



Emerging Trends and Innovations in Teacher Education

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Teacher education is a program related with teacher proficiency and competence that would make them competent enough to face new challenges in the education. Now a days the field of education is not only limited with books but has broadened in various new horizons. Development and changes in education have affected teacher education necessitating review and reforms. It demands understanding with investigative minds, assimilating the required transformations, accommodating and responding to the universal needs. We also need to train teachers with new perspectives as the outer world is in the classroom and schools are opening to the world. The pre-service and in-service teacher education programs have shown paradigm shift with its emphasis on globalization and individualization. This main purpose of this paper is to indicate main changes that has incurred in teacher education in India and also provide an overview of trends, reforms and innovations in teacher education (integrated teaching, teacher curriculum and teacher innovations). It also discusses the need of teacher education program to be innovative and various practices that can be included. It has been recognized that teacher education program should be structured and modified in a way that enables them to respond dynamically to the new problems and challenges in the field of education, then only teacher can help in national development.*

Introduction

According to NCTE (1998) teacher is the most important element in any educational program. He plays a central role in implementation of educational process at any stage. The level of achievement of learner is determined by teacher competence. So the quality of education basically depends on the quality of teachers. Kothari commission has very rightly said, "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms." As the population in India is growing very rapidly day by day the need of well qualified and professionally trained teachers will also increase in the coming years. So lots of efforts should be made to improve teacher education. Teacher education is a continuous process and its pre-service and in-service components are complimentary to each other. Education is instrumental in the preparation of teachers who can in their practice ensure transformative learning, where teacher and learner, learner and learner are co-constructors of knowledge.

Today there are new expectations for education where the focus is on having teachers - be futurist leaders to ensure sustainable education. The paradigm shift is from teacher dominated classroom practices to that of partnership between the teacher and the learners and their peers. The key role of educational institutions is reflected in a variety of initiatives taken to transform the nature and function of education-both formal as well as non-formal. Universal accessibility to quality education is considered essential for development. This has necessitated improvement in the system of teacher education so as to prepare quality teachers.

Present Scenario

India has a large system of education. There are nearly 5.98 lakh Primary Schools, 76 lakh Elementary Schools and 98 thousand 4igh / Higher Secondary Schools in the country, about 1300 teacher education institutions for elementary teachers and nearly 700 colleges of education / university departments preparing teachers for secondary and higher secondary schools. Out of about 4.52 million teachers in the country nearly 3 million are teaching at the primary/elementary level. A sizeable number of them are untrained or under-trained. In certain regions, like the North-East, there are even untrained teachers. As far as in-service education is concerned the situation is not very encouraging. In this scenario it has been observed that teacher educators are not professionally

committed and overall competencies of teachers leave much to be desired. The quality of pre-service education has actually shown signs of deterioration. Naseem & Anas (20 11, pg. 187) in their study discussed about the various problems that are existing in Indian Teacher Education. While Sharma (2012) stressed on the fact that ICT can play a major role in professional growth of the teacher and shaping the global economy. Unless teacher educators model effective use of technology in their own classes, it will not be possible to prepare a new generation of teachers who effectively use the new tools for teaching and learning. All these problems are closely associated with increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices; and the support system provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the University Departments of Education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level. The DIETs are charged with the responsibility of organizing pre-service and in-service programmes in addition to being the nodal resource centers for elementary education at district level. Likewise, Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutions of Advanced Study in Education (TASEs) have been given the responsibility of introducing innovations in teacher education programmes at the secondary and higher secondary stages and in vocational education.

Although National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as a non-statutory body has taken several steps as regards quality improvement in teacher education. Its major contribution was to prepare Teacher Education Curriculum Framework consequently; teacher education curricula have witnessed many changes in teacher preparation programmes in various universities and boards in the country. During the last decade, new thrusts have been posed due to rapid changes in the educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels. Curriculum reconstruction has also become imperative in the light of some perceptible gaps in teacher education. Teacher education by and large, is conventional in its nature and purpose. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system still remains inadequate. Teachers are prepared in competencies and skills which do not necessarily equip them for becoming professionally effective. Their familiarity with latest educational developments remains insufficient. Organized and

stimulatory learning experiences whenever available, rarely contribute to enhancing teachers' capacities for self-directed lifelong learning. The system still prepares teachers who do not necessarily become professionally competent and committed at the completion of initial teacher preparation programmes. A large number of teacher training institutions do not practice what they preach. Several of the skills acquired and methodologies learnt are seldom practiced in actual school system. This highlights the need to bring realism and dynamism in the curriculum.

Problems of Teacher Education

It is universally acknowledged that education is an effective means for social reconstruction and to a great extent it offers solutions to the problems a society is faced with. These problems may be economic, social, cultural, political, moral, ecological and educational. Since the teachers play a major role in education of children, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Various problems in the way of teacher education are following:

- Selection problem
- Short Duration of Teacher Training Programs
- Incompetency of Pupil Teachers
- Teacher Education Program have narrow and rigid curriculum
- Superficial Practice teaching
- Problem of supervision of teaching
- Deficient in content of the Teaching Subject's Knowledge
- Methods of Teaching are lacking in innovation -
- Segregation of Teacher Education Department
- Poor Academic Background of Student-Teachers
- Deficient in facilities for pupil-teacher
- Lack of Regulations in Demand and Supply
- Lack of facilities for Professional Development
- Insufficient financial grants
- Narrow Scope of Teacher Education
- Lack of Culture-Specific Pedagogy

Teacher education must, therefore, create necessary awareness among teachers about their new roles and responsibilities. Education of teachers needs to strengthen and stress upon the main attributes of a profession, such as, the systematic theory, rigorous training over a specified duration, authority, community sanction, ethical code and culture, generating knowledge through research and specialization. It is acknowledged that formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct.

Emerging Trends and Innovations

Innovation is usually understood as the introduction of something new and useful, like introducing new methods, techniques, or practices or new or altered products and services. Schools or teacher education institutions can carry out innovations or experimentation on any aspect of their work related to teaching-learning, training or management of schools in order to improve efficiency of the institution to overcome problems and difficulties, they face in day to day functioning. The present structure of teacher education is supported by a network of national, provincial and district level resource institutions working together to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs at the pre-service level and also through in-service programs for serving teachers throughout the country.

Teacher education is now becoming more ye to the emerging demands from the school system. Because the changing educational needs of the student and advancement in technology has widen the area of responsibilities of the teacher. Now teacher has to perform various role like encouraging, Supporting and facilitating in teaching-learning situations

which enables learners (students) to discover their talents, to realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens.

Suggestions

- (1) The courses of studies in theory and practice should be restructured. For this research should be conducted comprehensively to realize the goals of teacher education. The results of these researches should be given due importance in designing the curriculum of teacher education.
- (2) The method of teaching in the teacher education should be reorganized according to the changing demand of education system. Special innovative programmes like seminars, Workshops, conferences, projects and discussions should be organized regularly for the improvement of teaching learning process in various fields.
- (3) The admission procedures of B.Ed. should be completely restructured so that only those who have aptitude of teaching are able to take admission in this course as the increasing number of colleges of B.Ed. has made this course accessible for everybody
- (4) Now a days the number of self-financing colleges are mushrooming like shops and they have made it as their money making factory which detrimental for education in future. Therefore for regular inspection should be done to ensure quality in teacher education. The affiliating bodies for teacher education should frame such parameters which can enhance the teacher education program in qualitative aspect rather than quantitative aspect.
- (5) In order to remove the myth or misconception that the training in teacher education department is superficial and is not incorporated in real situation the professional attitude should be developed by organizing various types of facilities like school assembly, social work, field work, surveys, laboratory and other co-curricular activities
- (6) State Education department can have planning unit which can help in regulating the demand and supply of teachers at various levels of schools. As it has been observed that there is big gap between demand and supply in various states. The whole scenario of education is changing after Right to Education Act 2009, the demand for teachers at various level has tremendously increased. Moreover today is the time for inclusive education which leads to demand of special teachers/educators and we all are aware of the fact that there is scarcity of special educators.. So a balance should to be maintained for better results.
- (7) The training or the teaching practice of pupil teachers held in the school should be closely associated with teaching staff in education colleges in planning the content to be covered and method to be used by the pupil teachers to have useful implications for school rather than disturbing their routine schedule. Moreover the real teaching practice should be supervised by the teachers in a systematic way so that it fulfills the objectives of teacher training.
- (8) It should be made mandatory that a teacher education department should have a demonstration school which should have certain facilities such as laboratories, libraries and other important audiovisual equipments. This can be of great help to formulate the policies, program for refining the education system.
- (9) The whole system of education is changing at a greater speed. The teacher education department should conduct research on teaching curriculum and evaluation procedure in the regular university departments. Extension programs and Exchange programs with different universities within India and outside India enrich the teacher education programme enormously. So such programs should be sponsored by government and university so that different academicians from different disciplines can contribute in the qualitative aspect of teacher education.

- (10) Refresher courses, Orientation programs Seminars, Conferences, Workshop, Symposium should be encouraged for the professional growth of teacher educators. All the educationists can be oriented with new developments, changes, innovations in the field of education.
- (11) The reference books, other reading material are not available in Hindi and other regional languages so availability for such books should be made for students and teachers which can make the teaching learning process more effective.
- (12) Haryana government has made provisions for providing incentives for pupil teachers who undergoes training at elementary level, so provisions should be made at higher level also. Government should provide financial grant to teacher education institute/department for opening experimental school.
- (13) Rigorous screening and strict admission procedure should be followed for correspondence courses for teacher education
- (14) Inclusive education should be made an integral part of teacher education curriculum so that the pupil teachers are sensitized with Children with Special Needs.
- (15) Teacher Education department! Institute should be connected with real life situations of classrooms so that the teacher educators and pupil teachers both get acquainted with different problems of classroom situations.
- (16) The internships/teaching practice time period should be increased so that pupil teacher become more confident and get familiar with classroom situations.

Conclusion

Since the teacher is the pivot of the entire educational system and is the main catalytic agent for introducing desirable changes in the teaching learning process, all attempts need be made for motivating teachers to become innovative and creative. It goes without saying that a self motivated and really industrious teacher can utilize his own resources to keep himself abreast of new knowledge and skills. It has been recognized that teacher education program should be structured and modified in a way that enables them to respond dynamically to the new problems and challenges in the field of education, then only teacher can help in national development.

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