

INTEGRATED COURSES: FUTURE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Manpreet Kaur

Abstract

Teacher educators put together programs of course work and experiences with the goal of educating teachers whose knowledge, skills, and habits of mind will intermingle to create pleasing patterns of practice called quality teaching. Unfortunately, neither decades of research nor volumes of policy documents on quality teaching and teacher education have yielded a definitive way to make those patterns consistent across contexts with different students, teachers, subject matter, and curricula, among other characteristics. Quality teaching form a significant part in driving the reform of teaching over the past 20 years and are evident in influential teaching reform and policy documents, legislation, and curriculum and teaching standards. These teaching reforms, in turn, are shaped by and shape the direction of teacher education through policy making. Within this scope, this article provides an overview of paradigm shift in teacher education and evaluation in India and lastly this article discuss about benefits and challenges of integrated teacher education programmes.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Quality teaching

Dynamic change in the Indian society is necessitating changes in the education system. Industry operates today in a globalised, fast changing and hence very intellectually challenging world. The rapidly changing technological advancements and quick silver revolutions in the field of information technology have shrunk the world and the child of today is exposed to conflicting value systems. The alternative models of living and being available today have made life decisions more complex and hence life processes more uncertain. This in turn has made education a more complex enterprise for all concerned. Demands on the current system of education are many and at times are at cross-purposes. While none of its traditional roles, 'of conscience keeper of the society' and 'a molder of wholesome personality' have been taken away, a few more have been added, as that of a crusader to heal the world afflicted with racial prejudice, communal disharmony, ever increasing unemployment, unimaginable poverty, problems of environmental degradation and diminishing resources, senseless materialistic

pursuits and competition to attain territory and power.

Hence the process of educating the individual starts with catering to these complex demands, requiring education itself to become more dynamic, providing the individual a safe cushion to absorb the shocks the external environment is constantly inflicting on him. Thus training the individual in withstanding the pressure of time, money and resources, blending in him beautifully personal and international values, coupled with sustained love for learning and creativity has become the major goal of education today.

It is clear that the country's future growth or decline will depend on the life quality of it's people-which includes thinking caliber, personal values and human skills. The need of the hour is people with quick thinking to understand complex new technologies and to apply them, fluent creativity to see problems and explore solutions in a multi-contextual environment as well as emotional qualities facilitating healthy personal and inter personal relationships.

Assitant Professor, Khalsa College of Education, G.T. Road, Amritsar, Punjab, India.

The National Policy on Education (1986) aptly summarizes the situation stating-"Education in India stands at the cross roads. Neither the normal expansion nor the existence pace and nature of improving can meet the need of the situation."That is, to face the challenges of the present crises of values and conflicting interests of human existence many a complex demands are made on the system of education that in turn makes teacher education a difficult task.

It also should be remembered that the teacher trained today would still be practicing his profession thirty years hence! The emerging profile of Indian society in 2030 A.D may be considerably different from what it is today. It may be a society where in the problems of today-of poverty, illiteracy, over population and under employment are carried forward and added to that will be the newer problems of information onslaught, over emphasis on individual values, slackening of social structure, dilapidated moral and ethical fibre. It may be a society where in life would move faster, countries come nearer in terms of time, but individuals distance themselves from each other. Teachers need to prepare their students to face such a situation by developing in them initiative, inventiveness, decision making ability, concern and care for human relationships. Preparation of such a teacher becomes the responsibility of teacher education.

Primary and secondary teachers in India are trained in teacher education institutions, and the educational system is centralized and the Ministry of Education and its implementation units, such as local education centers, have the primary responsibility for education policy, curricula design and practice. The Parliament approves legislation on education and the Ministry of Education sets guidelines for all practical issues including teacher education, as well as being the main funder in the sector. In general, India does not experience shortages of school teachers but there are shortages in particular subject fields and locations, such as in the areas of mathematics, and science, especially in remote areas. Quality and excellence in the education sector is one of the major initiatives of the Government of India in its plans. To achieve the outcome of enhanced quality at all levels of education, Govt. of India has been focusing its

attention on quality and excellence in higher education and teacher education. Management of teacher education is a difficult task because of the fact that there are large numbers of variables in teacher education programmes including variations in the purpose for which persons join teacher training courses of various levels.

ORGANISATION BODIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Department of Elementary Education & Literacy of the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India is the apex body that looks after policy for teacher education. Its agencies include: National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and National University for Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA).

University Grants Commission (UGC) is also involved with Departments of Teacher Education or Departments of Education in the Universities and Institutions Deemed to be Universities and Colleges of Teacher Education. Besides these, MHRD, there are also other ministries that have institutions which run teacher training programmes. Ministry of Women and Child Development has a large net work of training of Anganwadi workers, who take care of pre-school component.

At the State level, the apex body that looks after teacher education is the Government Department of Education. In certain States, it is looked after by the Department of School Education. A few States have independent Directorates for Teacher education. In a few others, the Directorate and SCERT function under one Director. The teacher training institutions offering programmes for elementary and pre-school teachers are in many states under the control of the Department of School Education, whereas the teacher training institutions offering degree courses are under the Department of Higher Education. In certain States all teacher education institutions are managed by the State government. In certain other States, majority of teacher training institutions are managed by private agencies under self-financed category. At the State levels, there are teacher training institutions being run by the Departments of Tribal Welfare, and other administrative departments. Creation of separate cadre for teacher educators has been an important issue to be solved

in many states.

WHAT IS TEACHER EDUCATION ?

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the school and classroom. In early times, teachers were often scholars or clergymen who had no formal training in how to teach the subjects of their expertise. In fact, many believed that "teachers were born, not made." It was not until the emergence of pedagogy, the "art and science of teaching," as an accepted discipline that the training of teachers was considered important. Although there has been continued debate about whether teaching is a "science" that can be taught or whether one is "born" to be a teacher, it has generally been agreed, at least since the nineteenth century, that certain characteristics are needed to qualify a person as a teacher: knowledge of the subject matter to be taught, knowledge of teaching methods, and practical experience in applying both. Most educational programs for teachers today focus upon these points. However, the internal character of the individual is also an important aspect of teaching; whether that is something one is born with or can be taught, and what are the qualities that are needed for the role of teacher, are also a matter of debate.

QUALITY TEACHING

Teacher quality and the strength of educator's leadership are recognised as the greatest determinants of educational success. Quality teaching has a measurable impact on student outcomes. The teaching profession in India has much to celebrate. Our teachers and academic leaders are having a profound impact on our society. Teacher quality affects all stages of the teaching 'lifecycle', from attraction into the profession to ongoing development and retention in their own schools. Improving teacher and quality requires action to:

- Attract the best and brightest entrants to teaching profession;
- Train our future teachers through world-class pre-service education programme;
- Place quality teachers in schools where they are needed most;

- Develop teachers skills and knowledge through ongoing professional learning; and
- Retain quality teachers in our schools.

Without maintaining the quality of teachers no innovation should be expected. Quality is not an act, it is a habit. It signifies the degree of excellence. It is the totality of features and characteristics of product, process that bear on its ability to satisfy stated implied needs. It depends upon input, process and product factors.

Input factor involves all the physical infrastructure, student entry behaviour (family background, socio-economic status, academic achievement and their interests, needs etc.), teacher entry behaviour (their academic and professional background, socio-economic status, attitude towards profession, etc.) are considered. While process component is a particular course of action intended to achieve the desired result. On the other hand product factors are desired outputs – academic achievement committed to teaching profession, personality development etc. So, the basic need for teacher education provides improved level of student participation for achieving that degree of excellence. Overall progress in the colleges of teacher education takes the variety of initiative to transform the nature and function of education both formal and non formal. This can help in the improvement in system of teacher education so as to prepare quality teachers.

The government has created National Council of Teacher education (NCTE) in 1975 and has given effect from 1995 which make efforts in maintaining the quality of teacher education through planned and co-ordinated development of teacher education programme throughout the country. Generally there are two modes of Teacher Education. One is conventional and other is the Distance mode. In India, in most of the states B.Ed was offered as one year course under conventional mode, two years under distance Mode. The NCTE undertook a major exercise of developing a new National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in 1998 and for the first time made the recommendation for beginning a two year B.Ed. programme to prepare quality teachers. Curriculum for two year B.Ed. programme has been divided into four semesters and was implemented

from the session 2015-17. The course structure of two years B.Ed. programme offers a comprehensive coverage of theme and rigorous field engagement with the child, school and community. NCTE favoured the idea that through two years B.Ed programme the nature of experiences to be offered to the student-teachers will make them reflective practitioners. However, in real practices there are certain issues that act as barriers in achieving quality in teacher education, these are:

The mental setup: Majority of the students who enter into the teacher training course are actually not ready to join the teaching profession. It means either they joined the course to fill the gap in their studies or they entered without any interest. All these things lead to deterioration of quality of teachers.

Late admission of student teachers: As per the trend of selection of student teachers we can see that even failure is selected for B.Ed course. Already they are failure then how it's possible that these student teachers can become the competent teachers. It is all because of increased number of educational institutions that they just want to fill the seats, the students who are below the demarcation line of pass percents are also admitted to these private educational institutions.

Choice of the subject: It is generally seen that the students who have passed the entrance test are eligible for getting admission in B.Ed course but subject they have to choose are the subjects which are not of their interest, whereas they are forced to choose the different subject as there is boundation of limited seats in particular subject, or due to the non availability of the subject combination in the college. Then how it is possible that those student teachers can become perfect in that very subject which is not of their taste

Problem regarding duration of teaching: Duration of course of teacher training is of two years after graduation. As the main aim of teacher education program is to develop healthy attitude, broad base interest and values consistent with dignity of training, profession and thereafter development of personality. This long duration of teacher training course is somehow loosing the interests of the pupil teachers in this profession.

Lack of subject knowledge: The two year B.Ed

program does not give due emphasis on the knowledge of basic subject. There is no provision to increase and enhance the knowledge of particular subject of the student teacher. The whole teaching practice remains indifferent with regard of subject knowledge of pupil teacher.

Teacher demand and supply: There is mismatch between demand and supply of trained teachers-area wise, subject wise and perspective wise. The population of India is increasing day by day and private schools are overcrowded with excess strength of students, so the schools are requiring trained teachers who will be capable enough to perform their duties as per the latest trends. So, Teacher education programmes should be able to ascertain the specific needs of society.

These are the problems faced by the two year B.Ed programme on the real practical ground. For maintaining quality in teacher education, different efforts are made by the government and courses are revised from time to time. During a meeting of the State Education Ministers in 2015-2016 presided over by then HRD Minister Smritilrani, the Centre rolled out two 4-year 'integrated courses' – B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed and 3 year B.Ed.-M.Ed. integrated course. These courses will be practically implemented from session 2018-2019.

The Human Resource Development Ministry revised the teacher education courses' duration and syllabus following the adjudication. The B.A B.Ed. integrated course got a lot of attention thereon. Wondering why? At the present time, the most opted career after the B.Ed. program is teaching. Moreover, the job is highly gratifying and induces self-pride. A teacher stays well-versed with the evolving trends and stays updated with the changes in the line of the field. The ministry wants the teacher training course to be like the B.Tech or MBBS programme. There should be only Integrated BA-B.Ed and BSc-B.Ed courses so that serious students join this noble profession.

As an outcome of integrated BA-B.Ed and B.Sc-B.Ed courses it can be expected that after the completion of these courses teachers will possess sufficient knowledge of subject matter to teach with confidence; will equip with knowledge and skills in a range of appropriate and varied teaching methodologies; and can have Fluency in the

language of instruction. These outcomes are expected on the following grounds:

- Ensures the best entrants to the teaching profession
- Individuals with mental readiness can enter only
- Freedom in choice of the subject combinations (BA & B.Ed both)
- Provision to enhance the knowledge of particular subject of the student teacher
- Short duration of the course helps in retaining interest of the students
- Better able to ascertain the specific needs of society (demand and supply)

The above mentioned outcomes can't be achieved easily. In the implementation of integrated courses we do have to face few challenges, like:

- Developing the awareness and sensitivity towards the integrated programme.
- Orientation of the teacher educators about integrated courses
- Detailed orientation related to new subjects and topics should be provided to the teacher educators
- Enabling teachers to appreciate and acquaint themselves with new syllabi
- Provision of infrastructural resources
- Enriched library as per new syllabi
- Scarcity in getting PTET/CTET candidates
- Change in government recruitment procedure

At the end, I would like to conclude that recommendations sometimes lead to effective change and sometimes do not. For instance, the outcome of this integrated programme will depend

upon support received through different individuals involve in the implementation of this integrated programme like different universities and teacher educators etc. The more one goes down from the system level to the chalk face level of actual teaching, the more the balance seems to go from accountability as the main aim of quality assurance is the improvement of educational quality.

References

- Altbach, P. (2006). The Dilemmas of Ranking. *International Higher Education*, 42(3), 26-38.
- Barrie, S.C., Ginns, P. & Prosser M. (2005). Early impact and outcomes of institutionally aligned, student focused learning perspective on teaching quality assurance. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30(6), 641-656.
- Biggs, J. (2001). The reflective institution: assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 41(3), 221-238.
- Harvey, L. & Stensaker, B. (2007). *Quality culture: Understandings, boundaries and linkages*. Paper presented to the 29th EAIR FORUM, Innsbruck, Austria.
- Loughran, J. (2014). Professionally developing as a teacher educator. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(4), 271-283.
- Maitraya, B. (2005). *Administration and Recogonisation of Teacher Education*. New Delhi India: Kanishka Publishers.
- Murray, J. M. T. (2005). Becoming a teacher educator: Evidence from the field. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 21, 125-142.

■