

## Promoting Quality Teacher Education: Need of the 21st Century

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### ABSTRACT

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*Education is the basic human right and it is as a tool to make a sensitive about issues and problems. The teacher occupies a pivotal position in the system of education. India is one of the largest education systems ranging from pre-primary education to higher education. There is a wide spectrum of variables related to teacher education. Teacher is the most important element in any educational program. Teacher education is an integral part of education. It is related to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors they require to perform their tasks effectively in the school and classroom. Teacher education is the limelight of the 21st century. Teacher education refers to the process by which a person attains education or training in an institution of learning in order to become a teacher. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. Teacher education encompasses many different studies all of which attempt to better understand and improve the learning and educational process. These studies include thrust areas such as teaching, learning, child development, pedagogy, evaluation, classroom management, psychology, technology and cognitive science. This paper explores the meaning of teacher education, purpose, need and importance, issues and challenges of teacher quality and teacher education improvement. Therefore, these are becoming the pivot of teachers, researchers, educators, policy makers, implementers and evaluators.*

**Introduction**

Teacher and his education are very significant aspects of any nation. The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. It is a well known saying that teacher is the nation builder. Teacher education equips pre- and in-service teachers with the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate others in general or specialized subjects. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to content, teaching methods, organisation etc. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum. It needs to be revised according to changing needs of society. An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Teacher education institutions train pre- or in-service teachers, providing them with the knowledge as well as the professional skills. At the same time research in teacher education is losing its identity in our country. It is a systematic attempt to define and investigate significant problems involved in teaching and learning in and outside the school. It is high time to revive and strengthen the teacher education programme in all over India. The success of education depends on quality of teacher which creates excellence in all walks of life. Excellence in the education system is one of the major initiatives of the Government in its plans. To achieve the outcome of enhanced quality at all levels of education, Government of India has been concentrating its attention on quality and excellence in teacher education.

**Purpose of Teacher Education**

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. The main purpose of teacher education programme is to develop value, health attitude and broad based interest. It is also to improve educational practice. According to UNESCO, teacher education institutions "serve as key change agents in transforming education and society." Why is there no quality assurance system in place yet? Teacher education is necessary to include the development of their knowledge of teaching and of subject content, and work to sharpen their teaching skills. It can establish the best practices that teachers, students, administrators and counselors should use to improve learning outcomes. Therefore, educational researchers should focus on practical research activities that will have notable implications for education. In the broad sense, major purposes of teacher education are following:

- Addressing gaps in the effects of online versus traditional classroom learning;
- To develop new knowledge and understanding about the teaching-learning situation to improve educational practice;
- To enhance educational outcomes through the improvement of practice;
- To provide opportunities to develop professional skills in documentation, analysis, pedagogy, drama, craft, story-telling and reflective inquiry;
- To provide opportunities to enhance understanding, knowledge and examine disciplinary knowledge and social realities;
- To provide opportunities to observe and engage with children and relate to children;
- Replicating knowledge to verify previous findings; and
- Helping to revise theory and practice to reflect different student needs.

These are only a few of the many points that show the purpose of teacher education. Therefore, educators need to be able to conduct quality teacher education to examine issues within their own contexts.

### **Need and Importance of Teacher Education**

The need of performing teacher education will start from effective programs and teaching methods. It is helpful to students to learn what they really want to discover relationships between variables in educational settings. It is required not just for students and academics, but also for all professionals. According to experts, following are the needs and importance of teacher education:

- Teacher education enhances the continuous professional growth of teachers;
- It enhances capacity-building in the field of education;
- It can develop the scientific attitudes of objectivity, curiosity and critical outlook in the students;
- It attempts to find an objective, unbiased solution to the problem;
- Teacher education will help to understand any subject in much better and easier way;
- It also leads to improvement in teaching and learning situations;
- Teacher education emphasizes the development of generalizations, principles or theories that will help in understanding, prediction and/or control;
- It equips teacher trainees with problem-solving and leadership skills;
- Students' participation in educational research can provide very useful baseline data that can be used for planning purposes.

Government and educators will need to understand better the links between schooling and its social and cultural environment. These are the ways to develop more awareness about environments in the family and the community surrounding the school.

### **Role of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE)**

The University Education Commission (1948-49), the Kothari Commission (1952) and the Education Commission (1964-66) recognized the importance and significance of teacher education. Based on the Education Commission's recommendation, the non-statutory National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was formed in 1973. NCTE was a statutory body of Indian government set up under the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 in August 1995. It was established with a view to achieve planned and coordinated development of teacher education system throughout the country and for regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards of teacher education. Some of the major functions of NCTE are laying down norms for various teacher education courses, recognition of teacher education institutions, laying down guidelines in respect of minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers, research and innovations, surveys and studies, prevention of commercialization of teacher education, etc. Teacher education programmes need to be reformulated and strengthened so that the teacher can be an encouraging, supportive and human facilitator in teaching-learning situations to enable learners 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. Keeping with the view of all these above noted things, the NCTE has also issued new norms and standards for various teacher training programmes in 2014. The NCTE suggested some more following reformations regarding teacher education:

1. Developing norms for various courses or training in teacher-education, including minimum eligibility criterion for admission.
2. Preparing code of professional ethics for teachers.
3. Developing curriculum of teacher-education.
4. Establishing international relations in the area of teacher-education.
5. Developing methodology of teaching and techniques of evaluation procedures.
6. Preparing programmes for in-service teacher-education for orienting teachers for latest development.

But as per the views of educationists, NCTE had neglected areas like planned development, academic research and innovation, workshops and interactions. Most of the training programmes were not organised according to the needs of teachers. The NCTE has not

developed an appropriate database on the availability of teachers. It has acted merely as a regulatory authority, without vision or innovation. It took an application based approach rather than a comprehensive view.

### **Major Issues and Challenges of Teacher Education in India**

The current system of schooling poses tremendous burden on children. 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 National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) consequently. Teacher education curricula have witnessed many changes in teacher preparation programmes in various universities and boards in the country. During the last two decades, new thrusts have been posed due to rapid changes in the educational, social, economic and political contexts at the national and international levels. Quality depends on the research level of any country. At present research work in India is not up to the mark. Today, there is a gross shortage of equipment for experimental research, especially in teacher education. Lack of financial assistance, infrastructure, high vision and work culture researchers are unable to involve in research practices. Teacher-centred strategies and pedagogy is still dominating in the classrooms. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system is remaining 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. Incompetency of pupil-teachers and incompetent teacher educators is still resulting in deficiency of scholars. Lack of incentives and motivation, lack of a system of on-going professional development for teachers, lack of qualified personnel, lack of up-to-date books, and materials on teacher education etc. are issues in this era.

Negative attitude of managements towards development of both human as well as material resources is revealing. Methods of teaching are lacking in innovation in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lacking of library and Internet search skills in students is very painful. The system still prepares teachers who do not necessarily become professionally competent and committed at the completion of initial teacher preparation programmes. Staff appraisal systems and the use of peer observation in schools are still in infancy stage. Superficial practice teaching is going on for the name sake. There are many problems and issues plaguing the system of teacher education. Unplanned and insufficient co-curricular activities are big issues. Teacher preparation has been a subject of discussion at all levels, from the government, ministries,

regulatory bodies, schools, to teachers themselves. The challenges include those identified above and, while much more development will be required to answer them.

### **Few Measures for Improving Teacher education**

The government has made many attempts to regulate the functioning of private institutions. However, present laws are not sufficient guarantee against teacher exploitation. A lot effort has been done by government and non-governmental agencies, but a several still remains to be done. There are some suggestions here to improve the condition of teacher education system:

1. Affiliation condition of teacher education institutions should be made strict.
2. The practicing schools have to be taken into confidence. During practice teaching more emphasis should be given till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.
3. Several types of co-curricular activities in the curriculum should be included.
4. Teacher education programmes should enable the teachers to develop their life skills among students.
5. Institutes of low standards should be reformed or closed. Regular inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis.
6. Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with common entrance test and marks should be introduced.
7. Value education should be given to teachers, so that they could educate young minds in the right direction.
8. For this the members of the staff of teachers colleges should be closely associated with the schools. More emphasis should be given on practice teaching till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.
9. Staff appraisal systems and the use of peer observation in schools should be developed. Government should look after the financial requirements of the institutions.
10. Research in teacher education should be encouraged. Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency.
11. Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with common entrance test.
12. Libraries are needed to be enriched with complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with all available journals for use by all the researchers.
13. Research in teacher education should be encouraged. More research is needed in the area of teacher education and there needs to be qualitative and quantitative improvement too.

14. Teacher educators to be trained in the use of ICTs. There should be a free exchange of scholars from one department to the other. This will improve the quality of teacher education programmes immensely.

A teacher education institution should therefore, conduct special innovative programmes for teacher educators frequently e.g. seminar, conference, team teaching, brain storming session, refresher course, panel discussion and projects for improvement of teachers, students and researchers. These remedies will be helpful to bring reforms and bright the future of teacher education.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education is an integral part of educational and social system. Many recent developments in teacher education, certainly, are made in a professional definition of the field. Teacher and his education are very significant aspects of any nation. The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. It is a well known saying that teacher is the nation builder. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issues related to teaching methods, content, organisation etc. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded and revised according to changing needs of society. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum. Government and educators will need to understand better the links between schooling and its social and cultural values and goals. Teacher quality, teacher learning, and teacher improvement, therefore, are becoming the foci of researchers, policy makers, program designers, implementers, and evaluators. This is the powerful way to raise the level of its quality, induce best practices and create positive development in any society.

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