

A Critical Evaluation of Contemporary Issues in Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

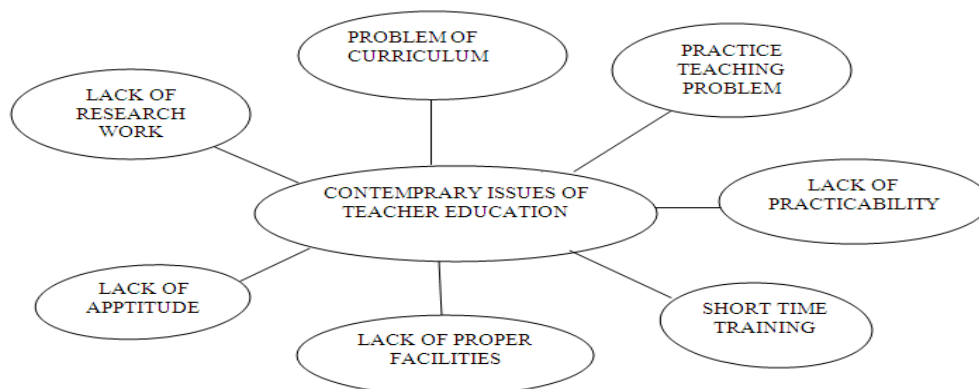
Today's globalized world is passing through a new era of knowledge explosion. Under globalized circumstances, the profession of teaching has undergone a sea change during last two decades. For example, learning is no longer a mere collection of facts, it is now a process of active construction of knowledge & skills through collaboration of modern techniques. As well the role of teacher in the present circumstances largely depends upon his proficiency in academics, teaching technology & emerging vision of a global society. It is the intense and global need of teacher education institutions to prepare teacher for tomorrow's classrooms. In this context the present paper highlights the changing scenario of teacher education which is facing various problems and issues related to the quality of teacher education. Through this paper authors discuss various topical issues related to quality of teacher education and provide some valuable suggestions to improve the quality of teacher education.

Key words: Teacher Education, Quality Education, Topical Issues

INTRODUCTION

No doubt education plays a significant role in national development but the quality of education is greatly determined by the quality of teachers. Teacher plays significant role in the development of human activities by providing quality education. A nation cannot imagine development without the committed, dedicated and quality teachers. The education scenario has dramatically changed from last few years. Recently in India a very important step was taken by government of India to pass RTE Act-2009 to provide education to all its citizens and provide right to education as a fundamental right status. In this situation the aims of national development are depends on education, it is important to ensure the quality of education that is further depends on the quality of its teachers. To produce quality teachers is the responsibility of teacher education system. The quality of teacher, to a large extent, depends on the quality of teacher education received by a teacher. Today, produce the quality teachers in an ongoing matter of concern at the national and international level. Teacher education has come to the center stage and has become the most important agent for change and development. It is the intense and global need of teacher education institutions to prepare quality teachers for tomorrow's classrooms. To produce quality teachers is very important matter of present educational scenario. Quality teacher education is one of the hottest debatable issue and basically the degree of excellence. In the present scenario teacher education is facing various problems and issues related to the quality of teacher education.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES OF TEACHER EDUCATION



The prevalent teacher education programme in India suffers from various deficiencies and problems resulting in deteriorating the standards of education.

Lack of Research Work: Research is very essential for the development of any field. It is only research that can remove the hurdles of education and improve the level of teacher education programme but the research work undertaken in teacher education institutions is theoretical, superfluous and meaningless in nature. Lack of interdisciplinary approach, inadequate funds and facilities, improper planning, lack of collaboration and consultation among teacher education colleges and various departments, no strong link between the practicing school and the teacher education institutions, lack of competence on the part of teacher educators are the main reasons for the low quality of research work. Although UGC and NCERT are promoting research in the field of education but after that researches in this area is so inferior quality.

Lack of Attitude in Trainees: Positive and favorable attitude is very necessary for any profession. But teacher education programme is suffering by this problem. It is the main problem in teacher education that the trainees have very low level of teaching attitude. Without positive and high teaching attitude in trainees it is not possible to improve the quality of teacher education.

Problem of Curriculum in Teacher Education: Another important weakness of the existing teacher education programme is the impractical, unrealistic and rigid curriculum. The curriculum adopted in teacher education programme is away from the realities of school. It is more theoretical rather than practical. It doesn't meet the present needs. There is much to be done in methods and techniques of teaching. Teacher education institutions in India are lacking in innovative methods and techniques. We perceive a wide gap between theory and practice. Teachers generally adopt traditional methods to impart education which create autocratic atmosphere in the classroom. Another important weakness of teacher education programme is its evaluation system. Teacher education programme in India is lacking in continuous and comprehensive evaluation and the prevalent evaluation procedures are not objective and criterion-oriented. Then, the lack of proper facilities in teacher education institutions is also a very important point that deserves serious consideration. Self-financing colleges of education are woefully lacking in various facilities such as proper building, libraries, laboratories, audio-visual equipments etc.

Problem of Proper Practice Teaching: Practice teaching plays an important role during teacher training programme. By the practice teaching trainees can use theoretical part of training in real classroom situation and it can help the trainees to find out the lack area of teaching profession in them. During teaching practice positive and favorable attitude developed in the trainees. Through teaching practice problems related in real classroom situation can also find out and may be removed by teacher educators and observers. But there is a lack of seriousness in trainee teachers towards teaching practice. So this is also affecting the teacher training programme.

Problems Related to In-Service Teacher Education: In-service teacher education is also a very important aspect of teacher education programme that suffers from various deficiencies. In India, various in-service teacher education programmes are organized, but such programmes are lacking in quality and they are not carried out effectively. The main purpose of these programmes is to refresh and update the knowledge of teachers by making them aware of latest developments that have taken place. Such programmes aim not only at the enhancement of the academic and professional knowledge of the teachers but at the improvement of their teaching skills and competencies. The major weakness from which the in-service teacher education programmes are suffering is the lack of periodic and adequate evaluation of the whole programme and a proper follow-up of all the participants of the programme. Distance education programmes have made education easily accessible to teachers, but these programmes need improvement as they suffer from various deficiencies such as lack of multimedia approach in teaching, the poor quality of self-learning material supplied by the universities, the improper design of the programme, the casual approach adopted by the teaching staff during the personal contact programmes etc.

Short Term Training: Teacher education programmes in India are too short term. Especially B. Ed programme for secondary teachers is very short term. It is only one year duration. The objectives of teacher education as; development of proper and positive attitude, development of teaching skills, development of values and committed ness towards teaching profession, development of research attitude among trainees cannot achieved in such short time.

Lack of Practicability: The major deficiencies from which teacher education institutions suffer is that they have by and large remained isolated not only from the academic life of the University, but also from the daily problems of the schools. Moreover, they have remained isolated from one another. In the present situation several of the skills acquired and methodology learnt by trainees seldom practiced in actual school system.

DISCUSSION

After realizing the aforesaid problems and deficiencies in prevalent teacher education programme in India, it is essential to make substantial efforts to remove them to improve the quality of teacher education programme, National Policy on Education-1986 and Programme of Action, 1992 have suggested to re-organize and overhaul the system of teacher education and have called for strengthening teacher education in the country. Programme of Action suggest develop norms and standards for teacher education institution at different levels. So, there is an urgent need to establish statutory mechanism to develop national norms for teacher education institutions and to make them implement the prescribed norms related to staff requirements, admission criteria and basic amenities such as laboratories, libraries, building and equipments etc. This step will be helpful in weeding out sub-standard institutions.

Teacher education has, by and large, remained isolated from the main stream of the academic life of the universities. In this context, Kothari Commission (1964-66) states, " Education should be considered as an independent subject. It should be taught at an undergraduate level." In order to break isolation from schools, the same commission states that teacher education institutions should give guidance to neighborhood schools. Further it suggests that practice teaching should be organized with the co-operation of certain selected schools. In order to remove isolation of teacher education institutions from one another, it has recommended to establish comprehensive colleges and to constitute State Boards to determine curriculum, text books etc.

There is a pressing need to bring significant changes in selection and admission policies and procedures. National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992) have suggested develop reliable and valid tools and techniques for the selection and admission of suitable and eligible candidates. Acharya Rammurti Committee (1990) suggested that select students on the basis of stringent aptitude and attainment and not merely on the basis of University marks or grades. Another improvement is required in the curriculum for teacher education at different levels. There is need to develop practical curriculum which can meet the changing needs of the society and a periodic review of the curriculum is necessary to bring about necessary changes in it. The teacher education and the school education have a symbiotic relationship. In order to bring qualitative improvement in the entire spectrum of teacher education, it is necessary to develop both these sectors. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2010) developed by NCTE has stressed on improving the quality of teacher education by incorporating a newer vision for school education.

This framework focuses on various issues such as reorientation of teachers for enabling the child to learn through activities, discovery and exploration of environment and surrounding in a child- friendly manner, development of perspective for sustainable development, gender perspective, inclusive education, introduction of ICT and E-learning. There is much to be done in the field of methods of teaching. Modern and innovative methods like project and discussion methods should be used in place of traditional methods to create democratic atmosphere in the classroom. Educational Technology, ICT, various maxims of teaching, and other instructional aids should be used to create conducive environment in the classroom and to make teaching effective. There should be proper allocation and utilization of funds to increase various physical facilities such as adequate building, proper libraries, laboratories and audio-visual aids etc. in our teacher education institutions particularly in Self-financing Colleges of Education. Reliable, valid, objective and criterion-oriented tools and techniques of evaluation procedure need to be developed for the continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

There is a dire need to bring improvement in the research work undertaken in teacher education institutions. All the teachers need to be familiarized with the elementary research procedures so that they can view their academic problems in a scientific way. Efforts should be made to promote action research in the field of education. To promote original, practical and valuable research in teacher education programme, there is need to take various steps such as adopting interdisciplinary approach, providing adequate funds and facilities, organizing seminars, workshops and conferences for proper planning of research work, promoting collaboration and consultation among teacher colleges and various departments, establishing strong link between the practicing school and the teacher education institutions, providing facilities of documentation and dissemination of research findings through publication of M.Ed. dissertations, good doctoral theses and reports of various research projects. Moreover, the libraries in teacher education institutions should subscribe to good journals that report educational researches.

In-service teacher education programmes need to be carried out effectively. In this context, Acharya Rammurti Committee (1990) suggests that In-service and Refresher Courses need to be specific and they should cater to the specific future needs of the teachers. For this, it has recommended to make evaluation and follow-up an essential part of the programme. There should be periodic and proper evaluation of the whole programme. An adequate follow-up of all the participants of the programme is also essential for the effectiveness of the programme. In-service teacher education programmes are very expensive from the point of view of time, efforts and money. So a great care should be taken that the largest number of

teachers should be benefited by these programmes. Less expensive methods like evening classes, in-service teacher education programmes on radio and television etc. should be found. There is a great need to develop strong distance education system of in-service education by adopting multi-media approach. It can be strengthened by a proper design of personal contact programmes and supply of good quality of self-learning material.

Suggestions for Improvement: After the above discussion following steps may be taken for the improvement of teacher education in India:

1. Reforming curricula of teacher education. Present curriculum is very theoretical in nature; add practical content in the curriculum of teacher education.
2. Improvement in entry of criteria in teacher education programme. Enter only trainees with positive teaching attitude. The admission procedures of teacher education programme especially in B.Ed. should be completely systematized and steps should be taken to make it full proof against tempering.
3. Increase research and innovation in teacher education. Researches related real class room situation, curriculum improvement, teaching methods and use of new technology in teaching etc. should be promote by the government.
4. Time duration of teacher education especially for secondary teachers is very short; it should be of two years for proper training.
5. Focusing continuing and in-service education for teachers. Refresher courses, seminars, workshops and conferences should be conducted time to time for the improvement of professional competence among in service teachers.
6. Appoint qualified teacher educators in teacher education institutions.
7. Arrangement of attached school with every teacher education institutions for proper practice of trainee teachers.
8. Library, laboratories and other learning resources should be arranged in teacher education institutions. Library are need to be enriched with complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with all available journals for use by all the researchers and trainees.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the basis of above discussion we can conclude that in order to bring improvement in teacher education, it is necessary to remove the isolation of teacher education institutions by bringing them into the mainstream of the academic life of the universities and by building up a closer relationship with the schools, Universities and the other teacher education institutions. There is a need to provide financial aid to expand various facilities. It is necessary to promote research work and publication in order to bring innovation in the field of teacher education. The Government should offer proper incentives to teachers to attract and retain competent and talented persons in teaching profession. Further, there is a need to establish statutory mechanism to maintain the standard of teacher education institutions to bring qualitative improvement in teacher education.

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