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**Shabina Akhter**

Department of YSS, Sant Gadge  
Baba Amravati University,  
Amravati, Maharashtra, India

**Tahir Rasool Mir**

Department of YSS, Govt hr sec  
school Nadihal, Bandipur,  
Jammu and Kashmir, India

## Issues and challenges of teacher education in India

**Shabina Akhter and Tahir Rasool Mir**

### Abstract

Education is the key for development of any nation and it depends on the quality of teachers. Knowledge, dedication, quality, professional commitment and motivation of teachers are the factors responsible for quality education and learner achievement. Producing such teachers is a major challenge for governments across the globe today. With the ever increasing amount of knowledge today, teacher's job has been more challenging in the light of new pedagogical and psychological theories, philosophy, sociology and globalization. Well planned and imaginative Teacher education programmes are required today. Teacher education programme has to be critiqued, studied, reformed, rethought and reoriented today. Improvement in teacher education is a 3 dimensional task. It's a challenge for every nation to provide well prepared and effective teachers; it is an area of concern for degrading values and questions about purpose and goals of education for society; and it is a research problem involving educational issues, concerns, questions and conditions. In India, during the quest of this reforming and restructuring and in the light of various policy papers and documents like- Kothari commission report (1964-66), Acharya Rammurti Samiti Report (1990), NCF (2005), National knowledge commission report, NCTE regulations 2009, Right to education act 2009, NCTEF (2010) etc., the Teacher education curriculum and regulations have witnessed a paradigm shift in recent years. However some of the problems have also been there like updated curriculum, duration and quality of internship, in-service teacher education, lack of practical aspects and teacher education through distance mode are debatable issues. This paper deals with some policies, problems and proposed suggestions for teacher education.

**Keywords:** education, teacher education, issues, challenges

### 1. Introduction

It is well known that teachers have a pivotal role in the development of an inclusive education system. Highly motivated, qualified, and trained teachers are important factor for ensuring meaningful access to education <sup>[1]</sup>. Teacher education is the process for the development of proficiency and competence of teachers which in turn enable and empower them for meeting the requirements and challenges of the profession in present times. Goods Dictionary of Education explains- „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.“ W.H. Kilpatrick specified teacher training by stating that „Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.“ Clinton stated in his Call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century (1996) that, “Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation and training” <sup>[2]</sup>. This indicates the importance of preparing good teachers. A good teacher education system is a major requirement of any nation for its progress. Teacher quality is the most important factor of school education. UNESCO-ILO stated that “Teacher quality is an important consideration in student achievement, and although defined differently by different people, it continues to be a central concern of those responsible for teacher education. Quality teachers are products of quality teacher education programs, policies and practices <sup>[3]</sup>.”

Recently Universalization of Elementary Education, and implementation of RTE coupled with

**Correspondence**

**Shabina Akhter**

Department of YSS, Sant Gadge  
Baba Amravati University,  
Amravati, Maharashtra, India

sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have produced a huge requirement of teachers and to meet this new challenge, our country should be able to supply good teachers in large numbers. Today new innovations and experiments are being tried out inside as well as outside the classroom that includes project based learning, development of thinking skills, and discovery learning approaches. Many teachers are not perfectly familiar in implementing the concepts of new curriculum and many are not equipped to properly implement the curriculum. So it is necessary to define the professional qualifications and skills needed for a good teacher and inculcate them within prospective teachers<sup>[4]</sup>.

These qualities which make good teachers were summarised by Arthur *et al.*, in a survey on UK teachers as fairness, creativity, and a love of learning, humour, perseverance and leadership as the six most important character strengths for good teachers, along with kindness and honesty.

In this line and to improve quality of teachers, certain nations have developed teaching standards. For example Australia, developed standards for teachers in 2010 and finalized 3 domains of teaching and seven standards mentioned in Education Services Australia (2011), which are given below<sup>[3]</sup>:

### Professional Knowledge: (Domain 1)

1. Know students and how they learn;
2. Know the content and how to teach it; Professional Practice: (Domain 2)
3. 3 Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning Professional Engagement: (Domain 3)
6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents / carers and the community Teacher education is the means for inculcating these professional qualities within future teachers

### 2. Scenario of teacher education and its development in post-independence India

After independence, several committees, commissions, documents and policy papers were prepared time to time and brought into force to review and suggest progress and achievements in every aspect of education, including teacher education. These were University Education Commission (1948-49) was the first education commission set up in Independent India. It critically examined the existing courses in teacher training programme and suggested that these courses must be flexible and adaptable to local circumstances. It recommended that teacher education courses should be remodelled, suitable schools to be taken for practical training and more time to be given to school practice, and replaced the term „teacher training“ with „teacher education“.

Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) suggested that during one year of training graduate teacher should be trained in methods of teaching in at least two subjects. The practical part of teacher training should consist practice in teaching, observation, demonstration and criticism of lessons; it should also include the construction and administration of scholastic tests, organization of supervised study and „student“s societies“, conducting library periods and maintenance of cumulative records.

Ford Foundation Term (1954)–was an International team of experts appointed by Government of India, to examine in

detail the major recommendations of Secondary Education Commission. It recommended that the teacher training institutions should include demonstration or laboratory schools where experiments are made in curriculum construction and progressive methods of teaching are used.

Pires Committee (1956) recommended that practical aspect should be given more weightage than the theory portion in teacher training. The examination papers should be reduced to four *viz.*

1. Principles of Education and School Organisation
2. Educational Psychology and Health Education
3. Methods of Teaching Two School Subjects
4. Current Problems in Indian Education.

Education Commission of 1964-66 (Kothari Commission) observed that a sound programme of professional education for teachers was essential for the qualitative improvement in education at all levels of teacher education to meet the requirements of the national education system.

National Policy Statement on Education (1968) emphasised that among all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, teacher is undoubtedly the most important. Teacher, must therefore, be accorded an honoured place in society. Teacher’s emoluments and service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory with respect to their qualifications and responsibilities.

First Asian Conference on Teacher Education (1971) held at Bangalore and jointly sponsored by Association of Teacher Educators (IATE) and the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) recommended that the programs of school education and teacher education in each country should be modified to meet the new challenges.

Efforts of Indian Association of Teacher Educators (IATE)–The Indian Association of Teacher Educators, formerly All India Association of Training Colleges, the only national organization of teachers of training institutions, have been organizing annual conferences beginning with their first meet at Baroda in 1950. IATE constituted a study group popularly known as Baroda Study Group towards revitalizing the B. Ed. Programme

National Commission on Teachers I (for school teachers) of 1983-85 suggested a 4 year training course after senior secondary, or preferably a 5 year course leading to graduation and training. For elementary teachers it suggested a two year training course after Class XII. It recommended that an integrated 4 year curriculum of a degree in education should consist of general education and professional preparation. Training curriculum for elementary teachers should emphasize on mastering of language and communication skills. The teacher educators in colleges of education should be from disciplines of various school subjects like psychology, sociology, philosophy etc. The minimum qualification for a teacher educator should be PG degree in the subject and a B.Ed., preferably a M.Ed. degree. The minimum qualification for a teacher educator for the elementary training institutes should be a PG degree with B.Ed. training. This commission also suggested that the practice teaching should be replaced by the word „Internship“.

The National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986 recommended that teacher education is a continuous process and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. NPE 1986 and its Programme of Action 1992 advocated for improving the quality of teacher education as it was the

prerequisite to improve the quality of school education. As result, some training schools were upgraded to District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs).

Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because "...the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time."

Yashpal Committee (1993) noted that inadequate programme of teacher preparation leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in school. Therefore, the B.Ed. programme should offer the possibility of specialization in secondary or elementary or nursery education. The duration of the programme should either be one year after graduation or four years after higher secondary. The contents of the programme should be restructured and be relevant to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking. The statutory NCTE prescribed a Curriculum Framework (1998) to provide guidelines for the content and methodology of teacher education. As a result, many universities and state governments revised the courses of teacher education.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 for school education made recommendations about curriculum, school, exams and many more. It stated that teacher quality is an outcome of several factors: teacher's status, remuneration and conditions of work, besides teacher's academic and professional education.

National Knowledge Commission (2007) suggested that there should be adequate monitoring of the teacher education programmes by private institutes, the budgetary allocations should be increased, and the state level training system along with DIETs should be revamped [5].

### 3. Challenges of teacher education

Great expansion of teacher education institutions during the last decade reflects the teacher education scenario of today. Increase in the no. of schools and enrolment as a result of countrywide primary education programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, has resulted in increased demands for the teachers. This produced a great demand and increase of teacher education institutions but the quality parameters were ignored in the process. As result, poor quality, lack of responsibility, and lack of desired qualities and dedication is seen among the newly produced pupil teachers. Some of the major challenges of the teacher education system in India are shown in the figure 1.

#### 3.1. Poor Integration of skills

Certain skills as life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human developmental skills and spiritual skills need to be integrated in the teacher education programmes. There should be simultaneous focus on the creative thinking, critical thinking, self and social management skills. The present teacher education system of country fails to integrate these skills within learners [7].

#### 3.2. Small time period for teacher's training

In India, this period is of one year after the graduation and

finally the effective 6 to 7 working months in a session was less than required to develop healthy attitude, values and multidirectional interest. To overcome this problem, NCTE has extended this period to 2 years from 2015. There are some positive and negative impacts of this step but the final result has to come yet. But controversies are still there. A recent survey (possible rollback) of NCTE by inviting suggestions about the duration, before the completion of the first batch, is a strange and unexpected step.

#### 3.3. Problem of selection

Selection process for teacher education programmes includes some defects which result in deterioration of the quality of teachers. A better selection processes and use of appropriate method is needed to improve the quality of prospective teachers and in turn their training. Including steps like test of General Knowledge, school subjects, language, intelligence, aptitude, interest and attitude by suitable methods coupled with interview of candidates will be a good move.

#### 3.4. Incomplete competency development of teachers

The present training programme does not provide proper opportunities for pupil teachers to develop their competency as these training programmes are not well concerned with the existing problems of schools. So a close link between the routine work of a school teacher and the programme of teacher training college is a must. The recommendation of increasing the internship period of school is a good step in the direction.

#### 3.5. Improper and inadequate practice teaching

Generally practice teaching is not taken seriously and professionally by pupil teachers, especially in many private teacher training institutes and there is a lack of sense of duty, and they remain irresponsible, aimless, and indifferent to children, which are hurdles in the development of pedagogical skills.

#### 3.6. Lack of subject knowledge

The B.Ed. programme does not emphasize the knowledge of the basic subject. It should ensure the development of subject knowledge along with teaching skills. Without it the teaching practice will remain somewhat ineffective with regard to the subject knowledge.

#### 3.7. Inappropriate methods of teaching

In India teacher educators are neutral towards adopting innovative methods and experimentation in their teaching. Their acquaintance with modern class-room technologies and effective ICT techniques is poor.

#### 3.8. Incomplete supervision and feedback

The supervision coupled with proper feedback is useful for improving practice teaching and instructional activity of the pupil teachers. Feedback and support help them in developing confidence to face the classroom. Guidance for planning lessons, learning to organize contents, and developing other classroom skills are its parts but in reality the lesson plans are checked superficially and no meaningful discussion is made by the subject method masters.

### 4. Solutions to overcome the challenges

- Timely updating of curriculum
- Proper monitoring of private institutions
- Faculty training in value education and stress

management

- Development of critical thinking
- Development and enrichment of life skills
- Developing competency of teachers
- Maintaining Academic Uniformity

## 5. 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, organisation 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. After the deep study and healthy discussion with educationist, I came to this conclusion that Centre and States Governments should join the hands to bring the quality and improvement in the teacher education, then bright future of teacher education is possible. This article would be helpful to State and Centre Governments policy maker budget allotment and best educationists to bring reforms in teacher education.

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