

TEACHER EDUCATION: THE PROFESSIONALISM IN TEACHING, PROBLEMS & PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Education plays a major role in the economic development of any country, may it be developed or developing. Many resources play a part in the growth of a country's economy one of which and perhaps the most important is human capital, which means the workforce of the country. A good and productive workforce by making use of other resources can lead an economy in to growth and prosperity. One of the major factors in developing this resource i.e. human capital is education. Therefore education is one of the most important factors that lead a country to sustained economic growth. Education has therefore become a very important part of every government policy. Much effort has been done with respect to education in many developing countries including Pakistan. Many studies have been conducted in the past to examine the relationship between education and the economic development of a country. The following is a chronically review of some of the important work done in the past. The paper presents evidence that education has direct and indirect effects on national output. Educated workers raise national income directly because schooling raises their marginal productivity. They raise national income indirectly by increasing the marginal productivity of physical capital and of other workers.



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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the greatest assets of any education system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. They are accepted as the backbone of education system. Teacher quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and student's learning outcomes in particular. The Education Commission (1964-66) of India accepted this influence of teachers in powerful words, "No system can rise above the status of its teacher..." Similar sentiments have been expressed by the Delors report (1996), and UNESCO report on Teacher and Educational Quality : Monitoring Global Needs for 2015 (2006). The European Commission Report' Communication on Teacher Education' (2007) in the very beginning observes 'research shows that teacher quality is significantly and positively correlated with pupil attainment and it is the most important within school aspect explaining students' performance (40, p.3).

Policy initiatives for Teacher Education Curriculum reform

The pre-service teacher preparation programmes remain the important determinant of how teachers learn and succeed in the dynamic circumstances of real classroom and school. India has made concentrated efforts to modify and modernize teacher education curriculum to suit the requirements of contemporary educational needs of the society and instill greater professionalism and commitment in practicing teachers through pre-service and continuous in-service teacher education programmes. The National Policy of Education (NPE, 1986) reflects this commitment by considering pre-service and in-service teacher education as a continuous process and two ends of a continuum. An analysis of the recommendations of various commissions, committees and the education policy of India reveals the efforts of policy planners to bring qualitative improvement in teacher education system along with quantitative expansion of the facilities. Efforts have been made to make teacher education.

Curriculum responsive to the contextual needs of emerging society, and break the isolation of teacher education institutions. In fact, the first two decades of the post independence period are characterized by significant efforts to break away from the colonial legacy and modernize the teacher education curriculum along with the school curriculum. The concern for quality improvement and indigenisation of teacher education had been the top priority of educational planners which is reflected in the concerns expressed, and recommendations made by various commissions and committees appointed by the government of India from time to time since independence. The University Education Commission (1948), Secondary Education Commission (1953), Chattopadhyay Committee Report (1983-85), Acharya Ramamurthy Committee (1990) and several seminars and study groups that were set up to discuss improvements in elementary and secondary teacher education, from time to time expressed concern over the poor quality of teacher education, and its isolation from, both the mainstream of university life, and the ground realities of schools. This was the first commission in the post independent India, which comprehensively dealt with all stages of education, from pre-primary to higher level, including the vocational and technical education etc. The commission stated, "The essence of 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" (Para. 4.13;P.72). Accepting that the existing teacher education programmes are largely divorced from the realities of schools, it recommended reorientation of subject knowledge; vitalization of professional studies and to root the entire curriculum in Indian conditions; development of special courses

and programmes and revision and improvement of curriculum. The commission stressed that the prospective teachers need courses which will help them to build up a prospective of life, of our cultural heritage and of problems and aspirations of then nation as well as of human culture and civilization in general (Para 4.29; P.75). All these commissions, committees and study groups expressed concern over their relevance of teacher education programme. However in reality even after approximately five decades of the observation made by the Education Commission (1964-66) in this context that "Vitality and realism are lacking in the curriculum and programme of work which continue to be largely traditional with disregard for the present day need and objectives" (Para 4.02; p.68) remains relevant, though, a number of polity initiatives have been taken by the government, from time to time, to modernize and bring qualitative improvement in teacher education curriculum of the country.

National Curriculum Frameworks for Teacher Education: Move towards Professionalisation

Teacher development is considered as the continuous process of developing and maintaining professional competence in teachers through pre-service, induction training, in-service training and on-going professional development programmes. Pre-service is the first step in the ladder of developing professionalism in teachers that is in turn, dependant on the professional preparation of teachers through well designed teacher education courses suited to the needs of contemporary educational system. The first comprehensive attempt was made in 1978 with the publication 'Teacher Education Curriculum: A Framework' by the National Council for teacher education (NCTE), a non-statutory body located in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Major recommendations of this Framework included:

- Relevance of the Curriculum to the personal and social needs of children and schools; as well as aspirations of people and ideology of nation.
- Flexibility within the framework of acceptable national goals and values.

The framework suggested that 'flexibility is urgently required not only to break the barriers between the stage wise teacher education programmes, but also, between different disciplines'. Flexibility for relevance, mobility and continuing education was emphasized.

- Interdisciplinary and integrated approach in teacher education curriculum should be so designed that integration among theory courses takes place and this integrated pedagogical understanding flows into the skill dominated areas of

methodology of teaching various subjects as well as into the attitude-building areas of work experience, health, physical and recreational education, along with social service.

- Task-oriented teacher education. Teacher education must be treated as an "exercise of training a teacher for handling a variety of tasks inside and outside the classroom.
- Reform in practice teaching. The framework suggested that student teachers should be put through a series of simulating, micro teaching situations before being pushed into actual classroom.
- Semester system was suggested to replace the year wise course.
- Evaluation system to be made more reliable and valid.
- Promotion of research and experimentation in teacher education institutions (pp.4-12)

This framework tried to address the thrust areas included in the National Curriculum Framework for Elementary and Secondary School Education brought out by NCERT in 1988 emphasizing learner centered approach and reorientation of the process of education by using interactive style of teaching and prominence to non scholastic areas etc. The need for having a balance between theory and practice was manifested in the framework as "The curriculum should emphasize integration of theoretical understanding with their practical application without overdoing one over the other "(pIV.2). Central place to practicum or field work with appropriate weightage was suggested by this Framework.

- a) Foundation Courses, emphasizing mainly the philosophical and social perspectives and psychological bases of education at the stage concerned.
- b) **Stage- relevant specialisation**, emphasising understanding of the professional functions of the teacher in a general way relevant to the stage and competencies and skills of teaching relevant school subjects.
- c) **Field Work or Practicum**, emphasizing application of theory in classroom teaching and in the practical activities involving students, parents and the community.

With the establishment of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as statutory body by an Act of Parliament in 1993, another 'Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education' was brought out in 1998. While the 1978 teacher education curriculum framework was developed on the backdrop of 1975 school education curriculum reform and 1988 framework on the backdrop of NPE 1986, the 1998 framework for teacher education

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proceeded school curriculum framework for teacher education proceeded school curriculum framework which was developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2000. This framework (1998) tried to address and reflect on the changing international scenario as the result of globalization, privatisation and communication technology etc.

A major problem facing teacher education programme in India is the unrelatedness of the theoretical discourses at the training college and classroom realities of schools. This divorce between the classroom realities a teacher has to face and the teacher education programmes he/she receives also finds an expression in the World Bank Report (1997) as "in India teachers need but do not receive preparation for teaching in the situation that two thirds of them have to face; multigrade classrooms with many first generation learners who attend school irregularly". Similar concerns have been expressed by Raina (1999) "teacher training programmes in India have remained procrustean, offering the same menu to all without slightest regard for varying cultural and physical settings. They remained unresponsive to vast cultural, linguistic, regional and geographical diversity". The learners today also need considerable freedom to explore enquire, and investigate. This means that teacher education curriculum should give enough space to student teachers to develop logical reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving and meaning making.

Conclusions

The present teacher education programme is inadequate to meet the challenges of diverse Indian socio-cultural contexts and the paradigm shift envisaged in the NCF 2005. The pedagogic reform from this perspective need to invest on building on teachers capacity to act as autonomous reflective groups of professionals who are sensitive to their social mandate and to the professional ethics and to the needs of heterogeneous groups of learners. To conclude, professionalism needs to be instilled in each and every phase of teacher preparation starting from conceptual to evaluation and appraisal to prepare professionals and improve the quality of education.

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