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**Innovation in Teacher Education: What we have? and What more is needed?**

*Dr. Asha Yadav*

Associate Professor, Department of social sciences, OSGU, Bir, Hisar

*Ms. Sarita*

Research scholar, Department of social sciences, OSGU, Bir, Hisar

**Abstract:** This article highlights the various innovative Practices prevailing now-a- days in the field of Teacher Education and what more is needed in the field. Teacher-training programmes are to be structured and modified to achieve the vision of NEP 2020 launched by Government of India on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The vision that is to be achieved by 2030 as mentioned in NEP, needs lots of effort, planning and alteration in present system. Technology can be utilised to achieve the vision as laid in NEP. As technology has touched every aspect of our lives and its impact can be seen in teacher education also. The use of ICT mediated practices enables pre-service and in service teachers to bring improvement in art and science of teaching. Knowledge and practice of these practices during and after teacher's training enable pupil-teachers (or teachers) to have mastery in their field. The use of technology in this field was popular earlier also but it got a sudden upsurge after COVID-19. It brings lots of changes in the earlier practices. New innovative practices came into action which are supported by technology. The use of technology supports the teacher training programmes during the lockdown and also make all stake holders more techno friendly. The environment of teacher-training institutes has completely changed over this short span. The methods to impart the knowledge, submission of projects and assignment, use of teaching-aids and evaluation system has been completely changed by use of ICT majorly after Covid- Phase. The objectives of NEP2020 can be achieved by extensive use of technology in teaching training institutes as skills learned here can be applied in field later. This paper will focus on newly emerged practices in detail and suggest what more is needed.

**Key words:** Innovation, mind maps, blended learning, flipped classrooms, cooperative learning, collaboration,

**INTRODUCTION :** Innovation refers to something new or to change made to an existing product, idea or field. It is derived from a Latin word *Innovare*, which means to renew. In essence, innovation means to improve or to replace something. Innovation is needed in every field and teacher education is not an exception. It is needed for the development, improving the quality, for raising standards, to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to cater present and future needs. Innovation in teacher education is needed to achieve the objectives as stated in NEP 2020. As teachers truly shape the future of any country, it is needed to bring reforms in teacher education to empower teachers and help them to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is possible by enabling teachers by developing innovative mindset, where different needs can be catered. In this regard, innovation in teacher education is manifolded like; innovation in teaching style, instructional practices, class managements, textbooks and other materials and in methods of assessment and evaluation. It involves different ways of looking at problems, finding solution with involvements of students, providing best learning experience, inventive and creative mindset.

### **Some innovative practices in teacher education**

Following are some of the innovative ideas currently came into existence

*1 Information and communication technology:* ICT has supported nearly all the aspect of human life. In Teacher education it has been utilised for imparting content, connecting people virtually all around the world, engaging students and collecting information easily and quickly.

*2 Blended teaching and Learning:* It is an approach which connects online and offline mode. It came into existence with advent of ICT in teaching-learning process. It focuses on mixing or blending of online and physical location mode in teaching -learning process. Instructions, now are no longer limited to physical location or face to face interaction. With the fixed schedule, classes are arranged in campus and online. The schedule is flexible for students as per their convenience on how they want to have classes.

*3 Team teaching:* This is also known as co- teaching and shared teaching. This is based on the idea of ‘division of labour’, for planning, organising and execution of work. Pupil-teachers who are learning teaching skills are associated with experienced teachers by sharing of responsibilities like planning and execution of content. Based on the idea of utilising the available resources and expertise, its aim is to give best possible to learners.

*4 Reflective Teaching:* It engages teachers to reflect them to evaluate their own teaching, before, during and after the course. It involves strategies like self-assessment, classroom observations, writing reflective journals, assessment through teaching Inventories, peer review teaching, feedback mechanism and by teaching portfolio. It helps teachers to develop better understanding of their teaching, assess their own professional growth and to build confidence. Reflective teaching makes teachers aware about how to modify teaching and make it as per needs of learners.

*5 Flipped Classroom:* Flipped classroom strategy is best suitable for the class which needs student engagement in learning process. These classrooms shift instructions from teacher centred approach to learner centred approach. It involves learner in personalised form of learning where learners learn from their own pace. Learners are given time to collect information about the topic at home and it is later shared and discussed in classrooms. It makes a learner ready to learn when the class begins and makes classroom interactive where everyone is present in class with some prior knowledge to be discussed in class.

*6 Cooperative Learning:* Cooperative learning is also known as collaboration learning. It is another teaching method in which students are put in small groups to work together. It helps them to share the work and responsibilities, provide platform for learning from peer group. It is different from team teaching that in team teaching responsibility is shared between matured and less matured ones. In cooperative teaching, responsibilities are shared among similar ones.

*7 Constructivism:* This concept is evolved from cognitive psychology. It is based on the assumption that learners are actively involved in the process of learning not just passively receivers of information. Learners interacted with each other and take responsibility of learning. It is a view that learning is not based on the actions done by teachers in class and students sitting idly listening. Rather it requires active involvement of learners in construction of knowledge. It involves construction of new knowledge and altering in prior knowledge. This method also caters the need of individual learner as it pays attention to what is already known and what new is to be added by a particular learner.

*8 Animated videos:* Animated videos can be easily downloaded, purchased or created by teachers to make the lesson more interesting to learners. It is an effective way to learn a new language as it enables learners to capture proper pronunciation, accent, rhyme of a language. Also, complex topics which needs demonstration can be easily taught to learners. Keeping the diverse need of a classroom, teacher can create own material to support the learning in students.

9 *Mind maps*: Mind map is a diagrammatically presentation to show, organize and illustrate information usually on a single concept. This technique is useful to record information, show different facts and ideas, shows relationship with one another, present chronological events etc. It not only helpful in understanding the concept or taking notes but also gives a quick glance about topic in form of heading and subheading for revision purpose. The use of symbols, images, pictures, coloured pens etc. make it more effective.

10 *Real world exposure*: Giving real world exposure is another innovative way to make learning permanent which is different from traditional way of imparting lectures. It gives understanding of practical side of the concepts. It can be field visits; visits to schools, hospitals, factories, cooperative offices, construction sites etc. Working with the concerned field gives exposure to learn which can't be learned from books inside four walls. Another advantage of it is that it builds a better understanding of the field. Teaching Practice, internship, lab work etc are tools to give real world exposure.

### **What more is needed:**

All the three levels National (NCTE), State (SCERT) and District (SIE) are putting efforts at their levels to bring innovation in the field of Teacher Education by promoting research and developing 'growth mind set' in pre and in-service teachers, yet a lot is needed to fulfil the needs of present time and time to come.

Following can be considered as target to be achieved

1 Building techno-enabled infrastructure in Teacher-Training Institutes (TTIs) is dire necessity of the hour. The present scenario in TTIs is not compatible to achieve the target of present century.

2 Training of teacher educators of various TCT tools is to be arranged immediately so that they can disseminate it further.

3 Tie-ups with field is trivial need to give practical knowledge to pupil teacher. It is to be made mandatory for Government and private agencies not just to welcome such trainees but to give full freedom to utilize the resources to learn.

4 Developing or buying various software is next step after setting up of infrastructure. At initial stage when it is not possible to develop software of own, these can be purchased from others. Later people can be hired in department to develop these tools.

5 It is felt that unwilling candidates are coming in teaching profession who either by parents' pressure or peer influence have been enrolled in teaching courses. It is duty of selection board to ensure fair selection in the teaching courses by measuring required aptitude for the profession.

6 Innovation, in any field can be carried out by promoting Growth- mindset in learners. People having growth mind-set believe that intelligence and talents are not fixed but can be developed over a period of time. Such mindset promotes to adopt positive outlook towards learning and creating something new.

7 Developing research aptitude in learners is needed to get progress in any field. Research aptitude enables learners to solve problems scientifically, analyse any situation in relation to cause and effect relationship and to discover new knowledge or to add in prior knowledge.

8 Developing digital tools is another need for formative and summative assessment. Such tools are to be well suited for the assessment and budget friendly.

9 The biggest task in the shift from offline to online is the formation of offline content in online units. It is a time-consuming and skilful work. Proper time and training are to be given to convert the content.

10 To break the rigidity of in- service teachers is another challenge. People working over a period of time feel comfortable in the fixed pattern of thinking and action, thus denied the changes.

11 Promoting teacher educators for professional growth (subscription and publication, workshops, conferences, seminars) so that they can take incentives.

12 Establishment of healthy atmosphere in institutes which is not based on competition but on collaboration among management, administration, staff and students.

**Conclusion:** Thus, it can be concluded that technology can play a vital role to attain the aim of NEP 2020 that is to ensure equitable access to the highest- quality education to all. The gap between the present and desired goal is to be filled by bringing changes in present education system. The creative potential of each individual can be better drawn out by bringing modification in current system. These changes can only be brought by promoting innovation and research. ICT can play an important role in achieving the desired goals. Developing infrastructure, adopting novel pedagogies, learning required techniques, altering old according to new challenges is crucial to bring into scene.

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