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Modalities of Teacher Education in India

Parsuram Pradhan

Teacher-In-Caharge, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad T.T. College (B.Ed.), Bagbari, Itahar, Uttar Dinajpur, Pin-733128

Email: pradhanparshuram79@gmail.com

Abstract

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are teachers. As stated by NCTE (1998) in Quality Assessment of Teacher Education in India—The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage. This shows that it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers, so that the future of a nation is secure. The importance of competent teachers to the nation's school system can in no way be overemphasized. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 places demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education.

Keywords: Quality assessment, NCF, skills

Meaning of Teacher Education

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as – A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. According to Goods Dictionary of Education Teacher education means, —all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively. In 1906-1956, the program of teacher preparation was called teacher training. It prepared teachers as mechanics or technicians. It had narrower goals with its focus being only on skill training. The perspective of teacher education was therefore very narrow and its scope was limited. As W.H. Kilpatric put it, Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.

Meaning and Nature of Teacher Education

Teachers are crucial elements in preparing young people not only to face the future with confidence but to build it with purpose and accountability. Teacher Training was the former concept at the beginning with meant only imparting same skills in the teacher for better performance as a professional person.

Teaching skills would include providing training and practice in the different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teachers to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills, preparation and use of instructional materials and communication skills.

Pedagogical theory includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practicing the teaching skills in the classroom. The theory is stage specific and is based on the needs and requirements that are characteristic of that stage. Professional skills include the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes soft skills, counselling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieving and management skills and above all lifelong learning skills. An amalgamation of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development.

Nature of Teacher Education

1. Teacher education is a continuous process and its pre-service and in-service components are complimentary to each other. According to the International Encyclopaedia of Teaching and Teacher education (1987), Teacher education can be considered in three phases: Pre-service, Induction and In-service. The three phases are considered as parts of a continuous process.
2. Teacher education is based on the theory that Teachers are made, not born in contrary to the assumption, Teachers are born, not made. Since teaching is considered an art and a science, the teacher has to acquire not only knowledge, but also skills that are called tricks of the trade.
3. Teacher education is broad and comprehensive. Besides pre-service and in-service programmes for teachers, it is meant to be involved in various community programmes and extension activities, viz. adult education and non-formal education programmes, literacy and development activities of the society.
4. It is ever-evolving and dynamic. In order to prepare teachers who are competent to face the challenges of the dynamic society, Teacher education has to keep abreast of recent developments and trends.
5. The crux of the entire process of teacher education lies in its curriculum, design, structure, organization and transaction modes, as well as the extent of its appropriateness.
6. As in other professional education programmes the teacher education curriculum has a knowledge base which is sensitive to the needs of field applications and comprises meaningful, conceptual blending of theoretical understanding available in several cognate disciplines. However the knowledge base in teacher education does not comprise only an admixture of concepts and principles from other disciplines, but a distinct gestalt emerging from the conceptual blending, making it sufficiently specified.
7. Teacher education has become differentiated into stage-specific programmes. This suggests that the knowledge base is adequately specialized and diversified across stages, which should be utilized for developing effective processes of preparing entrant teachers for the functions which a teacher is expected to perform at each stage.
8. It is a system that involves an interdependence of its Inputs, Processes and Outputs.

Need, Scope and Objectives of Teacher Education

Need of teacher education: The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes, *"The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher."*

In his Call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century in 1996, Clinton indicated that: *Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation and training".*

The need for teacher education is felt due to the following reasons:

1. It is common knowledge that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation. The focus of teacher preparation had to shift from training to education if it had to make a positive influence on the quality of curriculum transaction in classrooms and thereby pupil learning and the larger social transformation. The aspects that need greater emphasis are:
   - ✈ The length of academic preparation,
   - ✈ The level and quality of subject matter knowledge,
   - ✈ The repertoire of pedagogical skills that teachers possess to meet the needs of diverse learning situations,
   - ✈ The degree of commitment to the profession,
   - ✈ Sensitivity to contemporary issues and problems and
   - ✈ The level of motivation.

Teacher Education Curriculum

90% TEs agreed that the changes introduced in the school system require a change in the work profile, skills and competencies of the TEs. Though in-service trainings are organised for TEs, there are no clear policies and processes for selecting TEs for training. Selection is largely based on convenience and availability of TEs, not on training needs, willingness or preparedness to attend training. This reduces the possibility of capacity building benefits reaching trainees with the real needs.

Importance of greater collaboration of the teacher education program and the school system was first recognized in 1960s. The concern has echoed in the Kothari Commission (1964–66),the Chattopadhyaya Committee (1983–85), and the Yashpal Committee Report (1993) and more recently by National Policy of Education (1985), NCF 2005, and NCF TE 2009

- ✈ TEs said that there is a considerable time lag between education policy changes introduced at the school level and those brought to the training of TEs with regard to knowledge of policy and related curriculum and pedagogical changes.
- ✈ 56% TEs were unable to list or recall perceived challenges in current school teaching. In addition, they expressed lack of preparedness to counsel STs on emerging challenges in schools. This further limits the STs' understanding and preparation to handle professional challenges in schools.

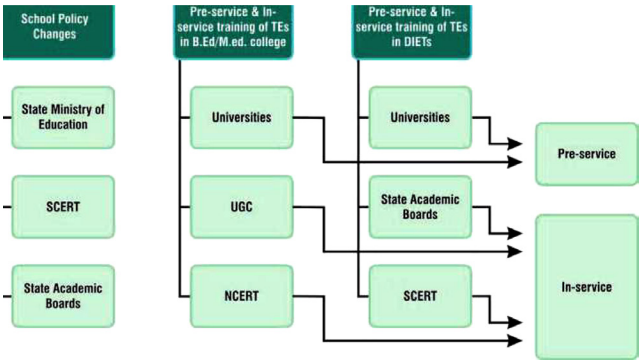

Fig. 1: Agencies responsible for TEs' Pre-service and In-service training

- ✈ Institutions responsible for policy changes at school level and those for TEs' pre-service and in-service training are different. This leads to a lack of coordination between new policy changes that are effected and reflection of same in TE training. Lack of mechanisms for greater institutional coordination between various organizations is a matter of concern that was brought out during discussions by respondents from SCERT, NUEPA as well as TEs. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was introduced in the Central Government schools. State Governments are steadily moving towards adopting this technique of evaluation, aligned to the principles of NCF 2005, 2009. It is mandatory for teachers to learn and practice "assessment for learning" and "assessment of learning". While few teacher education colleges have integrated CCE in their

B.Ed. curriculum, and have trained TEs, a large majority of the teacher education colleges are yet to integrate it.

The lack of any communication pipeline between policy making institutions and those thatdeliver training to STs and TEs is a matter of deep concern. The scenario plays out better with regard:

- To institutional coordination between SCERTs and DIETs. Discussions with the SCERT officials and DIET TEs highlighted the fact that there was some level of preparedness amongst the primary school teachers and teacher-educators to address changes in the school education curriculum. In this case, SCERT is responsible for both– modifications in the primary school curriculum as well as in-service training of the teachers (primary schools) and TEs (in DIETs).
- Sometimes in-service training conducted by the DIET for TEs precede changes introduced in the school curriculum - therefore they are able to train STs in time. Consequently, courses taught at the DIETs are more responsive to changes in school curriculum.

The figure below shows the extent of TEs' preparedness to address changes in school education or university Teacher training curriculum. That the largest category should fall under "somewhat" prepared does not augur well for these institutions.

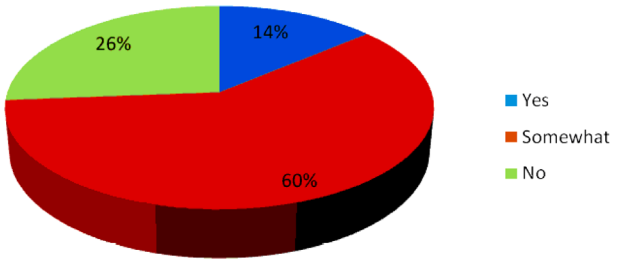

Fig. 2: Extent of TEs' preparedness to address curricular changes at school curriculum

TEs were of the view that policy changes at the school level should continuously feed into the courses offered at the teacher training institutions. TEs also pointed out that there are many variations in the M.Ed. curriculum across institutions.

Common components in most M.Ed. programs include the following:

1. Theoretical components:
   - Sociology and philosophy of education.
   - Education in contemporary society.
   - Advanced educational psychology.
   - Teaching methodologies.
   - Elective courses on educational management, teacher education, and counseling
2. Practical components:
   - Practical understanding of the theory courses through project-work
   - Dissertation and research under supervision of TEs or supervisors.
3. The varied components include:
   - Global context of education.
   - Advanced assessment and evaluation.
   - Education technology & e-learning.
   - Practicum with B.Ed. Colleges.
   - Educational management/ administration.
   - Population education.
   - Adult education.
   - Yoga/ Physical education.
   - Elementary education.
   - Teacher education.
   - Special/inclusive education.

The M.Ed. curriculum is not adequate to cover all B.Ed. subject areas – this could be a huge lapse in the system and become detrimental to the efficacy of running these courses.

For instance some compulsory B.Ed. courses like Instructional Systems, Educational Evaluations, Assessment Techniques and School Management, are optional at the M.Ed. level and so we may face a situation where a TE will have to train STs in these subject areas without having been trained in them.

TEs outlined the most useful components / courses of the M.Ed. curriculum – these are shown in the figure below, which shows that TEs felt that these components equip them to develop the essential skills and competencies required of their profession.

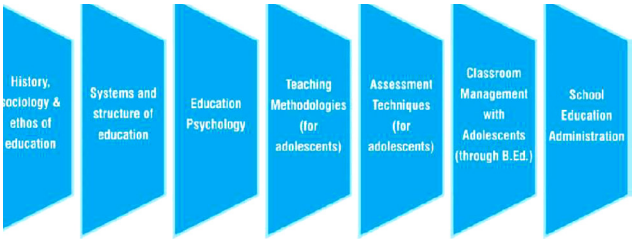

Fig. 3: Useful Components of M.Ed. Curriculum

TEs identified specific areas within the M.Ed. courses that need critical review:

1. **Adult learner psychology:** 80% TEs expressed that the current M.Ed. course has inadequate emphasis on psychological aspects of adult learning. Consequently, M.Ed. students graduate with inadequate knowledge and skills to address specific issues relating to a classroom of adult learners.
2. **Internship and Practice teaching:** Internship and/or practice teaching in B.Ed. institutes is not a part of M.Ed. curriculum. Therefore even after completion of M.Ed., trainees lack experience in teaching adult students. TEs expressed the need to integrate these components for an all-round development of future TEs.
3. **Guidance and counseling:** 69% respondents expressed the view that mentoring STs on "decision making for classroom environment", was of utmost importance. However, the M.Ed. curriculum failed to fully equip TEs with these skills.
4. **Stage-specific preparation of TEs:** During discussion with TEs from DIETs, RIEs, and officials at SCERTs, the need for stage-specific preparation of TEs, with a specialization in elementary, secondary and higher secondary teacher education surfaced as a requirement to be built into TE training. This focused training, they felt, would prepare them to guide their students and future teachers more effectively. A senior teacher educator at Malda Govt. Teachers' Training College mentioned that no academic course prepares one to become a TE. It is the right attitude that is required and that comes with a great deal of practice, individual motivation and personal choice. It is a matter of right attitude not mere aptitude.
5. **Technology integration in curriculum:** 73% TEs expressed that the technology integration in M.Ed. curriculum, including classroom practices was inadequate. TEs lacked pedagogical skills to use technology for teaching, and therefore felt constrained in further preparing student-teachers with "techno-pedagogical skills".

Pedagogy

TEs shared their concerns and called for a critical review of the pedagogic aspects in the M.Ed. curriculum.

- **Lack of experiential learning:** TEs and the M.Ed. students were of the view that M.Ed. curriculum is theoretical to a great extent, and covers essential components of pedagogic skill development in the classroom only.
- **Lack of experiential approach in teaching:** 80% TEs expressed that M.Ed. curriculum emphasized more on theory. Teaching methodologies were introduced through lecture method. 76% M.Ed. students expressed that they had a theoretical understanding of innovative teaching methodologies and personalized learning. Administrative and infrastructural challenges and non-availability of time restricted integration of experiential approach in both teaching and learning. As STs are not being taught using an experiential approach, they are not fully equipped to implement experiential methodologies as a future TE.
- **Lack of teacher education pedagogy:** 80% TEs pointed out that the current M.Ed. curriculum does not focus on adult learner pedagogy. Consequently, M.Ed. is primarily an entry-level criterion to become a TE and cannot be completely termed as the "preparatory curriculum" for TEs. TEs at a Teacher training college in West Bengal said that proliferation of ICTs has enabled students to access information from multiple sources. Teachers and TEs need a level of preparedness to continuously address student queries. Students turn to alternate sources of information in the absence of satisfactory answers

from TEs. Therefore, it is a challenge to sustain student attention in classrooms. TEs felt that the teacher education courses should be responsive to this changing nature of the student community and address it by revisiting the curriculum, transactional systems and assessment techniques at the B.Ed and M.Ed. levels. According to them, self-study and self-assessment at M.Ed. levels should be explored to enhance higher order cognitive and thinking skills among student teachers. Teacher educators at Vivekananda B.ED College of the view that the integration of experiential learning in their B.Ed. course has transformed TEs and students' understanding of the teaching-learning process. Experiential learning has been adopted in two-ways:

- as one of the teaching methodologies taught to the student-teachers and
- as a teaching methodology practiced by the TEs. This methodology follows an approach, wherein concepts are categorized, and introduced to student-teachers in the order of increasing difficulty.

- **Lack of focus on elementary teaching pedagogy:** DIET TEs shared that they lacked training in pedagogical aspects essential for training elementary school teachers. The training modules comprised of achieving basic literacy and numeracy; establishing foundations in science, mathematics, geography, history and other social sciences. They observed that the lack of inclusion of various pedagogies to be adopted in elementary classrooms has implications on their own preparedness to train STs in addressing challenges that arise while teaching elementary level school students.
- **Lack of skill-building activities through simulation/ real life situations:** Discourse with TEs revealed that STs are predominantly taught teaching methodologies theoretically. Simulation or real life practice sessions are not emphasised when topics such as "levels and pace of understanding" are introduced in classroom. This creates disconnect between what they learn in classroom and various classroom situations they experience in their profession later.
- **Training on interactive content development:** 31% TEs in B.Ed./M.Ed. colleges and 79% TEs in DIETs expressed a need and willingness for further training on interactive content development aligned to the teaching-learning needs in classroom. This training would reduce their dependency on pre-set content from books, and enable them to create content and modules better suited to their teaching style and students' needs.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are met in scholastic as well as co-scholastic areas. However comprehensive assessment techniques do not find their way in TE curriculum. In this context three levels of assessment are needed:

1. Assessment techniques for scholastic and co-scholastic areas that needs to be built into the syllabus to be taught to the STs.
2. Assessment of scholastic and co-scholastic skills of Student Teachers.
3. Assessment of teaching skills of Student Teachers. Current assessment techniques in the M.Ed. curriculum are built to assess performance in written examinations only.
4. TEs shared their thoughts about areas where assessment techniques need critical review:
5. Techniques to assess co-curricular and extra-curricular activities: Assessment techniques taught at B.Ed. / M.Ed. courses focus on assessment of scholastic areas and not co-scholastic areas. NCF 2005, NCF TE 2009, recognises the importance of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as critical to a child's overall development. Training teachers and TEs on assessment of co-curricular and extra-curricular areas will indeed help in assessing students' holistic development and enable teachers to adapt their teaching styles accordingly.
6. Assessment of adult-learners: The M.Ed. curriculum also does not include elements of assessment for adult learners as a result of

which TEs are ill-equipped to assess the trainee teachers.

7. Skills to identify student abilities: The assessment techniques, currently followed, at M.Ed. level, focus largely on assessing theoretical knowledge. Prevalent assessment techniques in teacher training institutes do not assess the STs' classroom teaching skills. Consequently,it fails to prepare TEs with skills to assess STs' ability to teach.
8. Lack of research on assessment: 77% TEs said that assessment and evaluation mechanism cannot be the same for students of varying age groups. Students in a class may have different learning styles and special needs – therefore have to be taught and assessed differently for their holistic development. B.Ed. /M.Ed. curriculum do not have specific elements that are designed to engage STs in developing innovative and new assessment techniques. Hence TEs and teachers are less prepared and less responsive to use "assessments for"and "assessment of" learning.
9. Continuous assessment and evaluation practice: Unlike schools, student-teachers are not assessed holistically through their project work, dissertation, and internships. Summative evaluation is carried out to gauge theoretical knowledge of STs. TEs expressed their interest in continuous and comprehensive assessment of the student-teachers, at the B.Ed. and M.Ed. level too.

Figure below presents a snapshot of some of the gap areas in the M.Ed. curriculum, as identified by the TEs. Integration of these elements will create a more robust TE curriculum, thereby increasing the preparedness of TEs, to further train the student-teachers.

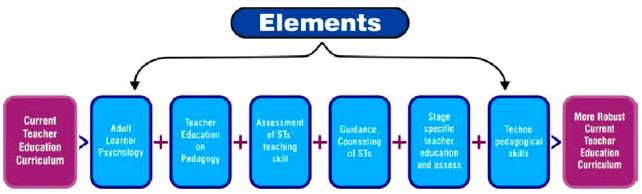

Fig. 4: Elements for strengthening M.Ed. Curriculum

Classroom Management

Insufficient elements on classroom management: B.Ed. curriculum has elements on classroom management that are not taught at the M.Ed. level. This has implications at two levels:

- TEs are not prepared to handle critical issues in adult learner classrooms (which are very different from secondary school students taught by B.Ed. trainees).
- TEs are ill prepared to guide their STs (B.Ed. level) on classroom management and prepare them to address critical student issues at school level.

Practice and Internship

- **Usefulness of practice teaching:** All M.Ed. students felt that practice teaching sessions,like the ones in B.Ed. course, should be introduced. They said that practice teaching of a longer duration would provide them hands-on understanding of various aspects,including, classroom facilitation, time management, assessments and other administrative responsibilities given to them.
- **Lack of practicum at M.Ed.:** All respondents, TEs and M.Ed. students, unanimously voiced the absence of practice teaching and internship at M.Ed. level in most institutions. According to them, introducing practicum on teaching and/or mentoring B.Ed. students will sharpen one of the much needed skills in teacher educators.

Below figure presents TE opinion on integration of practice teaching in the M.Ed. course. 79%of TEs expressed that M.Ed. course should include practice of teaching/mentoring B.Ed course trainees. However, some TEs expressed that it should be optional at M.Ed. level, owing to number of STs who do not opt to be a teacher educator. 21% of them expressed an opinion that integrating practice teaching as a compulsory element with the existing curriculum and time table might not be feasible owing to extensive syllabus, dissertation and participation in college activities in a limited time period. Also, students with interest an administration and content development do not necessarily require having a teaching experience.

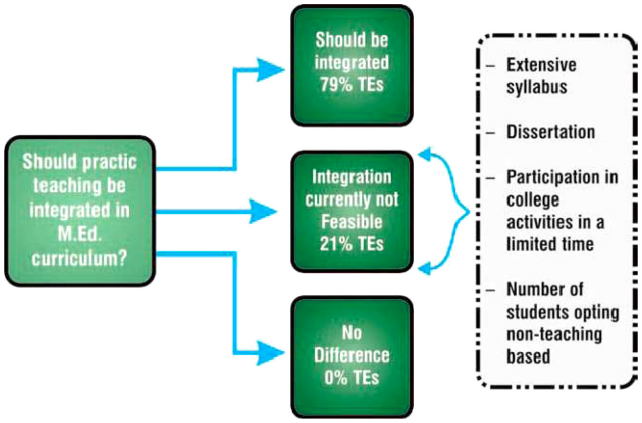

Fig. 5: TEs' Opinion on integration of practice teaching in the M.Ed. course

Research

- **Lack of scope for research and innovation:** 80% TEs expressed that the M.Ed. course design should have scope for research and innovation. Currently, M.Ed. students write dissertations and study educational research as one of the elements. TEs expressed the need to engage STs in research on all the elements studied to the M.Ed. course, and encourage innovation in education.
- **Lack of Research-orientation:** 83% M.Ed. students said that there is lack of research orientation in the M.Ed. curriculum. The current curriculum largely provides them with the basic theoretical understanding about teaching practice as per learners' needs – their level,pace and learning styles. Need for deliberations and engaging STs in research on innovative and effective teaching and learning methodologies, was expressed by respondents.
- **Research qualification as an entry-level criterion for TEs:** 69% TEs and 81% M.Ed. students expressed that an M.Phil or Ph.D. should be the entry level criteria for a TE. This would bring in TEs with greater research orientation that can further add to STs' capacity for research.

Conclusion

Education aims at bringing out desirable changes in all three domains viz. cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learners personality. Hence, besides providing appropriate learning experiences, it is necessary to monitor the programme and performance of students in all the areas of learning. To streamline the education system in the country, the Government of India had constituted an education commission which submitted its report recently. The HRD ministry is all so planning to establish an exclusive University for Teacher education in the country to produce teachers of excellence unless we have succeed in bringing about radical changes in teacher education, school education in the country will continue to linger in its pathetic state. Moreover, in the context of Universalization of Elementary Education [UEE] by 2010 and Universalization of secondary education by 2020 and the recent constitutional amendment to make education a fundamental right. There is an urgent need to focus on improving the teacher education system. Education in India; points out urgent need to revamp pre-service teacher education programme in India. There is an urgent need of a research in teacher education programme. The research quarries will help the researchers to plan research studies for finding answers to various educational issues.

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