

# Teacher Education in Present Scenario

## Abstract

The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes, "The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher." It means teachers are the greatest assets of our education system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. They are accepted as the backbone of education system. Teacher quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students' learning outcomes in particular. The Education Commission (1964-66) of India accepted this influence of teachers in powerful words, "No system can rise above the status of its teacher..." Similar sentiments have been expressed by the Delors report (1996), and UNESCO report on *Teacher and Educational Quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015* (2006). The European Commission Report 'Communication on Teacher Education' (2007) in the very beginning observes 'research shows that teacher quality is significantly and positively correlated with pupil attainment and it is the most important within school aspect explaining students' performance (40, p.3). Teachers help in shaping and reshaping the society and determine the quality of life in the community and the nation. Experiences of various countries reveal that the most effective way to develop good teachers in a dynamic and changing environment is to begin with a well-developed pre-service teacher education programme and continue with career long learning opportunities.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education, Present Scenario.

## Introduction

The teacher is the key agent in the transition to this vision of education. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC, 2007) has observed that the teacher is the single most important element of the school system and has stressed the need to substantially enhance teachers' professional capabilities, standing and commitment to education.

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. NCTE has defined teacher education- A programme of education, research and training of a person to teach from pre-primary to higher level.

Thus teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

## Policies and Commission for Teacher Education in India

### Historical Background

The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions on education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), The Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurti

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Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee Report (1993), The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications on the teacher education system in the country.

The earliest policy formulations emphasized the need for teacher education to be "...brought into the mainstream of the academic life of the Universities on the one hand and of school life and educational developments on the other" (Kothari Commission, 1964-66). It is indeed a matter of concern that teacher education institutes continue to exist as insular organizations even within the University system where many are located. Recognizing 'quality' as the essence of a programme of teacher education, the Commission recommended the introduction of "integrated courses of general and professional education in Universities...with greater scope for self-study and discussion...and...a comprehensive programme of internship."

Subsequently, while observing that "...what obtains in the majority of our Teaching Colleges and Training Institutes is woefully inadequate..." the Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983-85), reiterated the need "...to enable general and professional education to be pursued concurrently..." and emphasized that "...an integrated four year programme should be developed carefully...(while also making it) possible for some of the existing colleges of Science and Arts to introduce an Education Department along with their other programmes allowing for a section of their students to opt for teacher education."

The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986/92) recognized that "...teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs of and capabilities of and the concerns of the community." The policy further states that "...teacher education is a continuous process, and its preservice and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled."

The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) in its review of the NPE 1986 observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because "...the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time." Commenting

on how the inadequacy of programmes of teacher preparation leads to Unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools, the Yashpal Committee Report (1993) recommended that "...the content of the (teacher preparation) programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for selflearning and independent thinking."

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 provides a comprehensive approach to child centred education. The perspective on education has shifted from rotebased transmitting of information to making teaching a means of harnessing the child's creative nature. There is unprecedented public demand for quality education. NCF, 2005 with its focus on the concerns of the learner and the teacher provides a new opportunity to intervene in the otherwise neglected sector of teacher education. Connecting knowledge to life outside the school and enriching the curriculum by making it less textbook-centered are two important concerns of the NCF. In order to help children move away from rote learning, teachers will need to be prepared to give children the opportunity to derive meaning from what they read, see, hear and experience. This is possible only when teachers are able to play an active role in the design of learning materials, and have the knowledge and skills to organize meaningful learning experiences and to use evaluation as means to improve their own performance. For this to happen, the teacher needs several support mechanisms, including a pool of learning resources to choose from, the skills to identify developmentally appropriate text materials, a critical and analytic mind and the opportunity to engage children with learning resources outside the classroom.

The Report by NCERT (August, 2009) on Comprehensive Evaluation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education has set out the immediate tasks which a reform agenda must face as under:

1. To enhance the institutional capacity available at present for ensuring the adequate supply of trained teachers for all levels of school education;
2. To utilize all possible kinds of institutions, including university departments of education and teacher training institutions in the private sector, for in-service training of the existing cadre at all levels, in addition to State institutions, including CTEs;

3. To recognize teacher education (for all levels of school education, from pre-school to senior secondary) as a sector of higher education and to facilitate co-operation and collaboration between institutes of teacher training and colleges of general education or universities with a view to enabling interaction between different departments of a local college (or university) (e.g. sciences, languages, social sciences) and the institute of teacher training.
4. To envision a comprehensive model of teacher education, utilizing the Chattopadhyay Commission Report and updating its perspective, and ensuring that progress towards a new, comprehensive model is paralleled by necessary modifications in policies of teacher recruitment, deployment and service conditions, including emoluments;
5. To prepare a curriculum policy and framework for teacher education which is consistent with the vision of the NCF, 2005, and to translate it into imaginative syllabi and textbooks for pre-service courses and sets of in-service training material suited to diverse conditions and needs; and
6. To bring about synergy between institutional structures operating at different levels, e.g. NCERT and NCTE at national level, SCERTs and boards of education at State level, DIETs and under graduate colleges at the district level and so on.

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has developed the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education, 2009. This framework has been prepared in the background of the NCF, 2005 which necessitated an altered framework on Teacher Education which would be consistent with the changed philosophy of school curriculum recommended in the NCF, 2005. While articulating the vision of teacher education, the framework has some important dimensions of the new approach to teacher education, as under.

1. Reflective practice to be the central aim of teacher education;
2. Student-teachers should be provided opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas;
3. Developing capacities for self-directed learning and ability to think, be critical and to work in groups.

4. Providing opportunities to student-teachers to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children.

The Framework has highlighted the focus, specific objectives, broad areas of study in of theoretical and practical learnings, and curricular transaction and assessment strategies for the various initial teacher education programmes. It also outlines the basic issues that should guide formulation of all programmes of these courses. The Framework has made several recommendations on the approach and methodology of in-service teacher training programmes and has also outlined a strategy for implementation of the Framework.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which has come into force with effect from 1st April, 2010, has important implications on the teacher education system in the country. The Act inter alia provides as under:

1. The Central Government shall develop and enforce standards for training of teachers;
2. The Central Government shall provide technical support and resources to the State Government for promoting innovations, researches, planning and capacity building;
3. The Appropriate Government (Central Government and State Governments) shall provide training facility for teachers;
4. The Central Government shall notify an academic authority to lay down minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher.
5. All teachers should acquire the prescribed minimum qualification within a period of five years.

#### **Guiding principles for teacher education under the RTE Act**

The Bordia Committee report, entitled "*Implementation of RTE Act and Resultant Revamp of SSA*" (2010) enumerated the following principles:

1. Holistic view of education, as interpreted in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, with implications for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education with significant implications for curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management.
2. Equity, to mean not only equal opportunity, but also creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society – children of SC, ST, Muslim minority, landless agricultural

- workers and children with special needs, etc. – can avail of the opportunity.
3. Access, not to be confined to ensuring that a school becomes accessible to all children within specified distance but implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories – the SC, ST and others sections of the most disadvantaged groups, the Muslim minority, girls in general, and children with special needs.
  4. Gender concern, implying not only an effort to enable girls to keep pace with boys but to view education in the perspective spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986 /92; i.e. a decisive intervention to bring about a basic change in the status of women.
  5. Centrality of teacher, to motivate them to innovate and create a culture in the classroom, and beyond the classroom, that might produce an inclusive environment for children, especially for girls from oppressed and marginalized backgrounds.
  6. Moral compulsion is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders, rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes.
  7. Convergent and integrated system of educational management is prerequisite for implementation of the RTE law. All states must move in that direction as speedily as feasible.

#### **Current Status**

The RTE Act attaches great significance to the role of teachers in reforming elementary education. Section 23 highlights the need for making available professionally trained teachers for the schooling system; however recognising that some States may not have the capacity for professional training of teachers in the numbers required, the Act provides that the Central Government may give relaxation for a period not exceeding five years, within which period all teachers would need to acquire the prescribed qualifications Section 24 specifies the academic duties of teachers, including *inter alia* timely completion of curriculum, provide additional support, where required, ensure contact with the parents of children. Section 27 prohibits teacher deployment for non-academic work and Section 28 bans teachers from giving tuitions.

The unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes during the past few years characterizes the teacher education

scenario of today. With increasing school enrolments and the launch of pan-Indian primary education development programmes such as the SSA (2002) to achieve UEE, the Operation Blackboard (OB) 1986, and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) 1995, there was an increase in the demand for teachers. Added to this, the backlog of untrained teachers in the system and the essential requirement of pre-service teacher certification for appointment as a teacher led to mounting pressure on existing institutional capacity. With the demand far exceeding supply, market forces have taken over causing unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country. The escalating demand for trained teachers and the belief that a training certificate acts as collateral against future unemployment has made teacher education a lucrative business proposition. It has also led to a large scale mushrooming of teacher education institutions.

Two major developments in the recent years form the background to the present reform in teacher education – the political recognition of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) as a legitimate demand and the state commitment towards UEE in the form of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. This increased the demand manifold for qualified elementary school teachers. The country has to address the need of supplying well qualified and professionally trained teachers in larger numbers in the few years.

The Supreme Court-appointed **Justice J S Verma Commission** on improving teacher education system had submitted its report August 2012, with the suggestion of also exploring possibility of engaging teacher educators as visiting faculty in schools. It had suggested development of a framework on school audit and teacher performance and increased investment in establishing teacher education institutions. On basis of justice verma commission's recommendations- In this academic year, we see a slew of reforms in teacher education such as the introduction of four-year integrated BA/B.Ed. and BSc/B.Ed. programmes across the country and the discontinuation of MEd course in open and distance learning centres. At a meeting in Delhi on 5th Jan 2015, the Centre asked state education ministers to prepare for key changes that also include extension in duration of B.Ed. and MEd courses to two years from the current one year, a mandatory 20-week teaching internship to be eligible as a teacher and introduction

of part-time B.Ed. course during vacations for teachers who don't have the degree.

The changes, including the introduction of integrated courses and discontinuation of the MEd one in open and distance learning institutes, has implemented in the academic year of 2015-16.

The integrated courses has offer the option of a vocational course alongside BA or BSc to enhance employability and bridge the skewed gap between demand and supply of teachers.

The move to do away with the MEd course in open and distance learning institutes was aimed at emphasizing the specialized training and seriousness required for the programme, secretary (school education and literacy) Vrinda Sarup said at the meeting. Professor of education at IGNOU CB Sharma, however, told HT that the decision wasn't a well-thought one.

HRD minister Smriti Irani, who chaired the meeting, called upon the states to implement the proposed reforms, including a choice-based credit system. She also called for another meeting in February to discuss the proposed New Education Policy. "We want village education councils, blocks, districts, MPs and MLAs to discuss what our educational needs are... We should think of the New Education Policy," Irani said.

"We don't want orders from Delhi to decide it. We'll come to hear the people in villages of different regions," she added.

The reforms were passed recently by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) — the regulatory authority in the teaching field — on the lines of the justice JS Verma commission's recommendations.

Thus The Commission has highlighted how the role of the teacher and the very concept of teaching has changed and assumed new meaning and significance due to various reasons. Today, students are quite advanced I their mental age in their intellect ideas and outlook. They are curious to know and have many doubts. Teachers have to meet the queries and satisfy this hunger with confidence. There must be adequate freedom, flexibility and frankness in them. Teaching instruction needs to be problem oriented and not discipline or theory oriented. Approaches such as case studies, simulations, role play and action research would be more appropriate for the professional development of teacher. Open ended activities and questions could help bring out the vast experiences of the prospective teachers. The

professional development of teachers need to be located in the larger socio –cultural, economic and political context of contemporary Indian society. A teacher's task is to facilitate learning by enabling the child to construct or generate knowledge on the basis of his/her own observations, experiences, experimentation, analysis and reflections. Teachers need to be prepared to care for children and to view learners as active participants in their own learning. To conclude, professional up gradation is an important issue in teacher education. Teacher Education has to be made an integral part of social as well as educational system. There should be dynamism in our approach to meet the challenges of the diverse problems with confidence and competencies. The code of professional ethics and values has to pursued vigorously. Teacher Education has to assume responsibility to prepare teachers with proper attitude and ability to translate the philosophy of education into practical learning experience. Unless and until the present system of Teacher Education is revamped and re-organized, it would be difficult to provide suitable pre-service education and upgrade the quality of education in the country.

### **Conclusion**

The quality and standards of an education system largely depends on the quality, characteristics and commitment of the teachers to their profession. Teacher Education needs to be adequately strengthened and upgrade to accommodate the changing role of the teacher and so that teachers can effectively address contemporary issues regarding education. Teacher education has to be reformed in order to adequately prepare teachers for their new and more diversified functions in the school and the community.

Considering this, various commissions and committees have been appointed to study the status of teacher education and to suggest recommendations. Justice Verma Commission has attempted a scrutiny of the existing provisions and the quality of teacher education to facilitate identification of the deficiencies therein, and then to enable it to make recommendations which can rectify the defects and provide the level of teacher education necessary to produce quality teachers. The present paper discusses existing scenario of Teacher Education.

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