



QUALITY CONCERNS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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"Quality Teachers for Quality Education and many events are taking place around the world to promote that ideal from the grassroots on up to the highest levels of government"
— UNESCO

Quality in systems improvement is an unending Journey. It needs deliberate and persistent attempt in a systematic way. Quality does not come by chance. It is a continuous process. It comes through strategies of better Human Resource Development. It comes by comparison preferably with the best. It comes when everyone works in a right way.

Main indicators of quality are relevance and excellence. Relevance shows the difference between caliber while excellence shows the right of the performance. It is very difficult to measure the contribution of various factors for the rise in quality. Quality in teaching is influenced by the response of the student. In fact, quality may vary at different times and in different circumstances.

Teacher education is involved in the process of preparing teachers and supports them throughout their careers. Teacher education institutions in India spread over all the states and union territories. These institutions are conducting teacher education programs to prepare teachers for our schools. Though the quality of the programs surpasses the quality component in certain aspects, how can the quality be assured.

The quality of teacher education of our country is far from satisfactory. This may be due to lack of focus on providing meaningful experiences to pupil teachers. However, recently NCTE has made some provisions for the improvement in quality of

teacher education programs. Still we have some problems and we are facing the challenges to solve them. Through this paper, the author has made an attempt to discuss some major issues related to teacher education.

Before discussing the issues and their solution for the quality teacher education we must have a clear idea of what is quality teacher education. In my opinion the quality teacher education must be able to achieve the following targets:

1. It should prepare ideal teachers who are capable of bringing about all round development of their students.
2. It should make every student teacher an expert in both theory and practical side of his subject.
3. It must give practical knowledge of various school activities and duties which a teacher is expected to require performing.
4. It should give every student teacher the command over language so that he may express himself in the class with clarity, confidence and joy. In other words he should enjoy teaching.
5. It should make the student teacher a man of character who can inspire his students and build their character.
6. It should be capable of imparting physical education to student teachers through sports, games, yoga etc. This will mainly apply to primary and middle school student teachers as there is no post of sports teacher in schools
7. It should impart the training of drawing, painting, music and art of writing so that every student teacher is made proficient in any one of these arts.
8. It must develop in every student teacher the dignity of labour through various crafts and arts. In other words it must maintain the dignity of labour through SUPW and inculcate the ability of earning while learning in every student teacher who in his turn may develop a keen urge among his students of becoming economically independent.
9. It should have an outlook in every student teacher that teaching is not only a profession but a mission also.

If our teacher education is able to achieve these targets it can be accepted as the quality teacher education. Now the question is how our teacher education can achieve these targets. In order to achieve these targets our teacher education must take the following steps:

1. To maintain quality in teacher education three factors i.e. infrastructure, instructional facilities and human resources are required. If these requirements are provided to each teacher education institutes, the quality development is possible.
2. The criterion for the assessment of teacher education institutes should be developed for the NAAC perspectives. NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) provides grades as well as standardizes and maintains the quality and authenticity of higher education including teacher education.
3. Value erosion among the students and youth are matter of concern today. Teachers need to be trained for inculcating values in their students such as accountability, rights as well as duties of an individual. As the society is looking at the teachers for a solution of erosion of values, there is a need for working out strategies, which will lay adequate emphasis on the Affective Domain.
4. In the two year program, we have now sufficient time for the school experience and practice teaching. We have to follow these activities strictly as these are the main part of pre service teachers training. In the first part of school internship the student teacher should teach for one month with the supervision of teacher educators followed by two months of internship the student teacher must be supervised by the school authorities.
5. Computer literacy and knowledge of use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the student teachers and teacher educators are very much recognized in the present teacher education programs.
6. The competencies to evaluate the curricula and to transact it effectively need to be given more importance. The teachers need to be equipped to handle different types of Boards, Schools and Text books.
7. The practical training in guidance and counseling need to be included in teacher education curriculum. This will certainly help the students who need counseling at various stages in their school life.
8. Community health education should be incorporated in the training program of student teachers.
9. The teacher educator should take feedback from the student teachers into consideration. When suitable changes are incorporated the classes become more interesting. The student teacher

should also be given opportunity to evaluate their assignments and teacher evaluation should be compared

10. Periodic appraisal of teacher's performance based on peer evaluation or student evaluation if conducted objectively might help the teacher improvement qualitatively.

Professional Development Of Teacher Educators:

Continuous up-gradation of professional and academic capabilities is necessary not only for the practicing teachers but also for the teacher educators. Therefore, special emphasis has been given in the 12th.Five Year Plan for professional renewal of teacher educators. Refresher courses for the teacher educators in government and government aided teacher education institutions needs to be put in place. University departments of Education may therefore, be supported to offer specially designed refresher courses to teacher educators. The universities are not showing sufficient, except that they organized 2-3 days conferences supported by the UGC. The programs organized by the Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) are not able to cater to the professional needs of elementary teacher education institutions. National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) should become proactive participants in the organization and conduct of such courses. Existing norms for conduct of refresher courses through Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) could be utilized for the purpose. 50 such institutions could be identified to prepare and impart 21 days refresher course modules in 2 cycles each year consisting 40 participants each. Accordingly, around 4000 teacher educators would be covered each year.

Suggestions for Qualitative Development of Teacher Educators

The following suggestions are made to make teacher educators for more effective:

1. Enhance the institutional capacities for meeting the requirements of all teacher educators on continuous basis.
2. Make effective use of ICT and Open Learning Technologies in order to facilitate continuous learning by teacher without requiring them to be away from their workplace.
- 3 Link participation of teachers with continuous professional development activities for their carrier progression.
- 4, Organize professional development programs so that they do not become a mandatory routine and instead help development excellence and creativity.

5 .Ensure that teachers and students resort to open source software and other open source learning material in using ICT in education.

Conclusion

The quality of teachers determines the quality of education which in turn is directly linked to a nation's development. Therefore care should be taken in providing quality education to future teachers and also in teacher support services. Teacher evaluation should be a regular feature to sensitize the teachers regarding development in their subjects. Continuous professional development of teachers and teacher educators is necessary through refresher courses and other activities/ programs from time to time.

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