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EDUCATION - A CHALLENGE FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Mukta Kumari

Assistant Professor

Education Department, D.L.S. P.G. College

Bilaspur, Chattisgarh, India

Abstract

Teachers play a vital role in the improvement of the quality of education which further one of the major roles in the development of any country. In India, more than 70% people lives in villages and the literacy rate of the village is very low. The socio, cultural, economic, scientific development and advancement of a country depend on the quality of the people which ultimately depend on the education of the person. Without maintaining the quality of teachers, school and curriculum, progress of any nation cannot be envisaged. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers. The world is changing rapidly due to the science and technological developments. The new technologies have also greatly influenced the educational fields. Teachers need to be prepared as per the need of the innovative concepts of education and the need of the 21st Century.

In this paper, I try to highlights the issues which are challenges in front of us to improve the quality of education in the 21st Century in India to compete with the rest of the world. The issues like training of teachers, training of school and post-school teachers, curriculum, ineffective method of teaching, practice teaching, in service training, professional development, acquaintances with modern class-room devices like smart classes, computer, internet etc., poor academic background of the student teacher, ICT Skill Development etc. NEP 2020 has been now been recently implemented which will improve the condition of education in India.

Keywords: Curriculum, Ethics, Moral Values, Quality, Teacher.

Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in the improvement of the quality of education which further one of the major roles in the development of any country. In India, more than 70% people lives in villages and the literacy rate of the village is very low. The socio, cultural, economic, scientific development and advancement of a country depend on the quality of the people which ultimately depend on the education of the person.

Without maintaining the quality of teachers, school, colleges and other educational organizations, no change or improvement should be expected. It is a universal fact that the progress of any country directly varies with the quality of teachers & schools and today when there is a virtual explosion of information, it is highly essential that teacher education is of the highest quality and standard.

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) document of 1998, stresses that teachers are the torchbearers in creating social cohesion and national integration by revealing and elaborating the secrets of attaining higher values in life. World is growing very fast. The new technologies have also greatly influenced the educational fields. Teachers need to be prepared as per the need of the innovative concepts of education and the need of the learners of 21st century. Therefore, teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education.

Educationists throughout the world have agreed that the training of the teachers is of utmost importance in any educational endeavor. The wealth of a nation depends on how effectively its young minds are trained and educated to take up the challenges of the future. With such a great responsibility, it is very important to strengthen the teaching profession. There is a need for greater emphasis on continuing education for teachers to meet the growing demands of teaching profession.

Issues and Problems in Teacher Education & its solution

The point wise major challenges and its solution have been described briefly.

Teacher student ratio: In any assessment of the educational system, it is important to know whether there are enough teachers, who are not only well qualified to teach different subjects, but are also able to cope with the changing curriculum and growth in knowledge. In school, normally the ideal ratio between teacher and student should not be more than 25. In European countries, this ratio is as low as 10. Strangely, In India this ratio is as high as 50 to 60.

Training of teachers: It is an important component of teacher education. Teacher education covers the whole gamut of activities involved in the accomplishment of the teaching profession. Pre-service and in-service training are the major activities involved in it.



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In service Training: It is expected that teachers at any stage will bring out the best child in youth and help them to realize their maximum potential. It is desirable that they should undergo in service training at regular intervals at least once in every 5 years. This will promote sound teacher performance and high-quality learning among students in cognitive, affective and psycho motor areas of human development

Teacher monopoly: The teacher has lost the monopoly of instruction. In the past the pupils accepted whatever teacher offered without a word. Now a days, if teacher will try to be strict than the parents as well as students does not like this.

Curriculum: The courses offered in the school are of general nature and did not appear to be relevant for the professional development of students. The **theory** courses in particular have no articulation with practical world and teaching skills requirements. There was over emphasis on theory and under emphasis on **practicals**.

The curriculum of teacher education has been suitably reoriented to respond to the emerging realities at the school level. ICT Skill Development, which is a part of the training programme will enable the teacher trainee to develop competency in using of offline and online electronic resources and encourage them to use internet for improvement of school teaching. ICT skills if properly utilized by computer literate teacher educators, transfer of newly exploded knowledge over an expanded area will be possible in minimum time with maximum efficiency.

Time constraint: There were also time constraints to complete the syllabus on time. Teachers are more oriented to complete the course curriculum instead of giving the quality education.

Ineffective method of teaching: There is shortage of infrastructural facilities in most of the schools to facilitate the teachers to use new technological innovations in their class room including audio visual aids. This should be improved.

Practice Teaching: Practice teaching continues to be the weakest link of the entire teacher education programme. The attitude of most of the schools towards practice teaching is discouraging. Teaching practice is considered as a disruption in their normal teaching. The school authorities consider it as waste of time and resources. Teaching practices play an important role in B.Ed. programme.

Professional development: It is very unfortunate that professional attitude is missing from our teachers. In the present scenario most of teachers teaching is confined only to lectures and dictating notes. Their acquaintance with modern class-room devices is negligible.

Poor academic background of the student teacher: In many cases student teachers do not have requisite motivation and adequate academic background for a well-deserved entry in the teaching profession. Attempt should be made to recruit first and good second-class students to teacher training institutions and methods to be adopted to enhance the English language proficiency of the student teachers.

Undervalued profession: To attract the highest-quality entrants, we also need to hold teachers in high esteem. Teaching is arguably the most challenging profession of all, yet unlike Finland – where teachers accrue similar respect to doctors – we don't recognize that teaching deserves the same respect and trust as the medical profession. Finland also demands graduate teaching qualifications.

Career growth: To attract the best candidates, prospective teachers need to see a career progression. Using the current lead teacher and accomplished teacher categories but linked with an appropriate pay level progression would be a good start. Teachers have a crucial role in improving student outcomes. We need not only to lift course and graduate standards, but also to ensure teachers are well supported so they can contribute fully as highly developed experts in a widely respected profession.

Proper use of audio visuals aids and proper application of the concept of education technology are strongly desired to convert the traditional and more or less lifeless teaching practices into an effective and lively teaching-learning system.

Method of teaching: Instead of traditional **chalk and talk** method of imparting instruction, teaching method should be **aid-oriented**. Scope for maximum teacher-student interaction during teaching must be created to make teaching-learning process attractive.

Technology based teaching will be highly effective method towards transfer of knowledge. Further to cope with the problem of infrastructure more financial grants should be provided to the schools so that they can provide more infrastructural facilities to the teachers (example improving library, setting well-equipped laboratories, acquisition of teaching aids etc.)

Raising the economic status: To keep the quality teachers in teaching profession salary and other conditions must be sufficiently attractive as compared to any other top profession. Lack of quality to some extent may be responsible for lack of security in terms of service, stability and salary. If the teachers are provided with high salary and better living condition, it will motivate them to be true to their profession.

Monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring and continuous evaluation should be an integral part of teacher education programme to know the strengths and weaknesses and make it more objective and transparent for optimizing the effectiveness of the programme. A systematic review of the teacher education programme at regular intervals can bring about drastic changes in teachers and improve the quality of teachers at all levels. A system of supervision by the higher authorities can improve the functioning of teachers training institutions.



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The study of educational principles: There has been much dispute as to whether the study of educational principles is to be seen as part of the liberal element in the course, contributing to the teacher's general education and personal development, or whether it is properly an adjunct to the professional sequence, serving to illuminate and enrich students' method courses and practical work.

In recent years there has been a revival of interest in the social sciences as an integral feature of teacher-education programs. This is partly recognition of the popularity of studies of this kind among students, partly a reflection of their relevance in a time of rapid social and educational change, and partly a function of the larger supply of qualified social scientists available to teach them.

Future Developments in Teacher Education

Coming decades are likely to see continuing development and change in teacher education. Post-secondary and higher education may soon reach between a third and a half of the population in many advanced countries. The teacher must adjust to new developments in educational technology, the growth of human knowledge, and the problem of creating a relevant and appropriate curriculum from the enormous range of material available. There will be new understanding of how children develop and learn.

Raising the professional status of teaching

A first challenge is to raise the status of teaching as a career choice, to attract more able people into teaching and to develop teaching as a knowledge-based profession. **For example, the secret to Finland's success: educating teachers**, only one in 10 applicants is accepted to study to become a primary teacher in Finland.

Attracting the best and brightest school leavers to teaching is only a first step for top-performing nations. They also work to understand the nature of expert teaching and use this understanding to shape initial teacher education programs, coaching and mentoring arrangements and ongoing professional development. Features of these high-performing systems include rigorous teacher education courses and well-developed processes for defining and recognizing advanced teaching expertise.

Designing a 21st Century Curriculum

A third challenge is to re-design the school curriculum to better prepare students for life and work in the 21st century. Today's world is vastly different from that of 50 years ago. And the pace of change is accelerating, with increasing globalisation; advances in technology, communications and social networking; greatly increased access to information; an explosion of knowledge; and an array of increasingly complex social and environmental issues. The world of work also is undergoing rapid change with greater workforce mobility, growth in knowledge-based work, the emergence of multi-disciplinary work teams engaged in innovation and problem solving, and a much greater requirement for continual workplace learning. The school curriculum must attempt to equip students for this significantly changed and changing world.

However, many features of the school curriculum have been unchanged for decades. We continue to present disciplines largely in isolation from each other, place an emphasis on the mastery of large bodies of factual and procedural knowledge and treat learning as an individual rather than collective activity. This is particularly true in the senior secondary school, which then influences curricula in the earlier years. NEP 2020 has been now been recently implemented which will improve the condition of education in India.

Conclusion

The socio, cultural, economic, scientific development and advancement of a country depend on the quality of the people which ultimately depend on the education of the person. Without maintaining the quality of teachers, school and curriculum, progress of any nation cannot be envisaged. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers. The qualities of education in the 21st century in India have to compete with the rest of the world. The issues like training of teachers, training of school and post-school teachers, curriculum, ineffective method of teaching, practice teaching, in service training, professional development, acquaintances with modern class-room devices like smart classes, computer, internet, poor academic background of the student teacher, ICT Skill Development etc. should be analyzed and taken care to improve the status of education. After this, we can expect our India to compete with the world.



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