

## Quality concerns in teacher education: An analysis

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### Abstract

Teachers play a vital role in helping people to develop their talents and fulfill their potential for personal growth and well-being. Teachers are the greatest assets of any education system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. They are accepted as the backbone of education system. Teacher's 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 this regard, lot of stress is given on teacher education courses in India, but still there are several loopholes in the system. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze quality concerns of teacher education. In order to improve the quality of teachers some suggestive measures have been put forward by the author.

**Keywords:** teacher, teacher education and quality

### Introduction

On the surface, teaching may appear to be a relatively simple process- the view that the teacher stands in front of class and talks and pupils appears to be all too prevalent. The reality is somewhat different. Teaching is a continuously creative and problem solving activity. Therefore, it is very difficult and challenging profession which requires professional knowledge about teaching, learning and professional judgement about the routines, skills and strategies which support effective class room management and a sound subject knowledge. Traditionally people believe that teacher is born. But in modern times teacher can also be trained in mastering the pedagogical knowledge and skills of effective teaching. Training of a teacher is very essential keeping in view the roles and responsibilities expected by the teacher. In India teachers are trained through well organised programmes and procedures designed by the education departments. Teacher education has remained a neglected sector notwithstanding its great utility and relevance widely acclaimed in global contexts. The institutions of teacher education has suffered many avoidable setback including the reign of mediocrity' and brain drain of a strange sort. Most of the members who join this profession came to it as last resort seeking solace in the easy to access rampant superficialities and half backed truths and principles of pedagogy (Pandey, 2005).

Almost all the commissions and committees set up by the government after independence have highlighted the importance of teaching into the total process of education. Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) <sup>[4]</sup> drew the attention of the nation to this fact when it observed, 'Even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remains dead unless quickened by the right method of teaching'. University Education Commission (1948) <sup>[3]</sup> also emphasised that it is primary duty of a university to maintain the highest standards of teaching and examination. In spite of these remarks, the standard of teaching continued to deteriorate so much that the Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) <sup>[5]</sup> had to report, "The existing situation in higher education during the

academic year broadly alternates between slackness and strain-slackness during the session, stress at time of examination. The gravity of the standard of the teaching was quickly realized by the National Policy on Education (1986) <sup>[2]</sup> which stated that "the time to act is here and now, in what exists". All teachers should teach and all students should study. International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century (1993-96) commonly called Delors Commission emphasized that education throughout life is based on four pillars. These are learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Thus, it is vital to conceive education in more uncompassionate fashion. Such a vision should inform and guide future educational reforms and policy in relation to both content and methods of teaching. The importance of quality teaching has also been acknowledged by National Knowledge Commission (2005) which stated that the quality of education at any level depends on the quality of teachers. The commission has called for conscious efforts to attract and train talented faculty members. Hence, in any efforts to improve the quality of education, the emphasis should be on improving the quality of the teachers.

### Quality Defined

It is very difficult to define quality, particularly with reference to educational process. However, it could be stated that a quality conscious system would produce people who have the attributes of functional and social relevance, mental agility and physical dexterity, efficacy and reliability and above all, the confidence and capacity to communicate effectively and exercise initiative, and experiment with new situations. To these personal attribute one could add the dimension of a value system conducive to harmony, integration and the welfare of the weak and disadvantaged. Thus, quality is a very comprehensive term. Quality of teacher education can be judge with the quality of its products. The quality of the products depends upon the quality of input, quality of process and quality of environment. These four elements of the whole systems approach to teacher education are very significant and

closely associated with each other. An analysis of all these aspects leads us to understand the problems and concerns faced by the teacher education institutions in our country.

1. **Quality of input:** it includes three aspects.
  - i. **Quality of entrants:** The quality of the teacher trainees entering to the teacher education institutions is the significant predictor of the effect of entire teachers' training programme. Quality of entrants includes many personal and social qualities like aptitude towards teaching, self concept, socio-economic background, level of intelligence and creativity, achievement motivation, level of adjustment, social attitude, academic background, personal value system and willingness to take up the responsibility.
  - ii. **Quality of the Teacher Educators:** Great education system require great teacher. This is more significant in case of teacher education institutions where the teacher educators have to perform the task of preparing the future teachers who will further take up the responsibility to groom the personality of the rising generations. Quality of teacher educators also include various aspects like their educational qualifications, value system, research temperament, enthusiasm, dedication, motivation, love and affection towards students and level of job satisfaction.
  - iii. **Quality Infrastructure:** Quality infrastructure is always a necessity to perpetuate quality temperament and environment. This includes attractive and comfortable building, class rooms, laboratories, science lab, mathematic model lab, library, hostel facility, special arrangement for differently abled students/physically challenged and the associated school to perform teaching practice.
2. **Process:** it is supposed to be important step which plays decisive role in transforming the entire personality of the prospective teachers into the trained teachers. It include methodology of teaching, importance given to the teaching practice and the manner in which it is conducted, compulsory attendance, arrangement of educational tours and co-curricular activities, work experience, evaluation strategies, engagement in action researches etc.
3. **Environment:** Environment includes those factors which exert positive or negative influence on the overall quality of the process of the teachers' training. It includes institutional environment and the social environment. Factors associated with the institutional environment are type of relationship between teachers and the authority, relationship between teacher educators and prospective teachers, democratic or autocratic leadership, working conditions, work load of teachers, salary of the teacher, level of job satisfaction of teachers. Social environment also influences the environment the environment of the educational institutions. Erosion of values, widespread corruption and materialistic tendency of people of our society and government are bound to affect the atmosphere of the educational institutions including teacher education department.
4. **Product:** Quality of the teacher education can be judged in terms of quality of the teachers trained by these institutions. Teaching competency, teaching skills, motivation to teach, academic promise, professional

commitment, personal professional relationship, professional ethics, social values, psychological maturity, personality characteristics and health standards are some of the abilities which are expected from a quality teacher.

### Quality in Teacher Education

Following are the real concerns of our teacher education programmes

- Our screening process has failed to a great extent, to select the students having teaching aptitude and genuine interest in teaching profession.
- Practice teaching is the most important of teacher education but most neglected aspect too. Supervision of practice teaching is per functionary, biased and subjective. There are several instances when the students are allowed to appear in final teaching practice examination without having the experience of even a single day teaching in practicing school. It show the limit of corruption involved in teacher education institutions.
- There are many areas which are untouched in teachers' training programme like paper setting, organization of co-curricular activities, guidance and counselling, conducting examination, time table preparation, case study, action research and health, population and family welfare programmes etc.
- Large number of teacher education institutions are running with the shortage of teacher educators specially the subject specialists, basic infrastructure, poor facilities of practice teaching schools and advanced technology instruments.
- Evaluation process is another major weakness of teacher education institutions. The whole process is biased, subjective, unscientific, unsystematic and unreliable. What is credibility of examination if the examiners are awarding 98% marks in practice teaching examination?
- Stress, anxiety and insecurity of job is quite apparent in teacher educators working in private institutions. This phenomenon has been reported by many researchers. Reasons cited generally are overworked, longer working hours, lack of domestic environment.
- Salary of the teacher is still a problem in many teacher education institutions particularly in private institutions.
- Role of apex bodies like NCTE, NAAC in granting recognition and maintaining quality is really an issue to discuss in the context of teacher education programme.

### Suggestions

1. Proper screening and selection of candidate is important in the preparation of all teachers. Screening of all prospects should therefore be accomplished in terms of motivation to teach, a professional commitment, academic promise, social values, interest in working with young people, psychological maturity, personality characteristic and health standards.
2. Indian society is engulfed in a number of serious problems like extreme poverty, bulging population, problems related to environment, health and peace. Thus, environmental education, health education, peace education, population education, human rights education, economics education, value education are some of the most important and relevant areas which must be incorporated in Teacher education programme.

3. Sociometric techniques are the best tools in the hand of teachers to understand the nature and structure of its group. Knowledge of other personality characteristics like intelligence, creativity, adjustment, self concept, achievement motivation, level of interaction in the class room, regularity and punctuality etc. Are equally important for the teachers to make his teaching effective. Therefore, the present teacher education programme must pay due attention to provide practical knowledge of action research.
4. Teachers particularly those who are working in private institutions are overburdened and always work under stressful environment. Anxiety and insecurity can be seen in their behaviour. It is difficult to expect creativity from our teachers under stressful environment. A democratic environment where freedom, care, sympathy, tolerance, admiration, incentives and encouragement are practised can be make them reflective and reduce the amount of stress and anxiety.
5. For professional development of teachers UGC/NCTE must make mandatory to participate in orientation and refresher courses for the teacher educators working in private institutions with those of regular teacher educators in UGC academic staff colleges.
6. In order to provide actual school experience for teacher trainees, internship along with practice of teaching may be introduced.
7. Increased access to elementary and secondary stage has made the students population heterogeneous. Handling the heterogeneous class and guiding their individual talent requires training in guidance and counselling. Thus, teacher education institutions need to provide some kind of training in guidance and counselling also.
8. The prospective teacher ought to develop a philosophy, values and professional ethics which will equip him as a guide for the students who should in turn set high store upon social services and concern for others. There are certain ethical principles which must be followed by the teacher educators and should transfer them to teacher trainees through their personal examples.
  - Content competency
  - Student development
  - Confidentiality
  - Respect for colleagues
  - Valid assessment of students
  - Respect for institution
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### To summing up

Expectations from the teachers are great as they are engaged in the tedious job of moulding the personality and guiding the talent of the rising generation. We need teachers who have competency and required skills to deal with the new and ever increasing challenges of the heterogeneous population of students in this age of information and technology. For the training of such teachers we need to revamp the teacher education institution by incorporating new subject areas, micro research skills, and other related techniques helpful to make them capable to deal new challenges.

### References

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