



Professional development of teacher education: Issues and challenges

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Abstract

Development of a nation depends upon the education of that nation. It is only through education that not only the nation but also the society as well as the individual development is possible. Education enables the individual to live a better life and also make them influence others around them to live a better life. So the best education should be provided to the students with more and more learning experience which lead them from darkness of ignorance towards the light of knowledge. The teacher should act as guide, as the facilitator, and as the mentor for the students. "The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage." (NCTE, 1998). So that teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. As it is said, "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms." and 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 programme includes pre-service training program given to student-teacher and in-service training programme to the teacher-trainees. It also includes the policies, regulations, provisions and procedure of teacher's training. There are so many problems like professional aptitude, employment issues, lack of facilities, lack of professionalism, lack of good practice in teaching, less importance to teacher education program, lack of teaching faculties, lack of proper guidance and supervision, etc. This paper highlights the teacher education program and challenges of teacher education program in the present scenario of education in the country. Along with its remedial solutions are pointed out providing better ways of growing of teacher education program the whole country wide.

Keywords: Teacher education, professional development & challenges

Introduction

Development of a nation depends upon the education of that nation. It is only through education that not only the nation but also the society as well as the individual development is possible. Education enables the individual to live a better life and also make them influence others around them to live a better life. So the best education should be provided to the students with more and more learning experience which lead them from darkness of ignorance towards the light of knowledge. The teacher should act as guide, as the facilitator, and as the mentor for the students. "The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage." (NCTE, 1998). So that teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. As it is said, "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms." and 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 programme includes pre-service training program given to student-teacher and in-service training programme to the teacher-trainees. It also includes the policies, regulations, provisions and procedure of teacher's training. There are so many problems like professional aptitude, employment issues, lack of facilities, lack of professionalism, lack of good practice in teaching, less importance to teacher education program, lack of teaching faculties, lack of proper guidance and supervision, etc. This paper highlights the teacher education program and challenges of teacher education program in the present scenario of education in

the country. Along with its remedial solutions are pointed out providing better ways of growing of teacher education program the whole country wide.

The role of the teacher in the education process is much recognized worldwide. Along with the education program the major challenges of education including vocational education, values education, population education, environmental education and overall quality bringing in all kinds of education including teacher education.

Today teacher education is struggling a lot to strengthen its identity in the world of education. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) have made immense endeavors to strengthen its identity which include bridge courses, two year diploma courses, new curriculum framework for teacher education, e-learning facilities, online portal of teacher education, online learning forums of education, etc. Today the government of India and the education ministry has rethought the teacher education policy based on the recommendations made by the Education Commissions and Committees; important of them are the Kothari Commission (1964-66), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986-92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yash Pal Committee (1993) and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). Further the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has implications on the present teacher education system and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education

Teacher education can be defined as a program of training given to the teacher trainees in order to meet the present and future requirements of profession of teaching. It is a program that refers to the policies, provisions and

procedures which are designed to equip the teachers with the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and attitude of the teaching profession. It trains the teacher professionals to perform their teaching tasks effectively and appropriately in the most meaningful way.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has defined teacher education as “a program of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level,” (NCTE, 1998). Teacher Education program works for enhancing the proficiency and competence of teachers so that they can meet the future needs and requirements of the profession. This program also enables the teachers to face challenges and acquire solutions for them.

According to Good’s Dictionary of Education, “Teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.” (Good, 1973).

Further Good pointed out (1941), “Teacher education not only refers to the total educative experiences which contribute to the preparation of a person for a teaching position in schools, but the term is more commonly employed to designate the program of courses and other experiences offered by an educational institute for the announced purpose of preparing persons for teaching and other educational service and for contributing to their growth in competency for such services”.

Teacher Education is a continuous process that includes pre-service and in-service training process for the teachers. “Teacher education can be considered in three phases: Pre-service, Induction and In-service. The three phases are considered as parts of a continuous process.” (The International Encyclopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education; 1987).

Moreover, teacher education is broad and comprehensive in the matter that it does not include only training programs but also other extension activities of education i.e. non-formal education, literacy programs and education awareness programs. Further and at last, teacher education is always dynamic. It makes the teachers ready to face challenges of the recent trends and innovations in education field.

Teacher Education comprises of three major things – teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills. Teaching skills includes training and practices for the teacher about different approaches, techniques and strategies that can help them in daily classroom activities. Further the Pedagogical theory includes all the philosophical and psychological aspects of education enabling the teachers with the teaching skills. On the other hand, the professional skills help the teachers with soft skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills and life-long learning skills.

Problems/Challenges of Teacher Education

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** There is a shortage of quality training institutions and facilities in our institutions. The existing institutions lack the necessary infrastructure to provide quality training to teachers.
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3. **Lack of Qualified Trainers:** There is a shortage of qualified trainers. The trainers themselves must be trained to provide quality training to the teachers.
4. **Monitoring of Institutions:** Monitoring of the teacher education institutions is a good task but it is not possible to monitor each and every teacher education college every year. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) does the task of monitoring the teacher education colleges but cannot monitor all of them. Therefore, today there are a number of institutions which are more oriented to money making rather than the educational growth of students.
5. **Employment Issues:** This is a big issue in teacher education area as the candidates coming out after completing the course training cannot find proper job in time. They have to wait for a long until the education department recruits them. Here, all the candidates cannot get a job of a teacher because of the low number of vacancies and a big number of students coming out of the institutions every year. So there is a gap between the demand in recruitment and supply by the institutions.
6. **Lack of facilities:** Improper facility is one of the big issues. Teacher Education colleges play major role in creating young talents contributing to the nation and also the teacher’s job is considered the best profession of all. Some teacher education colleges are working having no well buildings, some with inadequate classrooms and infrastructures, some with inadequate teachers as comparing to the students intake of the college, some colleges lack proper practice and training environment as the buildings are in noisy area, lack of language laboratory, science laboratory, proper library, reading corner, computer labs, etc. All these affect the importance of teacher education and create less qualified candidates for teacher’s job.
7. **Lack of Professionalism:** Teachers lack professionalism because of less importance given to newer trends and innovations in his program. Only the routine course and training are going on every year and no further endeavors are done to update the teachers with new knowledge. There is no way how to develop the professionalism of the teacher educators. It makes them less committed and less devoted to their work which may later on affect the quality of teacher education on the whole.
8. **Lack of good Practice Teaching:** It is noticed that the students are not serious with teaching practice in this training course. Most of the students come in this program only to have a good job after completing it. They are aimless and don’t give much importance to the practical work of the course and always emphasize on the theoretical area of the program. Thus, this makes them unknown of the basic pedagogical aptitudes and skills.

9. **Lack of proper guidance and supervision:** The student trainees lack enough and proper guidance in their subject methods while lesson planning and presentation in classroom. No enough time is provided for discussion on the topic to be taught in practical by the subject method experts which affect their presentation of content in an appropriate way. The lesson plans are also checked in a formal way without any discussion. Also enough feedback and support is not provided to the students in order to raise their confidence level and to face the classroom situations. Sometimes the subject method knowledge and expertness also affect the training of the students.
10. **Curriculum Issues:** It is criticized by many educationists that the curriculum of teacher education lack appropriateness to the training program. It is noticed that the curriculum does not meet all the requirements necessary to fulfill in teacher's training. There is a need of more relevant content for teachers.
11. **Less importance of teacher education program:** The teacher education program is considered less important than other courses in the country. Young students like to join the courses other than teacher's training course like engineering, science, management areas are the most selective areas of the young students to get admission and make these as career path. Also the many people think teacher's job as the last option of career selection when there is no other option remained. Thus, teacher education program is considered as inferior to other faculty programs in education.
12. **Lack of enough teaching faculties:** There are different subject methods taught in the teacher education colleges and it is necessary to have expert teachers of all these subjects. But the lack of recruitment of the teachers on the regular basis does an effect on the quality teaching work as irregular and contract teachers with less than minimum qualification teach the teacher trainees. Sometimes one teacher teaches two or three subjects or more than that to the students. It also affects the admission of students in such colleges.
13. **Incompetent teachers:** It is always opined that the teachers should be an expert of his subject and updated with newer competencies and skills. Especially in the teacher education colleges where the teachers are created, it becomes compulsory and invariable to have enough competencies in the teacher educators. Incompetency of teacher educators results into deficiency of teacher-trainees.

Suggestions for Teacher Education

1. **Restructured of theory and practice:** 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. **Reorganization of methods of teaching:** 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. **Regular inspection:** 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.

4. **Development of positive attitude in teacher education department:** 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.

5. **Appointment of Special teacher's:** State Education department can have planning unit which can help in regulating the demand and supply of teachers at various levels of schools. 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.

6. **Supervision of practice teaching:** 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.

7. **Facilities in School:** 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.

8. **Importance to research:** 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.

9. Experiential Learning: 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.

10. Available of books in Hindi or in regional language
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.

11. Provision for incentive: Govt. should provide incentives at higher level, so that students will not face financial problems to continue their study. Government should provide financial grant to teacher education institute/department for opening experimental school.

12. Inclusive Education: Inclusive education should be made an integral part of teacher education curriculum so that the pupil teachers are sensitized with Children with Special Needs.

13. Acquaint with different problems of Classroom
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.

14. Increase of the duration of Internship period: The internships/teaching practice time period should be increased so that pupil teacher become more confident and get familiar with classroom situations.

15. Digital Platforms: The rise of digital platforms presents an opportunity to provide quality training to teachers. Online courses and webinars can be used to train teachers across the country.

16. Public-Private Partnership: Public-private partnerships may be used to improve teacher-training quality in the country. Private institutions can bring the necessary infrastructure and expertise, while the government can provide funding and support.

17. Continuous Learning: Teacher training should be a continuous process rather than a one-time event. Regular workshops and refresher courses should keep teachers updated with the latest teaching techniques and technologies.

18. Proper monitoring system: Monitoring system should be divided into small committees for inspection of the education colleges so that each institution is covered under the monitoring.

19. Life skill training programme: Teacher education program should be added life skill training program in order to enable the teacher and students.

20. Self-learning Technique: Self-learning techniques should be taught to the students to reduce dependence on the

teachers. Project method learning can be implemented for this.

21. Utilization of ICT: The utilization of ICT and its necessity in today's world should be explained in teacher education colleges and its implemented should be done for effective learning process.

22. Gradation and Accreditation: Educational colleges should be graded and accredited according to the established standards of the government agencies and also provided extra funding on the basis of the highest grading points.

Conclusion

Teacher training is critical to improving the quality of education in India. While there are several challenges, there are also many opportunities to improve the quality of teacher training. The government, private institutions, and civil society need to work together to address these challenges and create a system that provides quality teacher training. Only then can we ensure that every child in India receives a quality education to prepare students for the 21st century. Without debate, it can indeed be said that teacher training is a critical component of school education in India. It can help to improve the quality of education, reduce teacher turnover rates, and better equip teachers to meet the needs of students. While challenges must be addressed, teacher training is an essential investment in the future of education in India.

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