

Government Policies For Quality Teacher Education

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Abstract

The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions on Education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country. In order to understand the process of growth and development of teacher education in India, It is imperative to have a look at its history and policy of the Indian Government that has shaped it into its present form.

Introduction

A sound economic and social infrastructure determines the growth and development of any nation or society. Economic infrastructure includes roads, transportation, communication, banking, finance etc. Social Infrastructure is inclusive of education, health and housing facilities. Thus, Education is the most important and crucial component of social infrastructure of any country or society and if we want the changes to take place in the outlook of any nation, then the education system should be developed, organized and well equipped with new changes that take place around the Globe and the entire responsibility of these changes dwells upon the teachers. Teachers are the only persons that possess the capability of molding the entire generation of any nation. It is the impact of the teachers that means a lot for the students and sometimes this impact is far more than the impact of parents on their children. If the teachers are dynamic in their outlook, their attitudes, their approach and in their methodology, merely then the education system could achieve sky heights, students can be developed holistically emotionally, socially, intellectually and in all the other aspects of their personality and they can positively contribute in the growth and development of the nation and we as a nation and as a society can become developed. In order to understand the process of growth and development of teacher education in India, It is imperative to have a look at its history and policy of the Indian Government that has shaped it into its present form.

Teacher Education In The Pre Independence Era:

Although East India Company was established in India in 1600A.D. yet it did not think about the education of Indian Masses for 100 years. It was the **Charter Act (1698)** that started the discussion about the education for the first time. The Charter Act gave the responsibility of starting and maintaining schools. Initially the provision was made for the children of company's servants. But by the end of eighteenth Century, the provision of providing western education was extended to general Indian children. Some educational societies and learned individuals started their efforts to train vernacular teachers in Bengal. The first formal Teachers Training Institution was set up in India by Danish Missionaries at Serampore (Bengal). It was established by Carey, Marshman and Ward.

After this Dr. Andrew Bell employed the monitorial system in Madras during 1789 to 1796. This system, which came to be known as the Bell-Lancaster system later on, laid the foundations of teacher training system in the country.

The Calcutta School Society began to train teachers for the elementary schools. In 1824, Mrs. Wilson Started a Central Training School, both for male and female teachers. In 1826 a Central School was set up in Madras Presidency also. It was established for the education of superior teachers. More over, the same year many teachers trained at Bombay in the Bell-Lancaster system were distributed to the whole Bombay Presidency.

In 1835, William Adam proposed in his famous report that teachers training in the country should be improved. He suggested a number of measures to be taken for the improvement in training of teachers including the suggestion that the vernacular departments of English should be converted into normal schools. He also suggested a scheme for in-service teacher's training. In 1847, first normal school in Bombay was started at Elphinstone College. In 1849, Alexander Duff also started a normal school at Calcutta. A normal training department was started in 1851 at Poona College. Similarly the normal training schools were also started at Surat and Agra.

Wood's Despatch (1854) gave some important practical suggestions for the improvement of training of teachers. The Despatch expressed its desire: "...to see the establishment, with as little delay as possible of training schools and classes for masters in each presidency in India" It also wished: "... that the profession of the school master may, for the future, afford inducements to the natives of India such as are held out in other branches of the public service".

Hunter Commission (1882) report is considered another important milestone in the history of Indian Education. Hunter Commission recommended: "...that an examination in the principles and practice of teaching be instituted, success in which should thereafter be a condition of present employment as a teacher in any secondary school, Government or Aided;.....that graduates wishing to attend a course of instruction in a Normal School in the principles and practice of teaching be required to undergo a shorter course of training than others.

The Government Resolution of 1913 on Indian Educational Policy marked a still further advance. It stated: "... eventually under modern system of education no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that he has qualified to do so."

Hartog Committee (1929) was appointed with Sir Philip Hartog as its Chairman. The report of the Committee was one of the most important documents of this period. Referring to primary education the Committee recommended: "... that the standard of the general education of primary teachers should be improved; the training period should be longer; the training institutions should be better staffed; refresher courses should be frequently arranged; service conditions of teachers should be made more secure.

Teacher Education In Post-Independence Era

After independence in spite of the partition of the country and its wide repercussions educational progress was not only maintained but moved much faster. The position regarding teacher training was still not satisfactory. Certain steps were, however, taken to ease the situation.

University Education Commission recommended: "... that the teacher educators must look at the whole course from a different angle. They must realize that the study of Education at university level is something than more mere Education;that theory and practice must go hand in hand and each must support and throw light upon the other;that the unintelligent following of rule-of-thumb

methods should be discarded. ... That the not less than 50 percent of the staff should have had school teaching experience;

Secondary Education Commission's Report of 1953 we find: "... that there were three types of teacher training institutions in the country –primary or basic, secondary and graduate teacher training institution. But the Commission recommended:... that the training institutions should be only of two types-one for those who have taken the Secondary School Leaving Certificate, for whom training should be of two years; and the other for graduates for whom the period of training should be of one academic session.... that graduate teacher training institutions should be recognized and affiliated to the universities which should grant degrees while the training schools should be brought under the control of a separate board and should not be under the Department of Education. The first part of the second recommendation is, by and large, being implemented by most of the universities but the other part has not yet been considered for implementation.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) 1961 was a major step taken for the development of School Education which involves teacher education also. Amongst the significant contributions of NCERT are:

- ❖ Revamping of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Education Curriculum;
- ❖ Reorganizing of student Teaching and Evacuation;
- ❖ Institutions of All-India Surveys On Teacher Education;
- ❖ Focus on continuing education of teachers through establishment of centers of continuing education
- ❖ Recognition to contributions to education by outstanding school teachers and teacher educators through a scheme of national awards.

Education Commission (1964) appointed by the Government of India which had in its purview all stages of education. Its report is divided into three parts: the first part deals with general aspects of education reconstruction, common to all stages and sectors of education; The second part covers the different stages and sectors of education such as problems of expansion, curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks, guidance, evaluation, administration and supervision; and the third part deals with problems of Implementation including educational planning and administration and education finance. The Commission gave its recommendations for teacher education under the following heads:

- ❖ Removing the isolation of training institutions by bringing them into the direct stream of the academic light of the universities and by building up close relations with the schools and between the training institutions preparing teachers for different levels;
- ❖ Improving the quality of training programmes and training institutions;
- ❖ Expanding training facilities;
- ❖ Making adequate provision for the continuing professional education of all teachers; and
- ❖ Creating appropriate agencies both at the Center and in the States for the maintenance of the standards of teacher education.

National Policy of Education (1986) and, at that time, a promise was made by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that it would present a programme of action for the implementation of this policy. **The Programme of Action (POA)** means action which would be needed in order to implement the directions of the policy. Inconsonance

with this commitment, the Ministry of Human Resource Development brought out a programme of Action in 1986 and a Revised one in 1992 in the light of the National Policy on Education 1986 and as modified in 1992 respectively.

National Knowledge Commission (2008) observed that the training of teachers was a major area of concern at present, since both pre-service and in-service training of school teachers was extremely inadequate and also poorly managed in most states. It further said that pre-service training needed to be improved and differently regulated in both public and private institutions, while systems for in-service training required expansion and major reform that allowed for greater flexibility.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 : The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has implications on the present teacher education system and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. The Act inter alia provides that:

- ❖ The Central Government shall develop and enforce standards for training of teachers;
- ❖ Persons possessing minimum qualifications, as prescribed by an academic authority authorised by the Central Government, shall be eligible to be employed as teachers;
- ❖ Existing teachers not possessing such prescribed qualifications would be required to acquire that qualification within a period of 5 years.
- ❖ The Government must ensure that the Pupil-Teacher Ratio specified in the Schedule is maintained in each school.
- ❖ Vacancy of a teacher in a school, established, owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government, shall not exceed 10% of the sanctioned strength.

National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has prepared the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education, which was circulated in March 2009. This Framework has been prepared in the background of the NCF, 2005 and the principles laid down in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which necessitated an altered framework on Teacher Education which would be consistent with the changed philosophy of school curriculum recommended in the NCF, 2005. While articulating the vision of teacher education, the Framework has some important dimensions of the new approach to teacher education, as under:

- ❖ Reflective practice to be the central aim of teacher education;
- ❖ Student-teachers should be provided opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas;
- ❖ Developing capacities for self-directed learning and ability to think, be critical and to work in groups.
- ❖ Providing opportunities to student-teachers to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children. The Framework has highlighted the focus, specific objectives, broad areas of study in terms of theoretical and practical learning's, and curricular transaction and assessment strategies for the various initial teacher education programmes. The draft also outlines the basic issues that should guide formulation of all programmes of these courses. The Framework has made several recommendations on the approach and methodology of in-service teacher training programmes and has also outlined a strategy for

implementation of the Framework. As a natural corollary to the NCFTE, the NCTE has also developed 'model' syllabi for various teacher education courses.

Conclusion

The study of policy perspectives in teacher education has led to some significant results about the Government's policy after independence. Various five year plans also laid stress on teacher education in the country. Outlays were earmarked for teacher education related programmes over different five year and annual plan periods. After Independence Government of India took many steps to ease the situation. New training colleges were started and many commissions and committees were appointed by the Government to streamline and spread the teacher education throughout the country.

The recommendations made by various commissions and committees regarding teacher education, from time to time, were implemented by the Government of India. It was realized by the Government of India that in order to increase the literacy rate and universalize school education, trained teachers were required in a large number. Thus after Independence in order to provide teacher education a number of public institutions were established by the central as well as the state governments.

But after the adoption of neo-liberal policies by the Government of India in the early nineties private participation in higher education sector has continuously increased. It has also affected teacher education, and a large number private self-financed teacher education institutions have mushroomed throughout the country with profit motive. This has further lead to many malpractices and commercialization of teacher education.

This is not to mention the vision, skills and values necessary for the kind of classroom envisioned by progressive policy documents, but which for the most part are not adequately addressed by teacher training programmes. Although a range of committees and policy documents in recent decades have decried the worrying state of teacher education and have made many recommendations for its urgent reform, the majority of these proposals have yet to be implemented.

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