

QUALITY CONCERNS IN TEACHER EDUCATION (EVALUATION ISSUES FOR QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION)

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ABSTRACT

The progress of a nation always depends on knowledge acquired through education and its sensible application. For global, national and regional progress quality education is indispensable. To improve the quality of education, teacher education is a significant vehicle. We require quality teachers who are dedicated to teaching and outfitted with essential knowledge, skills and competencies for effective teaching to deliver excellent education and to fulfill the needs of society. In this age of liberalization, privatization and globalization to enhance the quality of teacher education is very important and challenging task.

KEYWORDS: Teacher, Teacher Education, Quality Concern, Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization

INTRODUCTION

Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life. They reveal and elaborate the secrets of attaining higher values in life and nurture empathy for the fellow beings. Teachers are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. They not only disseminate knowledge but also create and generate new knowledge. They are responsible for acculturating role of education. No nation can even marginally slacken its efforts in giving necessary professional inputs to its teachers and along with that due status to their stature and profession. Teacher education is the backbone of the society. It is the quality of teacher education that decides the quality of human resource in a country. The management and sustenance of quality in teacher education is a great challenge for the policy planners and managers in the changing scenario. Quality has become the watchword of current educational growth not only in India but also at the global level. If we are to survive in this competitive, market oriented and technology driven world where boundaries of country are fastly disappearing, then there is no existence without quality.

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. Various attempts have been made in teacher education programme to improve the status of teacher education in India. The NPE (1986) has suggested establishing DIETs (District institute of education and training) , CTE (Colleges of Teacher Education) and IASE (Institute of Advanced Studies In Education) for providing teacher education at various levels. Besides these, university department and national level organizations is also conducting in- service education programme. But quality is still poor. Many issues are involved in the teacher education programme which should be tackled well if we want to ensure quality in teacher education. Some of these are -

Issues in Teacher Education Programme

- Problem of selection- our selection of teachers is quite defective. There is no standard screening criteria for the selection of Indian teachers. Defective selection procedure may lead to the deterioration of the quality of teachers. Therefore proper selection of teachers should be made on the bases of aptitude test and personal interview.
- Duration - our teacher education programme earlier used to be of nine months duration but a drastic change has been introduced by extending its duration to two years to make it at par with the training of other professionals. But it is still in its infancy stage so no valid conclusion can be drawn about its effectiveness. We can't predict to what extent it will help us to fulfill the broad objectives of education.
- Incompetency of student teacher- there is a gap between theory and practicing component of training institution. Students are not well prepared to face the complexities of real life. So this gap must be fulfilled at priority basis.
- Problem of practice teaching- period of teaching practice observed in our teacher education institution is very limited and a ritual only. Our supervisors lack the vision for this important component of teaching. They don't have enough time to observe and provide needed feedback to practicing pupil teacher. So a clear framework should be developed regarding teaching practice phase in teacher education institutions.
- Teacher demand and supply- there is a mismatch between the demand and supply of trained teachers- area wise, subject wise and perspective wise. This is primarily because of inadequate database of requirements for teachers. So it becomes the responsibility of the state to create database and liaison with the teacher education colleges.
- Isolation of teacher education department- our departments hardly develop linkages with schools, peer institutions, universities and other institutes of higher learning as also the community. However much remain to be done in this direction. The curriculum of the school, its actual transactional modalities, examination system, management process and its ethos need to be the main thrust areas of teacher education programme. Teacher education institutes should work in collaboration with the larger society.
- Lack of innovative practices- our teacher educator's still practice obsolete methods of teaching. They are not innovative in their ideas, thoughts and approaches. Need of the hour is to incorporate latest technology in teaching learning process
- Less opportunities for professional development- to produce the quality teachers we must focus upon their maximum professional development. Every teacher must take the opportunity to continue his/her professional development throughout his/her career. Teachers should be open to ideas, to refine decisions making skills and to become more effective in integrating theory and practice.
- Mushrooming of teacher education institutions- the last decade has evidenced the mushrooming growth of teacher education institutes leading to a very unhealthy suicidal trend that is commercialization. Education has come into control of people who do not have any concern with quality of teacher education. For them colleges are money making machines. This growth has created a new category of students popularly known as non attending. So there should be a check on opening of such institutions

- Problem of infrastructure- although we have a long list of teacher education colleges but majority of them lacks the required infrastructure to carry out teaching learning activities. Facilities are there but only in papers. Infrastructure is made available only at the time of inspection. As soon as the team leaves the college, there is nothing. This disease can be curbed only with the proper interventions from the bodies governing the teacher education programme.

So these are some of issues or challenges that our teacher's education is facing. There is need to come forward and take some concrete steps. More attention must be paid to defining and assessing global competence in teaching and learning. Training teachers for the global age also requires that teacher educators who are preparing future teachers in our colleges need to develop the capacities as well as the knowledge, skills and dispositions to help pupil teacher acquire them.

Only way out for this is securing international collaboration. The Teacher Education programs need to integrate innumerable skills and competencies. It is necessary to shift to more powerful learning paradigms, such as, linear to hypermedia learning, instruction to discovery and construction, teacher centered to learner centered education, absorbing material to learning how to navigate and learn, learning as taxing to learning as fun, teacher as transmitter to teacher as facilitator. We need to bridge the gaps between to have and to be. There is a need to bridge the gaps between Teaching Styles and Learning Styles providing differentiated differential learning experiences to learners of all the learning styles- audio, video and kinesthetic; cognitivist, behaviouristic and constructivist; accommodators, divergers, convergers and assimilators. Education should be value added. Character building should be one of the primary aims of education. Every teacher Education institution ought to have valid identity. Valid identity means valid institutional land & plant, valid setting, valid inputs, valid processes and valid products.

In view of the above ground realities and inline with the laid out priorities the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), set out to develop quality indicators for teacher education. The indicators are the outcome of the recommendations of senior teacher educators and experts in education from eleven Commonwealth countries. Experts from Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Singapore and United Kingdom (U.K.), participated in the initial workshop and subsequent development Using these indicators, which are introspective, the institution can create internal quality structures for the appraisal of the quality provisions of the system, which in turn would lead to continuous monitoring and improvement. The main objective in developing these indicators is to provide a tool for continuous quality improvement and to energize and sustain the institutions quality enhancement efforts. This document contains twenty five quality aspects and seventy five quality indicators spread under the six key areas of functioning of a teacher education institutions.

The Key Areas (KAs) represent six dimensions of a teacher education institutions functioning encompassing all its academic as well as administrative and management activities In developing the quality indicators the NAAC – COL team took into account the functioning of several pioneering teacher education institutions across the Commonwealth countries which have developed and put to use mechanisms for quality training provision and effective functioning of their institutions. Within each identified key area specified functional aspects have been detailed as Quality Aspects (QAs).

- Criterion I : Curricular Aspects
- Criterion II : Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

- Criterion III: Research, Consultancy and Extension
- Criterion IV: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

CONCLUSIONS

The above discussion clearly indicates the enormous task ahead of the institution of teacher education, integrating all aspects in the course to achieve the goal of education. Teacher with competences and commitment, encompassed by professional ethics are the need of hour. The challenges are ever changing and never ending. Thus both teacher education and teacher educators require and systematic review of their benchmarks followed by a serious planning and consideration about restructuring and resetting of teacher education institutes. This can bring about drastic changes in teachers and improve the quality of teachers at all level of education.

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