

Teacher Education: A Socio-Cultural Disposition Of India And Global Perspective

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Abstract

A nation or a society cannot afford to craft an educational system devoid of teacher education as its integral component. NCTE defines 'the teacher education as a programme of education, research and training of an individual to teach from the pre-primary to higher education level'. It refers to the 'organisation and development of proficiency and competence' of a prospective teacher to embrace the challenges of teaching and learning therein. The teacher education is at the buffer of the entire education system where it capitalizes the knowledge base from the disciplines like Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology etc. to develop a meaningful curriculum corresponding to the needs of the society and sensitive to field applications.

NEP 2020 agrees that Teacher Education creates a pool of school teachers well versed in dispositions and values of India coupled with latest advances in education. Basically the history of teacher education in India starts with British period, post 1700 AD, when education got a facelift from education of spiritual environment to material world. The personality development got its material curriculum as a quality education. Neither the parameters of quality fixed nor objectives were distinctly homogenized. The prime stumbling block in this regard was the heterogeneous nature of Indian society.

Despite having a lengthy constitution and independent judiciary, Indian political morals are very fluid. Historical and religious sentiments deviate the policy planners toward a reverse commitment. Societal transformations are scripted to impact on educational system and institutions which has a direct bearing on the development of teacher and teaching learning environment.

Key Terms: *Teacher Education, Society, Culture, Social Development and Disposition.*

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I. Introduction

The total transaction of education in a school or institution rests on the shoulders of a teacher who shapes and sharpens the dispositions of individual's intellect aimed to augment the developmental fabric of the nation. It is the education system that demands a stream lined effort to project national requirements and expectations. A teacher not only delivers the relevant contents but he organises the participation of students in the total transactions. That's why teacher's calibre and competence are judged through sensitivity and motivation of the students. The quality and extent of student's achievements are reflective of teacher's knowledge pool and skills. The teacher's skills run under the shadow of the process of education that revolves around its curriculum, design, organisation and the cultural necessity that a society approves.

A nation or a society cannot afford to craft an educational system devoid of teacher education as its integral component. NCTE defines 'the teacher education as a programme of education, research and training of an individual to teach from the pre-primary to higher education level'. It refers to the 'organisation and development of proficiency and competence' of a prospective teacher to embrace the challenges of teaching and learning therein. The American Commission on teacher education observes that 'the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon

the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher'. UNESCO defines 'teacher education as formal teacher training (pre-service or in-service) designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude behaviour and skills required for teaching at the relevant level'. It makes the prospective teacher ready to undertake the task effectively in the classroom. It involves the selection and development of relevant knowledge pool culturally rich to affect all aspects of learning.

Forking out the relevant knowledge pool to disseminate the academic and intellectual understanding of teacher education becomes the central concern. It becomes imperative to delimit (demarcate) the theoretical cognition from disciplines related to education and constitute it suitably for teacher education.

The teacher education is comprehensive and dynamic in character. It has to be in tune with the recent trends and developments. It becomes a requirement for a dynamic society to prepare teachers who are competent enough to face the challenges. The teacher education is at the buffer of the education system where it capitalizes the knowledge base from the disciplines like Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology etc. to develop a meaningful curriculum corresponding to the needs of the society and sensitive to field applications. However, such disciplines comprising knowledge reservoir of teacher education does not reveal that it is simply an admixture of its concepts and principles but it paves ways for the emergence of a specific gestalt.

It is incumbent on the teacher education system to prepare a prospective teacher with necessary attitude toward the profession and its intricacies through well-crafted conceptual and theoretical framework. Such as the philosophy tunes the insight towards the goal whereas the sociology helps to understand the social fabric and dynamics of the culture that is to be incorporated into the system of education. 'it encompasses the ideals that influences national and international scenes' (Lal, 2016). The psychology helps the prospective teacher to make forays into the self, the students and the learning environment. The operational boundary of the teacher must be clear and accordingly he has to be sensitive and attentive to the socio-cultural dynamics of education.

The present day world has peoples of diverse orientations in terms of their social structure and culture. This diversity is a big challenge for a prospective teacher to maintain the spirit of coexistence in and out of a classroom. The diversity is also a stumbling block for the curriculum developer, to be in tune with the national goal yet overcoming uneven surfaces of language, religion, caste and class etc. it is easy to brand diversity as strength but it leaves very thin passage of opportunity to construct a strong teaching learning environment based on socio-cultural history. In this respect Indian diversity pose a very complex orientation to design a strategy of teaching and learning that meets the aspirations of all students equally. The promotion of cross-culture dimensions of critical thinking becomes a liability on the teacher.

A nation always moves to translate its developmental ethics and culture through institutional practices and tries to cope with the international trends. The present trend is commonly understood as globalization. It is phenomenal and change of multidimensional nature shaking all existing institutions.

Objectives

1. To study and analyse the teacher education programme in India
2. To analyse the cultural heterogeneity and its effect on the quality of teacher education.
3. To study the dynamics of social development through teacher education in global context.

Design of the Study

The present study is interpretive and analytic in nature. The study comprises a review of the National Education Policies, which aims to synthesise the socio-cultural leanings, Constitutional provisions, contributions from other academic disciplines, and policies and programmes supporting cultural variations of the nation.

The literature review, for practical purpose, has been organised to study:

1. The broad overview of constitutional provisions related to education and social development that strengthen the support to different cultures.
2. The policies and programmes of different national governments over the years for teacher education to foster national development in India.
3. The challenges due to socio-cultural disparities in the maintenance of quality in teacher education programme.

II. Analysis And Interpretation

Teacher Education Programme in India

Pre-Independence

Since long the concept of teacher education is under scrutiny. Its standards, nature, quality and contents are bone of contention in almost everywhere. It is a universal statement that teaching is a noble profession. Hence its nobility rests on the task to groom the man and citizen to come to the expectations of the society. So far as quality of a teacher is concerned, NCTE (1998) states that 'the teacher is the most important element in any educational programme. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage'.

The development of such proficiency was termed as teacher training during the early 20th century. The goal was very narrow, limited to development of skills of teaching. Teacher education as a whole is a combination of pedagogical knowledge supported by teaching and professional skills. Beside skills, it is incumbent on the teachers to accept the challenges of the society and keep abreast of recent developments and trends.

Skills are, no doubt, important to make the environment of teaching learning conducive but content assumes the central place of all transactions in the classroom. A good repertoire of pedagogical skills only is not complete in the business but sensitivity to the contemporary problems also influence the quality of subject matter and hence, the student's learning. Apart from the above quality, decision making in the context of evolving development is necessary aspect for a teacher. He must understand language and cultural influences, learning differences, individual's nature, interest and approaches to learning. In simple terms, only foundational knowledge is not sufficient to enhance the performances and make capable of taking appropriate judgement in the interest of the students.

Teaching is one of the oldest profession and unique in drawing respect world-wide. The changing time and its requirements have nothing adverse but increased its importance. In India, since old age, it is considered a fountain of knowledge and an apostle of all good qualities. Before the reign of education taken over by Britishers, teaching and education was focused on spiritual subjects and developing a teacher was not on the card. The departure from the classical Indian pattern of education was initiated by European Missionaries. At the beginning of the 19th century a system of mutual instruction was got its way in Europe and known as Bell-Lancaster or Monitorial system. It was a system of organization and teaching method at the elementary school level in which intelligent abler students were involved to pass on the information to other students. This method was named after British pedagogues 'Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster who both independently developed it' (Wikipedia, 2020). This method was first used in India, where British pedagogue Andrew Bell was living at that time. The basic teaching and learning process used in this system was to furnish schooling to the under privileged pupil's in many cultures because of its low cost. Sir Munro, in his minute dated 13 December 1823, supported this system in India and he suggested allowance and different types of syllabi for both Hindu and Muslim teachers to improve their education. In 1826, first normal school to prepare teacher for district school was started in Madras under the management and finances of British government.

The most important chapter on Indian teacher education system starts with the release of Wood's dispatch, 1854. It introduced a pupil teacher system in India as prevailed in England at that time. It also strengthened the pupil teacher with a stipend and a certificate after successful completion of training programme. Though the purpose of the wood's dispatch was to block supply of teachers from England. It opened the gate for development of vernacular schools. The tentacles of teacher training in India spread and by the close of 19th century general courses were replaced by pedagogical courses.

In 1904, the Government of India Resolution on Education Policy, enunciated that for the improvement of Secondary Education, teachers needed to be improved through training. This was meant to equip the training colleges and men of ability with the idea of theory and practices of teaching to discharge the responsibilities efficiently. This resolution paved the way for establishment of training colleges. After a lapse of nine years, another policy resolution on education came in 1913, which highlighted the flaws in the system to improve primary education. In 1917, Calcutta University Commission popularly known as Sadler Commission, raised the questions of inadequacy of quality training. It opined that, apart from class-room teaching, competency of a teacher should cover understanding of administration also. It was further strengthened by the Hartog Committee. It touched the nurturing society of an individual and suggested that for a rural area institution, teacher should be picked up from rural society. Following it, a number of colleges were opened up for degree and post-graduate degree and the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was revived. In 1937, the Abbott-Wood report suggested a refresher course to widen the experience of prospective teacher with an increment in the duration of training to 3 years. In 1944, post-war educational development in India was chalked out by the CABE, known as Sergeant Plan. It bi-furcated the duration of training for graduates and non-graduates. It proposed a revision of pay scales for all teachers.

Post-Independence

The Teacher education gets a new impetus after India gets independence. The independence triggered new socio-economic and political equations. Many committees and commissions were set up to look into issues and circumstances of education. The requirement of trained teachers and their quality became the main concern. Hence, 1948 saw the establishment and development of two institute i.e. the Central Pedagogical Institute at Allahabad and the Central Institute of Education in Delhi, to produce the trained teachers.

The University Education Commission 1948, first post-independence commission, under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, deplored the discrepancies in theory and actual practice carried on in teacher's training colleges. The training colleges were found lacking in basic orientation essentials. The commission opined that the theory and practice of training programme should be complimentary to each other. The second all India conference held at Mysore in 1951, and it replaced the term 'training' with 'education'.

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) delved deeper into the problems of teachers and their training. Its analysis was based on the idea of educational reconstruction focused on the teacher, his attributes, qualifications, professional training and place of the teacher in the school as well as in the society. The commission recommended greater change in the educational approach. The second five-year plan (1955-56) contemplated that by 1960, close to seventy percent teachers would be trained. In 1961, NCERT was established to improve school education by focusing on training, research, publication and coordination. Development of teacher training remained in the eyes of Committee on Plan Projects also, which submitted its findings in 1964. It dragged the training institutions from the corridors of educational thinking to the laboratories to switch the practical realities of teacher education programme. It highlighted the inadequate laboratory arrangements that was that was a stumbling block in the way of innovation in teacher education programme.

In the same year, 1964, Government of India set-up an educational commission under the chairmanship Dr. D S Kothari, seeking advice on education layout. The commission pointed out some issues which were detrimental to the quality of teacher education and development of teachers. It was averse to the idea that the teacher's college should remain isolated from overall educational institutions. Further, subject orientation and integrated courses were suggested to improve quality and professionalism of education.

In the seventies, high water mark decisions were taken to boost up the education system. 10+2+3 pattern of education was introduced, NCTE came to its existence to work as a national advisory body for teacher education and education was brought to Concurrent list through 42nd Amendment of the constitution. A task oriented curriculum was designed for the teachers and it was expected that teachers would initiate process of transformation of society and thereby help achieve the goal of national development.

The members of NCTE and UGC panel together drafted an approach paper on teacher education in 1976. In 1983 two national commissions on teachers were set up to explore on the issues at school and higher education level. 'The Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective', a government of India document envisaged an educational system to prepare youth for 21st century. It lamented the situations surrounding teacher education. Teaching as a profession was the last option in the job market. This document was widely debated and resulted in Education Policy 1986. The National Education Policy 1986 adequately stressed to the teacher education and educational institutions were upgraded. The NPE-1986 revised in 1992 by Acharya Ramamurthy Committee. Its approach was value oriented education. In the meantime, NCTE emerged as a statutory body of government of India through an Act of 1993 passed by parliament (MHRD, GoI). Prior to 1993 the NCTE was only a department of National Council of Educational Research and Training. NCTE got its sanctioned weightage on 17th August 1995 for the purpose of development of teacher education system in India. Despite the allocation of good chunk of money and upgradation of many institutions, the quality improvement of teacher education was found to be marginal. The clutches of NCTE, in the name of norms and regulations, too did not bear fruit. It was the period when market was opened for private players through the policy of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation.

Education and Indian Society

Since independence, educational development programmes like Operation Blackboard (1987), District Primary Education Programme (1994), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2002) and Universal Elementary Education (2001) were devised to meet the situations. Such programmes were substantiated with the increase of institutions and teachers. Yet the quality parameters, like student's achievements and faculty learning resources, are still needed attention. As the teacher has to execute his understanding on a wide array of diverse students in the classroom. It is a commonly agreed premise that the prospective teacher should understand the concepts and processes of teaching learning in their socio-cultural context in this globalized and dynamic world. NEP 2020 agrees that Teacher Education creates a pool of school teachers well versed in dispositions and values of India coupled with latest advances in education. At the same time, it accepts the failure of Regulatory System. J.S.Verma Commission (2012) constituted by Supreme Court highlights the malpractices in the system and

failure of Regulatory efforts. Verma Commission recommends that the Regulatory System should be empowered to restore the integrity and credibility of teaching profession by curbing on TEI's (NEP:15.3). Further, NEP2020 aspires that all teacher education programmes must run in the composite multidisciplinary environment to maintain high quality content and pedagogy and all stand-alone TEI's be converted to multidisciplinary institution by 2030. Furthermore, ITEP will be basic qualification for school teachers. It means ITEP will offer 'dual major holistic Bachelor's degree in education as well as in specialized subject, beyond teaching of cutting-edge pedagogy'.

Hence, the teacher preparation in Indian milieu demands the teacher to understand the nature of Indian culture and its system of knowledge transmission, complexities of its value system and an attempt to resurrect the glory of ancient achievements. The changing socio-cultural landscape and national demands continuously pricks the educational aspirations. But in India, the fluid political direction leaves little space for a dynamic teacher education orientation. The teacher education policy and its regulatory contexts face varied challenges for a fair and homogeneous transfer of knowledge.

The post independent India faced immediate challenge of doing away with the imported system of teacher preparation and education system so as to reorient it to Indian needs. A responsive curriculum was to be prepared to suit the dynamic trends of Indian society. The prospective teacher had to handle the complex socio-economic and gender disparities, from simple transaction of knowledge to its being a human construct and leading to the process of reflective learning.

Global Change and Social Development

'The teacher education is a complex and multi-dimensional process' (Wang et al., 2003) and a wide range of elements shape this process like local elements of society and culture, national and global policies and economic conditions etc. Globalisation diluted the national borders and policy roadblocks in terms of economic transactions, exchange of technology and knowledge to reshape the organisational and institutional structure. "However, in this increasingly global environment, many individuals and groups strive toward the preservation of traditional cultures, the maintenance of locally established social norms, and the continuation of accepted communal arrangements. The inherent tension between globalization and regionalism plays out in different arenas of social and cultural life, including education" (Ben-Peretz and Lotan, 2010). Wenger (1998) identifies "four areas as central component of social theory of learning that are teacher knowledge; teacher knowing; teaching practices; and teacher identity. He further asserts that The process of knowing-in-practice does not reside within individuals; rather it is distributed across teachers, students and both conceptual artefacts such as models and theories, and physical artefacts such as books and computers". Whereas Schon (1983) clarifies that the "expertise of teachers has an active and productive relationship with their knowledge in and knowledge-of-practice". This is the inverse of cognitivist's approach.

There is a common argument that despite infiltration of global trends into the local context of social and cultural contours, the quality of teaching remains dominant indicator of students learning. This quality of teaching learning is commonly held on a platform of the aims and objectives of the teacher education programmes. The aims and structures of preparing teachers, directly respond to the purpose of education set by the society. Such "Programs are influenced by contextual needs and constraints as well as political realities and pressures. They reflect ingrained relationships between community values and educational institutions, and dominant beliefs about the school's role in educating children" (Ben-Peretz and Lotan, 2010). The larger context of a teacher's operation rests on the dynamics of social and cultural milieu of education. It presents a large canvas of disparities where teacher's responses and sensitivities are put to test.

Professional expertise of teacher must match the contemporary global society. The 21st century society has been reconfigured on many counts and the standards of learning is higher than the earlier. To commensurate with the trends it is imperative that a teacher must acquire additional knowledge and skills to survive academically and compete with the environmental change. Formal education under the roof of a school is not a new structure for the whole world and the teachers are considered to be the torch bearer of the values for which a nation is demarcated. He responds to the culture and historical developments of the society and helps define the educational goals.

The curricular cognizance of ever-changing needs of society, aspects of globalization, changing face of all pervasive technology and loosing grounds of traditional classroom for distance virtual learning, must be in the competency basket of the prospective teacher. "Global competence is the set of knowledge, skills, mindsets, and values needed to thrive in a diverse, globalized society" (Tichnor-Wagner, 2019). 'Globalisation does not have a single face, but a plurality of aspects, depending upon where and how one lives. The universal process of globalisation shapes national patterns in different ways' (Sen, 1999). "The United Nations Development Programme describes a number of central challenges facing humans when dealing with globalisation processes, such as addressing regional and national inequities, supporting human rights, reducing poverty, maintaining security, and achieving sustainability" (UNDP, 1999).

III. Conclusion

The delimited space is unique in socio-cultural characteristics. It is significant in the respect that it offers a fluid political approach and insufficient economic assistance to education yet having a huge liability of developing an environment of social justice. Historical and religious sentiments deviate the policy planners toward a reverse commitment. Societal transformations are scripted to impact on educational system and institutions which has a direct bearing on the development of teacher and teaching learning environment.

Basically the history of teacher education in India starts with British period, post 1700 AD, when education got a facelift from education of spiritual environment to material world. The personality development got its material curriculum as a quality education. Neither the parameters of quality fixed nor objectives were distinctly homogenized. The prime stumbling block in this regard was the heterogeneous nature of Indian society. Most of the human transaction remains on the platforms of economy, networking, knowledge and its transfer, only the face value changes in the form of either restrictions or its dilution. Globalisation integrated the borders with the dilution of approaches to lift the iron curtains.

Educational Implication

There are many socio-economic factors to satisfy “the demands of global knowledge economy” (Sharma, G. 2019) and fill the educational landscape. But the policy and regulatory contexts in India are never intensely debated to develop a long term quality premise. Supreme Court’s high powered commission (2012) was also critical of the policy transition of teacher education by peeping through the quality concerns of Teacher Education and regulatory functions of NCTE. The regulatory function of NCTE is not a straight line function. It was contested by many conflicting interest groups. Mathew and Menon (2016) highlights the commercial stakes and controlling voices of private sector, actors within government and teacher educators as major stumbling block in proper regulation to steer up the quality of teacher education.

JVC report was focused on inability of stand-alone institutions to provide an interdisciplinary environment and hence called for revision of curriculum supported by structural change.

Post-independence India witnessed a landmark expansion of school education which ultimately exerted pressures on the preparations of teachers to meet the national developmental needs. For that matter only British model of curriculum was not sufficient as different commissions and committees highlighted. Gradual reforms paved the way for emergence of Right to Education Bill, 2008. It culminated into an Act in 2009 and it became mandatory for the ‘state to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years’ (till class-8). The Act mandated a teacher student ration by 1:30 which propelled the demand for the qualified and well trained teachers. But it is not a simple process to groom the teacher. There are many constrains and dominant beliefs which need to be incorporated in the preparation of a teacher. The development of a nation is incumbent on the abilities of its teachers who successfully shape the learning environment of his students. Hence, it is the responsibility of the society to back the teachers with a good education system.

A teacher is bound to function on the purposive line of education drawn by the society so that a corresponding citizen is prepared. For the matter he cannot escape cultural and contextual requirements that shape values and beliefs. In a multicultural national system, like India, the professional preparedness of a teacher becomes very difficult. But heterogeneity of socio-cultural demographics of India can be transformed to an instrument productive to the development of a teacher, competent for the global learning community. Locally diverse compositions of attitudes and values set up multiple window of strength for the teacher to mould the learning environment.

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