



RECENT TRENDS AND PARADIGM SHIFT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The quality of an education system largely depends on the quality, characteristics and commitment of the teachers to their profession. Teacher Education should be strengthened and upgrade to accommodate the changing role of the teacher and so that teachers can effectively address contemporary issues regarding education. Teacher education has to be reformed in order to prepare teachers for their new and more diversified functions in the school and the society. A paradigm shift in teacher education is a radical change from one way of thinking to another; a transformation rather than an evolutionary process. The paradigm we use and accept is dependent on believes what we perceive to be true and valid. The recent trend of two years B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses were most discussed paradigm shift. It is in our hand how we use and accept it. During this paradigm shift we came across many challenges and problems faced by teachers and teacher educators. Keeping this in view the present article will discuss the New Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education, Justice Verma commission Report (2013), opportunities, problems and suggestions for better quality of teacher education.

Keywords: Paradigm shift, Teacher education, Justice Verma commission, Opportunities, Problems.

Introduction

Education is no longer defined in terms of what a teacher will teach but rather in terms of what a student will be able to demonstrate. Various commissions and committees in their report have shown their major concern for education reforms. The Education Commission (1964-66) of free India submitted a comprehensive report suggesting for establishment of a uniform national structure of education covering all stages and aspects of education. It emphasized on the

necessity of professional preparation of teachers for qualitative development of education. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was set up for the maintenance of standards and improvement of the quality of teacher education in India. The NCTE Act confers upon the Council to make every effort for improving the quality of teacher preparation in the country and also to ensure planned and coordinated development of teacher education. This commission also discussed various issues related to teacher education. It recommended professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programmes, comprehensive colleges of education and internship. The National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) recommended five years integrated courses and internship. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) recommended the overhaul of teacher education to impart it a professional orientation and referred to the same concerns voiced by the earlier Committees. Its recommendations led to the launch of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education incorporating the establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), and Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs). The NPE Review Committee (1990) and the National Advisory Committee on Learning without Burden (1993) have also drawn attention to the need for qualitative reform of teacher education and suggested various measures. This Commission set up with the intervention of the Supreme Court of India has interpreted the terms of reference in its true spirit and attempted to perform its task accordingly.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR) states: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.” The Constitution of India, recognizing this aspect enacted initially the directive principle of State Policy in article 45 to achieve the goal of free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen within ten years, but the task remaining unfulfilled for over half a century, the fundamental right in Article 21A has been inserted by amendment to reinforce its importance along with corresponding amendments in Article 45 and 51A.

Teacher is the medium to achieve this goal. Teacher occupies a very important place in society because he brings about the transfer of the intellectual tradition from one generation to the next. Teacher plays a pivot role of transmitters and of inspirers of man’s eternal quests for knowledge, of himself and of his external environment. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) rightly points out “we are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction, is the teacher -his personal qualities,

his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the school as well in the community.” The Report of National Education Commission (1964-66) states: “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms.” National Policy on Education (1986/92) states: “The status of teacher reflects the sociocultural norms of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teacher”. Thus, a true teacher is a role model who triggers the thought process of his students to realize their true potential. He teaches by practice and not merely by percept. Therefore, the teacher has to make himself / herself familiar with the technicalities of the teaching-learning processes.

The early 21st century has been a significant shift in public policy and the debate on school education in India after the re-constitution of Central Advisory Board on Education (CBSE 2003); a massive fiscal commitment to funding Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) introduced in 2004 national budget; a sector wise attempt to redesign a National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) and textbooks by the NCERT; the introduction of the RTE, Act, 2009; and the articulation of radical reforms in the education of teachers, including lengthening the duration of pre-service teacher education and providing professional development, on-site support to teacher practitioners through National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009). NCERT is a leading council at the national level, whose main objective is to bring qualitative improvement in school education. Teacher-education is a significant part of this school education programme. Along with many other functions, some of the important functions of NCERT in the area of teacher- education are to prepare the curriculum for teacher education, to revise the teacher-education curriculum in accordance with existing needs, to judge the suitability of some innovative curriculum for teacher education, to judge the suitability and effectiveness of some new teacher-training strategies etc. After a long-term debate and discussion, realizing the insufficiency/ inadequacy of one year B.Ed. programme, two year B.Ed. course is introduced in accordance with NCTE guidelines.

The two-year B.Ed. programme introduced by NCERT in its RIEs has certain special features/characteristics. It provides greater scope for development of sound knowledge in different areas i.e. content matter, knowledge on teaching-learning methodologies and knowledge on pedagogy of teaching learning among the trainee-teachers. It develops a sound knowledge base for trainee-teachers in content areas, develops skills of trainee-teachers to be competent enough regarding how to transact the content materials to the students

of the schools meaningfully. Some of the value related objectives that two-year B.Ed. intends to develop among the trainee teachers are commitment, competence, accountability etc. of the trainee teachers towards their profession. It intends to bring integrated development of the trainee teachers touching both cognitive and non- cognitive aspects of their behaviors. It is primarily practical oriented. It gives stress on practical activities like internal assessment, project works, sessional works, internship in teaching, practice of micro-teaching skills, community works, practical works relating to work experiences innovative ways for conducting practical activities related to health and physical education, work experience, fieldwork with community etc.

Justice Verma Commission

Justice Verma Commission has attempted a close scrutiny of the existing provisions and the quality of teacher education to facilitate identification of the deficiencies therein, and then to enable it to make recommendations which can rectify the defects and provide the level of teacher education necessary to produce quality teachers. The Report of the Commission is in three volumes: Vol. I contain the main report divided into seven chapters along with the final conclusions and recommendations. Vol. II contains all the discussion. Vol. III contains all the Annexure.

The Commission has pointed out the following findings:

- 1.** Classroom practice is closely tied to the manner in which teachers learn to engage with teaching as a practical and social activity. The institutions of teacher education operates as a system of well-established conventions that structure social interaction, reproducing shared habits of thought through the conventions and rituals of teacher preparation.
- 2.** The bulk of secondary teacher education institutes offering programmes leading to the B. Ed. degree are outside university campus. Elementary teacher education institutes leading to the D. Ed. degree are not linked to the Universities. Teacher education institutes function as closed spaces with the sole mandate of training teachers.
- 3.** Most teacher education programmes (B. Ed. and D. Ed.) do not adequately engage with subject knowledge.

Recommendations made by the Verma Commission

- 1.** The Commission recommends the Government should increases its investment for establishing teacher education institutions and increase the institutional capacity of teacher preparation, especially in deficit states.

2. Around 90% of pre-service teacher education institutions are in the non- Government Sector, and most of the States of the Eastern and North-Eastern Region of the country are facing acute shortage of institutional capacity of teacher preparation in relation to the demand. The Commission recommends that the Government should increase its investment for establishing teacher education institutions (TEIs) and increase the institutional capacity of teacher preparation, especially in the deficit States.
3. Government may explore the possibility of instituting a transparent procedure of pre-entry testing of candidates to the pre-service teacher education programmes, keeping in view the variation in local conditions.
4. Teacher education should be a part of the higher education system. The duration of programme of teacher education needs to be enhanced, in keeping with the recommendations of the Education Commission (1966), the implementation of which is long overdue.
5. It is desirable that new teacher education institutions are located in multi and inter disciplinary academic environment. This will have significant implications for the redesigning of norms and standards of various teacher education courses specified by the NCTE. This will have also implications for employment and career progression of prospective teachers. Existing teacher education institutions may be encouraged to take necessary steps towards attaining academic parity with the new institutions.
6. Current teacher education programme may be redesigned keeping in view the recommendations in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009) and other relevant material.
7. In keeping with the recommendations of the Education Commission (1966), every pre-service teacher education institution may have dedicated school attached to it as a laboratory where student teachers get opportunities to experiment with new ideas and hone their capacities and skills to become reflective practitioners.
8. There is a need to establish a national level academic body for continual reflections and analysis of teacher education programmes, their norms and standards, development of reading material and faculty development of teacher educators.
9. As a matter of policy, the first professional degree/ diploma in teacher education should be offered only in face-to-face mode. Distance learning programmes and the use of blended learning material may be developed and used for continuing professional development of school teachers and teacher educators.

10. The institutional capacity should be increased for preparation of teacher educators. There is need to make Masters in Education programme of two years duration with the provision to branch out for specialization in curriculum and pedagogic studies, foundation studies, management, policy and finance, and other areas of emerging concerns in education.

11. The NCTE would need to develop broad-based norms for qualification of teacher educators to enable induction of persons with post-graduation degrees in education science, social science, languages and mathematics, along with a professional degree in teacher education or a research degree in education, as teacher educators.

12. The idea of creating opportunities for teaching practitioners to teach in teacher education institutions, as visiting faculty, may be explored. Similarly, teacher educators could be considered as visiting faculty in schools.

13. Faculty development programmes for teacher educators should be institutionalized.

14. There is need for enhanced investment in promotion of research in education in general, and in teacher education in particular in the universities; creation of an Inter University Centre in Teacher Education could play a significant role, in this regard.

Major action taken in this area

Work initiated by Academic bodies of Universities to introduce four-year integrated teacher education programmes after high school and two year teacher education programmes after graduation; and to prepare curriculum and other resources that are in line with the recommendations of the NCFTE, 2009. UGC and NCTE Four-year integrated teacher education programmes and two-year teacher education programmes introduced by some universities from the academic session 2015-16 onwards. A Concept Paper outlining a Roadmap or introducing two-year M.Ed. programme in a phased manner prepared. February 2014 NCTE Preparation of curriculum framework for 2-year M.Ed. NCTE Action plans prepared for University Departments of Education to introduce two-year M.Ed. programmes in consultation with UGC and State Government.

Opportunities

The reforms in teacher education provide many opportunities for quality enhancement of teacher education can be discussed as follows:

- 1.** Due to increase in the duration the time constrains can be overcome to some extent.
- 2.** There will be enough time for inculcation of teaching skills among participants.
- 3.** There will be enough time to equip teachers with innovative methods and practices.

4. Teacher educators will get enough time to use innovative methods, techniques and approaches like cooperative teaching, constructivist approach, differentiated instructions, reflective practices, mastery learning approach etc. for which long duration is needed. Such practices will automatically cascade down in their school practices.

5. More time can be given for hands on experiences through practice lessons, internship programmer, field visits, case studies which will assure quality

6. Students of M.Ed. course will get extra time for research work, reading, reviewing, reflecting, data collection and analysis etc. which will equip them with such higher abilities. Thus the list of opportunities will extend over a period of time but this one side of the coin opportunities never comes without problems.

Problems

1. The duration of the course is good with integrated course because students will start their career at the age of 18 and have qualifications till the age of 22 or 24. But for general B.Ed. it is a bane because after graduation again two years for B.Ed. and another 2 years for M.Ed. and they may need to complete Post graduation in their respective disciplines too. Thus it is going to be long term career option so less attractive. Number of students choosing this career option may decrease.

2. For the colleges who are moderate in quality and transaction of the course or poor in infrastructure and other recourses it will be difficult to run the courses they may close down the colleges due to rigid norms.

3. College who will run the course for money making without assuring quality may project the course in a boring and monotonous way.

4. Colleges which are struggling for the quality may find short of students coming for the course.

Suggestions

Following suggestions may work to overcome the problems which we are going to face while Implementing and maintaining the quality:

1. There can be degree course after XIIth providing specialization of primary teacher education, secondary teacher education and higher education at second year of the degree. Foundation programmes at first year.

2. B.Ed. colleges can convert their courses to four year integrated courses.

3. Instead of having two years B.Ed. it can be made of 18 months where there will be training for 12 months and apprentice ship for 6 months.

This is just an attempt to provide suggestions to overcome the upcoming drawbacks during implementation. Deliberate discussions and resolutions need to be happen to have sustainable programmes.

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