
The Parameters of Teacher's Education

Suman Lata

Assistant Professor,

Hindu College of Education,

Sonepat, Haryana

ABSTRACT:

This paper discusses the key parameters involved in teacher education & also presents a background perspective to quality in teacher education. The teacher education system in the country is extremely vast and diverse, covering over thousands of institutions at different levels of elementary, secondary and post-graduate programmes with a huge total intake. The momentous developments and rapid advances in the field of education and training of teachers and the revolutionary changes in the modes of imparting and receiving instructions pose multitudes of challenges for the teacher educators and institutions.

The teacher at any stage is expected to bring out the best in the child and youth and help them to realize their maximum potential physical, intellectual, spiritual. The teacher education system should ensure adequate supply of such professionally trained teachers to teach and guide those who study in schools and institutions of higher learning. The main concern is therefore to build teacher capability to translate curricular intents into appropriate learning experiences for children to enable them to acquire the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes. In order to achieve this, the teacher education system should be situated in and driven by the special quality features of the teacher education enterprise.

Teaching is a profession and teacher education is process of professional preparation of teachers. The knowledge base of teacher education is built by professionals through systematic observation, study, reflection, practical experience, experimentation and the content modes. The processes of teacher education are shaped by reflective practice.

Therefore, This paper also covers need, scope, challenges & vision for the teacher education at different level of education systems.

KEYWORDS:

- Need of Teacher Education
- Scope of Teacher Education
- Changing Role of the Teacher
- Challenges in the Teacher Education
- Research & Innovation
- Vision of Teacher Education
- Changing Context of Teacher Education in global scenario
- Newly Visualized Teacher Education Program

INTRODUCTION :

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation.

The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are teachers. The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as – A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. As stated by NCTE (1998) in Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education, –The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage. || This shows that it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers, so that the future of a nation is secure. The importance of competent teachers to the nation's school system can in no way be overemphasized. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 places demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education. **According to Goods Dictionary of Education Teacher education means, –all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.** Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.

Teaching skills would include providing training and practice in the different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teachers to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment.

Pedagogical theory includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practicing the teaching skills in the classroom

Professional skills include the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes soft skills, counseling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieving and management skills and above all life long learning skills.

NEED OF TEACHER EDUCATION :

The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes,

“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.”

The need for teacher education is felt due to the following reasons;

- 1) It is common knowledge that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation. The focus of teacher preparation had to shift from training to education if it had to make a positive influence on the quality of curriculum transaction in classrooms and thereby pupil learning and the larger social transformation. The aspects that need greater emphasis are;
 - the length of academic preparation,
 - the level and quality of subject matter knowledge,
 - the repertoire of pedagogical skills that teachers possess to meet the needs of diverse learning situations,
 - the degree of commitment to the profession,
 - sensitivity to contemporary issues and problems and
 - the level of motivation.

SCOPE OF TEACHER EDUCATION :

The scope of teacher education can be understood in the following ways;

- Teacher education at different levels of education
- Triangular basis of teacher education
- Aspects of teacher education

Teacher Education at different levels of Education : Teacher education reaches teachers at all levels of education, namely Pre-primary, Primary, Elementary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and the Tertiary. The needs and requirements of students and education vary at each level. Hence level and stage-specific teacher preparation is essential. Teacher education also helps in the development of teaching skills in teachers of professional institutions. The teachers in professional institutions have only the theoretical and practical knowledge of their respective subjects. They require specialized teacher training inputs to deal with students entering their professions. Teacher education also reaches special education and physical education. Thus where there are teachers, there would be teacher education.

Triangular Basis of Teacher education : Construction of the relevant knowledge base for each stage of education requires a high degree of academic and intellectual understanding of matter related to teacher education at each stage. This involves

selection of theoretical knowledge from disciplines cognate to education, namely, psychology, sociology and philosophy, and converting it into forms suitable for teacher education. Teacher education derives its content from the disciplines of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology. These disciplines provide the base for better understanding and application of Teacher education. The **Philosophical** basis provides insights to the student teachers about the implications of- the various schools of philosophy, ancient and modern philosophical thoughts, educational thoughts of philosophical thinkers on education and its various aspects such as curriculum construction and discipline. The **Sociological** basis helps the student teachers to understand the role of society and its dynamics in the educational system of a nation and the world at large. It encompasses the ideals that influence national and international scenes. The **Psychological** basis helps the student teachers develop insights into students' psychological make-up. This enables the student teachers to understand their self, their students and the learning situations such that they are able to provide meaningful and relevant learning experiences to their students.

Aspects of Teacher Education : Teacher education is concerned with the aspects such as, who (Teacher Educator), whom (Student teacher), what (Content) and how (Teaching Strategy). Teacher education is dependent upon the quality of teacher educators. The quality of pedagogical inputs in teacher education programmes and their effective utilization for the purpose of preparing prospective teachers depend largely on the professional competence of teacher educators and the ways in which it is utilized for strengthening the teacher education programme. Teacher education, thus, first deals with the preparation of effective teacher educators.

CHANGING ROLE OF THE TEACHER:

The current system of schooling poses tremendous burden on children. Educationists are of the view that the burden arises from treating knowledge as a given', an external reality existing outside the learner and embedded in textbooks. Knowledge is essentially a human construct, a continuously evolving process of reflective learning. The NCF 2005, requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children's learning in a manner that the child is helped to construct his/her knowledge. Education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teachers have to increasingly play the role of crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted.

CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

Unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes during the past few years characterizes the teacher education scenario of today. With increasing school enrolments and the launch of pan-Indian primary education development programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, there was a natural increase in the demand for teachers. Added to this, the backlog of untrained teachers in the system and the essential requirement of pre-service teacher certification for appointment as a teacher led to mounting pressure on existing institutional capacity. The

demand far exceeding supply, market forces have taken over unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country.

Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigour of programmes should be appropriately enhanced.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION:

There is a need to increase research that documents practices reflectively and analytically- whether it is of programs or of individual classrooms – so that it can be included in the body of knowledge available for study to student teachers. University departments and research institutions need to undertake such research. In addition there is a need to innovate with different models of teacher education. Institutional capacity and capability to innovate and create are a pre-requisite for the pursuit of excellence. Hence in the present scenario a lot of impetus has been given to research. Many teacher educators are encouraged to take up either major or minor research projects.

VISION OF TEACHER EDUCATION:

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this, it has to prepare teachers for a dual role of;

- Care for children, and who love to be with them;
 - Understand children within social, cultural and political contexts;
 - View learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience;
 - Understand the way learning occurs, possible ways of creating conducive conditions for learning, differences among students in respect of the kind, pace and styles of learning.
 - View knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning.
 - Be receptive and 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.
- Analyze the curricular framework, policy implications and texts.
- Have a sound knowledge base and basic proficiency in language.

The objectives of teacher education would therefore be to,

- Provide opportunities to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children
- Provide opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas; developing capacities for self directed learning and the ability to think, be self-critical and to work in groups.
- Provide opportunities for understanding self and others (including one's beliefs, assumptions and emotions); developing the ability for self analysis, self-evaluation, adaptability, flexibility, creativity and innovation.
- Provide opportunities to enhance understanding, knowledge and examine disciplinary knowledge and social realities, relate subject matter with the social milieu and develop critical thinking.
- Provide opportunities to develop professional skills in pedagogy, observation, documentation, analysis, drama, craft, story-telling and reflective inquiry.

CHANGING CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE

GLOBAL SCENARIO :

Teacher education is a global profession that needs to be understood properly. It is essential to grasp a global perspective of the profession as it is today, to make assumptions about it in the near future and to utilize the best thinking and instructional models available in the present times.

Professionally, powerful teaching is very important and increasing in our contemporary society as a result of the steam of dynamic initiatives of human development and evolution. Due to these developments and evolution, standards of learning would be higher in the 21st century than it has been in the 20th century. As a result teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, both general and specific, to be able to survive and be successful in the 21st century school environment.

Education has increasingly become important to success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence demonstrates that, among all educational resources, teachers' abilities

are especially critical contributors to students' learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social and political spheres (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

- **Dynamic teacher education and training in the 21st century globalised world.**

For dynamic teacher education and training in the 21st century globalised world, teacher education and training institutions must design programmes that would help prospective teachers to know and understand deeply; a wide array of things about teaching and learning and in their social and cultural contexts. Further more, they must be able to enact these understandings in complex classroom situation serving increasingly diverse students. If the 21st century teacher is to succeed at this task, teacher education and training institutions must further design programmes that transform the kinds of settings in which both the novices and the experienced teachers teach and become competent teachers. This signifies that the enterprise of teacher education and training must venture out further and further and engage even more closely with schools in a mutual transformation agenda with all the struggles involved. Importantly, the teacher education and training institutions must take up the charge of educating policy makers and the general public about what it actually takes to teach effectively both in terms of knowledge and skills that are needed and in terms of the school contexts that must be created to allow teachers to develop and use what they know on behalf of their students (Fullan, 1993).

- **Structure of a globalised teacher education and training curricula.**

Throughout the world, reform and innovation initiatives by nations have triggered much discussion about the structures of teacher education and training programmes (Hébert, 2001) and certification categories into which programmes presumably fit. Building stronger models of teacher preparation in the 21st century would require adequate and progressive knowledge content for teaching as well as knowledge content for the subjects that the teacher would be required to teach. In this respect, the –what of teacher education and training should be the focus of the curriculum.

- **The –what of globalised teacher education and training curricula**

There are many ways to configure the knowledge content that teachers may need to render their services professionally (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In articulating the core concepts and skills that should be represented in a common-core curriculum for teacher education and training, there is need for a frame work to guide decisions and practice. In the United States, the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education adopted a framework that is organised on three intersecting areas of knowledge found in many statements of standards for teaching which would be applicable for consideration in the 21st century teacher education and training curricula. The list below is represented in figure 1 diagrammatically.

- Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts, including knowledge of language development.
- Understanding of curriculum content and goals, including the subject matter and skills to be taught in the light of disciplinary demands, student needs and the social purposes of education; and
- Understanding of and skills for teaching, including content knowledge of specific subject, content pedagogical knowledge for teaching diverse learners, as these are informed by an understanding of assessment and of how to construct and manage a productive classroom.

Another scenario is the changing pattern of world employment. There are so many professions in our modern world and this will multiply in the 21st century. The new directions in teacher education and training should take cognisance of this so that teachers are prepared to play multiple roles and take their rightful positions in the teaching-learning environment to face these challenges confidently. We can only improve the quality of education worldwide for our students if we provide our teachers with the required skills, knowledge and experiences. One which deserves mention is the ability of the 21st century teacher to control disruptive behaviour of students in the classroom which makes it impossible for the teacher to work efficiently and effectively and even in some instances puts the security of both students and teachers at risk. Problems of such nature may multiply in magnitude in schools in the 21st century and for this reason, teacher education and training institutions should equip teachers with knowledge and skills in management to be able to address such problems effectively and efficiently.

Teacher education curricula should be inclusive and emphasize on life long learning, development in technology and its applications and strategies for planning viable alternatives to benefit students. Emphasis should be on democratic principles and practices. The institutionalization of democracy will make teachers see the role of schools and their contribution to the development of democratic values, skills and behaviour from the global perspective.

- **The –how of globalised teacher education and training curricula :**

The programme designs and pedagogies should attend specifically to the **how** of teacher education and training. It is important to have well-chosen courses that include **core content knowledge** for teaching and advanced research background. It is equally important to organize prospective teachers' experiences so that they are able to integrate

and use their acquired knowledge in a skilful manner in the classroom, especially incorporating research in whatever is taught so that the 21st century teacher becomes teacher-researcher at heart. Often times, this becomes the most difficult aspect of constructing a teacher education and training programme. The onus of the issue is that teacher education and training should attend to both the **what** and **how** so that knowledge for teaching, in reality, shapes the teachers' practice and enables them to become adaptive experts who are versatile and capable of operating effectively and efficiently in a variety of teaching and learning environments using the tools that have been provided to them during their training.

- Learn not only to **think like a teacher**|| but also to **–act as a teacher**. This is termed by Kennedy (1999) as the **problem of enactment**. Professionally, teachers need to understand and be able to do a wide variety of things simultaneously.
- Be able to understand and respond to the dense and multifaceted nature of the classroom environment, juggling multiple academic and social goals requiring trade-offs from time to time and day to day (Jackson, 1974). In short, the 21st century teacher should learn to deal with the **problem of complexity** that is made more intense by the changing nature of teaching and learning in the teaching-learning environment.

A question that needs explicit answers in relation to the topic under discussion is **–How can programmes of teacher education and training prepare the 21st century teacher to confront the identified problems of learning to teach and others unanticipated?**

Studies (Oberg, 2001; Hébert, 2001; Glickman, 2001, Weiner, 2001; McCall, 2001) examining seven exemplary teacher education and training programmes find that despite outward differences, the programmes had seven things in common namely :

- A common clear vision of good teaching that permeates all course work and clinical experiences, creating a coherent set of learning experiences.
- Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate course and clinical works.
- A strong core curriculum taught in the context of practice and grounded in knowledge of the child and adolescent development and learning, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum design, reform, and innovation, evaluation and assessment and subject matter content and pedagogy knowledge and skills.

Extended clinical experience, at least 24 to 36 weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching opportunities in each programme are carefully chosen to support the ideas presented in simultaneous, closely monitored and interwoven course work.

- Extensive use of a variety of case methods, teacher research, performance assessment and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice.
- Explicit strategies to help students to confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and to learn about the experiences of people different from themselves.
- Strong relationship, common knowledge and shared belief among school-based and university-based faculty jointly engaged in transforming teaching, schooling and teacher education and training.

Hence there would be a major shift;

| From | To |
|---|---|
| Teacher centric, stable designs | Learner centric, flexible process |
| Teacher direction and decisions | Learner autonomy |
| Teacher Guidance & Monitoring | Facilitates, support and encourages learning |
| Passive reception in learning | Active participation in learning |
| Learning within the four walls of the classroom | Learning in the wider social context the class room |
| Knowledge as "given" and Fixed | Knowledge as it evolves and Created |
| Disciplinary focus | Multidisciplinary, educational Focus |
| Linear exposure | Multiple and divergent exposure |
| Appraisal, short, few | Multifarious, continuous |

NEWLY VISUALIZED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Newly visualized Teacher Education Program-

- Emphasizes learning as a self-learning participatory process taking place in social context of learner's as well as wider social context of the community to nation as a whole.

- Puts full faith in self learning capacity of school children and student teacher and evolving proper educative programme for education.

- Views the learner as an active participative person in learning.

- His/her capabilities or potentials are seen not as fixed but capable of development through experiences.

Views the teacher as a facilitator, supporting, encouraging learner 's learning.

- Does not treat knowledge as fixed, static or confined in books but as something being constructed through various types of experiences. It is created through discussion, evaluate, explain, compare and contrasts i.e., through interaction.

- Emphasizes that appraisal in such an educative process will be continuous, will be self-appraisal, will be peer appraisal, will be done by teacher educators, and formal type too.

REFERENCES:

1. Arora, G.L. (2002) Teachers and Their Teaching Delhi, Ravi Books.
2. Chaurasia Gulab (2000) Teacher Education and Professional Organizations Delhi, Authorspress.
3. Dillon Justin and Maguire Meg (1997) Becoming A Teacher : Issues in Secondary Teaching Buckingham, Open University Press.
4. Dunking, Michael, J. (1987) The International Encyclopaedia of Teaching and Teacher Education Oxford, Pergamon Press.

5. Elahi, Nizam (1997) Teacher's Education in India New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation
6. Kundu, C.L. (1998) Indian Year Book on Teacher Education New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Privatization Ltd.
7. McNergney, Robert F. and Herbert, Joanne M. (2001) Foundations of Education : The Challenge of Professional Practice Boston Allyn and Bacon.
8. Misra, K.S. (1993) Teachers and Their Education Ambala Cantt., The Associated Publishers.
9. Mohanty Jagannath (2000) Teacher Education in India
10. Murray, Frank B. (Ed.) (1996) Teacher Educator's Handbook; Building A Base for Preparation of Teachers, San Francisco, Jossey – Bass Publishers.
11. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) (1998) NCTE Document New Delhi, Published by Member Secretary, NCTE.