



Study Of Changing Context Of Teacher Education In The Indian Scenario

Shweta Jain, email : mrsshwetajain@rediffmail.com

Abstract : The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions

on Education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country.



Introduction : The well-established tradition of teaching and learning in India has retained its inherent strength even under adverse circumstances. The post-independence period was characterized by major efforts being made to nurture and transform teacher education. The system of teacher preparation has come under considerable pressure as a result of the expansion and growth of school education, through efforts to universalize elementary education. Having inherited a foreign model of teacher preparation at the time of independence from Britain in 1946, major efforts have been made to adapt and up-date the teacher education curriculum to local needs, to make it more context based, responsive and dynamic with regard to best meeting the particular needs of India. The current system 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.

National Policies and its Impact : India has made considerable progress in school education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure and universal access and enrolment in schools. Two major developments in the recent years form the background to the present reform in teacher education The political recognition of globalization of Elementary Education that led to the Right to Education Bill, 2008 and The National Curriculum Framework



for school education, 2005. The Bill has been passed by the Parliament and the Right to Education Act has come into being making it mandatory for the state to provide free and compulsory education to almost 20 crore children in the 6-14 age group till class 8. The Act mandates a schedule for the functioning of schools which includes a teacher - student ratio of 1:30 till a student population of 200 students at the primary stage. This would increase the demand for qualified elementary school teachers many times. The country has to address the need of supplying well qualified and professionally trained teachers in large numbers in the coming years. The launch of the massive Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2002 and the recent financial commitment and education cess to augment the Universal Elementary Education mission have underscored the need to adequately prepare teachers to address the growing demand for quality education.

Developments in School education : School education has seen significant development over the decades since independence. According to Government estimates (Selected Educational Statistics- 2004-2005 – Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi) while 82% of the 20 crore children of the 5-14 age group were in school as per enrolment figures, it is equally true that 50% of these children are dropping out before completing class 8 (MHRD Annual Report 2007-08). The situation on the ground is still ridden with difficulties. Regional, social, economic and gender disparities are posing new challenges. This reality increases the challenge that the prospective teacher will face in implementing the Right to Education Act. The continued fragmentation of the school system poses the severest challenge to the national declaration of catering to the basic needs of all children in the 6-14 age group through the elementary education in an inclusive setting. However increasing privatization and differentiation of the schooling system have vitiated drastically the right to quality education for all children.

Changing Role of the Teacher : The current system of schooling poses tremendous burden on children. Educationists are of the view that the burden arises from treating knowledge as a ‘_given’, an external reality existing outside the learner and embedded in textbooks. Knowledge is essentially a human construct, a continuously evolving process of reflective learning. The NCF 2005, requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children’s learning in a manner that the child is helped to construct his/her knowledge. Education is not a mechanical activity of information



transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teachers have to increasingly play the role of crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted.

Challenges in Teacher Education : Unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes during the past few years characterizes the teacher education scenario of today. With increasing school enrolments and the launch of pan-Indian primary education development programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Globalization of Elementary Education, there was a natural increase in the demand for teachers. Added to this, the backlog of untrained teachers in the system and the essential requirement of pre-service teacher certification for appointment as a teacher led to mounting pressure on existing institutional capacity. The demand far exceeding supply, market forces have taken over unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country. From 3489 courses in 3199 institutions and an intake of 2,74,072 in 2004, the numbers in December, 2008 swelled to 14,523 courses in 12,200 institutions with an intake of 10,73,661 at different levels. This expansion has taken a heavy toll on quality parameters like infrastructure, faculty learning resources and student profile. Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigor of programmes should be appropriately enhanced.

Research and Innovation : There is a need to increase research that documents practices reflectively and analytically- whether it is of programs or of individual classrooms – so that it can be included in the body of knowledge available for study to student teachers. University departments and research institutions need to undertake such research. In addition there is a need to innovate with different models of teacher education. Institutional capacity and capability to innovate and create are a pre-requisite for the pursuit of excellence. Hence in the present scenario a lot of impetus has been given to research. Many teacher educators are encouraged to take up either major or minor research projects.



Inclusive Education : There are two kinds of exclusion prevalent in schools; one is the exclusion of the child with disabilities and the second is the social exclusion of children who come from socially and economically deprived backgrounds. There is a dire need to equip teachers to overcome their biases in these regards and positively handle these challenges. The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act of 2005 provides for free and compulsory education up to the age of 18 years for all children with disabilities. The education of socially and economically disadvantaged groups, especially the SCs, STs and minorities has remained a primary national concern of education for several years. The enrolment and retention of girls and therefore their participation has also remained behind those of boys. Teachers will have to be specially equipped if the social deprivation has to be overcome through education.

Perspectives for equitable and sustainable development : In order to develop future citizens who promote equitable and sustainable development for all sections of society and respect for all, it is necessary that they be educated through perspectives of 15 gender equity, perspectives that develop values for peace, respect the rights of all, and that respect and value work. In the present ecological crisis promoted by extremely commercialized and competitive lifestyles, children need to be educated to change their consumption patterns and the way they look at natural resources. There is also an increasing violence and polarization both within children and between them, that is being caused by increasing stress in society. Education has a crucial role to play in promoting values of peace based on equal respect of self and others. The NCF 2005 and subsequent development of syllabi and materials is attempting to do this as well.

Role of Community knowledge in education : It is important for the development of concepts in children as well as the application of school knowledge in real life that the formal knowledge is linked with community knowledge. The NCF 2005 promotes the inclusion of locally relevant content in the curriculum as well as pedagogy. ICT in Schools and e-learning : With the onset and proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), there is a growing demand that it be included in school education. Teacher education has been structured to orient and sensitize the teacher to distinguish between developmentally appropriate and detrimental uses of ICT. It needs to also equip teachers with competence to use ICT for their own professional development.



Conclusion : In view of the above discussion the newly visualized Teacher education program as put forth by NCERT is as follows; Newly visualized Teacher Education Program Emphasizes learning as a self-learning participatory process taking place in social context of learner's as well as wider social context of the community to nation as a whole. Puts full faith in self learning capacity of school children and student teacher and evolving proper educative programme for education. Views the learner as an active participative person in learning. His/her capabilities or potentials are seen not as fixed but capable of development through experiences. Views the teacher as a facilitator, supporting, encouraging learner's learning. Does not treat knowledge as fixed, static or confined in books but as something being constructed through various types of experiences. It is created through discussion, evaluate, explain, compare and contrasts i.e., through interaction. Emphasizes that appraisal in such an educative process will be continuous, will be self-appraisal, will be peer appraisal, will be done by teacher educators, and formal type too.

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