less number of teaching days, unplanned and insufficient co-curricular activities, faulty mode of evaluation, lack of orientation for research work, lack of stage specific training and lack of in-service training and refresher courses. The major concerns of Teacher Training Institutes are: Lack of infrastructure, lack of staff, unhealthy financial conditions, improper teacher-student ratio and lack of support from the management. The major concerns relating to Teacher Educators are: lack of competencies, insufficient subject matter knowledge, lack of life and professional skills, lack of interest, motivation, commitment, proper attitude, ICT skills and sensitivity to contemporary issues and inadequate knowledge of new trends in education and technology. The major concerns relating to Student Teachers are: lack of aptitude, interest, motivation, dedication, sensitivity, towards the profession. Inadequate subject matter knowledge and casual attitude towards training program. Focus on degree than knowledge. To achieve the educational goals of society, teacher constitutes the most crucial component. Teachers are made in teacher training institutes so the teacher education as a whole needs an immediate and comprehensive reform

Key words: NEP 2020, New Learning Paradigm, Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

The role of teacher in the process of education needs no evidence and repeated emphasis. Of all the factors involved in education process, teacher no doubt is the most crucial and influential one. Best of the curriculum, infrastructure, textbooks, policies, management and even the students cannot bring the desired outcome unless it is backed up by a good teacher, because it is the teacher who links all the other factors together and acts as a catalyst to achieve the goals of education. Thus, the overall quality and outcome of education depend largely upon the quality of teachers. Earlier teaching existed as a necessary art and teaching was mainly conducted by born teachers. However, advancement of science and technology gave a new concept of teaching as a science and this has led to the development of teacher education programs and teacher training institutes. The journey of Teacher Education in India, post-independence has been incessant, progressive and interesting. After independence the teacher education got immediate and utmost attention by the authorities. The 1948 University Education Commission, the 1952 Secondary Education Commission, the 1964 Indian Education Commission, National Policy of Education 1968, 1986 and the review of these policies and the planning commissions, National policy of Education 2020 have all worked on teacher education very seriously. The establishment of NCERT in 1961 and NCTE in 1973 with its secretariat and NCERT granting of statutory status to NCTE in 1993 are the evidence that teacher education has received the focal importance since independence. Programs like Universalization of Elementary Education, Operation Black Board and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan demanded many trained teachers to achieve the goals of these programs. The result is that, from few training colleges and

institutes after Independence, today we have a large number of institutes and organization which constitutes Teacher Education system in India. The Teacher Education system today incorporates education for pre-primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary and higher education teachers. It includes not only face to face but also distant teacher education. It also includes both pre service and in service, formal and informal education. It also incorporates in it the teacher education for differently abled children, physical education, and vocational education and so on.

Though NCTE was granted a statutory status to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country and regulation and maintenance of norms and standard in it, the expansion has occurred only quantitatively compromising with quality. This quantitative expansion has taken a heavy toll on many quality parameters mainly related to-

- The Teacher Education Program/Course
- Institutes where Teacher Education Courses are conducted
- The traits and competencies of Student Teachers
- The traits and competencies of Teacher Educators.

Teacher Education in general means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively. Thus, teacher education encompasses in it, development of teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills in future teachers. The teaching skills include training and practice in different techniques, approaches, skills and strategies to create conducive learning environment. Pedagogical theory includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practicing the teaching skills in the classroom while professional skills include technique and strategies to help teachers grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. Thus, the entire effectiveness of Teacher Education process depends in its curriculum, design, structure, transaction, modes as well as the extent of its appropriateness. If we look at the present scenario, there are many challenges in all the components of teacher education system and teacher education as a whole need more and better comprehensive reforms.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM/COURSE

At present the most important concern in teacher education program in India is the curriculum which is followed in it. The curriculum followed today in teacher education system not only lacks uniformity but also is inflexible and traditional. The whole teacher education curriculum is heavily loaded with western psychological, philosophical and sociological theories, many of which have become outdated and discarded even by the western countries. The curriculum also fails miserably to bring to the surface the applied aspect of various philosophical, sociological and psychological ideas and hence the teacher education program remains theoretical. The curriculum fails to develop an understanding among the students about education as independent discipline and its inter linkage with various other disciplines. Thus, what they learn is a fragmented and incomplete knowledge of various disciplines. Much of the curriculum is irrelevant and remains unresponsive to various diversities and realities of the real world. The content and process of teacher education is not in conformity with the changing realities of a society and does not respond to the contextual needs of emerging society. It is not planned and organized to develop the spirit of inquiry, initiative, scientific temper, conceptual clarity, linguistic skills through rigorous practice. As the meaning of learning has evolved from not only discovering the reality to constructing the reality, the whole approach of teacher education program needs to be reoriented from traditional approach to constructivist discourse.

Other concern in teacher education program is lack of uniform curriculum nationwide at each level. We need a uniform curriculum which should be a combination of theory and practical. There is also a need of expansion and specialization of teacher education from pre-primary to university level, including professional colleges. Presently the pre-primary and tertiary education is still out of the reign of teacher education system. The isolation of education colleges from both the ground realities of school education as well as mainstream of university education is also a challenge. There also exist the regional imbalances in terms of number of colleges required and operating,

which need immediate attention. Also, there is a considerable lag between the demand and supply of teachers leading to under employment and unemployment.

There is also a lack of in-service training and refresher courses. As teacher education is a continuous process its pre-service and in-service are complimentary to each other there is a need for effective in-service and refresher courses

The main purpose of the teacher education program is not only to develop teaching skills, professional skills, and pedagogical theory but also to develop desirable attitude, values, and interest in student teachers and to accomplish all these objectives and thus on the recommendation of framework of teacher education (2009) the one year duration was extended to two. However due to four semester exams and delay in the counselling and admission process the effective teaching session reduces to few months, and this does not provide enough time and opportunity for self-study, reflection etc. to develop good teachers.

Another important flaw of teacher education system is related with the internship program held in school, which constitutes one of the most important aspects of teacher education process. Internship is held with a purpose of equipping the teacher students with teaching skills, knowledge of methods, approach and techniques to help them create conducive learning environment in real school teaching. Although all kinds of elaborate arrangements are made regarding internship in teaching, student teachers are non-serious towards it. They lack the sense of duty and responsibility towards school students as well as themselves. Instead of utilizing these sessions to improve their teaching skills and learning new methods, techniques and approaches they somehow do it with half-heartedness for the sake of attendance and marks. Not only are the problems from the end of student teachers, but also from the end of teacher educators. There are multiple problems related to the supervision of these internship sessions. The supervision is required both before as well as during these sessions. The supervision before internship aims to guiding the student teachers in planning their lessons, learning content organization, formulating suitable gestures and learning teaching skills. At present the lesson plans are checked superficially and no discussion is made by the subject method specialist. The supervision during the practice teaching is also not result oriented and effective. It is mostly done by teachers who are not method specialists. Instead of giving constructive feedback they give unproductive descriptive feedback. The percentage of lessons supervised is also very less due to lack of staff in teacher education institutes. Also, the whole practice teaching program remains indifferent with regard to the subject knowledge of the student teachers. Another serious challenge with teacher education programs is inadequacy of empirical research. In India research in education does not get proper focus and importance. The research conducted is of inferior quality.

Thus, teacher education community has to engage in more serious innovative designs in terms of pedagogy, in terms of teaching methods, in terms of conducting research, and generating empirical knowledge that has the capacity to transform the whole school system through teacher education system.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO INSTITUTES WHERE TEACHING EDU. PROGRAMS CONDUCTED

The major challenges of Teacher Education Institutes are lack of staff, unhealthy financial conditions, improper teacher student ratio, lack of proper infrastructure and facilities, insufficient financial grants from state and lack of support from the management.

The teacher education program is treated very indifferently in India. Most of the teacher education institutes are run privately in rented buildings without satisfactory infrastructure and facilities for laboratory, library and other equipment necessary for effective training. There are no facilities to conduct co-curricular activities including sports. The privately managed Institutes face negative attitude of management towards development of both human and material resources. The sole purpose of the management with teacher education course is gaining profit. To increase their profit margin, they cut all the necessary expenses on both human and material resources required. The inadequate duration of course also motivates them towards these unfair practices. The management somehow is concerned with managing the affairs somehow or the other. They even don't care for students' attendance and performance. The fact is that, the management has found ways to earn money from all the unfair practices. The mode of evaluation in teacher education

courses is subjective. The marks for internal assessment and practical papers give chances to the management to earn more profit from irregular and inefficient student teachers.

Today the technology has revolutionized every component of our life thus it becomes important that teachers be prepared not only to use today's technology but should be able to handle and think about the technology of future. With the onset of ICT, we need the teachers competent not only to use them but also to judge its appropriateness. Thus, it becomes important to prepare teachers to use modern technology but most of the institutes do not have resources to train the students with latest technology. The management of teacher education system needs to understand the importance of teacher education process and they need to change their mindset towards these courses.

CHALLENGES RELATED WITH STUDENT TEACHERS

The two key players in teacher education are the student teachers and teacher educators. The selection criteria of both are very crucial in determining the overall quality of school education system. It is the established fact that it is the teachers who hold the key for ensuring quality education for all in the society. But today we face a serious crisis with respect to the quality of student teachers joining the teacher education courses. Somehow the talented and well qualified youth are hesitant to enter teaching profession. Most of them enter in teaching profession, not out of choice but out of chance and so their interest is only to seek degree and not to acquire knowledge and skills. Most of them do not have the required motivation, values and academic background, technical skills, interest and temperament for a well-deserved entry in the teaching profession.

Even the selection criteria of student teachers are not appropriate and they lead to deterioration of the quality of teachers. For admissions to teacher education courses the qualifying marks at the graduation level is only 50% and an entrance test. It is unfortunate that the teacher in making is expected to possess only 50% of knowledge in the subject of specialization. How is it possible for such a candidate to teach concepts which perhaps they themselves have not understood? Even the students with full qualification show large gaps in their subject knowledge and that is a serious concern. The entrance test does not really test candidate's aptitude and attitude for teaching and the difficulty level is too inferior. The low difficulty level of entrance test makes entry of non-deserving candidates into teaching education easy, thus deteriorating the whole teaching system.

Another problem related with student teachers is regarding their subjects in under graduation and post-graduation. Many students come with degrees in commerce, engineering and other professional courses and have lack of knowledge in required school subjects. They don't have option but to choose from various pedagogy offered. These students face a lot of problems when comes to choosing school subjects to teach.

Thus, there is a need for better selection criteria and improved entrance test not only to improve the quality of future teachers but also to save the personal and social wastage.

CHALLENGES RELATED WITH TEACHER EDUCATORS

Out of the two key factors involved in teacher education, the other one and the more important one is teacher educators. Teacher Educator is a person who is directly or indirectly involved with the education and training of student teachers, and with research development and extension activities in school education at all the levels. This wide connotation makes it very difficult to decide the academic responsibilities, institutional roles and professional status of teacher educators. Being concerned with 'teaching how to teach' teacher educators do not enjoy purpose, sense of thrill and excitement associated with teaching on ground. Teacher educators do not have job stability; also there is no well formulated and planned policy for their recruitment. The eligibility required to become teacher educators and selection criteria is substandard. Master's degree with 50% and M.Ed with 55% with or without any teaching in school subject at schools makes one eligible to become teacher educators which in itself is an irony.

Also, this field attracts generally mediocre individuals who get into this profession without specific motive and preparation. Their professional productivity and research capabilities are very limited. Taking the position of teacher educators must assume leadership roles but presently they lack the

necessary motivation, aptitude, and competencies to do so. So generally speaking, the academic profile of the teacher educators irrespective of the stage at which they operate leaves a great deal to be desired. The problem further increases due to lack of experiences of majority of teacher educators in school teaching.

With specific reference to the length of academic education prior to professional training and its nature/subject, level of performance, duration of professional training and the extent and depth of professional knowledge, subject knowledge, skills required the teacher educators of today does not possess a profile that enables them to handle the task of educating teachers with confidence and assurance. Teacher educators are even averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching. Their acquaintance with modern technology is also negligible.

Thus, it calls for reorientation of teacher educators in the emerging pedagogies who are trained in conventional methods and are used to conventional pedagogies.

CONCLUSION

There are many challenges in the present teacher education system in India and the whole system needs an immediate and comprehensive reform. The various positive and promising recommendations of National Education Policy 2020, like Integrated Teacher Education Program, NCTE-PAR etc. gives us the hope of ray that the teacher education system will improve and teacher education community will engage itself in more serious and innovative designs in terms of pedagogy, in terms of teaching, in terms of research, and in terms of generating empirical knowledge that will transform the whole teacher education system for the overall good of the society.

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