



Teacher Education In India In The Context Of Rte Act 2009

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Abstract:

India has a magnificent history of teacher education. From ancient to modern age, the progress- path of teacher education focuses the excellence of qualitative and quantitative nature of the programme. In this paper we try to trace out the short evolutionary pathway of teacher education in India. On the wake of implementation of RTE Act 2009, some major challenges have come up in the field of teacher education programme. The scarcity of trained primary and upper primary school teachers is a big problem facing the nation. In India, a huge amount of teaching post is lying vacant due to new regulation framed by NCTE. We have made an attempt to find out the ways how shortage of trained teachers and teacher educators for teacher training programme could be diminished.

INTRODUCTION

In his Dictionary of Education C.V. Good defines teacher education as “all formal and informal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume the responsibilities as a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.” John W. Collins and N.P.O. Brien in their Greenwood Dictionary of Education refer to teacher education as the “intentional and unintentional curricula, infrastructural settings and experiences that enable teachers to promote learning and changes in others.” Teachers cannot discharge their duty properly i.e., help the pupils learn, until and unless they go through the complete programme for continuous professional development. There is no denying the fact that a few are born-teachers, but the larger pool of them needs to be professionally developed through effective programmes of education and training. The enlightenment and empowerment of teachers are the direct outcome of teacher education.

The Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) verily observed that “we are---convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction, is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and place that he occupies in the school as well as in the community”. This observation upholds the necessity of teachers' professional development to keep up the quality of the education they impart to the pupils. Again Kothari Commission (1964-66) commented, “The

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destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms”. A nation cannot progress and prosper without the education of her people and the quality of education is largely determined by the quality of teachers. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 too, laid much importance on teacher education, with the assertion that “The status of the teachers reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society. It is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers.”

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER EDUCATION

The concept of teacher training has taken the form of teacher education in the present era of knowledge explosion. Teacher training is an old concept and limited in scope. It lays stress on the development of a certain attitude, knowledge and skill of a teacher to perform a task successfully. On the other hand, teacher education is a programme of activities, aiming at the continuous growth of teacher. It is broad in scope and includes such programmes that will bring new insight, growth, understanding and co-operative practices to the members of the teaching community that will arouse them to action to improve themselves. Thus W.H.Kilpatrick commented, “One trains circus performers and animals; but one educates teachers.” The daily life philosophy and psychology of the learners are at the root of teacher education. It brings into focus and tries to explore all the domains of knowledge, values and behaviors needed in life.

TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA – DOWN THE AGES

Since the time immemorial, human society felt the need of preparing certain people as efficient members of society - who could impart knowledge and skill to others for their social and economic upliftment. They were expected to acquire such knowledge and life-skills that the elders and experienced people deemed necessary. For this purpose some knowledgeable persons were selected and employed to teach the youngsters according to the need and requirements of the society. Their job was to teach and train and as such, they were called 'Teachers,' 'Shikshakas' or 'Gurus'. As the time passed, it was felt that these teachers needed training and orientation for better performance in their job. Certain teaching skills were identified which could help them transact necessary knowledge and skills to the students to facilitate learning.

At the dawn of Indian civilization during the Vedic Age (2500-500 B.C.) there was no formal teacher training programme . Brahmin gurus were the sole agency of teaching through generation after generation. It was their family profession. The advanced learners would sometimes help the Guru in teaching and in this way they had a beginning in teaching jobs. In the Buddhist period (500 B.C – 1200 A.D.), a semi-formal system of teacher education can be traced out. In Buddhist 'Vihars' the monks wishing to be teachers, would undergo austere training. On having rigorous training in religion, morality and right conduct, they would be certified as teachers.

During the muslim reign in the medieval India (1200 - 1700 A.D.), no system of teacher education flourished. Persons well versed in the Koran and Hadith were appointed as teachers in Maktabas and Madrasahs. They had neither training in pedagogy nor any education on child psychology.

It was in the British rule (1757-1947 A.D.) that India developed a formal system of teacher education. Britishers brought with them the modern concept of education. Their life philosophy and demands were radically different from that of the prevalent religion- dominated education and life-style. The first teacher training school for primary teachers was set up at Serampore in Bengal by the Danish Missionaries in 1793. 'Normal Schools' as they were called – were gradually set up in Kolkata, Mumbai, Madras and other provinces in India. Wood's Despatch (1854) stressed on the training of teachers and envisaged “to see establishment with as little as possible, of training schools, classes for masters in each presidency in India.” the new grant-in-aid rules framed after the Stanley Despatch (1859) asked for certificate of teacher training for receiving government grants by the schools. In 1881-82, there were 106 normal schools with 3886 trainees in them. In the same year, 15 such schools were earmarked for lady teachers. The First Indian Commission of 1882 urged for equitable distribution of normal schools in the country and recommended that “an examination in the principles and practice of teaching is instituted, success in which should hereafter be a condition of permanent employment as a teacher to any secondary school government or aided.” The Government Resolution of 1904 commented, “ if the teaching in secondary schools to be raised to a higher level-----, if, in a word, European knowledge is to be

diffused by the methods proper to it, then it is most necessary that the teachers should themselves be trained in the art of teaching". Government of India Resolution (1913) stated, "Under modern system of education, no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that has qualified him to do so."

Teacher education saw the reflection of national aspirations and needs of the independent people of India in the recommendations of the University Education Commission in 1948. It made valuable suggestions regarding pre and in-service education of teachers and linking the programme of teacher education with the university system. Many other committees and commissions suggested in this regard from different perspectives. A few of their recommendations were carried out partly due to limited availability of resources and mainly due to lack of exclusive responsibility of the stakeholders as the Centre, States, the universities and private and public enterprises – all have their respective roles to play in this regard.

The Education Commission (1964-66) emphasized the necessity of professional preparation of teachers for qualitative improvement of education. It recognized teacher education as a distinct academic discipline of higher studies, different from pedagogy and suggested establishing schools of education in certain universities. It advocated for allocation of more funds for teacher preparation. The commission expected National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Regional colleges of Education (RCE) to play a greater role in the field of teacher education. National council for teacher Education (NCTE) was set up as a non statutory body in 1974 and in 1993, it was made a statutory body to look into the matter, including framing curriculum and rules and regulations for teacher education.

The National Policy on Education 1986 recognized continuity and inseparability of pre and in-service teacher education and recommended permanent educational mechanisms for the purpose. As a result, District Institution for Education of Teachers (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) Institutes of Advanced studies in Education (IASEs) was established across the country. Programme of Action (POA) 1992 also emphasized the enrichment of teacher education programmes. At present, besides the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and government aided institutions; private and self financing colleges and open universities are also partners in teacher education programmes.

RATIONALE BEHIND TEACHER EDUCATION

In 1986, National Policy on Education observed "Education has continued to evolve, diversify and extend its coverage since the dawn of history. Every country develops its system in education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also has evolved out of the need of the changing time." Education of teachers not only enhances the quality of education by preparing competent and committed cadre of teachers but also serves as a bridge between school education and higher education. To meet up the ever changing demands of the social system, teacher education has a significant role to play. It is universally recognized that teacher education is a must for producing enlightened citizens. India is the second richest nation in human power which needs to be flourished into fertile human resources. The social and political life of India is passing through a phase of transition that poses the danger of erosion to long accepted values. The goals of secularism, socialism and professional ethics are coming under increasing threat. In order to face these challenges by increasing professional competence and performance skills, teachers should be educated.

It is well known that the quality of pupils' achievement is determined primarily by teachers' competence, sensitivity and motivation. Again, the academic and professional standard of teachers is an essential condition for achieving the educational goals. The length of academic preparation, the level and quality of student-knowledge, the depth of pedagogical skills of teachers' go a long way to meet the needs of diverse learning situations that are ripe today. Teacher education promotes commitment to the profession and sensitivity to contemporary issues that directly influence the quality of curriculum transaction in classroom and thereby pupil learning and the larger social transformation.

RTE ACT 2009 AND TEACHER EDUCATION

In the present age of globalization, new development in information technology, challenges of post-modernity, consumerism and value crisis are evident. New pressures brought about by liberalization, privatization, market -forces and even the maladies like HIV/AIDS – demand a fresh look at teacher

education. In India two major developments in the recent years form the background to the present reform in teacher education –

- 1.The political recognition of Universalization of Elementary (UEE) as a legitimate demand and the commitment of the nation towards UEE in the form of 86th amendment of our Constitution in 2002 which led to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) 2009 and
- 2.The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for School Education by NCTE in 2005.

The Right to Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 came into force across the country on and from 1st April, 2010. It is mandatory for the State and UTs to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. To implement this act, our country needs qualified elementary and upper primary school teachers on a large scale within a stipulated time frame. In this context, teacher education needs to be on the top of educational programmes of the Government as it marks the initiation of a novice entrant to the calling and as such, has tremendous potential to imbue the would-be- teachers with proper motivation, knowledge, skill and attitude to run the nation's schools.

RTE AND TEACHER ELIGIBILITY

The implementation of RTE Act, 2009 necessitates the requirement of a large pool of teachers, both at primary and upper primary level, across the country within a specific time period. At the same time, enough care should be taken to maintain the quality and requisite educational qualification standard of the teachers to be recruited. To meet up the challenges of the era of knowledge explosion and complex socio-economic environment of the present society, the teachers should be armed with ability and aptitude of the teaching profession.

In accordance with the provisions of sub - section (1) of section 23 of the RTE Act 2009 and in pursuance of the notification number S.O. 750 (E) dated 31st March, 2010 issued by the Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD, Government of India, the National Council for Teacher Education has laid down the minimum academic qualification of a person to be eligible for teaching in class I to VIII in a school with effect from 23rd August 2010. For the stage of class I – V, the qualification required is Senior Secondary pass and Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) or Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed) or Diploma in Education (Special Education). For being a teacher of VI – VIII class level, a candidate should have graduation or senior secondary degree along with Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) or Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) or Bachelor in Elementary Education (B.El.Ed) or Bachelor in Education (Special Education). For both these levels the candidates must pass the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) to be conducted by the appropriate Government in accordance with the guidelines framed by the NCTE.

In part VI of the Act, it is stated that the State Governments shall provide adequate educational facilities to ensure that all teachers in schools – not possessing the minimum qualifications laid down in the Act at the time of commencement of the Act-- to acquire such minimum qualifications within a period of five years from the commencement of the Act. Where a State does not possess adequate teacher education institutions or persons possessing minimum qualifications as stipulated in the Act, the States shall request, within one year of the commencement of the Act, the Central Government for relaxation of the prescribed minimum qualifications. After six months of commencement of the Act, no appointment of teacher for any school can be made in respect of any person not possessing the minimum qualifications.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF TEACHER EDUCATION

At present, nearly 18 crore children are taught by 57 lakh teachers in more than 12 lakh primary and upper primary schools across the country. RTE Act 2009 demands that pupil-teacher ratio should be 30:1. To cope with this demand, 5.23 lakh teacher posts in primary level is required. In upper primary level, West Bengal tops the list with 52,764 vacant posts of teachers, followed by Bihar (51,074), Orissa (37,901), Chhattisgarh (34,985) and Rajasthan (29,356). Among the in-service teachers, there are 5.48 lakh untrained teachers in primary level and the number is 2.25 lakh in upper primary level across the country. The following table shows the States with highest percentage of untrained teachers:-

State	Untrained Teacher	% of untrained teacher	Intake Annual capacity (D.Ed)	Intake Annual capacity (B.Ed)	Teachers required (Vacancies + RTE)
Assam	118169	55.13	295	260	4992
Bihar	147665	45.05	1850	5610	323233
Chhattisgarh	40463	31.32	1920	8880	34985
Jammu & Kashmir	29294	43.34	-	-	9462
Jharkhand	43683	32.16	1310	4850	98424
Orissa	17921	9.02	3240	1348	37901
UP	123205	25.87	17400	81140	315175
West Bengal	86028	32.15	2385	9892	149470

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The enforcement of RTE Act will guarantee that more and more children from diverse backgrounds enter into the elementary education system. Teachers, therefore, will have to work towards a heterogeneous and democratic classroom, in which all the learners participate in the learning process as equal associates. Teacher education programmes will need to prepare teachers to address the socio-cultural diversity of the learners and handle inclusive classrooms successfully. The status of trained teachers-availability across the nation has to be investigated in the context of the RTE Act. So the major challenges before teacher training programmes across the country are:

- I.States with huge vacancies in teachers' post have few teacher training institutions that can not meet the demand of trained teachers needed in the context of RTE Act..
- II.In-service teachers are continuing their service without teacher training degree.
- III.Inadequate intake capacity for M.Ed programme which is now the essential qualification for methodology teacher educator in teacher training institutions. Our recommendations are:
 - 1.Maintaining 30:1 pupil-teacher ratio, exact number of teacher posts to be estimated on the basis of requirement of individual school.
 - 2.Accelerating the process of filling up teacher vacancies, ensuring that only trained candidates are recruited as teachers. Teacher recruitment process should be uniform for the whole country.
 - 3.Number of DIETs should be increased. If need be the larger districts should be permitted to set up more than one DIETs. Many DIETs have shortage of teacher educator. In such case, experienced school teachers may be recruited on deputation basis to combat the current problem.
 - 4.For in-service training programmes of teachers, open and distance learning mode should be enhanced. State Governments will need to redesign their training strategies, by coordinating with the state Open Universities for preparation of high quality modules and resource materials for the training programmes.
 - 5.States will have to expand the capacity of preparing teacher educators for the posts of eligible teachers in the teacher training institutions as per NCTE norms. M.Ed intake capacity in the institutions should be enhanced and scope of open and distance learning programmes for M.Ed should be commenced.
 - 6.NCERT should prepare a congregation of training modules and undertake specific programmes for

training of teachers and teacher educators nationally.

7. Identifying DIETs and other state run Teacher Education Institutions which have the capability to increase annual intake capacity. Government and Universities should encourage these Institutes to get accreditation from NAAC for the enhancement of intake capacities.

8. Filling up of vacant posts of teacher educators in Teacher training institutions on an emergency basis.

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