

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Concerns and Problems of Quality in Teacher Education

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Abstract:

Teacher Education is an important area of concern in an educational system. It is undergoing rapid changes in keeping pace with the demands of learning and expectations of learners, community and society as a whole. Various efforts have been made to improve teacher education, but the gaps can still be seen. The status of teachers has got a direct bearing on the quality of education. The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality. Education has always been the strongest medium in the hands of teacher to realize the social aspirations in effective and speedy manners. Teacher quality, teacher learning, and teacher improvement, therefore, are becoming the foci of researchers, policy makers, program designers, implementers and evaluators. The rapid changes in society led to teachers facing new and complex issues, resulting in changes in the area of teacher education. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, organization etc. It should prepare professionally competent teachers to perform their roles effectively as per the needs of the society. Without qualified competent teachers, it is impossible to build a high quality education. On the other hand, qualified competent teacher will not be able to carry out their task professionally without the proper conditions that support their task. Curricular Issues, Pedagogical Issues, Inclusive Education, Information and Communication Technology, Projects based approach, evaluation and feedback strategies are such issues which need the serious deliberations over possibilities, opportunities and threats of teacher education for achieving quality concerns in the teacher education. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of society. Thus, the present paper highlights the various issues as well as problems concerned with the quality of teacher education.

Keywords: Quality, Teacher education

1. Introduction

It is well known saying that teacher is the national builder. To be able to discharge such a high responsibility, it is very necessary that the teacher must become conscious of his role towards society. Teachers are torch bearers of future society in the process of the teaching learning. They are the greatest assets of any education system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values and are accepted as the backbone of education system. His personality must reflect characteristics of good citizenship, dignity of the individual, rights and duties etc., so that he may transmit the same to the younger generation. Teacher quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students' learning outcomes in particular. In India, by tradition teachers have enjoyed a position and great respect. Many of the social reformers and religious leaders have been addressed as teachers of people in our country. Many of the teachers still held in high esteem by their students and community. However, during last few decades the status of teachers has diminished. Various efforts have been made to improve teacher education, but the gaps can still be seen. There are various reasons that are responsible for their deteriorating service conditions that include the isolation in which teachers work, phenomenal expansion of the educational system, lowering of the standards of teacher training etc. The status of teachers has got a direct bearing on the quality of education. Education has always been the strongest medium in the hands of teacher to realize the social aspirations in effective and speedy manners. It should prepare professionally competent teachers to perform their roles effectively as per the needs of the society. Without qualified competent teachers, it is impossible to build a high quality education. On the other hand, qualified competent teacher will not be able to carry out their task professionally without the proper conditions that support their task. The society is changing rapidly. The rapid changes in society led to teacher facing new and complex issues, resulting in changes in the area of teacher education. The demand for qualified and quality teachers has been continuously increasing. It has become imperative that the effort and resources mobilized towards teacher education are effective and field relevant in particular country contexts. Teacher preparation programmes works toward the preparation of teachers by providing pre-service candidates with the knowledge, skill and dispositions necessary to teach all the pupils effectively by devising learner centered methods and by designing Pedagogical experiences for the learners. In order to attend to the growing concern of teacher quality and teacher shortage, it is crucial to examine the core of the problem that is, the type of teacher preparation and training being provided. To be

able to discharge such a high responsibility, it is very necessary that the teacher must become conscious of his role towards society.

2. Teacher Education in J&K

The State of Jammu and Kashmir covers an area of 2, 22,236 sq kilometers and has a population of 1,25,48,926. The state is distinctly divided between the three regions of Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu and is the only Muslim majority state in India. The population is largely rural and habitations are spread out amongst remote mountainous regions. The child population between 6 to 12 years is roughly 18 lakhs. For such an educational system, we require efficient teachers. As per Economic Survey 2006-2007, the State of J&K lags far behind in social sector i.e. education, public health, sanitation, and social welfare. Per Capita income comes out at Rs. 17,174 per annum as against the national average of Rs.25,907. J&K figures among the last four most illiterate and educationally backward state. It is the fact that no system of education can rise above the level of its teachers. Good teachers are the valuable assets for nation building and this fact has been recognized and highlighted in the National Policy of Education (1986). This calls for a drastic and an urgent revision in the existing policies and practices regarding recruitment, training and retention of the teachers based on well tried out programme of innovation, experimentation and research. Therefore, teacher education is in urgent need of reorganization so as to ensure the highest quality and standard. The casual implementation of pre-service programme for student teacher could not produce good teachers. These institutions, therefore, are need to be revamped to produce professionally trained teachers, fully equipped with both high academic standards, pedagogical practical skill, ethical and moral values.

3. Critical Issues in Teacher Education in J&K

The state of J&K also does NOT come under the purview of the RTE, although as early as 1944, article X of the Naya Kashmir document advocated that “every person shall have the right to education. In order to ensure this right, there shall be compulsory primary education”. However, the Right to Education Act, 2002 of the government of J&K states that “The Government shall provide for free and compulsory education for children upto the level of Class 8th all the way through the State within a period of 10-years from the commencement of this Act and, for this purpose, it shall take apposite steps to provide the necessary conveniences (Govt. of J&K, 2002). Although the District Institutes of Education in the state were converted to District Institutes of Education and Training following the National Policy on Education, 1986, there was no move to create a instantaneous council at the state level that could take academic liability for elementary education. Neither were any of the academic powers relating to elementary education transferred to the State Institutes of Education (SIEs). As a result of this elementary education continues to remain under the purview of the J&K BOSE which has no institutionalized academic structure and expertise for dealing with elementary education. The minimum qualification for a “general line” teacher (a term designating teachers for the elementary level) is 10+2. Teachers at this level are not required to have any explicit discipline specialization nor are they expected to have any form of specialized teacher training, although it is a well recognized fact that primary education plays a fundamental role in the learning and developmental processes of future students. There is NO cadre of teacher educators in the state. The faculty of the two government colleges of education, the apex bodies of teacher education, does not have a dedicated faculty. Teachers are recruited from degree colleges with no specifications or requirements of specialization in any particular discipline. They are required to have a B.Ed degree but not essentially any prior exposure, orientation, training, research output or an expressed interest in Education, and are unfamiliar with issues of curriculum and pedagogy at the school level. The average tenure in the teacher education college is two to three years on an average before they are transferred back to the degree colleges and their engagement with school education is severed. There is an unprecedented explosion of private teacher training institutions in the state although a recent order has issued a ban on establishment of new colleges. There has been no expansion of teacher education institutions and all B.Ed. courses in the universities (including in the distance mode) are self-financed or working on a fee structure outside the regular fee structure of the universities. This is a hazardous trend to privatize teacher education that would leave the sector extremely vulnerable to market forces. Already the J&K BOSE survives almost completely on revenues generated from textbook publishing and printing and from fees charged for accrediting private schools and colleges of teacher education. There is no SCERT in the state and no forum which has the responsibility, the authority and the accountability of dealing exclusively with all aspects of elementary school education. The SIE and the DIETs, like the colleges of education, do not have a dedicated faculty that can be supported to develop the required expertise through a sustained programme of capacity building, research and engagement within the area of elementary teacher education.

4. Determinants Related To Teacher Education

The following are some of the issues which need to be well thought-out in teacher education:

4.1. Lack of subject knowledge

The B.Ed. programme does not totally emphasize the knowledge of the basic subject. There is no provision to increase or strengthen the knowledge of the concerning subjects of the student teacher. Thus, the whole teaching practice remains indifferent with regard to subject knowledge of the student teacher.

4.2. Problems of practice teaching

Teaching Practice plays an important role in B.Ed. programmes, and its main purpose is to help the trainees to acquire various skills of observations, attention, imagination and a sense of time. In most of the training institutions, stress is being laid on the theory rather than practice. Many of the training colleges do not have their practicing schools and thus they do not have sufficient

time to practice their skills of teaching which results in poor performance as a teacher. Therefore, training institutions should take measures to fill this gap.

4.3. Problem of selection

In most of the institutions proper admission procedures are not observed. Defective selection procedure may lead to deterioration of the quality of the teachers. Therefore, proper selection should be made on the bases of aptitude test and personal interviews.

4.4. Incompetency of student teachers

The existing training programmes does not provide adequate opportunities to the student teachers to develop competency to face the varied type of situations in their real life teaching because the organizers of the teacher training programmes are not aware of the existing problems of schools and due to this gap between training institutions and schools, the methodology gets stale and contact with academic discipline becomes weak.

4.5. Duration

The main purpose of teacher education programme is to develop healthy attitude and values consistent with the dignity of training profession and thereafter, develop a personality too. This is not possible within the short duration of few months. The period of training of teachers has all along one year after graduation which must be given the adequate time.

4.6. Problem of Supervision

At present the students are asked to prepare the lesson plans without being able to use them properly due to time factor and then the lesson plans are checked superficially. After that, the supervision team of two or more teachers supervises the teaching of the students within the shorter period of time and the supervisors fail to supervise all the lessons taught by all the trainees. The supervisor must enough time to observe the student teachers teaching so that the supervisor can provide a proper feedback to the student teacher.

4.7. Methods of Teaching

Many teachers often like to use traditional methods of teaching like instruction, lecturing and dictating notes rather than using new methods of teaching. Their lectures then become monotonous, boring and uninteresting. With the result it becomes difficult for the student teachers to use them effectively with ease.

4.8. Absence of Professional Attitude

The entire teacher education programme in our country lack in professional attitude which is necessary for a sound teacher education programme.

4.9. Crises of Values and Morality

It has been seen mostly that there is a persistent erosion of values in the society. But in present day context certain values needs to be redefined and reinstalled too. It is through education and as of necessity through teacher education programmes that the task of inculcating values can be substantially accomplished.

5. Suggestions

- Curriculum of teacher education programme should be revised from time to time according to changing needs of society.
- Teacher education programme should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigor of programme should be appropriately enhanced.
- Teacher education institutions should be put under strict control of this regulatory body for the selection of teacher, students and provisions of good infrastructure etc.
- Institutions working should be examined from time to time and strict action should be taken if they fail to come up to expected level.
- Value education should be given to teachers, so that they could educate young minds in the right direction.
- Teachers should be able to think critically make right decisions and maintain harmonious relations with others.
- The quality of teacher education programme should be up graded.
- Teacher education programmes should enable the teachers to develop their life skills among students.
- Techniques used in teaching should develop habit of self learning and reduce dependence on teachers. It will help them to reflect on their own and doing something new.
- Teachers should encourage student's capacity to construct knowledge.
- Constitutional goals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity can be realized through proper teacher education.
- Teachers are to make positive contribution to the realization of the constitutional goals.
- The impact of science and technology and Information and Communication Technology on society and education should be fully discussed in teacher education institutions.
- Scientific temper should be developed and its application for the solution of problems of life should be encouraged.
- Educational institutions should be graded according to the standards of the institution and admission should be allowed according to standard of the institutions.

6. Conclusion

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. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, organization etc. teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of society. No doubt a lot of stress is given on teacher-education course in India. Unfortunately still there are several loopholes in the system. At last I would like to conclude that Centre and States Governments should join the hands to bring the quality and improvement in the teacher education, and then bright future of teacher education is possible. This paper would be helpful to State and Centre Governments, policy maker and best educationists to bring reforms in teacher education.

7. References

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