



An Overview of Preparation of Teacher Educator

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ABSTRACT: Teacher education is an important aspect of the entire educational system. It has to represent the aspirations of the nation in all its aspects. Curriculum has to represent the national values and social goals of our country and all the cultural, social, traditional aspects of the Indian society are to be made known to the teacher. Recent changes in science and technology, information and communication technology inventions leading to knowledge explosion, several issues like population explosion, environmental concerns, human rights abuse has brought in different areas of interest in to teacher education scenario. But time and again various commissions and committees have expressed their dismay for not achieving this goal of representing the social context in its education programme that ultimately is affecting the quality of out put. Universalization of elementary education emphasized on universal enrollment, universal access and universal retention as its goals. The present ambitious project ‘Sarva Siksha Abhiyan’ is proceeding with full strength to achieve the universalization of elementary education by the end of 2010. Once this aspect is achieved there is pressure on secondary education to take care of the further educational needs of the students coming with success from elementary level. This again puts pressure on the teacher education programme to train teachers to the required extent. To train up teachers with a proper attitude towards social goals of education, there is a need to train teacher educator with a proper focus towards this teacher education and its present needs. Like other programs of teacher training, teacher educator training program is also having its set backs in producing quality output. The present paper focuses on certain aspects related to this scenario of teacher educator preparation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an important aspect of the entire educational system. It has to represent the aspirations of the nation in all its aspects. Curriculum has to represent the national values and social goals of our country and all the cultural, social, traditional aspects of the Indian society are to be made known to the teacher. Recent changes in science and technology, information and communication technology inventions leading to knowledge explosion, several issues like population explosion, environmental concerns, human rights abuse has brought in different areas of interest in to teacher education scenario. But time and again various commissions and committees have expressed their dismay for not achieving this goal of representing the social context in teacher education programmes that ultimately is affecting the quality of out put.

The Programme of Action (POA 1992) has pointed out the following in respect of teacher education:

- a) Professional commitment and overall competencies of teachers leave much to be desired;
- b) The quality of pre-service education has not only unimproved with recent developments in pedagogical science, but has actually shown signs of deterioration;
- c) Teacher education programmes consist mainly of pre-service teacher training, with practically no systematic programmes of in-service training, facilities for which are lacking.
- d) There has been an increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices; and
- e) The support system provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the University Departments of Education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level.

The Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education further commented, “one of the major inputs towards enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools as well as the teacher education institutions would be the extent to which research outputs and the outcomes of innovations are utilized by the system. Researches on teacher education have been and are being conducted in universities, national level institutions and other establishments but their utility for the teacher educator or the classroom teacher remains rather low. Majority of the researches are

undertaken to obtain a degree and hence the focus on its possible utility and relevance gets misplaced. The situation is compounded by non-availability of appropriate dissemination mechanisms, like journals, publication of findings in different forms and opportunities to the target group to get an access to these. Institutional capabilities and resources need to be augmented, enabling them to undertake relevant researches.”

To train up teachers with a proper attitude towards social goals of education and to undertake research in various aspects related to teacher education programmes there is a need to train teacher educator with a proper focus towards this teacher education and its present needs. Like other levels of teacher education programmes the teacher educator training programme is also suffering with many issues of quality resulting in output that is not catering to the present needs of teacher education programmes. The present paper is focusing on some of the issues related to these quality aspects.

II. SCENARIO OF M.ED. PROGRAMME

The M.Ed. programme is the dominant post-graduate course in education offered by Indian Universities. The candidates opting for this course have already been familiarized with various aspects of education from their undergraduate level programmes. The course draws a very large variety of clientele, fresh graduates from different disciplinary backgrounds with a B.Ed, experienced teachers, functionaries working in various education departments and sometime education officers working in other sectors. The pass-outs of M.Ed. (general) course have been employed by Boards, Councils of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Directorates of Education, Inspectorates, Schools affiliated to CBSE, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samitis and SCERTs, as curriculum experts, evaluation experts, population education experts, inspectors, sub-inspectors of primary and secondary schools, education officers, head masters, school principals, statistical officers and planning officers. All these personnel may however, not possess professional expertise and the required knowledge-base in curriculum formulation, evaluation, educational planning, management, supervision and educational administration. Newer and shifting concerns in education in respect of its nature, process, and management, the heterogeneous clientele and also due to shifting demands of various jobs related to education, a generalized programme of post-graduate studies in education such as the M.Ed needs to respond to such wide ranging needs in order to suitably equip people for specific responsibilities and to a wide range of academic and professional needs.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES INVOLVED WITH M.ED. PROGRAMME

Prior to the establishment of the NCTE as a statutory body, NCERT acted as its secretariat and organized several professional development programmes for teacher educators. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been organizing national and regional level workshops for improvement of the teacher education programmes. Through various schemes it offers financial support for seminars, workshops and research projects for teacher educators for such themes as higher education, educational technology, non-formal education, population education, environmental education, research methodology, etc. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) organize programmes for Principals of Colleges of Education, Heads of University Departments of Education and other administrators concerned with teacher education. The SCERTs and State Boards of Teacher Education organize continuing education programmes for teacher educators on teaching methodologies for new subject areas and on innovations in education. Some University Departments of Education organize seminars, workshops, and orientation programmes for teacher educators on teaching, development of instructional skills, interaction analysis, teaching behaviour, educational technology, guidance and counseling and research methodology. Certain Colleges of Education and University Departments of Education have been upgraded as Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutions of Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) for taking up innovations in teacher education. NCTE after its establishment in 1995 as a statutory body has initiated several programmes aimed at enhancing professional competence of teacher educators. These include seminars and workshops in the area of human rights and national values, indigenous thoughts in education, indigenous approach to teacher preparation, institutional networking and capacity enhancement and production of good quality enrichment materials for teacher educators. These institutions have considerable experiences in organizing training and development activities. Based upon the experience gained they will have to evolve programmes of sequential nature with in-built mechanism for assessment and impact evaluation. (Source: Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education web site).

IV. PROFILE OF A TEACHER EDUCATOR

Broadly speaking a teacher educator is a person providing training to teachers at pre-service and in-service levels. To produce quality teachers required for different reasons described above, the education and training of teacher educators is also important. As a key person involved with developing awareness, skills in student teachers regarding the changing aspirations and situations of our society the role of teacher educator in the teacher education programme assumed prime importance.

Teacher educator is not only concerned with teaching but also with designing materials for conducting different programmes during training period. They have to design various programmes innovatively and provide a supportive environment for student teachers to achieve the goals of teaching. They have to involve actively in the research to find ways to improve upon the present situation and to move into a prosperous future. They have to interact with different related people from surrounding community for this. They have to make student teachers to interact with their surroundings so as to grasp the reality and reflect it in their teaching. In a way, a teacher educator needs to be aware of all the things that are needed to be developed in a student teacher. They have to be aware of their social environment, school situations and problems and should actively involve with authorities to provide help in improving the situation. They have to inculcate all these qualities in their students to provide quality education at school level. The standards set for international Master level teacher training programs are also indicating more or less the same views.

Standard 1: Young Adolescent Development

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Standard 2: Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations and organizational components of highly effective middle level schools, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Standard 3 Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they apply that knowledge in the practice.

Standard 4: Middle Level Teaching Fields

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, standards, and research related to their teaching field(s), and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Standard 5: Middle Level Instruction and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective middle level instruction and assessment, and they apply a variety of effective strategies to meet the varying abilities, interests, and learning styles of all young adolescents.

Standard 6: Family and Community Involvement

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with family and community members, and they provide leadership in helping all stakeholders offer high quality learning opportunities for all young adolescents.

Standard 7: Middle Level Professional Roles

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to their professional roles in middle level education, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

(Source: National Middle School Association Masters Level Teacher Preparation Standards website)

V. OBJECTIVES OF TEACHER EDUCATOR TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Education and training of teacher educators has to focus its attention on the changing role of teacher educators according to the emerging global trends in education and the overall needs and aspirations of the people in India. It has also to deal with specific problems confronting teacher education institutions and to make teacher education more responsible and responsive. It also has to encourage teacher educators' continuing professional growth. The rationale behind the education and professional training of teacher educators lies in providing qualitative instruction through well-designed programmes of professional education. Keeping in mind this context, Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education, 1996 has set the following objectives for teacher educator training programme as -

- To develop competencies and skills needed for preparation of teachers and teacher educators
- To enable them to organize competency-based and commitment oriented professional programmes
- To enable them to develop pedagogy relevant to the education of teacher educators
- To acquire an understanding of the needs and problems of teacher educators and teacher education institutions
- To develop skills related to management of teacher education institutions
- To develop competencies of curriculum development and preparation of learning and evaluation materials
- To enable teacher educators to acquire capabilities to organize in-service continuing education programmes
- To enable them to organize need-based and commitment oriented on the job training
- To develop competencies for evaluating educational programmes and teaching learning materials
- To develop the capacity of examination, analysis, interpretation, elaboration and communication of educational ideas

- To relate education and the national needs and develop critical awareness about Indian realities
- To enable them to understand the relationship between Indian ethos, modern technology and education
- To promote the global perspective of educational development with special reference to the developing countries.
- To enable them to undertake meaningful educational research.
- To develop the capacities to reinterpret Indian heritage, culture and values to meet the requirements of the present-day Indian society.
- To develop the capabilities for self-directed and life-long learning.
- To enable them to appreciate and adopt emerging communication technology and innovative practices in Indian context.

It further commented, "With the policy focus changing to quality and relevance of education; it is necessary that only those, who are professionally competent, committed and willing, are charged with the responsibility of preparing teachers for the nation. Teachers for various stages, levels and categories are prepared professionally by teacher educators. The quality and character of teachers therefore, would largely depend on the professional education of teacher educators".

VI. ISSUES RELATED TO M.ED. PROGRAM

A. Admission

Present system of post-graduate level program accepts candidates on the basis of their performance at undergraduate program, basing on their merit at B.Ed. level or through conducting an entrance test. The entrance test often tests a candidate's language ability mostly in English. There is no centralized procedure for this admission tests. Various tests giving emphasis on various aspects of candidates are resulting in selection of candidates of various capacities.

B.Ed. is a program training students to teach at secondary level of schooling. M.Ed. that is offered is of general stream and it is also not adequately designed to provide teacher educators efficient in training of students teachers being trained for secondary level. The program has little provisions for training in and working out teaching and evaluation strategies suited to the needs of teacher trainees. But the degree holders are given working situations at all levels of training institutions from pre-primary to secondary stages. A candidate doing M.Ed. basing on B.Ed. qualification which is meant for training teachers at secondary but not at other levels, cannot suit the requirements of teacher training programs other than secondary level. Moreover, subjects like ET, Special Education, Vocational courses etc. need special training inputs at this level. There is a need to design level-specific, subject-specific programmes that could cater to the different needs of teacher training.

In this connection, the curriculum framework for quality teacher education opined, "It is time for seriously considering designing of definite programmes to prepare teacher educators rather than depend on the conventional B.Ed. or/and M.Ed. course. Education of teacher educators has necessarily to correspond to teacher preparation programmes. It is nonetheless necessary to consider alternatives and institute programmes like M.Ed. (Teacher Education) catering to the needs of stage-specific and category-specific preparation of teacher educators alongside general M.Ed. programmes." The framework has suggested for different programs as follows.

M.Ed. (Teacher Education) could be conducted for the following specific categories and areas: (some of the courses offered in different specializations by different Indian institutions taken from NCTE web site are listed here.)

- M.Ed. (Pre-primary)

- M.Ed. (Elementary)

Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar

Sachivalaya Marg,
Khurda,
Bhubaneswar-751022

I.A.S.E. Faculty of Edu., Jamia Millia Islamia,

Jamia Nagar,
New Delhi-110025

- M.Ed. (Secondary & Sr. Secondary)

- M.Ed. (Special Education)

Department of Special Education,

S.N.D.T. Women's University,,
Juhu Road,,
Bombay-400049

- M.Ed. (Distance Education)

Punjabi Uni. Deptt. of Correspondance Courses

Patiala,
Patiala-147002

Department of Correspondence Studies

Punjab University,
Chandigarh-160014

Himachal Pradesh University, Deptt. of Education

Summer Hill,
Shimla-171005

Karnataka State Open University

Manasangothri,
Mysore-570006

- M.Ed. (Physical Education)

Bvv Sanghas Basaveshwara College of Physical Edn.

Vidyagiri,
Bagalkot,
Bijapur District-587102

Mangalore University

Mangalagangothri,
Dakshina Kannada Dt.-574199

University College of Physical Education

Jnana Ganga, ,
Gulbarga University,
Gulbarga-585106

Deptt of Studies in Education, Mysore University

University Of Mysore,
Manasa Gangothri,
Mysore-570006

-M.Ed. (Science)

State Institute of Science Education

P.S.M. Campus,,
Jabalpur-482001

- M.Ed. (RE)

Department Of Physical Education

North Gujarat University,
Post Box No. 21,
Patan -384265-

M.Ed. (Part Time)

Government College Of Education

Railway Station Road,
Padampura,
Aurangabad-431005

S.N.D.T. Women University Deptt. of Education,

1, Nathibhai Thakrey Road,
Church Gate,
Mumbai-400020

Central Instt. of Edu.,University of Delhi

Department Of Education,
33, Chhatra Marg,,
Delhi-110007

Saurashtra University

Department Of Education,,
University Road,,
Rajkot-360005

-M.Ed. (ET)
Department of Educational Technology
Bharthidasan University,
Khajanagar,
Tiruchi

It further commented, “Existing M.Ed. courses in Indian Universities are by and large academic in nature and not adequately professional in content. In as much as the Master’s level courses in Education need to be formulated for making it a professional course, some additional areas of study will have to be introduced with changed orientation.”

VII. CURRICULUM AND DESIGN FOR THE COURSE

There is no uniform curriculum (theory and practical) and its transaction all over the country. This is resulting in different quality outputs at the end of the training period. Programmes run by different institutions are not giving equal importance to teaching and research training. A programme without proper emphasis on conducting dissertation, seminars etc. is going to give out teacher educators without proper knowledge about research. When the system is expecting a teacher educator with proper understanding of the problems of education system and ability to search for solutions for those problems, programmes of the above kind result in severe lack in the quality. Absences of proper emphasis on practical aspects of the training, not strengthening curriculum according to present needs are the issues affecting the quality of the programme adversely.

In addition, there are certain practical problems in designing the program. There is no clarity regarding the basic qualifications of teacher educators at various stages of teacher preparation, the requirements in respect of the core education courses and for the organization of procedures and practices in the institutions. Relevancy of training program design for present contextual needs is also a question. Answers to several of such issues have to be sought in the very rationale of providing professional education. There is a need to provide clear cut standards for developing objectives, curriculum and procedures for transaction of curriculum.

VIII. RECOGNITION OF THE PROGRAM

Currently the system tends to place M.Ed programmes with different specializations in a hierarchical order. This has led to unhealthy competition amongst different stages of school education and crystallized further the already low status of elementary school teachers as they stay in the lowest rung of the ladder.

There is also need to remove present anomalies and confusion arising out of the existence of two parallel post-graduate programmes in education i.e. 2 year M.A. in Education (which is considered as a liberal discipline oriented academic course) and 1 year M.Ed programme (which is considered as a professional course) and their equivalence. This is necessary because in actual course design and content the liberal and professional courses do not differ on any sound academic rationale. There is need instead to diversify specializations at the post-graduate level into areas of curriculum and pedagogic studies in mathematics, languages, social sciences and sciences. Students should be encouraged to pursue electives in education at the undergraduate levels, after which they could pursue postgraduate studies in a chosen discipline, along with the option of specializing in a select curriculum and pedagogic study course.

Undergraduate students need to be provided with a variety of routes to pursue studies in education. This would include the pursuit of four year integrated models of elementary and secondary teacher education, electives in educational studies, followed by a range of post-graduate studies in the social sciences (including educational studies), sciences, humanities, mathematics, language studies and the liberal arts. Such diverse routes are likely to tap talented and motivated young people to enter into education and pursue a diverse set of options such as teacher education, research, curriculum development and specialized pedagogy. (Source: Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education Website)

IX. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

In the absence of an appropriate policy of recruitment, especially at the pre-primary, primary and elementary stages of teacher preparation, the manpower in the institutions of teacher education does not necessarily possess the professionally required qualifications for the preliminary stages. At the pre-primary stage one comes across teacher educators who have passed high school or higher secondary examination and possess a certificate in teacher training, not necessarily meant for the pre-primary stage; graduates or those with higher qualification with absolutely no training background or with the background not appropriate for that stage or level. As regards the primary and elementary stages, the teacher educators, generally, possess graduate or higher qualification with teacher training mostly at the B.Ed. level. There are serious lacunae in the recruitment policies in as much as the professional qualifications prescribed are not stage-specific and mostly not suited to the education of teachers for the stage or level concerned. This situation calls for fresh thinking regarding recruitment policies for teacher educators and well-

planned programmes of education for teacher educators. (Source: Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education Website)

X. RESEARCHES ON M.ED. PROGRAM

Proper research conducted on various aspects of the program can give out best solutions to solve problems. But this area is also suffering with lack of research studies. Most of the research being conducted in teacher education arena is limited to school level and under graduate level training programs, but not much focus is there at this level of program.

XI. STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAMME

Proper admission procedures need to be designed to select a well qualified candidate in to the program. There is also a need to provide basic guidelines from NCTE regarding this process. A centralized system of admission procedure could also be there to select candidates countrywide.

Strengthening of the program is also dependent on relevant course curricula designing. Providing adequate practical exposure is important for the present context. The curriculum has to be framed around what is actually going on the working conditions. Specialization courses relevant to the context need to be included in the curriculum as integrated or special fields of study. It essentially implies that the preparation of teacher educators has to be made an integral part of the system of teacher education.

There is a need to evolve proper pedagogical practices relevant to different programs designed for the purpose. This will lay due emphasis on societal goals, values specially those enshrined in the Indian Constitution, higher order learning processes, curriculum development and theory and practice of educational research including action research. Competence to carry out research and innovations needs to be acquired by all. Training in curriculum development and preparation of learning materials should be inalienable aspect of entire process of teacher education. Similarly, development of evaluation materials would result into more effective utilization of evaluation in teacher education institutions.

Internship programs are to be designed to provide necessary practical exposure related to teacher education institutions. This will give the prospective teacher educators an adequate knowledge of the total functioning of teacher education institution, the improvements needed and also provide insights into the problems and issues concerning maintenance of institutional plant, classroom management, organizational climate of the institution etc. As for practice teaching, the main thrust has to be on a variety of techniques such as team teaching, micro-teaching, panel discussion, seminar, demonstration, etc. as integral part of classroom-teaching-learning-evaluation procedures. Practical work other than internship and practice teaching has to develop competencies and skills in organizing activities concerning work education and working with community as per the practical work requirements in the teacher education institutions.

Policy making, decision making bodies have to evolve proper procedures of recruitment, rules and regulations for streamlining recognition processes, admission processes in order to take in and give out candidates with proper attitude and skill.

There is a need to change the duration of the program if necessary.

XII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATOR

The present provision for continuing education of teacher educators is inadequate in respect of both quality and content. Planning in respect of in-service education of teacher educators needs to be evolved for different stages and levels. The major thrusts in respect of programmes for teacher educators among others may be as follows:

- Designing short-term programmes for those who are already placed in these institutions.
- Specific short-term induction programmes for those who do not have the experience for the stage they are supposed to be working at.
- Identification of certain university departments of education and Institutions of Advanced Study in Education as institutions which may work mainly for teacher educators. They may focus on induction training, recurrent training, orientation programmes, research studies and surveys, curriculum development, preparation of training materials, evaluation strategies and techniques, use of educational technology, media and others.
- Establishment of institutions for preparation of teacher educators for special education at different stages. These may be open to primary and secondary trained graduates willing to become teacher educators. Such programmes need to be designed with particular focus on the practicum that would familiarize the trainees with school situations in totality.
- Networking of various institutions and organizations for designing and carrying out collaborative programmes by pooling and sharing of resources. (Source: Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education)

With the policy focus changing to quality and relevance of education; it is necessary that only those, who are professionally competent, committed and willing, are charged with the responsibility of preparing teachers for the

nation. Teachers for various stages, levels and categories are prepared professionally by teacher educators. The quality and character of teachers therefore, would largely depend on the professional education of teacher educators. Therefore, it is necessary that their education should be given a new orientation and improved qualitatively and adjusted properly with the demands of the present context.

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Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2006, NCTE,
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List of Recognized Institutes, “<http://www.ncte-in.org/recoginst.htm>”