

TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA - A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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Abstract of the Paper

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.

Keywords: *Class room Environment, Teacher Education, Educational System, Curricular Design, Educational Policy,*

Statement of the Problem

Teacher education, any of the formal programs that have been established for the preparation of teachers at the elementary- and secondary-school levels. While arrangements of one kind or another for the education of the young have existed at all times and in all societies, it is only recently that schools have emerged as distinctive institutions for this purpose on a mass scale, and teachers as a distinctive occupational

category. Parents, elders, priests, and wise men have traditionally seen it as their duty to pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generation. As Aristotle put it, the surest sign of wisdom is a man's ability to teach what he knows. Knowing, doing, teaching, and learning were for many centuries—and in some societies are still today—indistinguishable from one another. For the most part the induction of the young into the ways of acting, feeling, thinking, and believing that are characteristic of their society has been an informal—if serious and important—process, accomplished chiefly by means of personal contact with full-fledged adults, by sharing in common activities, and by acquiring the myths, legends, and folk beliefs of the culture. Formal ceremonies, such as the puberty rite, marked the point at which it was assumed that a certain range of knowledge and skill had been mastered and that the individual could be admitted to full participation in tribal life. (Residual elements of such ceremonies remain in some modern arrangements; it has been seriously contended that the study of the Latin language in the Renaissance and post-Renaissance school can be interpreted as a form of puberty rite.) Even in the formally established schools of the Greek city-states and of the medieval world there was little separation between, on the one hand, the processes of organizing and setting down knowledge and, on the other, those of teaching this knowledge to others.

This does not mean, however, that prior to the 19th century little attention was given to a training in teaching methods as distinct from “subjects.” The great works of medieval scholasticism were essentially textbooks that were designed to be used for the purpose of teaching. Today, as in the medieval world, methods of teaching and the organization of knowledge continue to be reciprocally influential. Nor are the problems that today surround the qualifications and certification of teachers wholly new. State, church, and local authorities everywhere have long recognized the importance of the teacher's work in maintaining or establishing particular patterns of social organization and systems of belief, just as radical and reformist politicians and thinkers have looked to the schools to disseminate their particular brands of truth. In medieval and post-Reformation Europe, for example, there was considerable concern with the qualifications and background of teachers, mainly but not entirely with reference to their religious beliefs. In 1559 Queen Elizabeth I of England issued an injunction that prohibited anyone from teaching without a license from his bishop. The license was granted only after an examination of the applicant's “learning and dexterity in teaching,” “sober and honest conversation,” and “right understanding of God's true religion.” Thus the certification of teachers and concern for their character and personal qualities are by no means new issues.

What is new for most societies—European, American, African, and Asian—is the attempt to provide a substantial period of formal education for everyone and not just for the small proportion of the population who will become political, social, and religious leaders or for those few who possess surplus time and money for the purpose. Universal literacy, already achieved in most European and American and many Asian societies, has become the goal of all. In an increasing proportion of countries every child now proceeds automatically to secondary education; many remain at school until 16 or 18 years of age, and large numbers go on to some form of postsecondary education and training. The scale and variety of educational provision that all this requires makes the supply, education, training, and certification of an adequate number of teachers a worldwide issue of education policy and practice. In developed and developing countries alike, no factor is of greater importance in relation to the quantity and quality of education; it is significant that a substantial proportion of the budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is devoted to the improvement of teacher preparation.

The term “teacher” in this article is used to mean those who work in schools providing education for pupils up to the age of 18. Thus, “teacher education” refers to the structures, institutions, and processes by means of which men and women are prepared for work in elementary and secondary schools. This includes preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary institutions for children from the age of two or three to 18.

Teacher Education in India

The Indian 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.

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.

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.

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:

1. **Education quality as exceptionalism:** excellence is the vision that drives education, quality education is education that is exemplary; schools should maximize the pursuit of the highest potential in individual students.
2. **Education quality as consistency:** equality is the vision that drives education, quality requires equitable experiences, schools and classrooms should provide students with consistent experiences across the system.
3. **Education quality as fitness-for-purpose:** refinement and perfection in specific subject areas is the vision that shapes the system, quality is seen as preparing students for specific roles, instructional specialization is emphasized.
4. **Education quality as value for money:** education reflects reasonable correspondence to individual and societal investments; quality is interpreted as the extent to which the system delivers value for money.
5. **Education quality as transformative potential:** social or personal change is the vision that drives education, quality education is a catalyst for positive changes in individuals and society, education promotes social change.

One way of looking at quality, prevalent in both the research literature and reports of program implementation, concerns the relationship between different “inputs” and a measure of student performance, or “output.” The outputs are usually students’ results on achievement tests, assessments, or end-of-cycle examinations. The inputs include a wide variety of factors: infrastructure and resources, quality of teaching environment, textbooks, teacher preparation, teacher salaries, supervision, attitudes and incentives, Educational Institutional climate, curriculum, student’ physical well-being, and family and socioeconomic context. Another way of looking at quality involves measuring the efficiency of the system. Educational efficiency is measured internally by the rates of completion, dropout, and repetition. Efficiency is also measured externally by looking at the outcomes of education or the productivity of school leavers.

This is measured according to, for example, wages or agricultural yields associated with an individual’s or a community’s level of schooling. This topic/literature has a long history, primarily in educational economics, and has often used quantity of education as a proxy for quality. Studies of efficiency provide necessary information for planners, but this approach has relatively little explanatory

power about what creates school quality without an accompanying analysis of the dynamics among the myriad school process factors that encourage students to stay in school and gain valuable knowledge and attitudes while there for studying. A more recently developed way of looking at quality focuses on the content, context, and relevance of education. This approach to quality focuses on process within the educational institutions and classroom and relationships between the educators and the surrounding community. Greater attention is given to the ways in which inputs interact at the Institutional level to shape quality of learning, defined as the elements of knowledge and character that a society values in young peoples.

Role of Teachers in Promoting development of skills

Good Governance of 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.

Teacher Development

Action research is also closely related to teacher empowerment and has become an important component of what is considered good teacher development. Action or participatory research refers to teachers individually or in groups gathering and analyzing information in order to problem solve at the institutional level. In addition to mobilizing teachers to study and reflect on their practice, action research advances the professionalization of teachers by helping them develop and validate their knowledge. Action research often begins, in a teacher’s practice, as academic-based studies that are part of a preserves’ teacher education program and continue as part of academic-based teacher professional development programs.

As we have various papers on this topic as “education quality” which demonstrates that there is a strong link between teacher professional development and quality. This is mainly because reforms leading to improved quality in preserves’ and in-services teacher education cannot succeed unless they are backed by on-going professional development and continuous teacher learning at the academic level. Teacher professional development ensures that theories acquired in initial preparation can be successfully implemented in practice. Quality in-services professional development, backed by a supportive academic community of practice, is essential to ensuring that reforms in teaching and learning reach the classroom, are correctly implemented in the classroom, and are sustained. Thus, this supports the important role that teacher learning plays in making the connection between theory and practice, and in improving education quality, by recognizing and supporting the role of teachers as professionals capable of making sound decisions regarding classroom instruction and student learning.

Issues And Challenges in Teacher Education

An immense writing has appeared on educational quality in recent years, examining factors that help improve Teacher education and proposing ways to promote better learning in schools. 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. In a search for the factors that promote quality, countries' programs as well as the literature increasingly emphasize teachers, schools, societies and communities as the engines of quality, with teacher quality identified a primary focus.

The rapid changes in society 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. For Special education teachers, learning how to effectively convey subject content is as important as learning this information. 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.

What need to be done?

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. With the coming on of distance learning utilizing mobile technologies and the internet understanding of technology or we can say e-learning has become crucial for new teachers in order to keep up with the knowledge and interests of their students in these delivery systems. The emergence of a networked knowledge economy presents both opportunities and challenges for teacher education. Used effectively, knowledge networks present opportunities for better informed and supported practice by education professionals and more authentic learning by students. The challenges include those identified above and, while much more research and development will be required to answer them.

Summing up

As India's population or worldwide populations increasing 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, programs have been initiated to draw new talent into teacher educational programs. The UN's Millennium

Development Project has eight established goals, one of which is to develop universal primary education in every country by the year 2015. Central Asia, Africa and Latin America are all target areas for this initiative. In order to help achieve this end, the UN has devoted resources and funds to helping improve educational infrastructure and to training more new teachers in targeted areas. Teacher education is a difficult assignment, especially at the present stage where teacher education programmes are being delivered by a large number of unaided private teacher education institutions. These institutions are also not sure of their tenure, as in near future; possibility of huge unemployment of trained persons may result in swinging fall. The surviving institutions can only be helped by appropriate authorities in improving quality of their academic management. This paper suggest an increase in responsibility for teachers but not an increase in authority: teachers are losing decision-making authority in the classroom. This paper also indicates that a positive policy environment and ample support for growth are essential for creating and sustaining teacher quality. Government and educators will need to understand better the links between schooling and its social and cultural environment, the kind of socialization and informal learning provided to children both before school entry and outside of the classroom and ways to develop more literate and encouraging environments in the family and the community surrounding the school. Although the task of recruiting for both miscellany and quality seems discouraging, several well documented and proven long-term strategies exist and but now we should support the creation of a stable pipeline for recruiting more and better qualified, diverse teachers.

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