

TEACHER EDUCATION SCENARIO IN INDIA: CURRENT PROBLEMS & CONCERNS

D.R. Goel and Chhaya Goel

The intent of the present paper is to enhance the teacher education quality in India by focusing on the emerging issues & related concerns. Various issues of teacher education namely, institutional inertia, brand inequity, quality crisis, overgrowing establishment, rare humane and professional teachers, poor integration of skills, alienated and incompatible modes of teacher education, little contribution to higher education, domain pedagogy mismatches, identity crisis, rare innovations, stake holders' non-alignment, inadequate technology infusion, little choice base, poor research scenario, vision and vision mismatches, non-scientific manpower planning, illusive laboratories, over activism of distance/open universities, invalid recognition and accreditation and no teacher education policy have been dwelt on in this paper. The paper concludes that teacher education system in India calls for revolutionary changes.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Education, Problems and Concerns

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Indian teacher education system has been strengthened a lot during the past couple of years. The NCTE Regulation 2007 were revisited and modified by the NCTE and notified in 2009. The Elementary School Teachers' qualifications were worked out and notified in August 2010. The TET inclusion in qualifications has been widely appreciated, wherein, it was provided that even after obtaining the necessary qualifications the teacher will have to obtain at

D.R. Goel ✉

Professor, Centre of Advanced Study in Education (CASE), FEP

The M.S University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat. Email: goel_d_r34@rediffmail.com

Chhaya Goel

Associate Professor, Centre of Advanced Study in Education (CASE), FEP

The M.S University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat. Email: goel_chhaya@rediffmail.com

least 60% marks in TET. Norms and Standards for Two Year Diploma in Performing and non-performing Art Education were worked out by the Council and notified in August 2009. Teacher Education New Curriculum Framework was designed and released during March 2010. The Study of Demand & supply of trained teachers in States and Union Territories at primary, upper primary, and secondary levels was completed by the Council in 2010 and was published in 30 volumes. The recognition of sizable number of below standard Teacher Education institutions was withdrawn. A large number of Teacher Education institutions have shifted to their own premises. Bridge courses have been introduced to strengthen Teacher Education, where found wanting. Online applications and self-disclosure drives were introduced. Persons of integrity and competence were included in the Visiting Team Panels. A manual has been designed on the structure & functioning of the labs. A volume has been published by the NCTE (2009), namely, Teacher Education, which contains Reflections towards Policy Formulation.

The efforts made by the NCTE are indeed appreciable. Teacher Education has been struggling to strengthen its identity. Struggle does not mean degeneration of values and degeneration of institutions. It is true that after persistent struggle there is evident improvement, but, still there is no end to perfection. Every establishment has noise. There are issues and resolves, problems and solutions, puzzles and pathways. Reflections on some of the issues concerning Teacher Education in India are presented in this research paper.

INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA

Due to divergence of State, Society, Judiciary and Education there is institutional inertia. Who is accountable? The State? The Society? The Judiciary? The Education? or all of them? Incubation, innovation, creation and construction are the products of Peace, patience and perseverance. Annihilation, deletion and destruction can be done within seconds. Education has its own identity. No body should try to superimpose and dictate education. Earlier the Society was governing the Society, then the State started governing the Society, now the Economy is overarching, both the State & Society. The private & corporate sector has more of commercial motive. Education has been largely commercialized. Return on investment is being estimated in terms of material profit rather than in terms of all round development.

BRAND INEQUITY

There is public private dichotomy in teacher education. There is a pathetic indifference in public sector institutions and rampant commercialization in private sector. The teacher education degrees conferred by the various universities and institutions are non-comparable. Are TETs, SETs and NETs

the solutions? If the input and process norms are grossly wanting, then how can the quality be ensured. What could be greater loss than educational institutions questioning the legitimacy of their own products?

There is evident variation at all levels of input, process and output. The study conducted by Madhavi (2009) reveals that research aptitude, educational management aptitude, adjustment capacity and teacher education disciplinary profile have been found to be significant predictors of teacher education proficiency in the western region of India. Research aptitude, adjustment capacity and teacher education disciplinary profile have been found to be predicting in a positive and significant manner, whereas, educational management aptitude has impacted in a negative manner. Living competencies and techno-pedagogic competencies have not been found to be significant predictors. There is a need to find out how teacher education has failed to correlate significantly with these variables. Also, there is a need to find out how the educational management aptitude has been found to be contributing inversely. None of the six variables have been found to be significant predictor of teacher education proficiency in the northern, eastern and the southern regions of India.

Enrolment in teacher education programmes varies from region to region. There are some areas in India where the enrolment in Teacher Education is near full, but, the physical presence in the face to face mode is nearly nil. These are exclusively commercial centres than educational. There should be immediate ban on these institutions, whether, these institutions are under the purview of the NCTE or not. There are well specified teacher education curricula by the NCTE. Even then in significant number of institutions there is under coverage. The quality of product and placement criteria for teacher education programmes varies from university to university. There is evident disregard with respect to the NCTE Norms and Regulations. The question is whether to revise the norms or the parameters or both.

QUALITY CRISIS

There are problems of quality perception, quality scaling and quality differentiation in Teacher Education. There is a significant variance between expected and actual quality. Alas, this gap is widening. This is exemplified by the successive entrance tests for higher level, be it Graduate, Post-Graduate or Doctoral Level. There has to be adequate focus on all the systemic parameters-input, process and output. The degeneration of quality of Teacher Education can be attributed more to the private sector. Unless the teacher education norms are observed sincerely by the society, no body can help.

OVERGROWING ESTABLISHMENT

Establishment has overgrown enrolment in most of the teacher education

programmes. But, at the same time there is uneven distribution of the teacher education institutions. teacher education regulations, norms and standards though latest visited during 2009, have further scope for perfection. There is a need to have demand and supply estimates. Blanket “NO” and even blanket “YES” can be grossly harmful in the public interest. The States need to justify, substantially, case-wise their stand for objection or no objection with due respect to the establishment of teacher education institutions. There is a need to find out teacher education institutions required countrywide, program-wise and state-wise, at present, and in future. Surveys need to be conducted to find out the present status and requirement. These projections ought to be in tune with the growth of school education. Also, futurological studies need to be conducted to make forecasts of teacher education.

RARE HUMANE & PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Teacher Education for preparing humane & professional teachers needs to be wholistic. Along with content & methodology there is a need to integrate emotional competencies, such as, self-awareness and self-management, social sensitivity and social management. There is a need to integrate life skills, such as, self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, effective communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, and coping up with emotions and stress. There is a need to integrate info-savvy skills, such as, asking, accessing, analysing, applying and assessing. There is a need to integrate techno-pedagogic skills, such as, media-message compatibility, media designing, integration of message media and modes, realizing proximity of message forms, media language proficiency, media choice, message authenticity and media credibility, media automation, media integration and media acculturation. There is a need to integrate human development climate through trust, risk taking, openness, reward, responsibilities, top support, feedback, team spirit and collaboration. There is a need to integrate spiritual intelligence dimensions, such as, spirituality, soul or inner being, self awareness, quest for life values, convention, commitment and character, happiness and distress, brotherhood, equality of caste, creed, colour and gender, inter-personal relations, acceptance and empathy, love and compassion, flexibility, leadership, life & death. The teacher education programmes need to integrate in numerous skills & competencies.

Environmental Education courses run by teacher education institutions have been found to enhance environmental awareness, but not developed environmental ethics. Political Science education programs have been found to multiply the number of professional politicians and not humanistic statesmen. Law Education is not ensuring lawfulness. Even after Science Education the actions are not scientific. The convocations without invocation are useless and painful. Merit is destroyed due to mismatches between Teacher Educators and

Teacher Trainees. Quality teachers can be developed through skilled and competent Teacher Education professionals who have passion for profession. There should be no compromise with the standards and norms.

POOR INTEGRATION OF SKILLS

The term skill has become a misnomer, particularly, in education. All the skills, such as, life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, techno-savvy skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human development skills, spiritual skills need to be integrated in teacher education. The study conducted by Helaiya (2009) very well presents how the life skills can be developed in the pre-service teachers and integrated in the teacher education programmes. The study insists that all the life skills need to be integrated in the teacher education programmes. There should be simultaneous focus on creative thinking and critical thinking, as well as, self-management and social management. The present century teachers ought to be highly skilled in management of stress and emotions. The study conducted by Madhavi (2009) has tried to scale the techno pedagogic skills amongst the M.Ed. students. The study reveals that living competencies and techno-pedagogic competencies have not been found to be the significant predictors of teacher education proficiency in India.

The Study by Dhodi (2011) on the development of info-savvy skills in Secondary Student-Teachers demonstrates very well how the info-savvy skills of asking, accessing, analysing, applying and assessing were developed in the pre-service teachers of India through surfing on cultural heritage of India, Buddhist heritage of India and on the domains of their respective discipline methods. It is a joyful experience to travel through her research volume experiencing various surfing skills, viz., skimming, scanning, authenticating, hyper-linking, switching, skipping culminating into educational immersion for seeking solutions.

The intervention program by Dutta (2009) was an attempt to provide student-teachers with varied exposure and experience which helped them to enhance various emotional skills and so emotional maturity. The various skills need to be properly integrated in teacher education. Teacher education is starving and striving for competent & proficient teacher educators.

ALIENATED & INCOMPATIBLE MODES OF EDUCATION

There is little parity amongst various modes of education, such as, distance mode, e-mode, and face to face mode. Distance mode is diluted, e-mode is in infancy, whereas, the face to face mode is stagnant. There is no network amongst the various modes of teacher education. These are functioning more or less in isolation.

LITTLE CONTRIBUTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Teacher Education has not been in a position to come out of school education. It has made very little contribution to higher education. Educationists have been over obsessed with school education intensively for complexity, enormity, and the large number of the schools and students, but this is at the cost of neglecting higher education.

DOMAIN PEDAGOGY MISMATCHES

There are mismatches between the subject and pedagogy. There are mismatches amongst the profiles of the learners and their education. Every subject has its own structure and functions. Each subject has its own ethos and discipline. Every Education level has its own tenderness. In spite of the presence of all the global and regional attempts we have not been in a position to even sustain the identity of elementary education. When is education said to be universalized? Every moment there are slogans and predicaments to universalize education. Has the Education really been universalized? Has the Right to Education ensured Education? Have we really been strong enough to provide differentiated differential inputs? Subject specific differential pedagogy demands scientific bases. We ought to make sincere & exhaustive attempts to realize the matches.

IDENTITY CRISIS

Every teacher education institution ought to have valid identity. Valid identity means valid institutional land & plant, valid settings, valid inputs, valid processes and valid products. Each & every teacher & teacher educator ought to have a unique identification number. The self- disclosure exercise being done by the teacher education institutions helps in realizing identity. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher (Dec. 2009) is with high hopes. Also, Teacher Education: Reflections Towards Policy Formulation (2009) is quite promising. Teacher Education will have to revive and build its identity.

RARE INNOVATIONS

Teacher Education is a discipline which educates the progressive generations on what has gone by, where we are, where we want to go, and what we like to create, observing healthy, meaningful and long life. Innovations in Teacher Education are very rare. It may be attributed to various factors. Novel ideas do not incubate because of the adverse external conditions. There are wide gaps between the visionaries and actors. So, very often the innovations have short life and die down in the institutions, where these originate. Sometimes, the

most innovative programs fail in the formal system, because, these are beyond the view & purview of the apex bodies. Four year integrated secondary teacher education programmes need excellent teacher educators who are philosophers of basic disciplines, as well as, education. Such a combination is rarely found. In addition to this, there is a need to have scope for vertical mobility. Activity based, personalized teacher education programmes though originated with zeal, yet need to struggle to sustain themselves in the forms envisaged.

Novel ideas die because of non-incubation. Personalized teacher education, wholistic teacher education, specialized teacher education, and even integrated teacher education are rarely found because we don't have the capacity to tolerate repeated failures arising out of experimentation. One-shot success is a fairy tale and not the reality of life. The society and its institutions must have the capacity to tolerate genuine mistakes committed inadvertently during the course of innovation.

STAKE HOLDERS NON-ALIGNMENT

Different parties to education champion their cause by becoming the so-called stakeholders without having regard to the needs, urges and aspirations of other stakeholders. Consequently, the system is unduly stressed, instead of making it resilient enough to deliver man-making education. State indifference and displeasure, judicial concern and activism, Privatization and commercialization, public hope and failure, disregard and disrespect for education are fully evident.

INADEQUATE TECHNOLOGY INFUSION

Teacher education programmes are largely traditional. Pace of modernization is very slow. We have not yet been in a position to infuse the technological innovations for transacting the education. There is more of knowledge deepening than knowledge construction. A sizable number of studies on effectiveness of CAI developed through various computer languages employing either pre-experimental design or quasi experimental design reveal significant mean score gain from pre-test to post-test. Studies on the effectiveness of CAI reveal favourable reactions of students and teachers towards the CAI. (Prabhakar, 1989; Himani, 1990, Mahapatra, 1991, and Adhikari, 1992, DAVV, Indore; Khiwadkar, 1999, Zyoud, 1999, Yadav, 2000, Goel, Khirwadkar, Tomar, Das & Joshi, 2000, Macwana, 2004, Sharma, 2005, Barot, 2005, Pradesi, 2005, and Rathod, 2005, MSU; Suwanna, 2004, SGU; Upadhyaya, 1999, MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly; Sanjana, 2001, MDU and Pandian, 2004, DU). These studies reveal that there should be added focus on production variables, pedagogic principles and spatial and temporal contiguity of various message forms (Patel, 2001,MSU; Chaudhari, 2005,

MSU).

Computer as a medium has been found to have the potency of addressing the heterogeneity in terms of variables, namely, IQ, Interest, Motivation, Language level (Zyoud, 1999, MSU). Attempts have been made for designing, developing and implementing computer based Learning Resources Management System (LRMS). The automated LRMS has been found definitely more effective than the manual LRMS (Beryah, 1995, DAVV). A sizeable number of teacher education institutions in India have initiated ICT in education either as a core course or as optional course. In spite of the impeding factors, namely, limited staff, inadequate laboratories with maintenance problems, sizeable classes, the courses have been found to realize their objectives reasonably (Goel, Das, and Shelat, 2003, MSU). A sizeable number of teacher education institutions have been found lacking facilities, such as, Internet, hardware and software (Goel, 2005, MSU). A few studies conducted on the use of Internet in Teacher Education Institutions revealed that the student teachers largely lack in info-savvy skills and techno-pedagogic skills (Joshi, 1999, MSU; Dhodi, 2005, MSU). Some of the teacher trainees make use of Internet for surfing, e-mail, research, core courses, special areas. But, the Internet is rarely used for web designing, reflective dialogue and outsourcing. Measures of Internet safety are rarely employed. There is a need to develop Net-Savvy Skills in Teacher Educator Trainees (Goel, 2006, MSU). Educational technology and ICT in education have demonstrated their values. But, Technology in Education is not yet fully integrated. Technology in Education is still under utilized. There is a need of technological revolution in teacher education. There is a shift from bachelor of teaching to bachelor of learning, that too, bachelor of e-learning. There is a shift from e-Learning 1.0 (Online learning) to e-Learning 2.0 (Tweeters, Face-book) to e-Learning 3.0 (Semantic Web), that is, from content to community to artificial intelligence. There are proposals for e-Teacher Education. Smart Classrooms are emerging, wherein, we have e-learning and e-testing. Terms like Wi-Fi, iPad, e-Book, e-Reader, e-News Letter, Webinar are widely used. Digital Lesson Designs and e-Portfolios have become common features. There are compendiums of e-abstracts and surveys of educational research in India on the World Wide Web. The NCTE is expediting teacher education on e-Technologies through an MOU with Intel. There is a wide scope for transformation of teacher education through technology.

LITTLE CHOICE BASE

Options are not substitutes for choice based education. Choice by whom i.e. students, teachers, or by both? The issues involved relate to the systemic correction, as well as, developing the right attitudes to make it a success. Though we have introduced optional areas in teacher education, but the choice is very limited. There is a need to employ choice based credit system in teacher

education, which can be realized through e-platforms, and amalgamation of various modes, such as, fact to face, distance and electronic. Choice base demands plenty of resources.

POOR RESEARCH SCENARIO

Research in education is replicate and repetitive devoid of freshness, either of problem or of approach or of methodology. The national agenda for research needs to be developed in alignment with the developmental objectives. A prospective plan for research and innovations should be framed with regional and national developmental priorities. The research methodology must be compatible with the local problems. There is a need to be innovative. There are mismatches between research trends and problems. Regulatory mechanism to tone up the research quality needs to be evolved. There is a need to evolve research quality indicators. There is a need to evolve social sciences compatible indigenous research methodology. Philosophical & historical studies are very rare. There is more of quantitative research than qualitative. There is more of descriptive and evaluative research than suggestive. There is more of borrowed methodology than indigenous. Taxonomy of research needs to be evolved.

There is lack of continuity, cumulateness and synthesis in most of the studies. Most of the studies are descriptive rather than preventive and ameliorative. Culture for incubation of ideas is grossly lacking, what to talk of inculcation. Statistics and psychometrics are superimposing reality. There is a mixed scenario of research in education. Some of the observations are as follows:

- A large number of surveys have been conducted in education. But, the principles of objectivity, transparency, equivalence and generality have not been adequately observed.
- In experimental research, largely the scholars move from induction to abduction to thesis to analogy to facts to theories. But inconsistent scattered researches lead us nowhere. Social laboratory is a myth and figment of imagination. It has become essential to sustain social life that the social scientists evolve their own methods.
- In case study research diagnosis of a case is as important as prognosis of its disposition. A large majority of us have become excellent in describing the problems and cases, but prognosis is lacking. Here the presage, process and product variables, all, need to be treated very carefully.
- Naturalistic enquiry which phenomenology demands needs to be conducted in an open, naturalistic, parametric setting. Because more and more are the controls in a social science laboratory, lesser and lesser is the generalization.

- Qualitative research cannot be conducted through a-priori samples only. Sampling goes on throughout research, through various sampling techniques, such as, typical case sampling, intensity sampling, critical case sampling, sensitive case sampling, convenience sampling, primary selection and secondary selection. Qualitative Research cannot be conducted through static tools and techniques, because very often the researcher employing qualitative research methodology does not have a sound theoretical base related to the reality. Theory in fact is the product of enquiry. Qualitative research is affected by a wonderful interaction of subject and object. The object needs to be perceived as objectively and comprehensively as feasible.
- One of the basic tenets of qualitative research is awareness of one's own biases. There is a need to address diversity issues, such as, gender, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. The pursuit of knowledge should be conducted with sincerity and care.

VISION & MISSION MISMATCH

University of teacher education has come up at Chennai. ITE is being established in Gujarat. Many integrated teacher education programmes are proposed. Private teacher education universities are also coming up. But, there are evident mismatches amongst vision, establishment, and mission.

NON-SCIENTIFIC MANPOWER PLANNING

The 21st Century is highly complex. The return on investment, be it public sector or corporate is measured in terms of material returns than in terms of human development. Human beings are most neglected. There is more of focus on GNP than on HDI. In this ICT and digital age machines are most respected, whereas, men are most neglected. What to talk of the knowledge poor, even in the knowledge rich societies, gross injustice is rampant. There are demand and supply imbalances in teacher education. Appreciable attempts have been made for manpower planning. But, the manpower planning still needs to be done more scientifically. It is expected that the various States governments play an active role in manpower planning.

ILLUSIVE LABORATORIES

The various laboratories of teacher education institutions, namely, Science Lab, Psychology Lab, Guidance & Counselling Lab, Educational Technology Lab, Computer Lab, and Language Lab are either not there or are mostly in very bad states. The field reality is still worse. All the laboratories ought to be fully functional and innovative to address the problems.

OVER ACTIVISM OF DISTANCE/OPEN UNIVERSITIES

Some of the distance and open universities have become over activists in the context of teacher education. These have a notion that they can open their teacher education extension centres anywhere. To give birth to infinite is their right, but who will rear their babies. Such distance and open universities have resulted into the dilution of teacher education.

INVALID RECOGNITION & ACCREDITATION

There are questions on recognition of teacher education institutions. There are questions on inputs & processes of teacher education. There are questions even on Accreditation of teacher education institutions. Escola Normal of Goa was much better established during Portuguese period than the most recent modern teacher education institutions in India. Nalanda was having a much better profile and grade than the highest graded modern universities.

NO TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY

There is no Teacher Education Policy in India. But, who will formulate Teacher Education Policy? To preserve the identity and sanctity of education, it is high time that we introduce Indian educational services. It is unfortunate that education is not even considered as an entity.

Irrespective of geographical and cultural context, education is needed for all and therefore, it should be a national priority instead of leaving the subject in the domain of States. For this education should be shifted to the central list of the constitution from the concurrent list. In order to make it locally relevant, the financial and administrative arrangement be jointly shared, both, by the Centre and States. This would hopefully loose the chains of political interference in the university system.

Every fault of Teacher Education is attributed to the National Council of Teacher Education. Rather than finding faults let us try to meet the gaps between our policies and programmes, vision and mission, wish and will. The foregoing analysis highlights the malaise plaguing the Indian Teacher Education System. It calls for revolutionary changes. There should be open forums and public debates on Teacher Education Policy, rather than leaving it to some selected committees, and commissions.

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