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## **Quality Assurance and Sustenance of Teacher Education Programmes in Autonomous Teachers' Training Institutions in India**

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**Abstract:** *Teachers are the backbone of any education system. Teachers help in shaping and forming the social fabric which determines the life and values of any community or a Nation. Teachers are instrumental in preparing responsible citizens of any country through the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. The quality of student coming out of any education system depends on the quality of teachers teaching the students which in turn depends on the quality of teacher education and teacher educators. There is a pressing demand for qualified and quality teachers across the nations. The main reason for this increase in demand is due to an unprecedented expansion of school education and hence the teacher education programmes have acquired significant importance. It could be seen that commercialisation of teacher education has ruined the very purpose of teacher education and its programmes. Lack of uniform standards, curriculum, infrastructure and qualified staff, principals, lack of authentic research has made the present condition of teacher education deplorable. The author in the present paper has tried to discuss the need for the present teacher education programmes to be more qualitative and innovative. The present research paper also highlights various strategies that need to be adopted so as to assure and enhance quality, its assessment, quality concerns and steps which are to be taken for maintaining quality standards of the present teacher education system.*

**Key Words:** *Quality Assurance, Quality Indicators, Quality, Teacher Education, NAAC*

## **Introduction**

In the past various efforts have been made for qualitative improvement and expansion of teacher education, both pre and post-independence. The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly said that, *“The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends upon the quality of their education; the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher”*. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 has rightly stated that, *“No people can rise above the level of its teachers”*.

NCTE document (1998) exhorts that, *“only enlightened and emancipated teachers lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life”*. Recognizing the importance of teacher education, Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) stated, that, *“the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher—his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place he occupies in the school as well as in the community”*. Kothari Commission (1964-66), pointed out that *“essence of a programme of teacher education is ‘quality’ and in its absence, teacher education becomes not only a financial waste but a source of overall deterioration in educational standards”*. NCERT (1983) workshop concluded that there is no uniformity among the B.Ed curriculum of various universities. The National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) recommended reforms in teacher education and called for revamping of the current courses and curricula in B.Ed colleges and institutions. The National Policy on Education (1986) and POA (1992) called for substantial improvement in the quality of teacher education by launching a centrally sponsored scheme for teacher education. NCTE (1988) stresses on modification of the existing B.Ed curriculum and divided the curriculum into (a) foundation course (20%); (b) Stage relevant specialization (30%); (c) additional specialization (10%); (d) practical/field work (40%). Rama Murthi Committee (1990) reiterated transformation in teacher education. It recommended in making teacher training programme competency-based and implementation of internship model of teacher training as against institution based, for training all types of teachers. The above statements clearly indicates that there is an urgent need of overhauling the existing B.Ed curriculum and providing right answers to the various issues pertaining to the problems of teacher education and teacher education programme. The existing B.Ed curriculum should be re-examined and revamped in the light of these issues as well as in terms of content and duration of practice teaching. The practice teaching component needs immediate attention and evaluation and its duration should be increased to at least sixty days, so that the gap between theory and practice component gets more abridged (Khan, 2012). Therefore, in my opinion and point of view, there is an urgent need of overhauling the existing B.Ed curriculum.

## **Major Challenges and Issues in Teacher Education**

The present teacher education programmes should be designed and redesigned in such a way that the prospective teachers and teacher educators are able to face squarely the

problems and issues thrown up by the higher education system and school education in particular. Besides, teacher education is essentially a context-sensitive activity. It has to respond to various changes in its social, political and economic as well as cultural contexts. If education does not review and rethink its content and processes very soon, it will lose its relevance. These concerns have given rise to modern educational challenges i.e. challenges from within the educational system. Post independence several efforts have been made to update and adapt the revised teacher education curriculum so as to meet the local needs and to make it more contextual, responsive and dynamic. The current system of teacher education is supported by a network of national, state and district level resource institutions such as DIETs and SIETs working together to enhance the effectiveness and quality of teacher education programmes both at the pre-service and at the in-service levels. There is a need to bring better coordination between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional skill, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to university level and that the duration and rigour of programmes should be appropriately enhanced. It is now being increasingly realized that there must be a balance between “*quality*” and “*quantity*” that drives the educational development (Khan, 2011). Some of the major concerns and issues in respect of quality in teacher education are as following:

#### ***Promoting Academic Excellence***

In the past few years, the drive for quality has been combined with drive for equality and justice. In the process of striking balance between the issues of equality and excellence, the later has been neglected in the most callous way. The teachers passing out from the teacher education institutions have been looked at with suspicion in respect of quality of their competence, knowledge, preparedness, will power and vision. The quality at the level of inputs, process has not been attended properly and consequently the managers of teacher education have been averse to evolving realistic parameters for judging, evaluating and maintaining the norms of quality in these areas. The teachers have not been given exposure to viable programmes of quality assurance in this regard.

#### ***Professional Development***

The professional development of the teacher is mainly concerned with the competencies, commitment and value-frames associated with teacher work whereas in the present scenario, teaching work is confined only to lectures and dictating notes. For the professional development, the teachers should be dedicated towards their profession and should be sensitive to their day-to-day problems.

#### ***Poor***

All the skills such as Life skills Techno-pedagogic skills, Techno-savvy skills, Info-Savvy skills, Emotional skills, Human Development skills, Spiritual skills need to be integrated in the present teacher education programmes.

***Mismatch between Supply and Demand***

There is remarkable imbalance in supply and demand of teachers between regions and geographical areas as well as between subject specializations which has severely impacted upon the recruitment of qualified and quality teachers. The situation is becoming much more distressful when we find that even the apex level institution such as NCTE has not been able to effectively regulate the demand and supply of the respective seekers of teaching positions at school level education.

***Little Choice Base***

There is a need to employ Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in teacher education and teacher education programmes, which can be realised through e-platform, and amalgamation of various modes, such as Face to Face, Distance education, e-learning and blended learning technology.

***Illusive Laboratories***

The various laboratories in teacher education institutions, namely Science Lab, Psychology Lab, Work-Experience lab, Guidance and Counselling lab. Educational Technology Lab, Computer Lab and Language Lab are either not there or are in a very poor condition.

***Obsolete Practice Teaching***

Though a sizable number of innovative approaches of teaching-learning such as, participatory, holistic, activity based, peer-group, constructivist interdisciplinary have emerged, yet the practice teaching is obsolete, isolated and primitive. Bloom taxonomy of Instructional Objectives has become more or less stagnant. There is need to modify the taxonomy, by further adding domains. The lesson plans and designs ought to be comprehensive of all the domains (Khan, 2011). There is only little coordination between theory and practice.

***Lack of Provision of basic Infrastructure to teachers in Universities and Colleges***

What quality we can expect, when the universities and Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) are not able to provide even the minimum basic requirements to the teaching staff, such as infrastructure and a suitable place to sit in departments and training institutions.

***Invalid Recognition and Accreditation***

There are questions on recognition, accreditation and validity of teacher educational institutes and there are questions on inputs and processes of teacher education.

***Need for overhauling the existing Curriculum***

The curriculum, content of the course, objectives etc. need thorough overhauling and revamping. If we examine the curricular changes at the primary, secondary and tertiary teacher preparation stages, only some here and there additions, deletions have been

done but certainly not a drastic and rigorous change is attempted. The existing B.Ed curriculum should be redesigned in such a manner so as to enable a teacher-trainee to see clearly how the colleges of teacher education and the school can contribute towards the transformation of our society.

### ***Problems of Wastage and Stagnation***

At present the teacher trainees are aimlessly entering in the teacher education programmes with a sole aim to of just getting degrees and certificates. Some take this course after booking seats in other countries. There are no research studies to reveal the situation and studies on the wastage and stagnation at the teacher preparation level are very few and also there is very little evidence on the impact of such courses on family life and well-being.

### ***Linkages and Co-ordination***

The present teacher education institutions are isolated and are marked by the absence of linkages and co-ordination between the teacher education institutions and teachers employed at various levels of teacher education as a result of which proper training is not provided to the teacher trainees.

### ***Management of Teacher Education***

Management aims at deriving maximum benefits from minimum inputs. One of the objectives of educational management is to improve the quality of teacher education by inducting new concepts of quality such as that of Total Quality Management (TQM).

### ***Novel Innovations in Teacher Education***

The rapidly developing format of communication technology in the today's world demands a use of hi-tech system in the field of teacher education. The methods and strategies utilised for transacting the curriculum should adopt a multimode approach. The new trends in the field of teacher education such as the use of computers, internet, teleconferencing, Edu-Sat, Information Technology etc. should be encouraged.

### ***Present Scenario of Quality in Teacher Education***

Our present teacher education system is deteriorating day by day and there is an urgent need for a drastic and comprehensive overhauling in all the spheres of teacher education and its programmes. Quality in teacher education programmes refers to the totality of features and characteristics of the student teacher acquired as a result of the teachers education programme. Quality in teacher education can be indicated by the education and qualification of the products of the institution i.e. the student teachers. Quality begets quality only when a quality institution with the set standard of quality training is encouraged by setting input norms both for staff and trainees. Quality teachers are produced by quality education that they have achieved through their education and training. Quality teachers are well informed and have updated knowledge about the various current happenings taking place in the field of teacher education. The quality

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teachers are cultured, well behaved, well mannered, and possesses a decent and integrated personality, which is warm, empathetic and ethical. Quality teacher should have an emancipated vision, objective, and should be able to rise above narrow bigotry, artificial boundaries of religion, caste, creed gender, linguistic and geographical belongingness, social mores, cultural traditions and forms and should treat all students fairly and equally. A quality teacher should be able to create an egalitarian society and should be able to create equality of opportunities for all his students. Quality teachers should be able to realize and achieve the best of potential hidden in them. Enlightened, Empowered and emancipated teachers should lead the societies in their march towards better and higher quality of life (Khan, 2012).

The faculty scenario in the teacher educational institutions remains grim. Assessment and accreditation of these TEIs is far from satisfactory. Since 1994, NAAC has only accredited 179 universities and 5156 colleges as on July, 2013. Out of nearly 700 universities in India currently, the number of accredited universities and colleges is dismal. On the one hand, we frantically try to find our higher education institutions in the World ranking of universities whereas the parameters and criteria adopted for World ranking of universities have not been given due consideration. Research is one of the areas which is of utmost concern. The qualities of M.Phils and PhDs produced are hardly up to the mark. Student evaluation of teachers which is one of the most important parameters for assessment in developed countries has remained only confined to discussion level. Such a concept has not been well received by the teaching community in India. The pedagogy adopted by our teacher educational institutions remains traditional and integration of ICT in the teaching learning process which can revolutionise the classroom teaching still remains elusive.

### **Quality Indicators and Quality Dimensions in Teacher Education**

For assuring quality of teacher education institutions, the NAAC and NCTE have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for executing the process of assessment and accreditation of all teacher education institutions coming under the provision of the NCTE. The three-stage process for assessment and accreditation is as follows:

- Preparation of the Self-appraisal Report by the teacher education institution for submission to NAAC.
- Validation of the Self-appraisal Report by peers visiting the institution; and

The final decision of NAAC based on the Self-appraisal Report and the recommendations of the team of peers. NAAC as an apex body for Quality Assurance of institutions of higher learning in India, has so far accredited 257 Universities and 6472 colleges (includes 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle) in the country as on July 08, 2013. The quality consciousness of Teacher Education Institutions is high among the autonomous colleges and its effective functioning-by regularly sending their Annual Quality Assurance Reports (AQARS) as per the NAAC guidelines.

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To assess the quality of teacher education institutions, certain quality indicators are to be considered. NAAC (2004)<sup>11</sup> has identified seven core indicators for quality teacher education which are as follows.

- i. Curriculum planning and design, which includes goal orientation curriculum development, programme options, academic flexibility and feedback mechanism
- ii. Curriculum transaction and Evaluation which includes admission process, catering to diverse needs, teaching-learning process, teacher quality, evaluation of teaching, evaluation of learning, and examination reforms.
- iii. Research, Development and Extension, which includes promotion of research, research output, publication output, consultancy, extension activities, participation in extension and linkages.
- iv. Infrastructure and Learning Resources which includes physical facilities, maintenance of facilities.
- v. Student Support and Progression which includes student profile, student progression, student support and student activities.
- vi. Organization and Management which includes goal orientation and decision making, organization structure, powers and functions of functionaries, perspective planning, human power planning and recruitment, performance appraisal, staff development programmes, resource mobilization and financial management.
- vii. Healthy Practices which includes total quality management, innovations, value based education, social responsibilities and citizenship roles, overall development and institutional ambience and initiatives.

#### **Assuring Quality Enhancement in Teacher Education Institutions**

Quality has become a defining element of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the context of new social realities. The information communication revolution, the knowledge economy and globalization have up to great extent influenced the next society. How to provide quality teacher education to large numbers at affordable costs is the primary concern of most of the developing countries. Quality makes education as much socially relevant as it is personally indispensable to the individuals. In this sense quality becomes the defining element of education. In this context, quality and excellence should be the vision of every teacher educational institutions including teacher education. Acquisition of quality and excellence is the great challenge faced by all teacher education institutions (Khan, 2012). Quality can be enhanced in all teacher education programmes through maintaining the standard of admission procedures, selection of faculty, effective teaching technology and methodology, effective curriculum, adequate infrastructure, proper academic environment, proper supervision and inspection, adequate funds and effective management and control etc.

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There are some important ways through which quality can be enhanced in teacher education institutions which are as following:

- Teacher education like higher education and technical education must be responsibility of the Central government.
- Uniformity among teacher education institutions must be ensured and maintained in terms of curriculum, duration and timings of the programme.
- Curriculum development should look after the financial requirements of the institutions.
- Teacher educators must be well qualified and experienced with language proficiency
- Privatization of teacher education should be regulated.
- Institutes of low standards should be reformed or closed.
- Conditions of affiliation should be made strict.
- Regular and rigorous inspection by NCTE should be done on a regular basis.
- Selection procedure must be improved and interviews, group discussion along with common entrance test and marks should be introduced.
- Duration of teacher education should be increased to two years.
- More emphasis should be given on practice teaching till mastery is reached with appropriate feedback.
- Internship should be of sufficient time that is of least 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 pupil ratio should be ideal.
- Several typed of co-curricular activities should be included in the curriculum.
- Professional development of teacher educators should be an ongoing process.
- Refresher courses should be organized frequently for teacher educators.
- Research in teacher education should be improved and encouraged.

### **Strategies Adopted for improving the Quality of Present Teacher Education Programmes**

There is an urgent need to overcome prevailing weaknesses in the present teacher education programmes in order to develop quality and competence among prospective teachers so that they are able to fulfil their changed roles and responsibilities effectively and successfully:

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- The entrance test for selecting B.Ed students should test the aptitude for teaching, intelligence, reasoning, general awareness, knowledge of the subject matter followed
- by group discussion/interview;
- In order to provide actual school experience for teacher trainees, internship along with practice teaching may be introduced.
- There is a need to pay emphasis on affective aspects so as to develop qualities such as
- empathy, healthy attitude towards profession, society and higher moral values among trainees;
- Infra-structural facilities are the basic requirement of any quality educational institution. There is urgent need to improve the infra-structure of teacher training institutions and equip them with good facilities and high quality instructional material;
- The present teachers' training programme must equip the prospective teacher to handle the special groups to make the concept of integrated education a success;
- There is need for comprehensive review of the curriculum of teacher education;
- The system of evaluation in teachers' training must be based on continuous evaluation so as to make it more objective and transparent;
- Privatization has posed many challenges by accommodating the rapidly increasing number of prospective teachers. The government and regulatory bodies must ensure high quality of teachers' training. There is an urgent need to implement objective and transparent procedure while granting recognition to such self-financed institutions;
- Computers and mass communication must be made an integral part of teachers training programmes;
- Accreditation of the teachers' training institutions must be done so as to ensure quality of teachers;
- Training in co-curricular activities must be there;
- Universal values need to be inculcated in teachers' training programmes;
- Various universities while giving admission to the students to the B.Ed course for affiliated colleges, must take care of the teaching subjects opted for by the students;
- Compulsory attendance laws should be strictly implemented;

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- The system of recruitment of teachers must be expedited, as the scarcity of teacher educators in teachers' training institutions is hampering the quality of teaching;
- Prospective teachers must be trained in guidance and counselling so as to manage students who are having suicidal tendencies or deviant behaviour;
- Teachers' training programmes must incorporate population education to equip prospective teacher as torch bearer of family planning and population control;
- Teachers and educational institutions can play an important role in generating awareness about health conditions, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and non-availability of health and sanitation services.

### **Conclusion**

Today there is an urgent need of quality enhancement and management in teacher education so as to face the present problems and challenges with confidence. Indeed, there is an urgent need of drastic modifications and changes in educational administration and planning, educational management and supervision, teaching-methodology, admission system, evaluation procedures and selection of faculty etc., so as to enhance the quality and standard of present teacher education system in India.

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