
Issues and Challenges in Teacher Education

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Abstract

The progress of a country depends upon the quality of its teachers and for this reason teaching is the noblest among all professions. Teacher Education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competency that would enable and empower the teachers to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges there in. Now a days the field of education is not only limited but has broadened in various new horizons. Development and changes in education have affected teacher education necessitating review and reforms. Indian education system is rapidly changing with the explosion of knowledge, population growth, advancement of science and technology and innovative ideas and practices. It demands preparing teachers who in turn will help to strengthen a knowledge society to meet the challenges of globalization and to mould the society. Empowering the teacher's performance is essential to increase the quality in teacher education in India. The present paper will focus on certain glaring challenges which persist in our teacher education programmes and the remedial measures which include proper planning and utilization of human resources, qualified staff, adequate facilities of space and equipment, effective teaching practice and internship, quality improvement, research efficacy, professional competency, empowerment of teacher educators, the changing role of teachers, integration of ICT in Teacher Education etc.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Quality, Competency.

Introduction

Man is a social being. He is an integral part of society. The man is product of society where as society also depends upon its individuals for its development. Aims and objectives of any society can be achieved through proper education of its men. For such an educational system, we require efficient teachers. It is well known saying that teacher is the nation builder. To be able to discharge such a high responsibility, it is very necessary that the teacher must become conscious of his role towards society. His behavior should indicate his attempt to do his job properly. His personality must reflect characteristics of good citizenship, dignity of the individual, rights and duties etc., so that he may transmit the same to the younger generation. The above said facts express the importance of teacher-education. Numerous empirical studies conducted by social scientists have established a strong correlation between education and national development; all attach utmost importance to education as an effective tool in reducing poverty by building a viable workforce capable of competing in an increasingly competitive and global economy (Jomtien, 1990, Delors,

1996, Mdgs, 2012). The present paper intends to focus on the problems and related concerns in Teacher Education and to suggest some remedial measures.

Meaning of Teacher Education

Teacher Education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the school and classroom. In early times, teachers were often scholars or clergymen who had no formal training in how to teach the subjects of their expertise. In fact, many believed that "teachers were born, not made." It was not until the emergence of pedagogy, the "art and science of teaching," as an accepted discipline that the training of teachers was considered important. Although there has been continued debate about whether teaching is a "science" that can be taught or whether one is "born" to be a teacher, it has generally been agreed, at least since the nineteenth century, that certain characteristics are needed to qualify a person as a teacher: Knowledge of the subject matter to be taught, knowledge of teaching methods, and practical experience in applying both. Most educational programs for teachers today focus upon these points. However, the internal character of the individual is also an important aspect of teaching; whether that is something one is born with or can be taught, and what are the qualities that are needed for the role of teacher, are also a matter of debate.

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Some Suggestions There of:

A number of write ups have appeared on educational quality in recent years, examining factors that help improve education and proposing ways to promote better learning in schools. The issue of quality has become critical in many countries. In countries like India where with constrained resources, the successful effort to increase access to basic education has often led to declining quality of education. In a search for the factors that promote quality, various programs as well as the literature increasingly emphasize teachers, schools, societies and communities.

The rapid changes in society led to teachers facing new and complex issues, resulting in changes in the area of teacher education. Some issues & challenges in Teacher Education are delineated here along with probable suggestions:

Quality Concern

The Practices and Procedures insisted upon by Teacher Education Institutions usually tend to be quite at variance with the Content, Instructional Objectives, nature and level of the Learner Group, teacher's inclinations and capacities and the context in which the instructional process is carried out. Irrespective of the institution and where it is situated, all student teachers generally conclude that the B.Ed. programme is not so useful once they become regular teachers in schools, although it is essential passing the B.Ed. examination to become a regular teacher. The significant Question that it poses to teacher educators is whether there is any 'Omnibus' methodology for Teaching.

Lack of Technical Clarity

There is a certain lack of technical clarity about what are proposed and insisted upon as essentials in Practice Teaching. To Some extent, this could also be due to the fact that several teacher educators, who provide 'feedback' to student teachers, are themselves in no position to be sensitive to the subtleties of the instructional process. They can hardly visualize effective alternatives and suggest them to student teachers. The reasons could be that several of them have

become teacher educators after completing studies. This leaves them with the barest minimum exposure to actual classroom or, more appropriately, to instructional Processes of 'Practices' sessions while under training. As a result, when they attempt providing technical hints, they sound too theoretical and may appear "bookish". To combat this problem experienced teachers may be associated while teaching accomplishing the task of practice teaching. The services of superannuated teachers can be availed for the same.

Procedure of Assessment

The procedure of assessment is inappropriate for a complex practice like teaching the nature of the tasks being highly creative, individualistic and non- standardized. Its evaluation should also necessarily possess similar characteristics. The Practices adopted for assessment of practice teaching tend to emphasize objective, standardized and fair assessment. For fear of being "unfair" and "Subjective" they do not often reflect concern for the rigor of teaching in technique and spirit.

Isolation of Teacher Education Departments

The Teacher Education Institutions, which are affiliated to universities, feel separated from the intellectual discipline in the university. Training institutions meant for undergraduates are completed isolated in this regard. Thus, there is an urgent need to break the existing isolation of teacher training institutions from universities. In order to achieve this goal, we shall have to bring teacher education in to the mainstream of the academic life of the universities. In order to strengthen its bond with the university, education may be introduced as an elective subject in degree courses. Education should be recognized as an independent discipline like philosophy and psychology.

Lack of Books and Materials

For successful teaching, there is a strict requirement of books and other supportive material which lead to effective teaching. But, unfortunately in our education system, there is lack of quality books and materials in Teacher Education Institutions. Most of the institutions just purchase some books to fulfill the criteria without bothering their worthwhileness. To check books and other supportive material State Government and Universities should take initiative. Statutory bodies should insist upon the need of latest, up-to date & quality books in Teacher Education Institutions which will be able to enhance knowledge of teachers and also broaden their mental horizons which may not remain inchoate in the absence of a meaningful exposure.

Lack of Dedication towards the Profession

Teaching can be made effective by the interest and dedication of the teachers. In Teacher Education system, we hardly find such type of dedication among teachers towards their profession. In order to create such type of dedication some refresher courses should be started by N.C.T.E and action research in Teacher Education should be encouraged.

Isolation of Colleges of Education

The different types of Teacher Education Institutions are also isolated from one another. In order to remove the isolation existing among the institutions preparing teachers for various levels of education and for special areas such as physical Education, art and craft, etc. an intensive effort is to be made. In a phased manner, all types of Teacher Education institutions should be brought under the jurisdiction of universities and all the existing training programmes may be upgraded to the university standard. The same may be applied for special kinds of training institutions also. Obviously, the qualification and pay scales of Teacher Educators will have to be improved accordingly.

Isolation from Schools

Teacher Education has to a greater extent, become isolated from the educational system of schools. In order to break this isolation of Teacher Education from schools, immediate steps may be taken to strengthen extension services Department. In fact, extension services departments should be established in every Teacher Education Institutions be it of any level- Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, or Territory.

In practice, there should be one practicing school attached to each training college. Periodical exchange of the staff of the cooperating schools and the Teacher Education Institutions may go a long way in removing the existing isolation. Alumni Association may be set up to bring old students and Teacher Educators together in order to make desired improvements in the system of teaching training.

Role of Statutory Bodies

As per the present practice, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), statutory body for maintaining quality in Teacher Education Institutions sends visiting teams while giving recognition to colleges of Education. Once the recognition is granted, NCTE hardly bothers to check the functioning of the colleges unless there is some complaint. The colleges get a loose rope and compromise with quality. NCTE should regulate its operations & check the colleges every year to renew its recognition. This will go a long way in improving quality in Teacher Education Institutions.

Integration of Technology

In most of colleges of Education, lecture method predominates which makes the teaching learning process dull & monotonous. In such a scenario teaching no longer remains interesting. To make teaching effective and learning permanent there is a need to integrate Technology in class room teaching. For this the colleges need to provide suitable infrastructure and instructional facilities & equipments. Such innovative strategies augment students' involvement. They no longer remain passive listeners rather they become active participants in the teaching learning process.

Faculty Development Programmes

In many Institutions of Teacher Education teachers still behave like knowledge providers. They discourage the students' creativity and independent learning. But in the changing scenario teacher is no longer considered as instructor disseminating knowledge to the students. His role is that of a facilitator who provides conducive environment and required facilities for a child to construct his/her own knowledge. He ought to behave like a co-learner as learning is never ending process and a teacher cannot truly teach unless he/she is still learning himself/herself. Hence to orient teachers to new approaches of teaching Faculty Development Programmes should be organized by the concerned universities or grant- in -aid colleges and it needs to be made mandatory for every teacher to attend such programme.

Field Visits

The management in private Institutions still have the old notion of teaching in four walls of class rooms. But with the shifting paradigm teaching may be more effective outside the classrooms when the student can get first-hand information about a concept. As per a proverb – 'One seeing is better than a thousand hearings' the stakeholder should realize the importance of educational tours, field visits and visit to various centers for learning. So that would be teaching may be able to accomplish their tasks and assignments which have been made a compulsory component of B.Ed. curriculum as per NCTE Regulations – 2014.

Conclusion

As an integral part of educational system, Teacher Education in India has to be responsive to socio-cultural ethos and national development. For this Teacher Education needs to undergo rapid change in keeping pace with the demand of learning and expectations of learners, community and society as a whole. Various efforts have been made to improve Teacher Education. But these are not enough because gaps are still visible and wide. Emphasis on four modern teaching approaches such as constructivism, comprehensive learning, contextual pedagogy and ICT integration needs to be highlighted. The role of teacher educators today is to mend the existing system with vision to help Teacher Education grow as a profession and produce quality teachers for schools. It should aim to upgrade the standard of Teacher Education, enhance professionalism and produce quality teachers for schools, upgrade the social status of teachers and develop sense of commitment among them.

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