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## Quality versus Quantity in Teacher Education

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**Abstract:** Researchers and policy makers agree that teacher quality is a pivotal policy issue in education reform. Teacher quality plays a vital role in ensuring optimum human resource development. Increasingly demanding and complex market forces require revitalized teacher education systems. The question of quality assurance and relevance gained some necessity as a result of NPE (1986). Quality assurance needs to be pursued in all fields of education, particularly teacher education, by finding the empirical basis for relevant and efficient teacher preparation programmes. It is in this context that research in these areas to explore not only what exists today but what is required for the future becomes a priority. Relevance of research in the field of quality, relevance and efficiency has become all the more urgent as NCTE and NAAC have taken up assessment and accreditation of teacher education institutions in India. The Parliament appreciated the role of quality teacher education in providing quality teachers for quality school education and passed an Act in 1993 for setting up of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as a statutory body. It was also felt that a system of rating by an independent autonomous body recognizing teacher education institutions will bring credibility in functioning of the institutions and the quality of the programme. This paper highlights the various endeavours made by the central and state governments to augment the quality of education, teacher preparation and professional development of teachers.

**Key Words:** Teacher Quality, Teacher Education, NAAC, NCTE, National Curriculum Framework.

## **Introduction**

Globalization has led to greater awareness of the value of specialized knowledge and advanced skills world-wide. As a result, the public in many countries has come to demand higher quality at all levels of the education system. Very often, the question of the quality of teacher education is raised. Education professionals as well as members of the public have expressed concern over a perceived lack of accountability among teacher education institutions for the actual teaching ability of their graduates. Teacher preparation over the past decade has increasingly become the focus of many universities due in part to numerous state reform initiatives and as the result of attention generated by several national reports and calls to action.

Today, teaching is a profession requiring specialization in terms of knowledge and skills. There exists a wide gap between theory and the knowledge and skills of teaching required in the actual classroom curriculum transaction. For this reason, a routine-bound teacher cannot act in accordance with the emerging needs unless he or she is trained and frequently oriented. One of the most important requirements to promote and strengthen education is the training of teachers who are the key resources in the reform, redirection and renewal of education. The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/ Commissions on education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, NCFTE 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country.

The teacher education system in the country is extremely vast and diverse – covering so many institutions at different levels of elementary, secondary and post-graduate programmes. The Parliament appreciated the role of quality teacher education in providing quality teachers for quality school education and passed an Act in 1993 for setting up of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as a

statutory body. It was also felt that a system of rating by an independent autonomous body recognizing teacher education institutions will bring credibility in functioning of the institutions and the quality of the programme. Teaching being a profession and teacher being a professional, the system of assessment and accreditation of teacher education institutions by an independent body such as National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is being made an effective instrument for raising the quality of teacher education programmes and for enabling institutions in using their physical and instructional infrastructure optimally and professionally. The scheme of assessment and accreditation will help institutions to carry out their strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis, and in making their programmes more attractive to the students and to their potential employers. The accreditation will promote the culture of self-appraisal and self-evaluation of performance by institutions, determined pursuit of standards of excellence set by themselves and mutual sharing of institutional experiences. It will also play a leadership role in the creation of a climate conducive to a healthy competition among teacher education institutions to pursue quality and excellence and influence one another with their good practices. Accreditation process initiates institution into innovative and modern methods of pedagogy. It gives the institution a new sense of direction and identity. It provides the society with reliable information on the quality of education offered by the institution.

In spite of adopting so many measures, various problems of teachers' training still exist. The college teachers, education departments of universities and the Government should give their attention to tackle the problem of teachers' training. For the development of the standard of education, ideal teachers are necessary and for this there is a need of appropriate teachers' training.

## **Meaning of Quality**

'Quality' became very common word nowadays. What actually quality means. It is very familiar term but its meanings and uses vary widely. In general term, quality is the position of a 'product' or a 'process' attribute on good-bad scale. It is often associated or linked

with defects and deficiencies in products or process. Quality management system starts with certain steps as follows:

### **Quality inspection**

This is very initial step and through this, defects are observed and communicated for quality improvement.

### **Quality improvement**

It is the commitment and approach used to continuously improve every process in every part of an organization. Quality improvement is long term approach, established through incremental steps. Quality improvement is a way of working that facilitates change and influences teaching and learning by quality providing the stimulus and support for further assurance of quality.

### **Quality Assurance**

Once quality is assured at reasonable level it needs to be controlled from deviations to ensure quality management. Due to social or professional reasons, the same may be communicated at the appropriate level for compliance. Thus quality assurance acts as a backbone in the total system of quality management and hence requires more concern.

### **Confidence**

The teacher perceives instrumentality and their utilization for improving the day-to-day situation. Due to emergence of knowledge in the society, the need of quality assurance has further multiplied its intensity. The application of quality assurance in industrial sector helps us designing quality assurance strategies for teacher education. As a whole, quality assurance in teacher education may be ensured by studying its customer than assuring quality at every stage because all these parts are interrelated. The value added learning in teacher education is complex of inputs to the teaching and learning, teaching

process, service quality, and institutional arrangement to assure quality in the inputs and the discipline may use national curricula with inbuilt flexibility suiting to regional requirements. The disseminator of teacher education is a teacher and preparing the teachers where he/she is in the direct contact with the end users. The close interaction between the service provider and end user also allow multiple opportunities for feedback and evaluation directing at satisfaction level of the end users. However due to involvement of repeated human interactions the possibility of human errors also enhances. Therefore, for the purpose of assuring quality in teacher education, we need to infuse soft indicators of quality assurance, i.e. care, courtesy, concern, friendliness, and helpfulness to deliver superior service quality.

For enhancing the quality of processes, it is necessary to ensure the consistency, validity, reliability, usability and cost-effectiveness of the processes.

**National curriculum framework 2005 has given some objectives as under:**

Teacher education must become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this it must prepare the teacher –

- 1) To care for children, and should love to be with them.
- 2) To understand children within social, cultural and political contexts.
- 3) To be receptive and be constantly learning.
- 4) To view learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience and knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning.
- 5) To view knowledge not as an external reality embedded in textbooks, but as constructed in the shared context of teaching-learning and personal experience.

- 6) To own responsibility towards society, and work to build a better world.
- 7) To appreciate the potential of productive work and hands on experience as a pedagogic medium both inside and outside the classroom.
- 8) To analyze the curricular framework, policy implications and texts.

### **Issues and challenges in relation to quality in teacher education**

- 1) The issue of quality has become critical in many countries. In countries like India where with constrained resources, the successful effort to increase access to basic education has often led to declining quality of education.
- 2) The rapid changes in society and increasing number of teacher educational institutions led to teachers facing new and complex issues, resulting in changes in the area of teacher education. One of the most significant developments was the creation of Special education for children with special needs. Special education teachers must be taught how information, especially more advanced and complex subject material, can be effectively taught to students in non-traditional ways. Special education teachers also often are required to study additional aspects of psychology and sociology.
- 3) Advances in technology have also posed an issue for future educators. Many educators have focused on ways to incorporate technology into the classroom. Television, computers, radio, and other forms of mass media are being utilized in an educational context, often in an attempt to involve the student actively in their own education. Hence, many teacher education programs now include courses both in technology operation and how to use technology for education purposes.
- 4) As India's population or worldwide populations are increasing and which turn up to increasing demand for new teacher, while poverty,

political instability, and other major issues have hindered governments around the world from meeting new educational demands. In some parts of the world, programmes have been initiated to draw new talent into teacher educational programmes.

### **NCERT as an agency for Revitalization and Modernization of Pre-service Teacher Education**

The NCERT working group, preparing a scheme for revitalization and modernization of pre-service teacher education (NPE 1986) and made the following important recommendations:

1. Admission to the teacher training institutions in a State should be made on the basis of results of a common entrance test given by a State Agency.
2. The teacher-pupil ratio in a teacher training institution should be 1:10, subject to minimum of ten teacher educators. There should be at least one teacher educator in each school subject and at least three in pedagogical subjects. There should be at least two teacher educators in Science methodology; one in Physical Science and one in Biological Science.
3. Every teacher training institution should have a good library with at least 5000 books in all subject areas.
4. There should be a separate laboratory for educational technology where trainees can do practical work for resource material development for teaching different school subjects.
5. Every teacher training institution should have adequate hardware and software in educational technology and trainees should be provided practical work in the educational technology under micro and mini-teaching sessions.
6. Every teacher training institution should provide practical work in games and physical education in groups for at least two hours a week for each group.



7. Every teacher training institution should have facilities for practical work in art, music and other aspects of culture.
8. Every teacher training institution should have facility for organizing practical work in some locally relevant socially useful productive work.
9. The four-year integrated programme of teacher education is a better model of teacher education.
10. The minimum qualifications for a teacher educator in a teacher training college or university department of education in the methodology subject should be Master's degree in the concerned subject together with Master's degree in Philosophy. Psychology or Sociology together with Master's degree in Education and should have M.Phil./Ph.D. in Education.
11. The minimum instruction in time in one-year B.Ed. Course should be 36 weeks after the last date of admission. Out of the 36 weeks instruction at the college, not more than 4 weeks should be spent in teaching practice. No candidate should be allowed to appear at the B.Ed. degree examination unless he/she has completed 36 weeks instruction at college.

### **Role of DIETs in improving in-service education of teachers:**

The NPE 1986 has visualized that for improving teacher education, a network of DIETs would be formed in the country:

1. Providing pre-service education to prospective elementary teachers.
2. Organising in-service education programmes, for elementary teachers.
3. Training and orientation of heads of institutions in institutional planning and management.
4. Conducting action research and experimental work.

## **Role of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) in Teacher Education**

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) suggested some reforms regarding teacher education:

1. Undertaking surveys and studies relating to various aspects of teacher- education and publishing the results.
2. Developing guidelines for general teacher-education programme.
3. Developing norms for various courses or training in teacher-education, including minimum eligibility criterion for admission.
4. Preventing commercialization in teacher-education and maintaining quality and standard of teacher-education.
5. Establishing international relations in the area of teacher-education.
6. Preparing programmes for in-service teacher-education for orienting teachers for latest development.
7. Preventing B.Ed. correspondence courses which are lowering the standard and quality of teacher-education and commercializing the teacher-education.
8. Preparing code of professional ethics for teachers.
9. Developing curriculum of teacher-education.
10. Developing methodology of teaching and techniques of evaluation procedures, continuing and non-formal education.
11. Improving role of the teacher in social and vocational areas.

Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in 1996, NCTE prepared and circulated a curriculum framework for teacher education

at various levels. The framework outlined concerns that teacher education should take note of objectives of teacher education and several related issues. The NCTE has prescribed norms for starting different types of institutions in the field of teacher education: Seminar, Workshop, Refresher Course, Study Groups, School Programmes, Study of Professional writings, and Conference.

Keeping with the view of all these above noted things, the NCF 2005 took the following steps regarding teachers' education:

1. Meaningful academic planning has to be done in a participatory manner by headmasters and teachers.
2. Monitoring quality must be seen as a process of sustaining interaction with individual schools in terms of teaching-learning processes.
3. Teacher education programmes need to be reformulated and strengthened so that the teacher can be an encouraging, supportive and human facilitator in teaching-learning situations to enable learners (student) to discover their talents, to realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens.
4. Reformulated teacher education programmes that place thrust on the active involvement of learners in the process of knowledge construction, multidisciplinary nature of knowledge of teacher education, integration theory and practice dimensions, and engagement with issues and concerns of contemporary Indian society from a critical perspective.
5. Centrality of language proficiency in teacher education and an integrated model of teacher education for strengthening professionalization of teachers assume significance.
6. In-service education needs to become a catalyst for change in school practices.

## **Suggestions for Improving the Condition of Teacher Education on the basis of following recommendations:**

There are some suggestions here for improving the condition of teacher education:

- Teacher education, like higher education and technical education must be the responsibility of the central government.
- Uniformity among teacher education institutions must be ensured and maintained in terms of curriculum, duration and timings of the programme.
- Curriculum development on a continuing basis to keep pace with current trends.
- Government should look after the financial requirements of the institutions.
- Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency.
- Teacher educators to be trained in the use of ICTs.
- Institutes of low standards should be reformed or closed.
- Conditions for affiliation should be made strict.
- Regular and rigorous inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis.
- Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with common entrance test and marks should be introduced.
- Duration of teacher education should be increased to two years.
- More emphasis should be given on practice teaching till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.

- Internship should be of sufficient time (six months) and student teachers must be exposed to the full functioning of the school.
- Evaluation in teacher education should be objective, reliable and valid.
- Several types of co-curricular activities should be included in the curriculum.
- Professional development of teacher educators as ongoing ritual.
- Refresher course should be organized frequently for teacher educators.
- Research in teacher education should be encouraged.
- Number of teaching days to be increased to 230 per year.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, any effective teacher education curriculum calls for systematic task analysis of teachers at various levels and inclusion of relevant contents, which alone can infuse confidence among the prospective teachers to negotiate the school curriculum in classroom. Quality assurance in teacher education plays the central role in the total quality management mission of the system. Quality assurance can be ensured by its application in all parts of customers. The main focus is on primary customers i.e. learners. Similarly equal attention needs to be paid on the total education system and slight deviation in any part of sub-system will disturb the way of quality assurance. The present teacher education programme is inadequate to meet the challenges of diverse Indian socio-cultural contexts and the paradigm shift envisaged in the NCF 2005. The pedagogic reform from this perspective needs to invest on building of teachers capacity to act as autonomous reflective groups of professionals who are sensitive to their social mandate and to the professional ethics and to the needs of heterogeneous groups of learners. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) promises to translate the vision into reality and prepare a humanistic and reflective teacher that have the potential to develop

more professional teachers to improve the quality of education. To conclude, professionalism needs to be instilled in each and every phase of teacher preparation starting from conceptualisation to evaluation and appraisal to prepare professionals and improve the quality of education.

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