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Research Paper Education

# Teacher Education at School Level in Assam

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**ABSTRACT**

*Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. The success of the educational process depends to a rigid extent on the characteristics and ability of the teacher who is the corner stone of the arch of education. The supreme function of teacher education institutes is to make the pupil teachers aware of their high mission and impart a new vision of the responsibilities of teachers in the education of children and youth. The success of a true teacher is to be judged not in terms of percentages of passes of his student or original contribution to knowledge but through the quality of life and character of children taught by him. It is the major responsibility of teacher education institutes and teacher educators to provide quality teacher education. And it is the teacher in the institution who produces desired individuals. Teacher educators are responsible for producing quality teachers. In other words, teacher educators' way of organizing theoretical framework, practical sessions and skill development programs affect the future teachers. This paper is an attempt to study the status of teacher education system in Assam.*

**KEYWORDS : Teacher Education, Quality Teacher, Training Institute, and Pedagogy.**

## Introduction

Teaching is a highly professional activity which demands specialized knowledge, skill and behaviour. Teacher professionalism comprises competence, performance and behaviour which reflect on teacher's personality in school and society. Professional competence is fundamental in teaching profession which includes preparation of teacher for classroom processes, acquisition of knowledge of subject and facilitates personality development of children. Competencies of an effective teacher include interpersonal communication, pedagogical empowerment and organizational leadership. Professional competence results in performance of teacher in terms of overall development of children. The competent teacher is supposed to perform better in the interest of the children and society as well. High level of competency empowers teacher with high self-concept, commitment and motivational level. The teacher's conduct is significant for a humane teacher and it has impact on classroom, school, community and educational system. The quality of a particular kind of education is largely depended on the quality of the teacher. In a nutshell, it can be stated that professional competence of a teacher is a most important pre-requisite without which even the best curriculum, syllabi and teaching-learning materials cannot ensure desired learning outcome. Therefore, to be a good teacher and also to ensure the desired learning outcome to the target group professional training is a must for every aspiring teacher. Unfortunately, the teacher education system is yet to be tuned to adjust with the changing educational need of time. The curriculum and syllabi review effort being undertaken in the context of child centric, joyful and competency based teaching especially at elementary level education has not yet been fully supported by the teacher education programs. As a result, there is large gap between what is expected and what is achieved at field level. On the other hand, for teaching at Secondary and Sr. Secondary stage B.Ed. or M.Ed. degree has yet not been made compulsory in the state. There is no provision for undergoing compulsory in-service teacher training particularly at this stage of school education. As different universities of the state control these teacher training institutions therefore, there is lack of uniformity and continuity in the curriculum and syllabi followed by them. Besides, no visible efforts can be seen for establishing linkage between various teacher education programs of pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education level. Lack of adequate numbers of up to date teaching –learning materials especially at elementary stage in vernacular medium is also posing as hindrance on the path of quality teacher education in the state.

## Need of Teacher Education

It has been aptly remarked, "If you educate a boy, you educate one individual but if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family and if you educate a teacher, you educate the whole family and if you educate a teacher, you educate the whole community". Teacher education is not teaching the teachers how to teach. It is to kindle his initiative, to keep it alive, to minimize the evils of the "hit and miss" process and to save time, energy, money and trouble of the teacher and taught. The necessity of the teacher to perceive that the course in teacher education would help him minimize his difficulties and to appreciate that it would save the children from much of the painful process through which he has himself passed. Teacher education is needed for developing a purpose and for formation of a positive attitude for the profession.

## History of Teacher Education

Unlike other parts of India, educational expansion in the context of teacher education could not be started earlier in Assam. It was the Christian missionaries who were pioneers in establishment of a few Primary Teacher Training Schools in the state as early as 1888-89. To provide training to MV and ME level teachers of the state the government had established a few Normal Schools in the early part of 20th century. The duration of these in-service Normal schools course was for the period of 3 years and policy was that teachers were appointed after completion of the training in Normal schools. The provision for providing training to in-service teachers teaching in Secondary level of school education was imparted at St Edmund's college in Shillong which was later on shifted to St. Mary's college. In the post independent Assam as per the Basic Education Act of 1954 a number of Basic Training Centers were established throughout the state to train in-service teachers teaching in primary schools. Pre-service training along with in-service training for Middle School teachers was introduced in the state in the already established Normal Schools. But it was discontinued in 1970's because of problem related to jobs for such trained teachers. Upon realization of the need for providing of pre-service teacher education and also to clear the huge backlog of untrained teacher the Government of Assam re-introduced the pre-service teacher training for elementary level School Teacher of 2 year duration in the year 2000 in the 15 DIETs. However, this course was discontinued from 2001 onwards. Since then no fresh enrolment in this course has been made. For training of secondary level teachers Gauhati University as well as Government established B.T. colleges under its direct management. At present there are altogether 37 B. Ed. colleges out of which 8 are Colleges of Teacher Education which belongs to the government and rest are belonged to private parties.

## General Objectives of Teacher Education

**Competence:** To develop competence of the teacher to teach the subject of his specialization on the basis of accepted principles of learning and teaching and knowledge of the subject by striving to keep in touch with the latest development in both the subject and methodology of teaching.

**Understanding, Interests, Attitudes and Skills:** To develop understanding, interests, attitudes and skills which enable the teacher to foster an all round growth and development of children and to provide guidance to individual pupil.

**Indian Background:** To develop an understanding of the aims and objectives of education in the Indian background, to promote an awareness of the role of the school and the teacher in inculcating a spirit of nationalism in achieving ideals of creating a democratic, secular and socialist society.

**Society and School:** To develop an understanding of the close relationship between society and school, between life and school work to understand the role of the school and the teacher in changing the society.

**Skill of Educational Technology:** To develop skills in making use of educational technology in teaching academic or vocational subjects.

**Communication and Psychomotor Skill:** To develop communication and psychomotor skills and abilities conducive to human relations for interacting with the children in order to promote learning inside and outside the classroom.

**Action Research and Investigatory Project:** To undertake investigatory projects, action research and experimental projects, both in education and specialized subject areas.

**Existing Teacher Training Institutes**

**Basic Training Centre (BTC):** There are 19 BTCs which provide Primary in-service program for 6 months duration having an annual intake of 4500. It was always a one-year course, reduced to 6 months in 1999 for greater coverage.

**Pre-primary Training Centre (PPTC):** There is 1 PPTC. Initially, it was meant for Pre-primary pre-service and in-service but now primary in-service. Initially, Pre-primary Training Centre (1 year) now provides Junior Basic Training Course (JBTC) for 6 months duration with intake of 100. At present, the institute is imparting JBT course for in-service primary School Teachers.

**Normal School:** There are 7 Normal schools which caters to teachers for Middle in service having duration of 1 year with intake of 350. Pre-service training was provided for a few years along with in-service training but the former was discontinued sometime in the late 1970s.It is running JBT course of 6 months duration.

**District Institute of Education and Training (DIET):** There are 18 DIETs which provide (a) Primary in-service for 6 months duration with intake of 1500 and (b) D.E.Ed pre-service for duration of 2 years with intake of 600.

**B Ed. College:** There are 57 B.Ed. colleges that provide B.Ed. course of 1 year duration with intake of 3420. Graduate teachers are deputed to selected B Ed. College /CTEs for in-service training. There are many private B. Ed. colleges of which some are recognized by NCTE but others are not.

**College of Teacher Education (CTE):** There are 7 CTEs which provide secondary pre-service and in-service B Ed. of 1 year duration with intake of 800.

**State Institute of Science Education (SISE):** This institute provides in service short term course on subjects especially science, Mathematics and Environmental Science for teachers of Primary, Middle, Secondary schools.

**State Institute of Education (SIE):** This institute provides in-Service short term courses on school subjects and teaching Methodology for teachers of Primary, Middle, and Secondary schools.

**English Language Teaching institute (ELTI):** This institute provides (in-Service) short term courses on English language teaching for teachers of Middle, Secondary and Higher Secondary stage.

**Board of Secondary Education Council (SEBA):** This Board provides short term training in school subjects for Middle and secondary level (in-service) teachers.

**Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC):** This Council provides summer institutes/short-term training courses in various +2 level subjects for higher secondary school teachers. Besides, there are number of NGOs which organize time to time subject based short term in service teacher training courses often by themselves or in collaboration with different teacher training institutes of the state.

**Sarva Sikhshya Abhiyan (SSA):** The SSA also provides short-term subject specific teacher training program for primary and Upper Primary level teachers.

**State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT):** The SCERT as a part of their extension service activity provides teacher training to various organizations and institutions in addition to AIR programmes for the Primary and Upper Primary level teachers on many academic issues related to approach, philosophy and pedagogy.

**Dibrugarh University, Gauhati University, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (DU, GU, and KKHSOU):** Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University conducts regular B. Ed and M.Ed. course (pre-service) for secondary level teachers. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University also conducts D.El.Ed two years pre-service diploma course for elementary school level teachers.

**Vision for Teacher Education**

It has traditionally been practical that the schools of different category are established by the community on the basis of public demand. Teachers are also appointed by community. These schools are managed and finances by the local community which are later recognized by the government on the basis of terms and conditions. Therefore, the service of the person engaged as teachers in these schools also get absorbed without least consideration whether the person concerned has ability or interest in the teaching profession. Although at present preference is given for pre-service training at the time of selection of teachers. This practice has lead over the year to the phenomenon of recruitment of batch after batch of untrained persons who lack both competence and commitment to be a teacher. As result the responsibility of teacher training institutes along with the course have increased manifold as because they are bound to make the existing teachers professionally competent to be able to continuously attempt to formulate one's own professional orientation as a teacher in a situation specific context. However, besides reviewing the curriculum and syllabi the existing teacher training institutes have lots to do in terms of infrastructure development, empowerment of teacher educators and in development of teaching-learning materials to address such a phenomenon complete restructuring of entire teacher training scenario of the state is the need of the hour. For doing so, a state level core committee comprising of distinguished educationists, representatives from universities and teacher training institutions etc may be formed with the aims of advising the government. (1). Restructure teacher education programs from pre-primary to university level; (2). Establish linkage between various teacher education programs; (3). Monitor and supervise and to extend support; and (4). Undertake timely need based intervention related to implementation of curriculum. In order to overcome problem related to appointment of untrained teacher there is an urgent need to re- introduce need based context related pre-service teacher education course especially at elementary level. As stated earlier that the state had introduced PSTE course in 2000 but could not continue it due many reasons. Problem related to this course and its successful implementation in letter and spirit may be found out if any, so that it can be introduced again in the larger interest of the state. For teaching profession at Secondary and Sr. Secondary stage there is an urgent need to introduce compulsory B.Ed course for those who do not have this degree at the time of their recruitment. Besides, the practice of organizing time to time refresher course of short term duration on various emerging educational issues may be continued with renewed vigour. This may be made compulsory and for better result may be linked with professional incentives. This will go a long way in motivating the teachers to undergo training. In order to provide quality teacher education there is a need to introduce Integrated Teacher Education course of 4 years duration at degree level. This may be introduced in some selected colleges or teacher education institutes of the state having sufficient infrastructural facility. This course is being

successfully run in some Regional colleges in Education of the country.

**Problems of Teacher Education**

Following are some of the glaring defects which persist in teacher education programs in Assam.

**Defective Courses of Studies:** In continuation of the patterns adopted more than a quarter of century ago, teacher education courses at different levels embody course content unhelpful in preparing an effective teacher. The theory courses have no articulation with practical work and teaching skill requirements. The practice teaching course is a meaningless ritual. Its carry-over potential is very poor in the development of a dynamic strategy for handling instructions in actual classrooms.

**Faulty Methods of Teaching:** In Assam, teacher educators are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching. They use traditional method of instruction, lecturing and dictating of notes. Their acquaintance with modern class-room communication devices is negligible. Their lectures are dull, monotonous and uninspiring. The teacher educators have no planned and systematic awareness and control over the instructional technology.

**Absence of Professional Attitude:** In Assam, the entire teacher education program is lacking in professional attitude which is so important for a sound program of teacher education. No attempt is made for the development of sound professional ethics during the period of teacher education.

**Isolation of Teacher Education Department:** The schools consider the teacher education department as an alien institution and not a nursery for the professional development of school teacher. The teacher education department only observes the formality of finishing the prescribed number of lessons not carrying for the soundness of pedagogy involved in the procedure.

**Poor Academic Background of Student Teachers:** Proper admission procedures are not observed in most of the institutions. Most of those applying for admission to teacher education department do not have the requisite motivation and the academic background for a well deserved entry in the teaching profession.

**Lack of Proper Facilities:** In Assam, the teacher education program is being given a step-motherly treatment. About 20 percent of the teacher education institutions are being run without any facility for an experimental school or laboratory, library, separate hostel facilities and other equipments necessary for a good teacher education department.

**Lack of Interaction with the Main Academic Stream:** As the teacher education department in the state is cut off and isolated, it cannot function as model for the university departments. Other university departments treat the teacher training section as something inferior. They do not collaborate in any program sponsored by teacher education section. Teacher education department has not been able to make any dent even in such areas as evaluation, teaching methods and curriculum development.

**Inadequate Empirical Research:** In Assam, research in education has been considerably neglected. Whatever research conducted in education is of a very inferior quality. The teacher education programs have not been properly studied by undertaking any systematic research. Unwarranted suggestions based on speculation are the guiding principles in teacher education programs.

**Lack of Facilities for Professional Development:** There is lack of facilities for the professional growth of the teacher educators. Even the summer institutes being run with the help of UGC and NCERT are not able to deliver the goods. Most of the programs are being conducted in a routine and un-imaginative manner. Even the association of teacher educators has not contributed anything towards development of a sound professionalization of teacher education in the state.

**Insufficient Financial Grants:** In most of the institutions, teacher education is still being run by the fee collected from student-teachers. While the share of the state grant is much too small. Most of them are in a bad shape of a sub-standard nature.

**Remedies to Problems of Teacher Education**

**Reorganization of Courses:** Pragmatic researches should be conducted by universities to arrive at the course structure helpful for realization of the goals of teacher education. The ratio of theory and practical work should be studied and a special program should be developed for recording various types of the practical work/practical activities required in schools. A comprehensive job analysis of teaching in schools should be made on the basis for re-casting of courses.

**Suitable Method of Teaching:** The method of teaching in the teacher education department should inspire appreciation among other departments of the universities and colleges.

**Innovations:** A teacher education department should conduct special innovative programs in the following directions: seminar, combining of seminar and discussions with lectures, team teaching, panel discussion, and projects sponsored by the faculty members for improvement of learning in various spheres.

**M. Phil**: M. Phil program terminal and preparatory should be organized for such students who hold Master's degree in other disciplines.

**Development of Professional Attitude:** The colleges of education should be equipped with facilities for organizing various types of activities such as daily assembly programs, community living, social work, library organization and other curricular activities which promote democratic spirit of mutual appreciation and fellow feeling.

**Co-operation of the Practicing Schools:** The members of the staff of teachers colleges should be closely associated with the schools. The faculty members of teacher education department should work in schools on regular basis from time to time. The senior teachers of secondary schools should be brought in the fold of teacher education department and mutual dialogue should be initiated. The courses of studies, the practical work and practice teaching should be moderated in such a way that they have useful implications for improving school practices.

**Proper Admission Procedures of B. Ed:** This should be completely systematized. Steps should be taken to make it fool proof against tempering and meddling. Suitable admission procedure should be evolved through studies. Confidence in procedure of admission should be restored.

**Demonstration School:** It should be made integral part of teacher education department. Definite norms should be followed for certain facilities such as laboratories, libraries and other important audio-visual equipment.

**Planning Unit:** There should be a planning unit in the State Education Department to regulate the demand, and supply of teachers at various levels of schools. It should be responsible for projecting future requirements of teachers in various categories.

**Nucleus for Research:** The teacher education department should be made a nucleus for research on teaching, curriculum and evaluation, entrusted with the responsibility of sponsoring programs for extension such as bringing the community into close contact with the university academicians. It should be improved with the help of the university professors of eminence. To improve the quality of teacher education program there should be a free exchange of scholars from one department to another particularly in the subject of natural and biological science and languages.

**Provision for Funds:** The state Government should make adequate provision for funds for teacher education department which should be treated at par with other colleges and departments of universities for all sorts of grants. Special assistance may be given for running an experimental school and holding of practice teaching sessions in various schools.

**Faculties of Education:** In order that teacher education institutions and departments enjoy greater autonomy and freedom in formulating programs- Universities should institute independent Faculties of Education.

**Correspondence Courses:** Correspondence courses should be provided in teacher education with a strict screening for admissions and a rigorous style of assessment.

**Libraries:** In the state, there should be a special library for teacher education with a complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with all available journals for use by all researchers.

**Documentation Centre:** A Documentation Centre must be set up to code all research material relating to education.

**Conclusion**

As can be observed, to be able to face the challenges of the new millennium, the teacher education requires a new approach. At present teachers are not the mere transmitters of information but facilitators in the path of students urge for more knowledge. If the teacher fails to play this role confidently and effectively then, the status of the teacher would be eroded in the eyes of the students. The teacher has to continuously evaluate the activity undertaken by him to see whether the activity undertaken by him has achieved the desired result in terms of students' performance. If not, why? How it can be improved? Therefore critical analysis of one's teaching learning methodology, practicability of curriculum in use need to be re-evaluated time and again till desired objectives are achieved. The existing teacher training/education institutions of the state has yet lot to do for themselves in order to articulate innovations in terms of approach, pedagogy for qualitative improvement of school education and so that they can response to the various demands of the student community.

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