

# Quality in Teacher Education: Issues and Directions



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## Abstract

The paper attempts to focus on current scenario of teacher education in the country in the light of changes that are fore seen. The 93<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the constitution of India has made education a fundamental right for the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, thereby making it compulsory for all children to be enrolled in the schools. Right to education (RTE) act passed by Indian parliament on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009 is a land mark act enacted after 62 years of independence of the country. To improve access to education the government has initiated changes in the plan allocations to education. It means, building of new schools, new colleges, and new universities and focusing on enhancing retention and improvement in quality of education. In order to enhance quality of education the need for quality teachers becomes imperative. Teacher training institutions and quality education is necessary input in development of quality manpower, shall be focus of the plan allocations. In this changed back drop the paper is an attempt to high light some facts and issues in the field of teacher education. In our attempt to achieve these various goals relating to teacher education a number of policies are evolving and teacher education has to align itself to various compulsions. Big players of international business are focusing on education and entering the field. So the professionals and quality training institutions will survive and grow in the field. The status of the teacher reflects the socio cultural ethos of society and no people can rise above the level of its teachers (NPE 1986). The more active, resourceful and competent the teacher, the more effective and purposeful is the education.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education, RTE, Training Institutions, Effective, Professional, competence and institutional environment.

## Introduction

We are on the threshold of Twenty First Century wherein, the impacts of industrialization, urbanization, globalization, rapid technological changes, and erosion of old social structures and emergence of new structural changes within our societies are substantial. Such powerful forces have also affected people's expectations, their time horizons, their political awareness, valuebase and their willingness to challenge the status quo. One great challenge is to give our society effective teachers- equipped with new skills, rich- technology, positive attitude, professional values, pedagogic leadership, dynamism and above all managing class room interactions.

## Aim of the Study

The paper is an attempt to high light some facts and issues in the field of Teacher Education.

The end product of education is based on four factors namely, the teacher, the learner, the curricula and the learning environment. It is difficult to list these factors in any hierarchical order yet the pivotal place of the learner cannot be denied, as all other factors can simply supplement the needs of a learner. The main agent to activate the process of education in an organized manner is, of course, the teacher himself and his interactions in the class room setting. A common metaphor in educational writings compares a teacher to a Gardner. Like gardener working in greenhouse, teacher nurtures budding personalities by removing weeds of ignorance and groom knowledge, skills and behaviour, thereby, adjusting conditions to provide for optimal growth.

No system of education can rise above the level of teachers. Although schools may have excellent material resources in the form of equipment, buildings and text-books, and although curricula may be approximately adapted to community requirements, if the teachers are misfits or indifferent to their responsibilities, the whole programme is likely to be ineffective and largely wasted. Teacher is a key person in shaping

the personality of the learner. Teacher effectiveness is reflected in learning outcomes. Teacher effectiveness has become more important in the present competitive scenario. Basically teacher effectiveness is a relationship and interaction between teachers, pupils and school as affected by limiting and facilitating aspects of the immediate situations (Barr, 1952). Effectiveness is a degree to which an agent produces effects. The question immediately arises: "What effects and on what"? Usually, three categories of effects in terms of the effect are (a) pupil, (b) school operation and (c) the school community (Remmers, 1952). Teacher class room interactions to large extent depend on ability to plan and improve verbal behaviour in the classroom learning environment.

In our attempt to achieve the various goals relating to education a number of policies are evolving and teacher education has to align itself to these various compulsions. Over the past 100 years from when teacher preparation is viewed as one of the essential features of education system a lot of changes took place in Science and technology, Society, social living, Study of human and child development etc and all these have been addressed by teacher education system. Education system has witnessed tremendous change in orientation styles from being subject centred to teacher centred to child centred. Teaching profession unlike others is an all inclusive profession. For instance, a doctor confines to the medical field, a lawyer to legal field, an engineer to technical field, a psychologist to behavioural field but a teacher though not a specialist should have the knowledge of all these and other varied disciplines.

At this backdrop the core group on teacher education has made certain observations to evolve a position paper on teacher education for the state curriculum framework of Andhra Pradesh. As facilitators for helping the child constructs his own knowledge. As community leaders who feel the responsibility towards the society and make all attempts for the good of society and the nation. The duration of D.Ed and B.Ed courses is not sufficient to make the teacher competent for all the roles expected from them. Hence it has to be enhanced. The best option would be to have four integrated courses leading to B.A .Ed. B.Sc.Ed, M.A.Ed and M.Sc.Ed after Schooling. Similarly, along with elementary and secondary four year course should be evolved for pre-primary and primary level. Students have shown that teachers who have the qualification of 4 year integrated course conducted by NCERT are more effective, professional and successful. This also helps in attracting students who are really interested and have the aptitude in teaching in this profession eliminating the financial reason for selection of teaching job.

Like the regular Universities and the IGNOU , the teacher education institutions should conduct various short term courses in which teachers can join and build their capacities as per their interest like ICT, ET, Inclusive Education, Evaluative techniques, vocational education, guidance counselling, and planning for teachership. These courses can be used as refresher courses for Career advancement of teachers. There should be separate Universities for

teacher education in the states to enhance the standards of all the courses and teachers at all levels. Teacher education curriculum should also incorporate non- academic components like yoga, art, craft, music and sports. Only then teachers may be able to come out of isolation as they are caught in. The curriculum designed should be the result of inter disciplinary research and experimental findings. The curriculum needs to include important policies acts relating to child and education. The practicum aspect should form a major part of the curriculum. Enough time should be allotted to translate the knowledge gained through theory into practice. Experiential learning helps in fine tuning the skills of the trainee. Teacher trainee should be given an opportunity to conduct action research and have first hand information of the present position of the component under study of the child, the curriculum, the textbook, the methodology, the school, and the community. The priorities in teacher education are as under:

#### **Administrative Reforms**

Teacher and teacher education courses should be given a professional status. Selection of teachers needs procedural changes. The entrance and recruitment tests instead of testing the content knowledge should test the teacher's perspectives, interest and attitude towards teaching profession. All teacher education institutions should mandatorily have model schools. Practice of core competencies need to be given higher weightage in training schedules. The curriculum and methodology cannot be patterned i.e to say as the liquid takes the shape of a container, teacher education should take the shape of the current needs. However it has to function within the broader outline of the objectives of education. It have also to function as quality production house of quality teachers for school system. Curriculum up date need to be carried out at the interval of every two years.

#### **Quantity and Quality**

It is an accepted truth that the quality of education depends on the quality of the teacher and teacher education. More than thirteen decades have passed since the Hunter Commission has made the recommendation for having trained teachers. Even after the biggest initiatives of establishing NCTE, DIET, CTEs & IASEs, teacher education is still conducted in isolation. There is no national perspective plan for teacher education. Directors of national teacher education institutions are appointed on political considerations even the norms and qualifications are compromised. In fact such institutions be left out of political considerations.

In our culture, teacher is held in great honour and respect. He is considered a fountain head and torch bearer to society and nations in their march towards higher quality of life and creation of learning society. The Education that refers to the preparation, policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills to perform their tasks effectively in the class room and schools is Teacher Education.

Teachers coming out of the teacher education Institutions find themselves inadequately equipped in taking care of their responsibilities as teachers. There is a growing feeling that teacher

education is not effective in turning out able, efficient and skilled teachers. Everyone seems to be concerned about mushroom growth of teacher education institutions with sound infrastructure but with limited and low qualified staff. Another category of institutions is institutions with limited infrastructure but qualified staff. It is strange to observe such teacher education colleges functioning with legal sanctions. The training of the teachers in such institutions is a major area of concern. Although teacher education is undergoing rapid changes to keep pace with the demands of the learning outcomes, learner's expectations and societal demand as a whole yet the gaps can be observed. Teacher Education Institutions need to upgrade the standard of teacher education through curriculum transaction to instil sense of commitment and professional development in the trainees. Professional development has a basis on three C's: Content, Commitment and Competence.

The number of teacher education institutions has swelled across india. These institutions have neither qualified staff nor the required infrastructure yet turning out thousands of trained yet unemployable man power annually. There is no annual planning about the requirement of trained teachers in the country. These so called trained people have neither content mastery nor skills. More so, lack competence and commitment required for the job.

#### **The Right to Education**

The Right to Education Act has been passed in the Indian Parliament on August 26, 2009 to bring in 100% children in the age group of 6 to 14 in the fold of education to achieve total literacy. For achieving total literacy, total enrolment is a requirement. This has led to rise in enrolment, but no change in Education quality. The ground realities have not changed much. The Nationwide survey revealed that though enrolment has increased the role of private tuition and rural students opting for private schools have increased substantially.

The Annual Status of education Report (ASER) disclosed that private school enrolment for rural children in the 6-14 age groups increased from 16.3% in 2005-06 to 24.3% in 2010. "Only 53.4% of children in class V can read a standard II level text. This suggests that even after 5 years in school, close to half of all children are not even at the level of expected of them", said the survey conducted by voluntary Organisation Pratham. Madhav Chavan, chief executive of Pratham, said that other than increased enrolment, there wasn't much change in any other aspect of Education. Social and political analyst Yogendra Yadav said bringing this shame to public view is essential. "Half of our school children are much below their standard," he said. "This is a fact now. What we are lacking is outcome based evaluation." Meanwhile, the trend of sending children to English medium schools in rural India has not yielded many results. ASER 2010 reveals that states such as Bihar and Punjab have made progress. Punjab has improved quality and in Bihar, state enrolment and quality in Education among girls and boys is picking up. Linking education with the election agenda can have some impact and it has shown in the survey report of Bihar. "I believe it will remain an

issue for the state for a few more years", Yadav said. Terming the Bihar story as note worthy, ASER 2010 underlined percentage of the children out of school in the state is steadily declining. In 2006, 12.3% of boys and 17.6% of girls were out of the school in the 11 -14 age bracket. By 2010, the numbers had declined to 4.4% and 4.6% respectively. Regarding compliance with RTE, ASER 2010 mentioned that 60% of 13,000 schools visited had satisfactorily infrastructure norms specified by the law. "More than half of the schools, however, will need more teachers".

Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) rightly remarked "The destiny of india is being shaped in her classrooms...." So much so depends upon the quality of teachers. NPE (1986) has shown great faith in teachers and stated that "Nobody can rise above the status of teachers, the government and community should endeavour to create conditions which will help to motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines.

#### **Teacher Orientation and Enrichment:**

Teacher education is a continuous process and both pre-service and in service education have to be well integrated in this process for making teachers effective. Teacher education need to ensure high proficiency and quality in school education. With a view to act as models in the lives of learners and also in the education process for development. Teachers have to acquire professional competencies commitment and skills to empower themselves as multiple taskers in the class rooms, school and society. To promote sound teacher performance and high quality learning among students in cognitive effective and psychomotor areas of human performance teachers need a rigorous professional training enrichment and upgradation in continuous manner.

#### **Other Roles of Teachers**

A qualified and responsible teacher has other roles to play. He must work with his colleagues, teachers, supervisors, administrators and community. In the constant improvement of the curriculum, a high ethical standard of conduct within the profession and bring about working conditions to encourage effective teaching. He must be ready to work with parents and the public to interpret what the school is attempting, to secure their evaluation, cooperation and support in developing the best educational transaction. He also needs to collaborate with the members of other professions to obtain support and a proper work ethics.

#### **Special Directions for Teacher Training**

In present changing environment teacher should possess specialised skills and competencies. A training ground needs to be developed to address the training needs and issues. The training needs to take, below mentioned themes as the context.

#### **Attitudes**

The attitudes of tolerance, openness, trust, enabling, simplicity, firmness, composition and spiritualism.

#### **Skills**

Observation, analysis, synthesis, creativity, articulation, questioning and artistic.

**Competencies**

Content Competency, Pedagogy Related Competency, Ict Competency, Research Competency and Managerial Competency.

**Functional**

Animator, Integrator, Enabler, Monitor, Motivator, Facilitator and Guide.

Organising in service training and teacher education programmes with respect to new approaches to education, new ways of dealing with students, and new methodologies of teaching. These new approaches demand changes in the attitude of the teacher, the teacher student relationship, management and school environment. Even the Ramamurti committee report suggest about training programmes for teachers should be competency based and provision for integration of theory and practice in situational applications need to be made so that teachers are able to develop empathy in students and learner profiles of children from various sections of the society.

**Conclusion**

In providing education for all, teachers play the most significant role. Education can thrive with effective trained teachers only. Teacher education is to be viewed as a continuous process, interactive learning, and exchange of ideas, innovations and experimentation. Teaching has to be learner centered and activity centered. On the one hand, different teacher education institutions and professional organisations like NCTE, CTE and NCERT are doing their best to improve the standard of teacher education through quality teacher education programmes and curriculum framework, however on the other hand it is required that individual teacher should put more efforts to improve the professional competence and class room learning environment. Individualised teacher education programmes need to be organised for teachers in the specialised field of

knowledge and skills. It is said "Real teacher is a dedicated student all his life". Teachers are the prime agents of change and development in a society. One should be proud of being a teacher and accept proudly, "I am a teacher; I am a nation builder, a torch bearer for all type of students. Teacher is a great and responsible person. That is the reason no one ever forgets a good teacher. Let me close with a quote from William Hazlitt, "Great thoughts reduced to practice, become great acts".

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