

PEDAGOGIC REJUVENATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:
CONCEPT IN NCFTE 2009

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ABSTRACT

The educational scenario in India country is now passing through an era of renovation and refinement. The school education as well as higher education is included in this rejuvenation, with least consideration to teacher education. Pedagogic changes gained momentum by the inception of nation wide schemes such as MLL, DPEP, SSA and the emerging RMSA .Teacher education is more or less static amidst of philosophical and methodological changes in the field of education. Curriculum frame work has been formulated from time to time for giving conceptual directions in uniformity and quality of education. The teachers who are the corner stones of prospective changes in society must be empowered properly in a phased manner to realize the national vision on education. Realizing the urgency of the situation, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) now proposed a draft curriculum framework for nation wide discussion, soon after one of this kind in 2006. The document is comprehensive and includes Context, Concerns and Vision of Teacher Education, Curricular Areas of Initial Teacher Education, Redesigned Schemes of Current Teacher Education Programmes, Evaluating the Developing Teacher, In-service Education and Continuous Professional Development, and Preparing Teacher Educators. The existing practices in preparatory courses of teacher educators, their in-service training and professional development are to be incorporated to formulate a policy for teacher education.

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Teacher education and school education have a symbiotic relationship. Developments in both these sectors mutually reinforce the concerns necessary for the qualitative improvement of the entire spectrum of education. It was against this backdrop that the NCTE Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education which is both contextual and in tune with the emerging concerns and imperatives of the fast changing canvas of education both nationally and globally.

The NCTE had the benefit of reviewing similar exercises attempted in this area before, namely, the curriculum framework developed by the non-statutory NCTE in 1978, a revised version of this framework developed by the NCERT in 1988, the first curriculum framework for teacher education by the statutory NCTE in 1998, and independent exercise in evolving a teacher education curriculum framework by the NCERT in 2005 and a joint curriculum framework brought out by NCTE and NCERT in 2006.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education laid down in 2009 is comprehensive and includes Context, Concerns and Vision of Teacher Education, Sample Redesigned Schemas of Current teacher Education Programmes, Evaluating the Developing Teacher, In-Service Education and Continuous Professional Development, and Preparing Teacher Educators. This article mainly focuses on the topic entitled 'Preparing Teacher Educators'.

PREPARING TEACHER EDUCATORS

The education and training of prospective teachers will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by teacher educators who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. The quality of pedagogical inputs in teacher education programmes and the manner in which they are transacted to realize their intended objectives depend largely on the professional competence of teacher educators.

The need and the importance of professionally trained teacher educators has been underscored in statements on educational policy time and again but the situation on the ground remains grim, there is severe shortage of properly qualified and professionally trained teacher educators at all stages of education and especially at the elementary stage. The shortage refers to both inadequacies of required numbers as well as to mismatch in the qualifications of teacher educators and their job requirements.

Existing Arrangements for Training of Teacher Educators-Status and Critique

Early Childhood Education

ECE aims at total child development in a learning environment that is joyful, child-centred, play and activity based. Teacher education programmes in ECE should develop in appropriate curriculum based on child-centred and play and activity based approach. The ECE situation calls for development of multiple models of training of work force with reference to age groups, nature of programme, level of staff and mode and location

of training. There is need to evolve specially designed programmes at the degree and post-degree levels for the training of teacher educators.

Primary\Elementary Education

District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) are main supply institutions for elementary teachers. The DIET functions both pre-service and in-service teacher training, non-formal and adult education workers, curriculum and materials development, educational research, extension etc. Presently DIETs find themselves totally under-equipped in required faculty capabilities; the faculty appointed do not possess the required academic qualifications or professional experience. Many of them do not possess basic experience in primary school teaching. Bachelor of Education(B.Ed.) nor Master of Education (M.Ed.) in their present form equips prospective teacher educators with the required skills to carry out the tasks specific to elementary education is thoughtful.

Secondary Education

Selected institutions were identified as colleges of Teacher Education and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education under the centrally sponsored scheme for strengthening secondary teacher education. In practice, the typical secondary teacher educator is a graduate with a post graduate degree in education. The NCTE norms prescribed a Master's degree with M.Ed or B.Ed having 55% marks with Ph.D/ M.Phil carrying

special weightage. Most universities is conducting M.Ed./M.A. in education simply as an extension of B.Ed seriously lacking inputs focused on the preparation of teacher educators secondary or elementary,

By way of summing up, it many note that TEIs of all stages are managed by faculties with little or grossly inadequate professional training to handle the tasks of teacher educators. TEIs over the years the situation has become critical as the supply of teacher educators has not kept up with the increasing demand for faculty and institutions have compromised faculty requirements.

Education of Teacher Educators-Basic Issues

(1) Teacher Educator and Education

Role of teacher educators has to be conceived primarily with reference to the philosophy and principles that govern the various aspects of school education-aims of education, curriculum, methods and materials and the socio cultural context in which the school functions- and the role of the teacher in translating educational intents into practical action. Accordingly, if a teacher is expected to behave in a particular way, for example

Care for children and love to be with them

Understand children within social, cultural and political contexts

Perceive child not as a passive receiver of knowledge

Encourage its capacity to construct knowledge

Discourage rote learning

Treat all children equally

Reflect on her teaching experience

It follows that the teacher educator should share the underlying educational philosophy and also possesses the needed understanding and professional competency to develop such behaviours in his\her charges. This would imply corresponding change in the behaviour of teacher educator.

(2) Stage Specificity in the Preparation of a Teacher Educator

It is generally the case that those who function as teacher educators do not possess appropriate stage specific professional or experiences. Teacher preparation of different stages would do as well for teacher educators too, B.Ed for elementary teacher education and M.Ed for secondary teacher education. The logic that seems to operate is that once higher position in the hierarchy would entitle one to train others working at the lower levels irrespective of whether one possessed the relevant skills.

The issue of stage specificity acknowledges the special nature of school education at different stages and make out a case for properly trained professionals to work the system. The issue needs to be addressed in the wider context of irrational disparities in the career path, remuneration package, service conditions and conditions at the work place that characterize school education and teacher education.

M.Ed as a Programme for Preparation of teacher Educators

M.Ed is the dominant PG programme in education offered by Indian universities. The course draws a large variety clientele: fresh graduates from different disciplines with B.Ed, experienced teachers, education functionaries in different government departments.

The M.Ed has come under severe criticism on several counts. First as a professional educational programme it lacks specificity, focus and rigor. The wide range of academic and professional needs in education like training of teachers, educational administration, educational research and extension, development of curriculum and teaching-learning materials and so on need more focused interventions; the omnibus M.Ed cannot fulfill these expectations. Even as a general programme of PG studies in education M.Ed has not responded to the many shifting and newer concerns in education. It is also indistinguishable from the two year M.A in education because in actual course design and content the two do not differ on any sound academic rationale. The existence of two parallel PG programmes in education has created an anomalous and confusing situation and has raised questions of equivalence.

M.Ed is generally accepted as the requirement for one to become a teacher educator, the programme as offered in most universities is simply an extension of B.Ed seriously lacking in inputs focused on the preparation of teacher educators, secondary or elementary. The typical M.Ed programme is very poorly focused with respect to training of teacher educators, primary or secondary. It is realized that B.Ed which it focuses on secondary school teaching cannot on its own qualify one to train elementary school teachers and the M.Ed which in most cases is an extension of B.Ed cannot equip one to function as a trainer.

Imparting professionalism to M.Ed

Several proposals are being made to improve the design and impart the greater rigor and professionalism to M.Ed. The need is now being effectively articulated for

identifying the objectives of education of teacher educators and the designing of programmes that offer specializations for meeting the needs of teacher education for different levels of schooling. The NPE Review made a specific recommendation to organize a specially designed training programme to fit all the desired attributes of a teacher educator. The NCTE curriculum framework (1978) emphasized the need for developing a task oriented M.Ed which provided scope for practical work in education .The NCTE norms committee suggested inclusion of internship in a college of education to impart teacher education specificity to the M.Ed programme.

Need of training and educating prospective teacher's teacher educators also need further in depth professional training in specified areas of education. The UGC has proposed M.Ed with core papers of philosophical and sociological foundations of education, psychological foundations of education and methodology of educational research and choice of specialization areas. These include: guidance and counseling, distance education, value education and human rights, special education etc

A Promising Innovation: Collaborative Postgraduate Programme of M.A Education (Elementary)

CPG is a collaborative postgraduate programme in elementary education launched by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. It is a first of its kind, Pan-Indian programme intervention in elementary education at the post graduate stage. Its twin objectives are to provide a firm disciplinary base to elementary education and train a range of professionals with different specializations – teachers, teacher educators, curriculum and text book developers, educational planners, administrators and researchers. The two year (four semesters) CPG is available for those with a bachelor's

degree. It demonstrates an approach to build professional preparation of teachers, teacher educators, educational planners, administrators and researchers around integration of academic knowledge and field learning. Through innovative design and transaction of curriculum which cover all core and foundational areas of education-theory, issues, research-and their integration with practical skills and field learning. It demonstrates the scope, content and methods of elementary education as a knowledge field.

Enhancing the Status of Educational Studies and the Professional Development of Teacher Educators

Several suggestions have been made to deal with this issue. One proposal is to diversify specializations into areas of curriculum and pedagogic studies in mathematics, languages, social sciences and sciences and encourage students to pursue PG in a chosen discipline along with the option of specializing in a select curriculum and pedagogic study course. It is also suggested that UG students be provided with a variety of routes to pursue studies in education like four year integrated courses in elementary and secondary education, electives in educational studies followed by a range of PG studies in education, social sciences, sciences, humanities etc.

A comprehensive and enduring arrangement for the professional development of teacher educators and enhancement of the status of education as a discipline is needed. Setting up of schools of education in selected (30) university departments including the Regional Institutes of Education (RIE) for breaking the isolation of elementary and

secondary teacher education form the main stream and integrating it with higher education

Setting up one inter university centre at the national level functioning under the UGC to co-ordinate the schools in terms of academic context : redesigning teacher education curricula, developing curriculum materials, commissioning of materials in regional languages, setting up of web portals on curriculum and pedagogic materials for teacher education.

Instituting specialized centres of education in lead national level institutions like Indian Institute of Science(IIS), Homi Bhabha Centre, TIFR to offer sandwiched PG courses of three years duration(B.ED for 2 years/M.Ed for 3 years) towards developing a specialized cadre of senior Secondary School teachers and teacher educators.

Special emphasis should be given for professional renewal of existing teacher educators through refresher courses, Fellowship program, and Periodic academic enrichment activities

Preparation of Teacher Educators-Future Directions and Possibilities

Presently the education of teacher educators takes place mainly thorough the well entrenched one year M.Ed. Further advancement is available through M.Phil and Ph.D routes. As already pointed out, none of these are designed specifically to prepare a teacher educator although they provide knowledge related to some aspects of teacher education.

The education of teacher educators has been acknowledged as a major issue in teacher education and academic bodies have addressed themselves to the task of curriculum renewal. There are different models of M.Ed that have been proposed by individual universities and innovative programs of teacher preparations launched by some institutions. The following recommendations deserve serious consideration addressing these concerns:

Mechanisms need to be evolved to promote the entry of talent in teacher education programs.

Vertical linkages for PG studies in education including research programs for students from a variety of science and social science disciplines need to be provided.

Integrated model for teacher education of four or five years duration could comprise of core components that would be common to all teacher education programs followed by specialization of professional development specific to the stage of education

Specialized M.Ed programs in science education, language education, social science education and mathematics education can be offered.

The distinction between education as a liberal study and education as a professional preparation needs to be appreciated.

The programme should involve rigorous professional training in field setting under the guidance and supervision of mentors over an extended duration.

The quality of teacher education depends on the quality of teacher educators. Since they play the most crucial role in professional education of teachers, their education becomes a

vital input not only for implementation of the recommendations of this curriculum framework but also for the improvement of overall quality of education. A weak program of education of teachers can hardly make any positive contribution to achieve the projected targets. Apart from proposals for comprehensive reform of teacher education like integrated programs providing for diversification of specializations and diverse routes for UG students, one can conceive a variety of program designs and structures which do not call for drastic structural changes. Reconsideration of the programs of professional preparation of teacher educators has become obligatory.

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