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## ENHANCING EXCELLENCE AND ADDRESSING THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

Teacher education is a crucial component of education. Through teacher education, school teachers, who are considered mentors of any society, are prepared and produced normally. Its importance in human life has been recognized for a long time. Teacher education is the main pillar of any established system of education and the custodian of the society's culture. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Now a days Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, organisation etc. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of society. This paper points out some major problems which is responsible for the deterioration of quality of teacher education and it also suggest some remedial measures for minimising these problems and thereby to enhance the quality of teacher education.

**Keywords:** quality, excellence, teacher education, issues, challenges



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### Introduction

Teacher education is a difficult assignment, especially at the present stage where teacher education programmes are being delivered by a large number of unaided private teacher education institutions. These institutions are also not sure of their tenure, as in near future; possibility of huge unemployment of trained persons may result in swingeing fall of these institutions. The survival of these institutions can only be helped by appropriate authorities in improving quality of their academic management. 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 programmes like Operation Blackboard (OB), District Primary Education

Programme(DPEP), and SSA to achieve universalisation of elementary education, there was a natural increase in 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 causing unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country. Quality of facilities and transaction in these institutions are questionable.

### **Quality of teacher education**

Teacher education is the process of providing teachers and potential teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach effectively in a classroom environment. Quality of education plays important role in the process of development of nations. Hence, quality concerns in education are national priorities for all nations. The dimensions of quality in education include achieving pre-determined targets and objectives. Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life. They reveal and elaborate the secrets of attaining higher values in life and nurture empathy for the fellow beings. They not only disseminate knowledge but also create and generate new knowledge. They are responsible for acculturating role of education. Hence quality of teacher education becomes need of the hour.

### **Quality indicators of teacher education**

NAAC has identified the following seven quality criteria's as the basis for its assessment and accreditation of teacher education institution with an assumption that these seven criteria encompass all the processes of an institution:

1. Curricular Aspects: it includes Curricular Design and Development, Academic Flexibility, Feedback on Curriculum, Curriculum update and Best Practices in Curricular Aspects.
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation: it includes Admission Process and Student Profile Catering to diverse needs Teaching – learning process, Teacher Quality Evaluation Processes and Reforms, Best Practices in Teaching Learning and Evaluation
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension: this dimension includes Promotion of Research, Research and Publication Output, Consultancy, Extension Activities, Collaborations, Best Practices in Research, Consultancy and Extension

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources: it deals with Physical Infrastructure Maintenance of Infrastructure Library as Learning Resource ICT as Learning Resource Other Facilities Best Practices in Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5. Student Support and Progression: it includes Student Progression, Student Support, Student Activities, Best Practices in Student Support and Progression
6. Governance and Leadership: it includes Institutional vision and Leadership, Organizational arrangements, Strategy Development and Deployment, Human Resource Management, Financial Management and Resource Mobilization, Best Practices in Governance and Leadership
7. Innovative Practices: it deals with Internal Quality Assurance System, Inclusive Practices, Stakeholder relationships

### **Issues and Challenges of Teacher Education**

- **Problem of selection:**

Defects of selection procedure lead to deterioration of the quality of teachers. Better selection method would not only improve the quality of training but also save the personal and social wastage.

- **Lack of uniformity and Unhealthy financial conditions of the colleges of education**

There are several types of teacher education institutions. For the past few years our country witnessed the mushrooming growth of teacher education institutions. There is no uniformity in the curricular and co-curricular activities and instructional methods followed in these institutions. Most of the teacher education institutions lack sound financial conditions which is necessary for providing adequate infrastructural and other academic facilities for student teachers.

- **Deficiencies of small duration provided for Teacher's training:**

In India, the time duration of teacher education courses are too short. The main purpose of teacher education programme is to develop healthy attitude, broad minded interest and values. It is not possible during the short duration.

- **Incompetent of student teachers and teacher educators**

Most of the existing training programme does not provide adequate opportunities to the student teachers to develop competency because, the organisers of teacher's training programme are not aware of the existing problems of student teachers. Improper selection of teacher educators is another issue which deserves serious

concern .Most of the teacher educators does not possess the necessary academic skill and pedagogical content knowledge, which is necessary for the proper development of learning skill among the student teachers.

- **Problems of practice teaching and supervision of teaching:**

In spite of all kinds of elaborate arrangements regarding practice in teaching, student teachers are non-serious to the task of teaching, The supervisory organisation for practice teaching aims at bringing improvement in the instructional activity of the student teachers by using various techniques and practical skills in teaching and helps them to develop confidence in facing the classroom situations.

- **lack of innovation in methods of teaching**

In India teacher educators are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching. Their acquaintance with modern class-room communication devices is negligible.

- **Isolation of teachers education department:**

As has been observed by education commission, the teacher education has become isolated from schools and current development in school education. The schools consider the teacher education department as an alien institution and not a nursery for the professional development of school teacher. These departments only observe the formality of finishing the prescribed number of lessons no caring for the sounders of pedagogy involved in the procedure.

- **Poor academic background of student-teachers**

Most of candidates do not have the requisite motivation and an academic background for a well-deserved entry in the teaching profession.

- **Lack of proper facilities:**

In India, the teacher education programme is being given a step-motherly treatment. Most of the teacher education institutions are being run in rented buildings without any facility for an experimental school or laboratory, library and other equipment's necessary for a good teacher education department. There are no separate hostel facilities for student teachers.

- **Unplanned and insufficient co-curricular activities**

Teacher education mainly intended to all round development of student teachers. Active participation of student teachers in the co-curricular activities organised by the

institution helps in the development of many kinds of social skills. But most of the teacher education institutions give little importance to co-curricular activities.

- **Lack of regulations in demand and supply:**

The State Education Department have no data on the basis of which they may work out the desired intake for their institutions. There is a considerable lag between the demand and supply of teachers. This has created the problems of unemployment and under-employment.

- **Inadequate Empirical Research:**

In India, research in education has been considerably neglected. The research conducted is of inferior quality. The teacher education programmes are not properly studied before undertaking any research.

- **Lack of facilities for professional development:**

Most of the programmes are being conducted in a routine and unimaginative manner. Even the association of teacher educators has not contributed anything towards development of a sound professionalization of teacher education in the country.

- **Insufficient financial grants:**

In most of the state's teacher education is still being run by the fee collected from student teachers, as the share of state grant is too small.

### **Suggestions for Enhancing the Quality of Teacher Education**

- Uniformity among teacher education institutions must be ensured and maintained in terms of curriculum, duration and timings of the programme.
- The courses of studies both in theory and practice should be reorganised.
- Curriculum development on a continuing basis to keep pace with current trends.
- Government should look after the financial requirements of the institutions.
- Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency.

Teacher educators to be trained in the use of ICTs

- Privatization of teacher education should be regulated.
- Institutes of low standards should be reformed or closed.
- Conditions for affiliation should be made strict.
- Regular and rigorous inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis
- The method of teaching in the teacher education departments should be such that it inspires a sense of appreciation among other departments of the universities and

colleges: A teacher education department should therefore, conduct special innovative programmes in the following directions: Seminar, combining of seminar and discussions with lectures, team teaching panel discussion and projects sponsored by the faculty members for improvement of learning in various spheres.

- For development of professional attitude, it will be advisable to recognise the college of education as unit in themselves. Such an institution should be equipped with facilities for organising various types of activities such as daily assembly programmes, community living, social work, library organisation and other curricular activities, which promote democratic spirit of mutual appreciation and fellow feeling.
- Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussions along with common entrance test and marks should be introduced.
- The practising schools have to be taken into confidence. For this the members of the staff of teachers colleges should be closely associated with the schools.
- More emphasis should be given on practice teaching till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.
- Internship should be of sufficient time (six months) and student teachers must be exposed to the full functioning of the school.
- Evaluation in teacher education should be objective, reliable and valid.
- Teacher education programme should be organised on the basis of evidence obtainable from researching such areas as follows: "Teacher behaviour "Developing conceptual framework and a theory of institution .Innovative practices of teaching such as microteaching, simulation and interaction analysis procedures."
- Several types of co-curricular activities should be included in the curriculum.
- Professional development of teacher educators as on-going ritual.
- Refresher course should be organized frequently for teacher educators.
- Research in teacher education should be encouraged
- The teacher education department should be made a nucleus for research on teaching curriculum and evaluation in the regular university departments. It can also be entrusted the responsibility of sponsoring programmes for extension such as bringing the community into close contact with the university academicians, there should be a free exchange of scholars from one department to the other. This will improve the quality of teacher education programmes immensely.

- For professional growth of teacher educators there should be seminars, summer institutes and research symposia at more frequent intervals
- The State Government should make adequate provision of funds for teacher education departments. Special assistance should be given for running an experimental school and holding of practice teaching sessions in various schools.
- Correspondence courses in teacher education should be provided, with a strict and high screen for admissions and a rigorous manner of assessment.
- Libraries are needed to be enriched with complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with all available journals for use by all the researchers.
- Professional development of teacher educators as ongoing ritual.
- Refresher course should be organized frequently for teacher educators.
- Research in teacher education should be encouraged

### **Conclusion**

Since the teacher is the pivot of the entire educational system and is the main catalytic agent for introducing desirable changes in the teaching learning process, all attempts need be made for motivating teachers to become innovative and creative. It goes without saying that a self-motivated and really industrious teacher can utilise his own resources to keep himself abreast of new knowledge and skills. In order to manage the expanding work and complex nature of the problems of teacher education, every state should have a separate Directorate of Teacher Education. Such directorate will also be responsible for manpower planning with respect to recruitment of various levels of teachers in the concerned state. State should plan teacher education facilities in terms of teacher requirement of various subjects and grades. The assessment procedure of NCTE, NAAC, and the University should help the teacher education institutions to know its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

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