

Challenges to Teacher Education in 21st Century

Abstract

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. The national Council for teacher education has defined teacher education as a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher secondary level.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Teaching Skills, Pedagogical Theory, Professional Skills

Introduction

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. According to Goods Dictionary of Education Teacher Education 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.

In 1906-1956, the program of teacher preparation was called teacher training. It prepared teachers as mechanics or technicians. It had narrower goals with its focus being only on skill training. The perspective of teacher education was therefore very narrow and its scope was very limited. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical Theory + Professional Skills

Teaching Skills would include providing training and practice in different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teachers to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills, preparation and use of instructional materials and communication skills.

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.

Professional skills include the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help the teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes soft skills, information retrieving and management skills and above all life long learning skills.

An amalgamation of Teaching Skill, Pedagogical Theory and professional Skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development

History and Background

Teacher Education in the Ancient Period

In ancient India, education was largely religious and since Brahmins were the sole in charge of all religious matters the responsibility of imparting education naturally rested on their shoulders. In Rig Vedic age the first and supreme teachers were the Rishis or Seers who were the originators of the Rig Vedic hymns. These Rishis and Munis who were also called Vipra, Vedhas and Kavi can be called the first teachers and preserved thus revealed highest knowledge in the form of Rig Vedic hymns. They then proceeded to further educate the teachers who could acquire, conserve and transmit this knowledge to the posterity.

Another method of teachers education and the advancement of their knowledge is indicated in Rig Veda. It is the learned assemblies or Brahmana-Sanghas where Brahmins-both teachers and successful



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students flocked together to discuss, share and further develop the truths they had realized in their hearts or reached by their minds.

The method of receiving education was generally in the form of recitation which was an art by itself. So a teacher in Rig Vedic age was the one who was first introduced by his own master, became an excellent and successful student, further enhanced his bank of knowledge and was finally acknowledged by the learned society around him as fit to become a teacher.

This system continued in later Vedic age when the rest of the three Vedas – Sam Veda, Yajurveda and Atarvaveda and other vedic literature also came in to existence. Teaching was still continued in the time honoured system of oral tradition, but in the course of time teachers had to access to other means also to enhance their education.

By epic age, hermitages and learned gatherings at the time of sacrifices became some other source of teacher education. These seats of learning were an effective medium of teacher education during epic age.

These means and mediums of teacher education continued till Buddhist period (500 B.C to 1200 A.D). But hence forth training of the teachers became more elaborate and thorough. A monk or a Bhikkhu was placed under the incharge ship of two superiors, qualified by learning, character and standing, who were called the 'Upadhaya' and 'Acharya'. This period of training or dependence (Nissaya) under the two teachers was for atleast ten years after which this monk was considered ready to give 'Nissaya' to others. Thus the Buddhist age recommended more strict and direct ways of teacher education and this was the reason why the religion produced out standing and hard working teachers who proselytized it not only with in India but also out side it.

Thus till the arrival of Muslim invaders in India, the education system in the country flourished under the guidance of such able teachers, who, despite the absence of any formal colleges of teacher education, gave direction and fulfillment to the system.

Teacher Education in the Medieval Period

In Muslim India, the chief aim of education was to produce religious men, to bring out the latent faculties of the students, to discipline the forces of their intellect and to equip them with all that was essential for their moral and material development. It was in other words, the formation of character. Education was regard as a preparation for life. Like ancient India, medieval India also presents no example of any formal college for teachers training. But the fact that this period of Indian history has produced some exemplary figures like Minhas – i- Siraj, Amir Khusrau, Shaikh Usman Tirmizi etc, which shows that there were some ways through which teachers received and further enhanced their education. Several books on theological and secular topics were written during this period which also helped in the cause of teacher education. Libraries also served as a rich source of teacher education. The Imperial Library of Bijapur, a modicum of which

still exists in Asari Mahal, had a rich collection of books which could be highly interesting for the Scholars of Arabic and Persian literature. So the teachers in medieval India although did not have any full-fledged college to educate themselves, still had several other means to amass the wealth of knowledge.

One system which continued from ancient period till the medieval times was the 'monitorial system'. This system as in the past, advocated the association of more intelligent and advanced students with their masters in the work of teaching.

Thus, till the arrival of Britishers in India, teacher education in the country was indirect and not very scientific and objective. So long as the education flourished in the country, no need of any change was felt, till the arrival of East India Company and subsequently the British Government.

Teacher Education in the British Period

When the Britishers came, their major goal in the field of education was to educate Indian children in British system. Formal system of teacher education was started by Britishers:

First of all Danish Missionaries established a formal training centre at Serampur (W.B). These missionaries were private institutions. This was the first step in the field of training the teachers in India. After this three more institutions (private) called Normal schools were opened for training of teachers. One each at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. After this the government institutions started functioning at Poona, Surat, and Calcutta.

In 1824, the total number of such teaching training institutions rose to 26. Such programmes were meant for preparing indians for lower levels.

Hunter commission (1882) emphasised on the improvement of primary education and extension of teaching schools for teachers. Several normal schools were established but no attention was given to Secondary training institutions.

At the end of 19th century there were 6 training college for secondary teachers viz. Madras, Rajmundari, Kurshooga, Jabalpur and Allahabad.

According to University act 1904, recommendations were given for extension of secondary training colleges. One training college was started in Bombay in 1906. In 1912 govt had recommended:

Under the modern system of education no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that has qualified to do so.

In 1917, Calcutta University commission had recommended to introduce the Education Deptt. of university level and to investigate the problems of teaching colleges. As a result there were 13 Education departments in 1921.

In 1929, Hartong committee recommended for the centres of primary education:

1. Raise the standard of primary education
2. Appointment of good and trained teachers
3. Provision for Refresher courses.
4. Investigate the problems of primary education

Teacher Education in the Post Colonial Period

After the Independence many problems were brought before our government as – socio economic change, political change and so on. Importance of education was stressed, there was greater demand of schools and consequently the greater demand of trained teachers. Side by side new concept of teacher education was developed in relation to national needs and aspirations. With this aim in view under the National Council of Educational Research and Training, four Regional Colleges of Education, in four regions of the country were established in 1963.

During the period 1944-64 the education commission under the chairman ship of Dr. D.S Kothari pointed out clearly the major weakness in the existing system of professional education. Commission made number of recommendations to improve the education system in the country.

In 1951 the planning started in India, The first three five year plans would extent from 1951 to 1969. Prior these plans almost half of the teachers population was untrained. There fore in all three plans efforts were made to extend the facilities of teachers training so that number of untrained teachers could be reduced. During the period 1969- 1979 during iv and v five year plan nothing significant was done. The reason was the great economic depression in the country. During this period priority was given to expansion of elementary education with special emphasis on covering the backward sections and girls.

Teacher education as it stands today in our country have several patterns of training. We have training of teachers for high school level in all states. Some of the institutions are run by govt herself, some departments have caught university, we have B.Ed departments in affiliated colleges also and 10 times more teachers are trained in these colleges than university. Some training colleges which exclusively runs by govt herself. But still more important pattern is in the regional colleges. They are run by N.C.E.R.T –Ajmer, Mysore, Bhubaneshwar and Bhopl.

Current status of teacher education is that there is over supply of trained teachers. The country is now on the eve of a large scale expansion of elementary education and a radical transformation in school education up to the end of higher secondary stage. To provide the quality, THE secondary education commission (1953), the education commission (1964-66), the first education national policy (1968), the new national education policy (1980) and the programmed of action (1992) have emphasized teacher education as a continuous process. These commissions and policies have taken major steps to face the new and emerging challenges to bring concern. The vast growth of explosion in the area of knowledge, science and technology, teacher education have come across or facing the challenges such as problem in inculcation of human values, breaking, the isolation of T.E.P from the community, to bring the innovative teaching learning methods in use in the class rooms, to prepare or produce the committed teachers to reconstruct pedagogical and

educational principles to expand the scope of T.E.P and to bring the overall quality in T.E.P such as the challenges to teacher education in 21st century.

Aim of the Study

Main challenges and possible remedies in devevelopment of teaching pffession in 21st century.

Challenges of Teacher Education in 21st Century

It is a known fact that the society has a great expectation from the educational system to fulfill the aims and objective of the T.E.P and expectation. There are some barriers of the society which can be summarised as below

Teacher Education and Curriculum

A teacher education curriculam frame work needs to be in consonance with the curriculam frame work for school education and a teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and demands arising in the school context. This reality increases the challenge that the prospective teacher will face in implementing the R.T.E act. The teacher must now be equipped not only to teach but also to understand her student and the community of parents so that children are regular in schools and learn. The act mandates that the teacher would be responsible for enrolling all children seeking admission, reframing from inflicting corporal punishment, complete the given curriculam in the given time, assess students, hold parent meetings and orient them and as part of the school management committee, organise the overall running of the school. In the present context we should take a fresh look at teacher preparation. Education is not a mechanical activity. Teachers need to be looked at as crucial mediating agents through whom curriculam is transacted.

To Emerge New Economic Order

The Indian Society needs education with special emphasis on science information and technology vocational inputs realistic work experiences should be the main concern of the present T.E.P curriculam poverty, unemployment and without job guaranty etc. are some of the outputs of the present T.E.P. It brings the economical crisis in education. 'To emerge of new economic order from the T.E.P' should be the basic objective of the TEP and should provide the realistic co-ordination between economic planning and manpower planning. It should create the self-respect and dignity of work and should enable the students and teachers to understand the attributes development. It should create the proper attitudes through the curriculam.

To Bring in Actual Use of Innovative Teaching Learning Methods in Classrooms

In T.E.P it is necessary now a days that students should have ability to take a decision and judgement regarding problem, it should develop the values and feeling regarding problem students should identify and understand various aspects of theme and content. Trainees should get opportunity to discuss, to interact with each other. Now a days, T.E.P is very much theory based and exam oriented. The application and proper utilisation of the innovative and learner inspiration teaching learning methods in classroom is one of the challenges of teacher education in 21st century.

To Prepare the Committed Teachers

Teachers are the important part of the education system. They shape the destiny of future citizens. T.E.P should have to stick up with prepreparation of committed teachers. Without commitment of teachers, we can not bring the quality in education.

Challenges Thrown By Science and Technology

We have experienced enormous growth of science and technology in the 21st century for which education have to change its objectives, curriculum to face this new challenge. M learning, e learning, visual classrooms, multimedia in teaching are taking place of old concepts. In education , trainees should also get the knowledge of these concepts through T.E.P. T.E.P should reconstruct the curriculum and its framework and make changes to face the challenges of new era.

Cooperation and Collaborative Approach

To build up the cooperative and friendly attitude among the teachers in T.E.P is one of the challenging tasks. Without cooperation and collaborative approach, it is quite impossible to achieve the objectives of T.E.P and of educational system

Reconstruct Pedagogical and Educational Principles

With changing scenario, T.E.P should also reconstruct the principles of teaching learning process. It is time to bring the use of new pedagogical in classrooms. Methods of teaching based on student activity i.e constructivism , use of new innovative models of teaching , active learning principles etc are the new concepts that should be bring in T.E.P. Educational principles should also reconstruct according to the need of society and according to the changing scenario of the world and needs of the student.

Teacher Professional Development and Upgradation

Teacher education gives only theoretical aspects of teacher' profession development and upgradation but can not run any to achieve this. T.E.P should conduct some programmes or courses for the development and upgradation. In practical work some of the activities should include to develop the students overall personality.

To Work Without Job Security

The problem of job security is a burning issue in non-aided teacher training institutions. Due to the government policy and economic conditions of the institution, the teachers are insecure about their job and about their salary. This problem is related to the teachers's life. Then how can one expect quality in education if jobs are insecure.

Examination Reforms and Admission Process

Our T.E.P is exam oriented which requires major changes and needs to reconstruct the traditional frame work of the education system. Admission process is too much hectic and the present theory and practical are not providing the life skills to lead a life with better perspective. There must be a correlation between exam results and admission

process. It is necessary to think about the semester exam system in T.E.P

Some of the Remedies to Face the Challenges

1. Teacher education institutes should develop the post-graduate studies based programmers etc.
2. For acquiring and facing the challenge to learn the language skills every teacher education institutes should have their own language lab.
3. T.E.P should encourage or inspire for self learning for acquiring life skills to lead a balancing life.
4. Devotion ,honesty and commitment of the teachers for imparting excellent education is very important
5. Effort shuld be given in interlinking the training institutes with the main stream.
6. Central agencies like N.C.T.E, U.G.C,S.B.T.E U.D.E C.T.E.D D.T.E S.I.E and C.T.E should work with transparency and with quality attitude to improve the quality of teacher education institute.
7. Reconstruction of the curriculum with special approach to the modern world. Vitality and realism are lacking in the curriculum. Only traditional courses are offered. Options or choices are very limited.
8. Teacher education institutes should start the publication of Teacher Education Bulletin , start the guidance and counselling centre , start the courses under scheme of earn and learn
9. Providing funds, educational facilities,improving the subject knowledge , using innovative methods in the class rooms,use of multimedia, internet in teaching learning process, keeping the professional attitude etc are the some remedies to face the problems and challenges of T.E.P

Conclusion

We know that there are many more problems and challenges of teacher education in the 21st century. It is not possible to solve the threats only by students or teachers or agencies. It is rather a team work and integration of the efforts of all. In the era of fast growing and expanding knowledge it is very important to adopt the changing situation as early as possible.

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