

ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE MILE-STONE : RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT :

Every nation whether developed or developing links its future with the status of the children. But even after sixty-four years of independence, many children still do not manage to enroll and many more drop out of the school education system. To enjoy the future, parliament and Indian people made efforts to bring about the act- 'Right to Education'. However, there is a question, whether the increase in enrollment necessarily reflect expansion of education because a child who is just on the register of the class is counted as enrolled irrespective of the fact that whether (s)he actually attend the class. Poor Pupil Teacher ratio leaves no doubt as regards the quality and attention, which is being provided to the children. Going by RTE norms, many more schools and infrastructure is to be planned and at least a million teachers will need to be freshly recruited and trained. UNESCO identified teacher-education institutions and teacher educators as key change agents in reorienting education to address sustainability. Teachers, Administrative setup and Policy making are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. This Paper focuses on the aspect- the role of teacher education institutions in reorienting education.

KEYWORDS :

Right to Education, Sustainability, Enrollment, Infrastructure, Knowledge.

Every nation whether developed or developing links its future with the status of the children. Neglecting children means loss to the society as a whole. If the children are deprived of their childhood-socially, economically, physically and mentally, the nation gets deprived of the potential human resources for social progress, economic empowerment, peace and order, social stability and good citizenry. But even after sixty-four years of independence, many children still do not manage to enroll and many more drop out of the school education system. Being out of school, they are subject to exploitation and the drudgery of work with little hope of realizing their full potential. There have been improvements but the pace is slow and definitely does not betray the first call of children on our resources. Access to schools, Enrolment Ratio, Challenges of quality, Skill orientation, Accountability, Professionalism, Decentralization and above all, Resources are some of the main challenges before the education system in India. Teachers, Administrative setup and Policy making are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. Evidently the quality of education is a direct consequence and outcome of the quality of teachers and teacher education system. Education is not only disseminating knowledge but it is also creation and generation of new knowledge and a safeguard toward a more sustainable future. Educating for a more sustainable future in its broadest sense includes improving quality basic education, reorienting education to address sustainability, improving public awareness, and providing training to many sectors of society.

Where the solution finds its way :

The economic, political, cultural and social crisis has caused all concerned to realize the expediency for reforms in education. The urgent need is to redeem the country from the downward spiral, so that India may arise in the immediate future as a nation of wealth, stability and dignity, capable of competing with others in this age of globalization. To enjoy the future, parliament and Indian people made efforts to bring about genuine and effective education reforms. The Right to Education Act (RTE), which was passed by the parliament on 4 August 2009, describes the modalities of the provision of free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14

in [India](#) under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 1 April 2010.

Areas of Problems :

The child (aged 0-18) population constitutes 43.06% (447066145) of the total population (Census India, 2001), for which there exist 1030996 schools (7th all India school education survey, NCERT, New Delhi). According to the Economic Survey 2003, the number of working children in the country declined from 2% of the total population and 6% of the total workforce in 1981 to 1.34% of the total population and 3.59% of total workforce in 1991. It is not merely the economic advancement but the overall social development, including education, which plays a major role in the incidence of child labour. At all India level the gross enrollment ratio has improved to 82.35. However, still in certain states (like Uttar Pradesh, 54.10% and Chandigarh, 58.67%) nearly half of the children are out of school. However, there is a question, whether the increase in enrollment necessarily reflect expansion of education because a child who is just on the register of the class is counted as enrolled irrespective of the fact that whether he actually attend the class. All the achievements in terms of increase in the enrolment are more than negated by an astoundingly high dropout rate of 66.04%. Further, even after five years of continuous presence in schools, only 60 per cent of the children are able to read, write and do basic calculations. Education is a generic term. We need to distinguish between the minimum quantum of education that a citizen should have in order to be able to discharge his or her responsibilities and claim rights, and the subsequent education geared to train him or her for a profession such as medicine or engineering. India's children have a right to receive at least eight years of education, the gnawing question is whether it will remain on paper or become a reality.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio :

Even after the extension of educational services even to the far-flung areas, education remains elusive in many states. Poor Pupil Teacher ratio at 43 (for primary

classes) leaves no doubt as regards the quality and attention, which is being provided to the children. It is far worse in many states. For instance, in Bihar single teacher is teaching 73 students, Gujarat 68 and Jharkhand 65. At present about 30% of 6.2 lacs primary schools have only one teacher. The seventh survey has identified 10,30,996 recognized primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools in the country. With the increase in enrolment, increase in the number of teachers and increase in the number of schools is evident. The implications of this trend are worrisome as the major brunt of teacher shortages is being faced in rural, remote and tribal areas.

RTE and Challenges :

Going by RTE norms, many more schools and infrastructure is to be planned and at least a million teachers will need to be freshly recruited and trained. The challenge of teacher recruitment and training will prove especially grim in the Hindi belt and the northeast, West Bengal, and Jammu and Kashmir. In Bihar, the number of teachers required is very huge and the institutional capacity for training very low, and in Madhya Pradesh, no one knows how to undo the decision taken long ago to stop the recruitment of career-path teachers. In West Bengal, overlapping structures have impeded curricular and administrative reforms. These States are not the only ones battling internal legacies of neglect or confused planning. The northeastern States have a vast number of untrained and poorly qualified teachers who are already in the system. Violent conflict between the government and the people has cast a shadow on childhood in many parts of central and northeastern India. The progress of the RTE in these parts cannot be easy or smooth. This also holds true for mega-cities like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai where children of the poor live in Dickensian misery. For the southern States where the system is in better health, the RTE will pose the challenge of radical improvement in quality. How things turn out will depend on the willingness of the directorates to adjust their outworn perspective and policies to the new expectations the RTE arouses in syllabus design, teacher preparation and deployment.

Watchdog and its Role :

National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which has the responsibility to monitor the RTE is supposed to keep a vigilant eye on several million classrooms where children are to be taught and protected from corporal punishment, mental harassment and discrimination. How is the NCPCR going to perform this huge task with the extremely meager infrastructure it has today? If the NCPCR becomes an empty shell, so might the RTE.

Where the solution lies finally :

During the 1990s, UNESCO identified teacher-education institutions and teacher educators as key change agents in reorienting education to address sustainability. Teachers derive their status as professionals from the multiplicity of challenges they face in deciding the specific nature of education that has to be imparted to each child, protecting his or her right to education. It is the teacher who experiences firsthand the difficulties children encounter while negotiating social, cultural and linguistic barriers. Every single child out of school must be transformed into a student. The universality of education cannot be achieved unless we have teachers whose commitment is beyond question; in which we can trust entirely. The teacher is the fulcrum around which the education system revolves. The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create conditions that will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. The system however continues to function more or less on the same principles, similar content and approaches characterized by continuity and unwillingness to change. The developments and changes over the last two decades require a fresh look at the teacher education.

Teacher Educators and their Role

Teacher education is provided by several Universities, affiliated colleges, and institutes in India. Some of these institutions are more like an eye wash and provide certification just by paying the fee, and this leads to rise of very poorly-qualified

teachers. Teachers play an important role in shaping the future of the country and hence it's important that a lot of attention is paid on the quality of teachers churned out every year. Formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct. Teacher education in India is institution based, along with internship programs in real classroom settings. Teacher training course should be designed to learn interactive and better ways of teaching to make a subject interesting. Since the teachers play a major role in education of children, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Teacher education must, therefore, create necessary awareness among teachers about their new roles and responsibilities.

Teacher Education Institutions :

Teacher education institutions which were considered 'islands of isolation' have gradually developed linkages with schools, peer institutions, universities and other institutions of higher learning as also the community. The curriculum of the school, its actual transactional modalities, examination system, management processes and its ethos need to be the main thrust areas of teacher education programmes.

Role of Teacher education institutions :

Teacher education institutions are required to be developed as cluster resource centres where various teachers can meet and discuss academic and co-curricular issues. There should be available all the facilities and infrastructure (library, computers, small laboratory, duplication facility, place to hold meetings etc.) to fulfill the resource needs of teachers and become capable of functioning as forums that pool the experiences of teachers and help them make curricular choices. There should be an active participation of teacher educators as professionals in sharing their experiences with teachers. They must be equipped to provide conceptual clarity and guidance based on teachers' own sharing of their activities and interventions in order to help the child learn. It was also to evolve systems for assessment and evaluation, design techniques and guidelines for continuous and summative learner evaluation.

The present system of pre-service education of teacher educators is characterized by lack of perspective in terms both of contents as well as qualifications. The existing M.Ed. programme has little provision of training in and working out teaching and evaluation strategies suited to the needs of teacher trainees. And yet one finds M.Ed. degree holders entrusted with the responsibility of teacher preparation. Thus, it is imperative that the professional qualification of teacher educators is made stage-specific suited to the needs of teacher trainees of different categories. Existing M.Ed. courses in Indian Universities are by and large academic in nature and not adequately professional in content, some additional areas of study will have to be introduced with changed orientation.

The Indian society needs education with special emphasis on science and technology, vocational inputs and realistic work experiences. The courses of teacher education and environment need to be enriched to enable teachers to understand the attributes of modernity and development. It is observed in the day-to-day functioning that teacher educators often tend to lose contact with content areas relevant to their own disciplines resulting into gaps in communication and latest information. It is, therefore, a felt need in the present-day context that teacher education institutions keep in continuous touch with institutions of higher learning and peer institutions for effective transmission of knowledge and its upgradation. 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. Every region and state has its typical cultural identity, and there is a need to utilize the same as a basis for developing meaningful, relevant pedagogies. Cultural specificity should get embedded in the pedagogical practices which should be evolved for tribal, rural, urban communities and other ethnic groups.

Conclusion :

The fact that our education system has inadequate facilities for preparation and orientation of teacher educators has been a major factor for not taking due care of the education and training of teacher educators in several respects. Only those, who are

professionally competent, committed and willing, are charged with the responsibility

of preparing teachers for the nation. Teacher education institutions and organizations at various levels should initiate the process of development of curriculum after in-depth perusal of this document. The expenditure on education, particularly on teacher education, is an investment in nation's future. Improvement in the standard of teacher education may require additional inputs in terms of money, material and manpower. The exercise has to be need-based and in tune with demands and directions of the National Policy on Education.

Bring quality education to the schools of the developing world competed for importance with the question “what kind of education would best serve humanity in the future ?”

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