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Quality, excellence and challenges in teacher education in Era of globalization

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Abstract

A quality teacher's education program is rational and streamlined to address some specific pedagogical issues. Basically, it elucidates the idea about what good teaching is all about and then how it organizes course work and all practical experiences around it. Teacher's education courses are very much connected to practice as well as to theory. A good teacher's training programs have teachers working continuously with expert master teachers in a traditional classroom or virtual setting to enhance the knowledge and experience base.

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. Teacher quality has produced voluminous studies that line many a research library. Discussion on what it is, how it is developed, and its connection to student achievement have become the feature of educational slang in the 21st century. These seek to look at teacher quality in away in which it brings: as a means to review how the terms excellence and quality are shaped by policy, identify how educators perceive teaching quality and to review how quality is cultivated in teachers. Within this scope, this article provides an overview of teacher education and evaluation in India and lastly we discuss about issues and challenges in teacher education. Several studies related to classroom environment and teacher behavior in selected subjects are referenced. The results from different papers and articles and some interview with teachers from different schools and colleges indicate that some items may be irrelevant in the Indian context (e.g., physical characteristics), while more items may be needed to reflect good teaching in India (e.g., questioning skills). In addition, the potential use of teacher profiles to drive staff development and academic improvement is explored.

Keywords: Quality, excellence, challenges, teacher, education

Introduction

Primary and secondary teachers in India are trained at universities, 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. There are four types of teacher education institutions: (a) government managed, (b) examining body managed, (c) government aided and privately managed and (d) self-financed and privately managed.

Government of India 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:

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- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
- 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.

Meaning of Teacher Education

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, 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 & Excellency in 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. To improve equity in educational outcomes, quality teachers must also work in schools where they are needed most including, remote and disadvantaged schools.

Improving teacher and school leader quality requires action to:

- Attract the „best and brightest“ entrants to teaching;
- Train our future teachers through world-class pre-service education;
- Place quality teachers and school leaders in schools where they are needed most;
- Develop teachers skills and knowledge through ongoing professional learning; and
- Retain quality teachers and school leaders in our schools.

Educational quality in developing countries has become a topic of intense interest, primarily because of countries' efforts to maintain quality or reverse the decline of quality in the context of quantitative expansion of educational provision. Many countries are simultaneously implementing reforms based on more active approaches to teaching and learning, further challenging education systems and, especially, teachers.

Meaning of Quality of Education

Despite the importance of "quality" as the motivating factor for educational planning, approaches to quality can vary widely. In much of the literature, "quality" is used in a detached way, assuming consensus both on what the term means and on the desirability of the various educational aims and approaches promoted under the banner of quality. Whether explicit or implicit, a vision of educational quality is always embedded within countries' policies and programs. Harvey (1995) provides a useful framework for thinking about quality by outlining five goals for education that define the vision of quality within individual systems. Education systems vary in emphasizing a single vision or, more commonly, a mixture of the five goals:

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.

Role of Teachers in Promoting Quality

Good education is the result of the interaction of multiple factors, the most important of which is increasingly recognized to be quality teachers and teaching. The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality.

Teacher quality, teacher learning, and teacher improvement, therefore, are becoming the foci of researchers, policy makers, program designers, implementers, and evaluators. In both developing and industrialized countries, teachers in the past were treated as semiskilled workers unable to make

responsible decisions about their practice. They were required to follow instructional prescriptions and highly scripted and rigid teaching procedures. For their professional development, teachers received information on how to improve from “experts” in centralized workshops with little follow-up support at the institutional level.

Many educational systems are starting to advocate active-learning approaches for teachers as well and significant changes are taking place. If teachers are to become reflective practitioners who use active-learning approaches in their classrooms, where students learn through problem solving, critical dialogue, inquiry, and the use of higher-order thinking skills, teachers must learn and improve in professional development programs that not only advocate but also use and model these methods.

The emphasis on teacher empowerment has grown from a variety of roots. The idea of reflective practice assumes that teachers are professionals capable of reflecting on the school and classroom situation and, thus, capable of making a large number of instructional and classroom management decisions. Even in circumstances where the level of teacher preparation is low, this perspective rejects the notion that teachers must work according to rigid prescriptions, incapable of independent decision making. Although some challenge the notion that teachers in developing countries, with minimal preparation and minimal resources, can reflect on practice and make informed choices, the more widely held view is that the idea of “the teacher as professional” has reliably led to better teacher performance.

Challenges Concerning Teacher Education

1. Problem for selection: Defects of selection procedure lead to deterioration of the quality of teacher better selection method would not only improve the quality of training but also save the personal and social wastage.

2. Deficiency of small time and small time period provide for the training for teachers: The period of training of teacher for secondary school has all along been of 1 year after graduation the effective session being of 8 to 9 months. The main purpose of teacher education program is to develop the attitude broad based interest and values consistent with the dignity of training profession and thereafter develop a personality too. It is not possible during the short duration of 9 months.

3. Incompetency of student teachers: The existing training program does not provide adequate opportunities to the student teacher to develop the competency to face the varied type of situation in their real teaching life because the organizers of teacher s training program are not aware to the existing problem of school. They are not indirect contact of schools.

4. Defects concerning papers: A student teacher should know the meaning of education, its objectives the sociocultural and politico-economic background various agencies that influence education the principle that guide construction of curriculum etc. But a proper preparation towards a good orientation is impossible in a short duration of 9 months.

5. Problem of practice teaching: In most of the institutes more emphasis is laid on the theory in respect of marks and

time. The ratio of marks between theory and practice generally remains of 5:2 in some institutes practical aspect is given equal importance to that of theory. Teaching practice plays a significant role in B.Ed. program.

6. Problem of supervision of student teaching: the purpose of supervision is the improvement of instruction in the student teaching situation. The supervisory organization for practice teaching and the supervisory techniques and practice aim at bringing improvement in the instructional activity of the student teachers by familiarization. The student-teachers with various techniques and practical skills in teaching and help them to develop confidence in facing the classroom situations.

7. Lack of subject knowledge: The B. Ed. Program does not emphasize the knowledge of the basic subject. There is no provision to increase and strengthen of the practice remains indifferent with regards to the subject knowledge of the student – teacher

8. Lack of realism: The whole B. Ed. program does not make the student to complete his whole prescribed syllabus in his real teaching life within the limited time session. The teaching practice which he exercised during his training period do not help him to take his class and to complete his prescribed course within the period provided.

9. Faulty method of teaching: In the world the teacher educators are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching. They use the traditional method of instruction, lecturing and dictating of notes. Their acquaintance with modern classroom communication device is negligible.

10. Absence of professional attitude: In world the teacher education program is lacking in the professional attitude which is so important for a sound program of teacher education. In some states the teacher education program has been commercialized. Optimum saving is made through the revenue raised by such departments. this has resulted into sub standard facilities in the college.

11. Isolation of teacher education department: As has been observed by the education commission the teachers education both a primary and secondary level has become isolated from schools and current development in schools education. In the schools the method of teaching curricula and various other requirements are different from those advocated and actually implemented in the teacher education departments.

12. Poor academic background of student teachers: Proper admission procedures are not observed in most of the institutions. Most of those applying for admission to teacher education departments do not have the request motivation and the academic background for a well deserved in the teaching profession. Therefore they remain indifferent to work and studies.

13. Lack of proper facilities: In India the teacher education program is being given a step-motherly treatment about 20% of the teacher education institutions are being run in rented building without any facility for an experimental school or

laboratory, library and other equipment necessary for a good teacher education department. There are no separate hostel facilities for student-teachers.

14. Lack of regulation in demand and supply: In majority of cases the state education departments have no control on starting of post graduate teacher education departments. The teacher education departments have no data on the basis of which they may work out desired intake for their institutions.

15. Lack of interaction with the main academic stream: As the teacher education departments in the states are cutoff and isolated. So they can not function as models for university departments. Other university departments treat the teaching as something inferior.

16. Inadequate empirical research: In the world research in education has been considerably neglected. whatever research is being conducted is of a very inferior quality. The teacher education program have not been properly studied by undertaking any systematic research.

17. Insufficient financial grant: In most of the states teacher education is still being run by the fee collected from student-teachers while the share of state grant is too much small. Most of them are in a bad shape of a substandard nature.

18. Lack of facility for professional development: There is lack of facilities for the professional growth of the teacher educators even the association of the teacher educators has not contributed anything toward development of a sound professionalization of teacher education in the world.

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