

SIGNIFICANCE FOR QUALITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**Manitombi Devi**

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**Abstract**

*Quality Assurance in teacher education is the Key for school effectiveness. The extent of integration of quality indicators in to the process of teacher education programs determines the success of teacher preparation. There is a need for a systematic institution based quality assurance system at functional level to monitor the processes. External agencies can assess the quality of teacher education programs but internal and institution based quality assurance mechanisms would be more appropriate and meaningful in this direction. A highly accountable institution of teacher education can only understand the importance of quality indicators and their impact on the teacher preparation.*

**Keywords:** *Quality Assurance, Teacher Education, NDE 1986*

Teacher Education system plays a crucial role in shaping the quality school education. It has been rightly said that the excellent education system could only be emerged with the concerted effort of the teachers. Therefore, preparation of teachers has been repeatedly emphasized in the National Policies on Education 1968, 1986 and revised 1992. The National Policy on Education (1986) stated that improvement in status and professional competence of teachers is the cornerstone of educational reconstruction. It emphasized the significance and need for a decentralized system for the professional preparation of teachers. The system of Teacher Education has been experiencing several changes in both academic and administrative dimensions. Teacher Education Curriculum- A Framework (1978 and 2006), provided a comprehensive view of the existing realities and perceived futuristic scenario for quality teacher education. As per NPE 1986 and Chattopadhyay Commission 1984, no system can rise above quality of its teachers, and quality of teachers greatly depends on the means deployed for selection, procedures used for training, and strategies adopted for ensuring accountability. The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986/92) recognized 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." The policy further states that "...teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled.

The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) in its review of the NPE 1986 observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because "...the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time." The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on Learning without Burden noted that "...inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. ...The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking." Establishment of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) in 1993 as a statutory body of the

Government of India has been exploring possibilities and designing strategies for monitoring quality in pre-service teacher education programs by imposing regulations and identifying quality indicators for the teacher education program in India.

More over, Centrally Sponsored Programs of Government of India resulted in strengthening few teacher education institutions as Institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) and Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) with an intention that these institutions would act as resource centers to conduct research and provide in-service program along with the pre-service teacher education. This is certainly a strong boost to the system of teacher education to search for excellence. On the other hand, the spatial and numerical expansion of schooling facilities at primary and secondary levels over the last decade has resulted in corresponding increase in the demand for teachers. As a result large number of teacher education institutions is created throughout the country and the maximum number of these institutions is managed by private organizations. This has posed exceptional challenges for the management of Teacher Education to ensure quality in programs.

Management of Teacher Education in India has been uneven across States/UTs. There have been variations in quality of performance even within a state/UT. These variations are due to the regional policies and programs, administrative structures, academic linkages and networking and quality assurance systems. Excellence in Teacher Education can only emerge from the confluence of four interrelated components: the strengthening of teacher skills, the systematic renovation of curriculum and its transaction, the improvement of organizational structures and the policy dimensions. The quality of teacher education can be made uniform provided the national curriculum framework be implemented in its real spirit across the country with a scope to contextualize by looking into the local needs and demands.

National Curriculum Framework and Teacher Attributes: The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2005) highlights that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, attitude, sensitivity and teacher motivation. The level and quality of subject knowledge, pedagogical skills teachers possess to meet the needs of diverse learning situations and



learners, the degree of commitment to the profession, sensitivity to contemporary issues and problems and the level of motivation critically influence the quality of curriculum transaction in classrooms. It also opens out possibilities for the teacher to participate in the construction of syllabus, textbooks and teaching learning materials. Such roles demand that teachers be equipped with a better understanding of curriculum, subject content and pedagogy on the one hand and community and school structures and management on the other. The NCF 2005 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 articulation 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 the programme needs to develop certain attitudes, dispositions, habits and interests in a teacher. The present evaluation protocol has no place for evaluating them. The above observations provide distinct pointers for addressing issues on the different aspects of teacher education curriculum reform.

In order to realize the concerns of the NCF (2005), teacher education needs to dwell upon the knowledge base that enables teacher trainees to acquire essential skills and competencies.

**Knowledge Base in Teacher Education: An Integrative Behavioral Framework**

Teacher Education as a program for professional preparation of teachers needs to focus on specialized knowledge, skills and personal attributes essential for exercising the academic leadership. They broadly include;

**General pedagogical knowledge:** This includes knowledge of learning environments and instructional strategies; classroom management; and knowledge of learners and learning.

**Subject-matter knowledge:** This includes knowledge of content and substantive structures and syntactic structures (equivalent to knowledge about a discipline).

**Pedagogical content knowledge:** A conceptual map of how to teach a subject; knowledge of instructional strategies and representations; knowledge of students' understanding and potential misunderstandings; and knowledge of curriculum and curricular materials.

**Contextual Knowledge:** Knowledge about the society, culture, ethos, social dynamics and the host of things that are directly and indirectly affect the school and teaching-learning process.

Along with the above, techno-pedagogic skills are required for teachers to make teaching learning more interesting and joyful. It is necessary to understand the entire teacher education program from the above framework and study to what extent these essential components are properly integrated in the programs of teacher education. The above broad framework provides a base for identifying the quality indicators for teacher education.

Various other skills that are essential to be developed in teacher trainees are exploration, problem solving, comparing and contrasting, modeling, developing ethical way of learning, scaffolding, characterizing etc. Teacher entrepreneurship is also vital for teacher preparation and development. The key elements for teacher entrepreneurship are Personal Resourcefulness, Achievement Orientation, Strategic Vision, Opportunity Seeking and Innovativeness and are to be inculcated among the student teaches.

**Personal Resourcefulness:** The root of the entrepreneurial process can be traced to the initiative taken by some individuals to go beyond the existing way of life. The emphasis is on initiative rather than reaction, although events in the environment may have provided the trigger for the person to express initiative. 'Personal resourcefulness' in the belief in one's own capability for initiating actions directed towards creation and growth of enterprises.

**Achievement-Oriented:** While personal initiative and purposeful behaviour can be view as a good starting point of an entrepreneurial effort, many such initiatives fail. The archetype successful entrepreneur is supposed to epitomize achievement motivation (McClelland,1961) which facilitates the creation and development of enterprises in competitive environments.

**Opportunity-Seeking:** The context in which an individual brings to bear his/her initiative, achievement orientation and visioning have a strong bearing on what it produces; when these forces are directed towards realizing surplus or value in a market environment, over a period of time, we see the creation of enterprises. Hence 'opportunity seeking' would include one's ability to see situations in terms of unmet needs, identifying markets or gaps for which product concepts are to be evolved, and the search for creating and maintaining a competitive advantage to derive benefits on a sustained basis.



Innovativeness: Schumpeter(1949) went on to conceptualize entrepreneurs as persons who are not necessarily capitalists or those having command over resources, but as ones who create new combinations of the factors of production and the market to derive profit. Innovativeness refers to creation of new products, markets, product-market combinations, methods of production and organization, and the like that enable the enterprise to gain competitive advantage in the market.

All the above attributes are important for teacher preparation and thereby teacher education programs should enable the trainees to acquire those skills and competencies. In order to make this focused in the programs; there is a need to derive a strategy to identify the quality indicators for teacher education programs and integrate them in process for quality assurance in teacher education.

Quality Assurance in Teacher Education: Pre-service Teacher Education programs should prepare the student teachers to undertake progressively the professional duties required of teachers, and to reflect on the nature of the education system, not only to respond to changes in the professional context, but also to contribute to that process of change. Teacher Education programs need to draw on a wide range of intellectual resources, theoretical perspectives and academic disciplines to illuminate understanding of education and the contexts within which it takes place. It should provide student teachers with a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of the features of education in a wide range of contexts. Student teachers need to be engaged in fundamental questions concerning the aims and values of education and its relationship to society and to draw on educational theory, policy and practice; encourage the professional reflection on educational processes in a wide variety of contexts. Teacher Education program must develop the ability to construct and sustain a reasoned argument about educational issues in a clear, lucid and coherent manner in students and thus can promote a range of qualities in students including intellectual independence and critical engagement with evidence in the pedagogical sphere. The quality indicators for the novice teachers include; being accountable for their role in the education of the whole child or young person, and taking professional responsibility for developing the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of each child or young person; engaging with current educational challenges and contributing to the processes of curriculum development, staff development and school development; undertaking a range of methods to teaching to facilitate the learning of students; promoting the learning of those pupils who encounter barriers to learning, including those who are in need of support for learning in particular areas of the curriculum; and those with emotional and behavioral difficulties; Liaison between pupils, parents, principal and community; taking responsibility for and being committed to their own professional development; using action research and other forms of valid evidence to inform choice, change and priorities in promoting educational practices and progress; Undertaking administrative duties as

required in a school; Understanding the social responsibility of the school and developing socially responsive programs. Teacher education is to be seen not as a prescriptive enterprise but open and flexible with emphasis on changing context. The concern is to make teacher education liberal, humanistic and responsive to meet the demands of inclusive social development. Normally teacher educators instruct and give structured assignments to be submitted by individual students. The training schedule is almost always packed with teacher-directed activities. There is little or no opportunity for reflection and independent study for the student-trainees. This calls for a reasonable duration of programme that can enable a wider and deeper discourse as well as opportunity to reflect and learn. These processes will help teacher-trainees to view knowledge not as external to the learner and as information existing in textbooks but as something that is actively constructed during the process of learning, involving interpretation of information via interaction with fellow classmates and dialogue with teachers and texts.

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