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PROBLEMS AND CONCERN OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN PRESENT DAYS SCENARIO

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Abstract: Teacher education is one of the most important programmes to improve the quality of school education. It is concerned with providing teaching skills and proficiency to the prospective teachers. In the view of current changes in the social, cultural, economic and political environment, the radical change is essential in the teacher education so that teachers could raise their standard with the changing needs of the society. In the present, the unexpected growth in a large number of non-government teacher training institutions has worsened the quality of the teaching programme. It is observed that non-government institutions lack of adequate physical infrastructure and produce a large number of incompetent teachers. Moreover, the ratio between demand and supply of teachers also has created a major problem. In the present scenario, various other problems also have emerged in the teacher education field like the low standard methods of teaching, traditional curriculum, the problem of supervision, inadequate empirical research, profit orientation of education, etc. Keeping in consideration all these problems and concern, the educationists, policy makers, curriculum planners, and other stakeholders need to reconstruct and reform the teacher education programme for the growth and development of teachers as well as for the nation.

Introduction

The improvement and advancement of any country depends on the value and quality of its citizens. The quality citizens are the results of its education system and quality of education. However, the most significant factor of all is the quality of teachers. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) rightly stated, "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 as in the community." The teacher plays a vital role in the development of a comprehensive education system. It brings out the latent capabilities of the learners and helps in their all-round development of personality. In this regard, the Kothari Commission (1964-66) has rightly said, "the destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms." The command over subject knowledge, professional commitment, good communication skills, dedication, and motivation are the required traits of quality teachers. To achieve such traits there is dire need of quality teacher education. Teacher education is concerned with policies framework and procedures and endowment which are designed to provide information, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and skills to prospective teachers to perform their task effectively in the school and society. India, being the world's third largest education system, is among the largest system of teacher education in the world (Sheikh, 2017). The educational expansion, universalization of elementary education (UEE) and implementation of Right to Education (RTE, 2009), vocationalization of secondary education, higher and professional education have created an enormous requirement of teachers. Our country requires a plenty supply of quality teachers to meet this challenge. After independence, the efforts began for the growth of teacher education in our country. The formation of teachers training institutions began to meet the demand of essential teachers but the reform in teacher education has been one of the enduring concerns in the reports of various commissions and committees on education. The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended "professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programmes, comprehensive colleges of education and internship." The National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) suggested five-year integrated courses and internship. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) recommended "the overhaul of teacher education to impart it a professional orientation." As a result of its recommendation, the centrally-sponsored scheme of restructuring and reorganization of teacher education came into existence in 1987 which incorporated the establishment of DIETs, CTEs, IASEs and SCERTs. Taking steps in reforming the teacher training programmes, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) announced new ideas and fresh proposals to improve the quality of education at all levels with the introduction of concepts like operation blackboard, micro-planning, minimum levels of learning, decentralized management, and modernization of teaching-learning process. The implementation of these ideas required a large-scale orientation of teachers and the drastic change in pre-service teacher education programmes. The NPE Review Committee (1990) and the National Advisory Committee on 'Learning without Burden' (1993) also gave emphasis on the need for qualitative reform of teacher education and suggested various measures.

In the contemporary situation, a huge number of teachers are untrained. In some areas, the situation is not very hopeful. It has been noticed that teacher educators are neither professionally qualified nor committed to their profession. The quality in pre-service education has shown the worsening condition. Naseem & Anas (2011) highlighted the various problems that are existing in Indian

Teacher Education. While Sharma (2012) emphasized the need for ICT in the professional growth of the teacher and determining the global economy. The rise in sub-standard institutions of teacher education is the cause of such emerging problems and mismanagements. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher (NCFTE, 2009) expressed concern over the quality of teacher education. Though, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has taken quality improvement in teacher education, the system is still not fulfilling the essential need of providing competent and committed teachers after completing the initial teacher training programmes. A huge number of teacher training institutions are not following the instruction and guidelines of NCTE. This highlights the fundamental mismanagements in our present teacher education system. At present, the radical change in the organization of curriculum, use of modern technologies and more emphasis on advanced and creative practices are necessity of the period. Thus, teacher training programme has to be re-entered, transformed, and reoriented today.

There are following major problems and concerns prevailing in the teacher education system.

Selection Procedure

A continuing problem of the pre-service teacher training programme is to select the high-quality aspirants and to refute admission to those who do not have aptitude and commitment to the teaching profession. The main goal of the teacher training programme is to identify the candidates who exhibit the personal attributes (sincerity, honesty, potentiality, commitment, impartiality and neutrality), the subject and pedagogical knowledge that are believed to lead to successful outcomes. The problem arises when those candidates enter this programme who do not have necessary competencies and qualities required for such an important profession. Consequently, it results in the production of poor-quality teachers in the education system. Thus, it is essential of the hour to evolve an objective procedure which can help in a suitable selection of persons who are likely to become efficient teachers (Reddy 1992).

Issue of Quality

High quality teacher education certainly plays a significant role in the production of high-quality teachers and thereafter in the nation building. The nation which is incompetent of providing quality teacher education can't produce high quality competent and skilled teachers. Trained, skilled and competent teachers shape the future of the children. The quality of a teacher reflects in his/her mastery over the subject, professional commitment, good transportations, analytical skills, and different learning tactic. Therefore, well trained, skilled, proficient and dedicated teachers are the utmost assets of any education organisation and thereby of the nation. Teachers' quality is fundamentally connected with the students' learning outcomes (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). In the on-going time, the quality concern in the field of education has emerged as a great problem in the time of globalization and privatization. The present teacher training programme is designed in such a manner that it does not provide the proper opportunities to trainee to develop essential teaching skills. According to Anees (2015) "despite realizing various measures still, numerous problems of teachers training exist in India. The main problem of the present teacher education system has been identified 'the unproductive trained teachers." According to Desai (2011) "several insufficiencies in the teacher training programme in India have been in identified. This situation arises because the organizers of teacher's training programme are not aware of the present problems of schools. Thus, it creates a problem in matching the work schedule of the teacher in the programme and school adopted for teacher preparation in a training college. It, consequently, results in incompetency of pupil-teacher in the area of teaching skills. As DIETs are facing problems of non-availability of qualified faculty. The working faculty does not possess qualifications or experience in elementary teacher education. The large number of CTEs face faculty shortage, poor library facilities, spends more time on initial teacher education." Sharma and Sharma (2015) 'identified various problems prevailing in the education sector where the major challenges are the lack of quality research work, shortage of faculty and high student-faculty ratio, the gap between the supply and demand of teachers, inadequate infrastructure and poor supervision in teacher education institutions.'

Problem of Teacher Readiness for Inclusive

Classrooms At present, in India, the population of 'Persons with Disabilities' (PWD) is large. They have to face various problems in daily life. The traditional faith and societal attitude toward their various problems makes it more serious for them. The availability of resources is so unusual and challenges are tremendous. According to the Official Estimate of the Census of India (2011) data on disability: office of the registrar general & census commissioner, India, about 2.68 crores or 2.21% of the total population are people with disabilities (PWD) in India. Among the persons with disabilities 56% (1.5 Cr) are males and 44% (1.18 Cr) are females. There are so many problems in teaching children with disabilities in regular classrooms. These problems are arising due to lack of proper infrastructure, material resources and undesirable attitudes of teachers. There is an urgent requirement to equip teachers to handle the problems of segregation prevailing in schools. Kaplan & Lewis (2013) 'stressed that inclusive education needs to be recognized as an essential learning objective for all student-teachers.' Das, Kuyini & Desai (2013) 'examined the current skill levels

of regular primary and secondary school teachers in Delhi, in order to teach students with disabilities in inclusive education settings. They found that about 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience teaching students with disabilities. Further, 87% of the teachers were out of access to the basic support services in their classrooms.' Yadava (2013) 'also found the deteriorating situation of unskilled teachers in the area of inclusive education.' Chatterjee (2003) highlighted the parental community's negative and resistant attitude towards the idea of inclusive education. According to Kumar (2007) Understanding the students with disabilities and accommodating their needs has become a central focus for higher education. The Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 opened the doors for the people with disabilities in the matters of education, vocational training and employment (Kumar, 2007). On ground reality, still, much has to be achieved in the area of inclusiveness. The National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005) clearly gives emphasis to child centred pedagogy that can meet the range of challenges confronting the inclusive school system. Inadequate teacher preparation has been identified as a major barrier to inclusive education in India (Singal, 2005a & 2005b). Therefore, there is an urgent need to take necessary steps to develop the required skills and giving training to prospective teachers in such a manner that they can cater to the needs of 'Students with Special Needs.'

Lack of Professional Development

The outdated approach to teaching is prevailing in schools among older teachers who were taught and have been teach in these traditional approaches. It gives more emphasis on mastery of content and procedures as the ultimate goal of instruction and little emphasis on child centre modern approaches. So many teacher training institution have not basic facilities like a library or laboratory and other equipment for the professional development of teachers. It has been noticed that a lot of teacher training institutions do not have their own basic facilities and infrastructure; they are being run in rented buildings. It leads to the weakening in the sound professionalization of teachers. Continuous Professional Development is essentially required for the success of the different teaching approaches. Researchers suggest that most effective Continuous Professional Development activities should be spread over time, be collaborative use active learning, be delivered to groups of teachers include periods of practice, coaching, and follow-up, promote reflective practice, encourage experimentation, and respond to teacher's needs (Sain & Kaware, 2014). In order to give teachers, the opportunity of sound professional development along with content & methodology, there is an urgent requirement to integrate emotional capabilities and life skills with individual development, continuing education, in-service education, curriculum writing, and peer collaboration etc.

Growing Pressure among Teachers

In the era of science and technology, fast and busy life has made the teaching profession physically and mentally very problematic. The teacher needs a lot of potentiality to deal with classroom situations and professional work. Sometimes, the teacher comes under stress due to a growing pressure. According to Eysenck (2001) "stress occurs when the perceived demands of a situation exceed the individual's perceived ability to handle those demands." Occupational stress has also influenced the professional growth of teachers. Occupational stress takes place when there is a disparity between the demand of the environment and an individual's capability to carry out a task. Nagra (2013) found a moderate level of occupational stress among teacher educators. The major causes for stress among teachers are excessive working hours, excessive workload, changes in curriculum and courses, rising class sizes, changes to assessment and testing requirements, poor management, workplace bullying, risk of violence from pupils, parents and intruders, lack of control over the job, lack of job security, burden of providing cover and lack of public esteem.

Not a handsome Salary of Teachers

The position of the teacher, since ancient times, has been regarded very prestigious in Indian society. The teacher, in ancient times, was called Guru and his/ her place was considered near to God. Respect and honour have always been great for the teachers in our society. In the present-day, still, we carry on this tradition of respecting our teachers. It reflects clearly as India has been ranked eighth in the world in terms of respecting its teachers (Global Teacher Status Index (GTSI- 2018). But the image is very gloomy when we come to the salary of the teachers, India stands among the least paying nations of the world. According to the Varkey Foundation (GTSI Report 2018), in the global index, India has been ranked 26th out of the 35 countries in terms of paying salary for its teachers, much below the developing neighbour Malaysia and much smaller countries such as Portugal, Chile, Czech, Hungary, Columbia among others. The highest paying countries are Switzerland, Germany, USA, Canada and Taiwan. Teachers' actual wage in India is much less than the wage considered fair for the job. According to the Global Teacher Status Index (GTSI, 2018), 'over 60 per cent of Indians think that teacher should be paid according to the performance record of their pupil. Implying if the outcome of the class is high, teachers should be paid more and if the number of students performing well is low, the teacher should be paid lesser.'

Lack of Training in information and communication technology (ICT)

In the modern era, information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the best tools to achieve access, inclusion, and quality in teacher education. ICT has become the indispensable part of the modern education system (Saxena, 2017). It has brought change in different aspects of the traditional educational process. The use of ICT in obtaining knowledge and skills has become an essential pre-requisite in teacher education. The proper use of ICT can bring significant changes in the whole teaching-learning process by bringing improvement in content and methodology (Sharma, Gandhar, & Seema, 2011). It improves the quality of instruction and encourages collaborative learning; it facilitates fast and accurate feedback to learners (Becta, 2003). According to Bhattacharjee & Dev (2016), ICT helps in developing innovative teaching skills and makes classroom teaching very effective. It also helps the teacher to motivate students and developing an interest in learning with the use of different media like hardware, software, internet & projector, etc. But there are some problems which are prevailing in our education system. Some teachers do not have clarity about how far technology can be beneficial for the facilitation and enhancement of learning due to lack of competency to handle it, whereas some teachers may have a positive outlook towards the technology. Teacher resistance and lack of enthusiasm to use ICT in education may also be another limitation (Sharma, 2015). Lack of infrastructure and equipment are another significant problem for the back warding Indian education system. It results in one of the major issues of present teacher education courses that the teacher trainees are not getting proper training in the information and communication technology (ICT). They do not know how to use ICT for facilitating their teaching-learning process. Even the teacher educators themselves lack in necessary ICT skills.

Isolation of Teacher's Education Department

About five decades ago, the National Education Commission (1964-66) highlighted the isolation of the teacher education system from other educational institutions. In the university, the education department remains isolated from other academic departments. It results in very little interaction between an academic department and education department in the university. Similarly, colleges of education get inadequate and insufficient support from university departments of education and SCERTs (Chauhan, 2004). There is a very weak and ineffective linkage between them. Therefore, there is need for planned and sustained efforts to establish linkages between them (Dhull, 2017).

Less Focus on Research and Innovations

The quality researches have been considerably neglected in the area of teacher education. The sufficient amounts of researches are not being conducted and not as per global standards (Kumar & Azad (2016). It has been observed that researches are conducted without keeping in mind the current issues and challenges of teacher education programmes. It results in no significant transformation in the existing educational system. There is an essential to develop the national arrangement for research in alignment with the local and national level priorities. It will eliminate the discrepancy between research trends and problems. The research methodology should be compatible with the local issues as well as national issues. There is a requirement to facilitate a space for innovations to take place so that the policy can draw from them. Researches and Innovations should be encouraged and research quality indicators should be evolved to expand the quality of empirical research. University departments and research institutions need to undertake the essential steps in the area of research. There is an urgent need for an inclusive framework for understanding the impacts of rapid developments and advancing implications for innovations in teacher training programme.

Lack of proper Infrastructures

It is definitely very crucial to have adequate physical facilities in terms material for providing sound professional training. It is the combination of several components such as knowledgeable teacher educators, good classrooms, library and laboratories which make good teacher education institute (Chauhan, 2004). The teacher training colleges suffer from inadequate physical facilities, classrooms, laboratories, libraries and Information & Communication Technology (ICT) facilities which do not have updated quality books and overall environment is not conducive (Khan, Fauzee & Daud, 2016). The most important problem is that a large number of teacher training institutions do not have experimental schools attached to them. So, it results in the difficulty of carrying out the practice teaching task of trainees effectively. This situation desires to be critically observed and improved.

Profit-Orientation of Education

In the present time, there has been a rise in the number of substandard teacher training institutions. The grave malpractices in such institutions have been a matter of great concern (Chauhan, 2004). These teacher training institutions are charging very high fees from trainee. Practices in these teacher training institutions are highly undemocratic and unjust. Such practices not only bring a downfall in the teacher training programme but also encourage commercialization of teacher education. These teacher training institutions do not follow the NCTE's norms and guidelines in the matter of staff recruitment, admission process, examination process, practice teaching and physical facilities etc.

Uneven Demand and Supply of Teachers

The unexpected growth of teacher training institutions and programmes in past few years along with the increase in school enrolments and the launch of Pan-Indian primary education development programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) have raised the demand for appointment of more trained teachers. The pre-service teacher training courses for appointment as a teacher have led to excessive burden on existing institutional capacity. The country has to address the necessity for producing well qualified and professionally trained teachers in massive numbers in the coming years. At the same time, the demand is also raising for maintaining the quality of secondary education. As per the recommendations it is being estimated to reach universal secondary education within a maximum of ten years. The qualities in most of the secondary schools are very poor due to lack of proper infrastructure and insufficient trained teachers. Therefore, it is very essential to address these problems and provide professionally well-trained secondary teachers.

Traditional Curriculum

The National Teacher Education Curriculum needs to be in accordance with the curriculum framework for school education. A teacher needs to be equipped to supply to the needs and demands of the school education and the learners and the learning process. Therefore, it is essential that the curriculum should be organised as per the ongoing demands of the school and society as well as for the nation. Khan (2013) emphasized on 'the need for significant transformation of the curriculum strategies and methods used in teaching.' In present day, the teacher training institutions are followed the traditional method for teacher training programmes without bringing the essential modifications with needs of trainee. The skill and proficiency development aspect are most neglected. The practice teaching aspect is not done according to the need and demand of the trainees. For the teaching of theory part consumes almost 70% time and practice teaching 30% of the total time available.

Hesitation towards Innovative Methods of Teaching

In our country, teacher educators hesitate in experimenting and adopting innovative teaching approach. They show hesitation towards learning modern techniques and use of information and communication technology. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) has brought a drastic change in simplifying the teaching-learning process. With the technological development, the teaching-learning process is not confined to the out-dated teaching methods only. New innovative approaches and methods have been developed in this area. The inadequate infrastructural facilities in most of the educational institutions make it more difficult for teachers to use various advanced technological innovations in their classroom including audio-visual aids. But the teacher's outlook is a big hurdle in adopting such innovative methods of teaching.

Suggestions

1. First of all, proper selection technique should be developed for selecting the proper candidate for the teacher training programme. The selection process for admission in teacher training institution should be updated in such a manner that the only those aspirants can get admission who have teaching aptitude and commitment to the teaching profession.

2. Secondly, the teacher training programme should be developed in such a way that it provides ample opportunities to trainees to develop their essential professional skills. It will help prospective pupil-teachers in their training to develop an all-round personality and making them competent enough to teach the learners.

3. Thirdly, the prospective trainees should be trained in such a way so that he/she can deal with the 'Children with Special Needs' along with the normal students in the comprehensive and inclusive classrooms. Inclusive and comprehensive education should be made an integral part of the teacher education curriculum.

4. Professional development of teacher educators is a continuous process. Therefore, New Refresher Course, Orientation Programmes, Workshops, Symposium and short-term courses should be encouraged on a frequent basis for the professional development of teacher educators. For the growth of professional temperament, the teacher training institution should be sufficiently furnished with facilities for start-up various types of activities such as refresher course, orientation programmes, workshops, symposium and short-term courses, daily assembly programmes, social work and other co-curricular activities.

5. Teacher educators need to learn various skills like meditation and yoga to maintain the balance between professional life and personal life. According to Sharma & Shakir (2017), the practice of meditation helps in relieving the stressful mind.

6. The teacher education departments should give more opportunity on conducting researches on teacher education, curriculum developments and evaluation procedure. Various induction programmes and exchange programmes with different universities within India and abroad should be sponsored by the government so that teachers can improve their quality.

7. Teacher educators need to be up dated with advance technology taking place in the area of education. Pupil-teachers should be taught the art of using information & communication technology (ICT) in the classroom to facilitate better teaching-learning process. Teacher educators should use innovative approaches with the changing demands of the education system.

8. It should be confirmed that the teacher training institutions have appropriate infrastructure for teacher training. NCTE should supervise the existing condition so that necessary action can be taken against such teacher training institutions if they have not required infrastructure.

9. NCTE should supervise the private teacher training institutions to stop them merely the platform of money making. Strict action should be taken against those teacher training institutions which are involved in commercialization and profit-orientation of education.

10. The Central Government and the State Governments should recruit a good quality teacher educator to solve the problem of unequal ratio of demand and supply in teacher education.

11. The curriculum for teacher training programme should be reorganised from time to time according to changing demand and latest developments of the society, nation, profession and globalized world. The advance research should be conducted to evaluate the course structure. The findings of such advance researches can be beneficial for assessing, evaluating and designing the curriculum of teacher education.

12. There should be a regular exchange of scholars, teachers from one department to the other in order to solve the problem of isolation of teacher training institution. It will also help in improving the quality of teacher training programmes immensely. Teacher education department should be intermingled with other departments of the university and should not work remotely.

Conclusion

Education is a procedure which encourages the innovative capability of an individual and supports him to concentrate his energies on the points he wants to fulfil. A nation become rich not by riches person but rather by its educated residents. It is this significant contribution of education in countrywide development that has made teachers occupation a respected position during ancient times and even at present. Education also helps in establishing a society which appreciates peace and stability and moves towards progress and improvement. The teacher is the vital point of the entire education system and the primary agent for bringing desirable changes in the teaching-learning process. The entire educational activities revolve around the teachers. Thus, quality teachers are the important factors in attaining sustainable global development. Therefore, their training, recruitment, retention, status and working conditions should be among global priorities today. But the shortage of well-trained teachers is a significant problem today. As per the UNESCO; Institute for Statistics (UIS) report to achieve universal primary education by 2030, the demand for teachers is expected to rise to 25.8 million. In this direction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entrusts UNESCO to lead and coordinate Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which has a purpose of bringing a substantial increase in qualified teachers. Since no education system can rise above the existing level without the quality of its teachers, vigorous efforts would be needed to bring substantial reforms. To fill this gap, the central government, regulatory bodied like NCTE, UGC and other statutory bodies like NCERT, NUEPA, IASE, Central Universities, premier institutions of education and policy planners with other stakeholders have to play a major role in this process of reform. The restructuring curriculum of teacher training programme needs to be revised according to the changing demand of the society and nation.

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