

RESTRUCTURING TEACHER EDUCATION: RATIONALE AND RISKS

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In the present paper author has tried to focus on issues of Teacher Education at the secondary level, and also examined the NCTE 2014 guidelines for restructuring teacher education. After highlighting the issues emerging out of these guidelines, some suggestions have been given by the author. It is suggested that policy makers should look into these issues and make some modifications in the guidelines.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Education, Reforms in Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

The entire educational system of our country is in the process of change. We all know that no educational reform can be successful unless the quality of teachers is improved, but in turn the quality of teachers depends to a large extent on the quality of teacher education. This is supported by National Policy on Education (NPE) 2016 (draft) which reiterates that “the poor quality of school education is a direct result of poor quality of teacher education and teacher training”. Further the policy states that “key improvement in quality of education is to have better qualified, better trained, better motivated and accountable teachers.”

Teaching which was at one time considered a noble profession is no longer a career choice of youth, particularly in urban India. Further, NPE observed that the students with better scores at higher secondary and graduate level prefer engineering, medical, management and commerce courses and

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generally those who do not get admission in any of these courses join B.Ed. as last resort. The present state of teacher education in the country presents a mixed picture of far-sighted intentions and innovations coupled with alarming distortions and structural shortcomings. Looking back, from past to present, it appears that although, nomenclature has undergone a change from 'training' to 'education', the system by and large remained unchanged.

NEED FOR RESTRUCTURING TEACHER EDUCATION

The following are the broader issues in teacher education that make the restructuring of it imperative:

BROADER ISSUES

- Admission policies
- Teacher-student ratio
- Weightage to different courses
- Content cum methodology
- Curriculum development
- Computer literacy/ techno-savvy skills

While there are some specific issues related to teacher education which needs attention. These are:

- Practice teaching and related practical work
- Practical activities
- Qualifications of teacher educators
- Isolation of teacher training institutes
- Actual number of working days available
- Mismatch between demand and supply

REFORMS BY NCTE FOR RESTRUCTURING TEACHER EDUCATION

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) 2014, has come out with 15 types of courses along with the two years B.Ed. programme. Present paper tries to critically examine various recommendations of the Gazette 2014, NCTE 2014. A million-dollar question is whether two years B.Ed. programme will help in enhancing professional commitment of teachers.

The recommendation of the gazette were as under: Candidates with at least fifty percent marks either in the Bachelor's Degree and/or in the Master's Degree in Sciences/Social Sciences/ Humanity, Bachelor's in Engineering or

Technology with specialization in Science and Mathematics with 55% marks or any other qualification equivalent thereto, are eligible for admission to the programme.

The author would like to put forth the following points to challenge the above requirements as per the gazette:

- Why Commerce subject is excluded from this list?
- What is the status of specialization? (Method Selection)
- Why is there discrepancy in percentage when it comes to Engineering?
- What about the aptitude for teaching and communication skills?
- The reservation and relaxation for SC/ST/OBC/PWD and other categories shall be as per the rules of the Central Government / State Government, whichever is applicable.
- There will be an imbalance in the methods (Since the reservation is not according to the methodology courses).
- Whether two hundred working days are excluding examination and admission days
- Is it practically possible to exclude days of examinations from the working days?
- The minimum attendance of student-teachers shall have to be 80% for all course work and practicum, and 90% for school internship. How to ensure whether institution is strictly following these criteria or not?
- Internship in schools will be for a minimum duration of 20 weeks for a two-year programme (4 weeks in the first year, and 16 weeks in the second year as noted above). This should also include, besides practice teaching, an initial phase of one week for observing a regular classroom with a regular teacher and would also include peer observations, teacher observations and faculty observations of practice lessons.
- There needs to be further clarity as to how this sixteen weeks be bifurcated and if sixteen weeks are to be spent in internship then what about theory courses? Will there be no theory courses taught during second year when there is internship for sixteen weeks?
- Supervision of Student teachers during internship for long duration by teacher educators is a practical issue.
- Availability of schools for internship programme of 16 weeks is another issue.
- Students are to be actively engaged in teaching for 16 weeks in the final year

of the course as per the NCTE guidelines.

- DEO Intervention is required but how fruitful would that be is another challenge.
- Will the college provide any monetary support to the practicing schools?
- For an intake of two basic units of 50 students each, that is total students' strength of 200, there shall 16 full-time faculty members. The distribution of faculty across different curricular areas shall be as under:

1. Principal/ HoD (One)

2. Perspectives in Education (Four)

3. Pedagogy subjects (Eight)

(Maths, Science, Social Science, Language)

4. Health and Physical Education (One)

5. Fine Arts (One)

6. Performing Arts (Music/Dance/Theatre) (One)

- If this is to be strictly followed from academic year 2015-16 then what about the permanent staff member who are already there with the institution with a particular basic discipline for e.g. if in the existing teacher education institution there are three teachers, 2 professors of mathematics method and one assistant professor of mathematics method then who should be in and how will the intake of two teacher per method be full filled?
- Availability of the teacher educators in fine arts and performing arts is a great problem
- In most of the states the positions of teacher educators are vacant. Many colleges/ universities appoint adhoc/ contractual staff, adversely affecting the quality of pre-service teacher education.
- According to the gazette there needs to be two faculty members each for mathematics, sciences, social sciences and languages then what about Sanskrit Gujarati, Hindi, English etc.
- How to recruit the faculty with the background of fine arts and performing arts immediately and if this is possible what has to be done of the surplus staff with same discipline?
- How will this faculty help in lesson observation and pedagogic intervention?
- How will their work load be justified?
- Another question which arises over here is this recommendation of 2014

will be killing the zeal of specialisation and making all the individual experts even though they do not have that subject as their main discipline.

- Also now the question of biology, physics and chemistry teacher will be crucial as all of the student teachers will be opting for science as a method thus killing the expertise in an individual
- What about training the PGTs for higher secondary classes?

CONCLUSION

The two-year B.Ed. was designed to bring qualitative improvement in the teacher training but the actual scenario seems different. Two years B.Ed. syllabus has already been implemented but the flow of students in many colleges has reduced. The total number of seats in many colleges are vacant since students prefer those colleges where attendance is easily taken care of. This is a great downfall in the system. Even getting a job after B.Ed. is not easy because passing of Teacher Eligibility test /Teacher Aptitude test is now mandatory. This further delays the students' job opportunities. It is advisable to have one year two-semester course, with at least 15 weeks of teaching per semester and one semester should be fully utilized for internship, under the observations of qualified Principals/ Teachers. The observing Principals and teachers should be given some monetary benefits for this activity as well. Also, it has been observed that last admission in many colleges and universities is given in the month of September/October, so it is recommended that the session should begin in October and end in next September without internship. All the practical work be properly integrated in internship and same be presented in respective college or departments.

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