THE NEED FOR REVITALIZING TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

School education system has developed considerably across the years as a result of new, improvised policies and programmes for better accessibility and quality of school education. This has enhanced the need of improvised infrastructure and skilled manpower to cater to the needs of the diverse student population in the classroom. The teacher education system, though is developing, yet has failed to take a quantum leap to match the demand of the quality teachers that has risen in the recent past. In this context, the paper aims to highlight the need for revitalising the teacher education system in the country in order to make the policies for improved school education a success.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Teacher Development

I. The System of Teacher Education in India

Teacher education is the essence for the success of education system of the country. Teachers have been regarded as the base of an educational institution and their importance has been stressed again and again by several commissions and bodies. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) recognised the importance and significance of teacher education and believed that the national reconstruction can only occur if the system of teacher education is improved and invested upon. It has been emphasized that the strength and success of any educational institution primarily depends on the professional competence, self less devotion of teachers and the extent to which they know and love their subjects and pupils.

India has a well established set up of teacher education in the country with National Council for Teacher Education as the statutory body set up under the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 to formally oversee standards, procedures and processes of teacher education in India. The main objective of the NCTE1 is to achieve planned and coordinated

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development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system and for matters connected therewith. The mandate given to the NCTE is very broad and covers the whole gamut of teacher education programmes including research and training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in schools, and non-formal education, part-time education, adult education and distance (correspondence) education courses. (NCTE, 2006). NCTE has been coming up with several policy guidelines and frameworks based on the trends of the demand and supply for the better supply of the quality teachers at all levels of education.

The preparation of the teachers for the primary and elementary level is mainly looked after by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) who perform the requisite task through a network of DIETs across the country. SCERT has been simultaneously entrusted for the professional development of the teachers educators across the DIETs for them to prepare the teachers for the challenging teaching environments in the classrooms. The teacher education programmes for the teaching at the higher levels are looked after by the various universities who conduct the teacher education courses in the UGC approved teacher education colleges. Thus the system of teacher education in India is a hierarchical multi dimensional structure with each dimension having a specified role in the given context.

II. Mapping the Demand for Quality Teachers

India is one of the major emerging economies of Asia and the world. Ensuring sustainability of the expanding economic success of the county puts much emphasis on the need for well balanced development. With the recognition that education is the cornerstone for all development, this vast country which is divided into 28 states and 7 union territories, with over 600 districts and 0.6 million villages, has taken major strides in making education available to its diverse population. Teachers are a precondition to the achievement of all the Education for All (EFA) goals and the key to bridging both the qualitative and quantitative targets. (GOI, 2012).

With the developing of new and improvised policies to increase enrolment and simultaneously reduce the drop out has drastically risen the demand for the quality teachers.

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2 It is a nodal agency recognized by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) for admission, curriculum construction, course conduct, guidance, examination and certification of pre-service training programme in the area of pre-primary teacher education and elementary education.

3 The Education for All (EFA) movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults.
With the increased focus of the government on Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), initiatives are being taken in the form of several policies and programme to improve the access of quality education to all children. There have been a variety of such programmes in the past such as the SSA, DPEP, etc. A major benchmark in this regard is the Right to Education (RTE) that came into force on 1st April 2010.

The right to education guarantees an individual within the age group of 6-14 years free and compulsory education. This right can be seen as a major move towards an inclusive set up of the classroom whereby the teaching learning process has been freed from the barriers of caste, class and ability differences etc. As the data suggests, there has been a drastic change in the enrolment after the enforcement of the right to education. The table below highlights enrolment in primary, upper primary and elementary education from 2000-2001 onwards:

**Table 1: Enrolment in primary, upper primary and elementary education (2000-01 to 2013-14) (in Millions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary education (Classes I-V)</th>
<th>Upper Primary education (Classes VI-VIII)</th>
<th>Elementary education (Classes I-VIII)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>113.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>113.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>122.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>128.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>130.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>132.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>133.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>135.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>134.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>135.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>135.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>137.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>134.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>132.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI; Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, MHRD, GoI; and U.DISE, NSSO.*

It has been clarified that ‘compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by every child in the six to fourteen age group. ‘Free’ means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. (MHRD, 2012)

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4 Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal in India.
The focus of the five year plans can also be seen more towards the improvement in enrolment. The eleventh five year plan was termed as the “Education Plan” as it allocated six times more amount for the improvement of the education system in comparisons to the previous plans. The XIth FYP (2007-2012) sought to reduce dropout rates in elementary education from 52.2 per cent in 2003-04 to 20 per cent by 2011-12; develop minimum standards of educational attainment in elementary school, and through regular testing monitor effectiveness of education to ensure quality; increase literacy rate for persons of age 7 years and above to 85 per cent; lower gender gap in literacy to 10 percentage points; increase the percentage 8 from the present 10 per cent to 15 per cent by the end of the XIth Plan (MHRD, 2012). Similarly the XII the plan also focussed primarily on inclusive education that is the education for all. The XIIth FYP (2012-2017) has accorded high priority to the expansion of education, ensuring that educational opportunities are available to all segments of the society, and ensuring that the quality of education imparted is significantly improved. (MHRD, 2012) All these policies have long term implications the success of which lies on the quality of teachers available/ entering the system. The teacher education thus has come under tremendous pressure to produce quality teachers who can, with their teaching skills, retain the student population who is now accessing the classrooms after the removal of several barriers under the above mentioned schemes and programmes.

III. The Need for Revitalisation of Teacher Education

The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions on Education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country. (MHRD, 2011)

The teacher education system needs to be developed holistically to meet the requirements of the diversified classrooms. The teachers need to learn to use and view diversity as a boon for the improvement of the teaching learning process. Only a skilled teacher would be able to exploit the available facilities for the benefits and the improvement of the system. Thus the

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5 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has termed the 11th five year plan as “India's educational plan”. The 11th Plan, approved at the meeting of the National Development Council in December 2007, places the highest priority on education as a centred instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth.
teachers need to be trained in order to reach the zenith of the benefits. Their attitude needs to be reformed more towards a positive one for them to contribute to the maximum.

IV. Conclusion

The teacher education system in India needs to be revitalised in order to meet the increased demand of the teachers who are well equipped with sufficient skills to handle the diversified classrooms in order to improve the teaching learning process for making the initiatives of the government successful.

V. Bibliography


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