

Role Expectations towards Teachers in View of Post Independent Policy Documents

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ABSTRACT

A sound education system has become a key of national progress in the entire globe. Therefore, all efforts are being made to make education system more effective and goal oriented. Such efforts will remain futile unless a large pool of effective and ideal teachers. In such premise the all the educational reforms have vehemently addressed the issue of teachers essential qualities and the mechanism through such teachers can be produced. The national policy on education 1986 goes to the extent of saying that no nation can rise above the levels of the teachers. Thus all policy documents have set forth different role expectations before the teachers and the policy makers of education. Almost all documents have defined teaching as a value laden profession and advocated that teachers should possess the essential humane values which are desired for character development of the youth. Further, strong notions have also been taken to equip teachers with desired knowledge and skills so that they may become an agent of national progress in true sense.

Key words: Policy in Indian education, teacher effectiveness, teacher education, history of Indian education

The Education Commission (1964-66) professed, “the destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms”. So did the National Policy on Education- 1986 emphasize: “The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”. Such exhortations are indeed an expression of the important role played by the teachers as transmitters, inspirers and promoters of man’s eternal quest for knowledge.” (Preface of NCFTE-2010) **The professional preparation** of teachers has been recognised to be crucial for the qualitative improvement of education since the 1960s (**Kothari Commission, 1964-66**), but very few concrete steps have been taken in the last three decades to operationalise this.

India has made considerable progress in school education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure and universal access and enrolment in schools (NCFTE-2010). With increasing school enrolments and the launch of pan-Indian primary education development programmes such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA -2002) to achieve the mission of universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), Operation Blackboard (OB) 1986, and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP- 1995), there was an increase in the demand for teachers. To supply for this increasing demand of well qualified and professionally trained elementary school teachers a vast mushrooming of teacher training institutions has been seen for some years. This privatization and commercialization has rather weakened the teacher education. Teacher Education actually should ensure essential teaching competency, knowledge, pedagogical skills, positive attitudes, perspective, and essential values in trainee teachers. But these institutions unconcerned with their quality are providing whole life teaching licences in form of degrees with no provision for in service professional development of these teachers.

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993), *Learning Without Burden* drew attention to the need for the involvement of teachers in curriculum and textbook preparation and training teachers in fostering learning through activity, discovery, observation and understanding.

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has observed that teachers are the single most important element of the school system and the country is already facing a severe shortage of qualified and motivated school teachers at different levels. It is urgent to restore the dignity of school teaching as a profession and provide more incentives for qualified and committed teachers. Non-teaching official duties such as election-related responsibilities should not be allowed to interfere with the teaching process. Forums that allow and encourage teachers to exchange ideas, information and experiences including a web-based portal should be developed. At the same time, there should be transparent systems for ensuring accountability of school teachers. As far as possible, teachers should be recruited to particular schools.

The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986-92) recognised that “...teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs of and capabilities of and the concerns of the community.”

In the post-independence India efforts were made to restructure school education according to the ethos and Socio-Cultural, Political and Economic concerns of the Indian society. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended for multipurpose School and 11-year pattern of school education. Whereas Education Commission (1964-66) recommended a 10+2+3 pattern of education which was accepted by the adoption of the National Policy on Education in 1968 further making ways for a national system of education. The Curriculum for the Ten Year School —A Framework (NCERT-1975) attempted to give concrete shape to the recommendations of the Kothari Commission and National Policy on Education -1968. Its recommendations for the ten years of general education were accepted thoroughly. The Ishwarbhai Patel Committee(1977) examined the problem of curriculum load and recommended for the study of one optional subject from a prescribed list to permit pupils to develop special interests or talents. (NCF 1988)

The major CURRICULAR CONCERNS of NCF-1988 were - Equality of Education and Opportunity, Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Constitutional Obligations, Strengthening of National Identity and Unity Character Building and Inculcation of Values, A Global Perspective, Protection of the Environment and Conservation of Natural Resources, Observance of Small Family Norm, Future-oriented Education **Pedagogical Concerns**, Education for All-round Development, Evolving a Child - Centred Approach to Education, Facilitating 'Learning How to Learn', Facilitating Creative Expression, Inculcation of the Scientific Temper, Inter face Between Education and the World of Work, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, Utilisation of Media and Educational Technology

General Objectives of Education in National Curriculum Framework -1988

Emphasising on the 'child-centred approach' to education school curriculum, on the whole, should aim at enabling the learners to acquire knowledge, develop concepts, and inculcate skills, attitudes, values and habits conducive to the all-round development of their personality and commensurate with the social, cultural, economic and environmental realities at national and international levels. Knowledge, attitudes and habits necessary for keeping physically fit and strong in conformity NCF expresses that education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teachers need to be looked at as crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted and knowledge is co-constructed along with learners.

National Curriculum Framework - 2000

visualises Teacher Education Institutions as responsible for imparting pre-service teacher education in the country for they can play a vital role in bringing about reform in evaluation practices. For this, they will have to make evaluation a core component in their curricula and review the existing ones thoroughly. Apart from undertaking research they will also have to conduct in-service teacher orientation programmes in evaluation for the teachers belonging to the schools in their vicinity.

National Curriculum Framework – 2005

The proliferation of sub-standard private teacher education institutions and the current state of teacher education programmes are both serious impediments to fulfilling the objectives of the NCF and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education. The programmes have come under severe criticism for not addressing the needs of contemporary Indian schools and not preparing teachers who can impart quality education in schools. Their design/practice is based on certain assumptions which impede the progress of ideas and professional and personal growth of the teacher. They train teachers to adjust to a system in which education is seen as transmission of information. They take the school curriculum and textbooks as 'given' and train teachers to adjust to the needs of the existing school system through fastidious planning of lessons in standardized formats and fulfilling the ritual of delivering the required number of lessons. (NCERT, 2005)

In addition, the NCF requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children's learning in a manner that helps children to construct knowledge and meaning. The teacher in this process is a co-constructor of knowledge. It also opens out possibilities for the teacher to participate in the construction of syllabi, textbooks and teaching-learning materials. Such roles demand that teachers be equipped with an adequate understanding of curriculum, subject-content and pedagogy, on the one hand, and the community and school structures and management, on the other.

The NCF has described the current concerns of teacher education as follows:

- Experiences in the practice of teacher education indicate that knowledge is treated as 'given', embedded in the curriculum and accepted without question; there is no engagement with the curriculum. Curriculum, syllabi and textbooks are never critically examined by the student teacher or the regular teacher.
- Language proficiency of the teacher needs to be enhanced, but existing programmes do not recognize the centrality of language in the curriculum.
- Teacher education programmes provide little scope for student teachers to reflect on their experiences. Disciplinary knowledge is viewed as independent of professional training in pedagogy.
- Repeated 'practice' in the teaching of a specified number of isolated lessons is considered a sufficient condition for professional development.
- It is assumed that links between learning theories and models and teaching methods are automatically formed in the understanding developed by student teachers.
- There is no opportunity for teachers to examine their own biases and beliefs and reflect on their own experiences as part of classroom discourse and enquiry.
- Theory courses have no clear link with practical work and ground realities.
- The evaluation system followed in teacher education programmes is too information-oriented, excessively quantitative and lacks comprehensiveness.

- Apart from conceptual and pedagogical aspects, existing programmes need to develop certain attitudes, dispositions, habits and interests in a teacher. The present evaluation protocol has no place for evaluating these aspects.

According to NCF-2005 Teachers need to be prepared to

- *care for children, and should love to be with them.*
- *understand children within social, cultural and political contexts.*
- *be receptive and be constantly learning .*
- *view learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience, and knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning.*
- *view knowledge not as an external reality embedded in textbooks, but as constructed in the shared context of teaching-learning and personal experience.*
- *own responsibility towards society, and work to build a better world.*
- *appreciate the potential of productive work and hands-on experience as a pedagogic medium both inside and outside the classroom.*
- *analyse the curricular framework, policy implications and texts.*

RTE- 2009 Role Expectations of Teachers

Regional, social, and gender disparities continue to pose new Challenges in education at all fronts. This reality increases the challenge of implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act and, in particular, the role and place of the school teacher.

The teacher must be equipped not only to teach but also to understand the students and the community of parents so that children are regular in schools and learn. The Act mandates that the teacher should refrain from inflicting corporal punishment, complete the entire curriculum within the given time, assess students, hold parent’s meetings and apprise them and as part of the school management committee, organise the overall running of the school.

The Act, vide section 29 (2), emphasises the following areas of professional development of teachers at all stages, both in their initial and in-service training, while laying down the curriculum and evaluation procedures:

- Conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution.
- All round development of the child.
- Building up child’s knowledge, potentiality and talent.
- Development of physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent.
- Learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a childfriendly and child-centred manner.
- Medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in child’s mother tongue.
- Making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely.
- Comprehensive and continuous evaluation of child’s understanding of knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same.

“National Curriculum Framework for School Education” – 2000 by NCERT views curriculum as a device to achieve national goals through the medium of educational experiences. Thereafter National Curriculum Framework 2005, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 as well as the fundamental tenets enshrined in the Constitution of India have guided the development of National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009). Preparing professional and humane teachers is the core foundational issue of this policy document which itself elaborates its vision. It elaborates the context, concerns and vision that teacher education and school education have a

symbiotic relationship. The new concerns of school curriculum and the expected transactional modalities including issues related to inclusive education, perspectives for equitable and sustainable development, gender perspectives, role of community knowledge in education and ICT in schooling as well as e-learning along with curricular areas of teacher education, pedagogy, school internship, assessment, focus on continuous and comprehensive evaluation of developing teachers, the suggestion to establish Teaching Learning Centres to act as laboratories for the theory and practice of teacher training have been emphasized in the framework.

According to National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education-2009

Teachers need to be equipped to understand the issues of **inclusive education** Equitable and Sustainable Development Role of Community Knowledge in Education, ICT in Schools and e-learning, Role of Community Knowledge in Education, Multi-cultural education and teaching for diversity, emphasis is on changing contexts, Meaningful Internship and School experience, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, and incorporate them in their teaching. The new teacher education curriculum framework needs to integrate these perspectives in its formulation.

Suggested Reforms in Secondary Teacher Education according to NCFTE (2009)

According to NCFTE the philosophy, purpose and practice of teacher education can be made as :

- Teachers need to be prepared to care for children, enjoy to be with them, seek knowledge, own responsibility towards society and work to build a better world, develop sensitivity to the problems of the learners, commitment to justice and zeal for social reconstruction.
- Teachers need to view learners as active participants in their own learning and not as mere recipients of knowledge; need to encourage their capacity to construct knowledge; ensure that learning shifts away from rote methods. Learning is to be viewed as a search for meaning out of personal experiences and knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning.
- Teacher education must engage with theory along with field experiences to help trainees to view knowledge not as external to the learner but as something that is actively constructed during learning. Teacher education should integrate academic knowledge and professional learning into a meaningful whole.
- Teachers need to be trained in organizing learner-centred, activitybased, participatory learning experiences – play, projects, discussion, dialogue, observation, visits, integrating academic learning with productive work.
- Teacher education should engage teachers with the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks to critically examine them rather than taking them as ‘given’ and accepted without question.
- Teacher education should provide opportunity to student-teachers for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule with teacher-directed activities alone.
- The programme should engage teachers with children in real contexts rather than teach them about children through theories alone. It should help them understand the psycho-social attributes and needs of learners, their special abilities and characteristics, their preferred mode of cognition, motivation and learning resulting from home and community socialization.
- The programme should help teachers or potential teachers to develop social sensitivity and consciousness and finer human sensibilities.

- Teacher education programmes need to broaden the curriculum (both school and teacher education) to include different traditions of knowledge; educate teachers to connect school knowledge with community knowledge and life outside the school.
- Teacher education programmes need to help teachers appreciate the potential of hands-on experience as a pedagogic medium both inside and outside the classroom; and work as integral to the process of education.
- Teachers need to re-conceptualize citizenship education in terms of human rights and approaches of critical pedagogy; emphasize environment and its protection, living in harmony within oneself and with natural and social environment; promote peace, democratic way of life, constitutional values of equality, justice, liberty, fraternity and secularism, and caring values.
- In view of the many-sided objectives of teacher education the evaluation protocol needs to be comprehensive and provide due place for the evaluation of attitudes, values, dispositions, habits and hobbies, in addition to the conceptual and pedagogical aspects through appropriate quantitative as well as qualitative parameters

Conclusion

Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, various policy documents have outlined a number of role expectations towards teachers and their profession. The national curriculum framework of 1988, 2000 have proposed teachers as a tool for achieving national goals and emphasised their effective role in all major national initiatives. The need of practicing child centred methods and ability of acquiring updated knowledge has also been recommended. The national curriculum framework 2005 has put forth a paradigm shift introducing constructivist approach to teaching and learning. It outlined role of teacher as a facilitator or as a guide in facilitating learning as per the context of the learners. The national curriculum framework for teacher education 2009 is also a major document to understand and operationalise the role of teachers in present modern world. Need of inclusive education, interdisciplinary approach, joyful teaching methods and a teacher equip with essential ICT skills are some of the expectations that document recommends.

In this way all policy documents have outlined the need of skilful teachers in different phases of national and social development. Parallel machinery for realising the policy goal although is seriously needed so that the guidelines may become a concrete reality in the field of teacher education.

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