



TEACHER EDUCATION: EVOLVING FROM CHALLENGES, HEADING TOWARDS BRIGHT FUTURE

Shanti Amol Pise¹ & Vijay Dhamne², Ph.D.

¹Research Scholar University of Pune, 411033, India

²Asst. Professors, Tilak College of Education, Pune India

Abstract

A teacher is the imparter of knowledge and information to students who are the future citizens of tomorrow. India has the largest and most complex system of education wherein teacher education has been accorded special emphasis in the face of recent social, economic, political and technological advances, particularly the challenges posed by information and communication technology, globalization and the growing rate of knowledge. The NCF requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children's learning in a manner that helps children to construct knowledge and meaning. In spite of various efforts being made to upgrade and enhance the quality of teacher training, the teacher education still remains weak gripped with various problems. The two year B.Ed. program has caused turbulence in the field of education which has to be yet soaked in. The most affected stakeholder are the prospective students passionate to be a great teacher or just doing degree for the job purpose. The present study was an attempt to gather an in-depth understanding of the student teachers behaviour with possible reasons that govern such behaviour. It was to examine why they have taken admission for two years B.Ed. Program, what are the challenges in teacher education and how the future of the teacher education would be? The study explores the present situation of teacher education in terms of the student teachers and discusses the future it is heading to.

Key Words: Challenges, Future, Perspectives, Student teachers, Teacher Education.



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1. Introduction

'Teachers should be the best minds of the country'- Dr.SarvapalliRadhakrishnan while stating this signifies the importance of intellectuals entering in the noble profession of teaching. The progress of any country depends upon the quality of the teachers hence the teachers are called the nation builders who are molding the future citizens. In the last decade of 20th century both education and the Indian society in all spheres have witnessed unprecedented technological advancements, commercial revolution and influenced curriculum- Vijaylaxmi (2011). To face the challenges of rapid technological and economic advancement the whole education system is under pressure to prepare students who are adaptable to this ever changing scenario and empowered to change their environments for maximum utilization, who are creative and innovative and who are able to apply knowledge and solve problems with confidence. Teachers are the agents of reformation Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change. (p.23) The success of the educational process depends to a rigid extent on the characteristics and ability of the teacher who is the corner stone of the

arch of education. Teachers in such learning environments have to take on the more demanding role of a mediator and a knowledge broker: to provide guidance, strategic support, and assistance to help pupils at all levels to assume increasing responsibilities for their own learning. There is a dire requirement of quality oriented teachers who would be able to transform the classroom into a wonderful place to learn. (Gokhale, 2013) In turn to prepare such sensitive teacher the teacher education program has to be such that it helps the teachers to open up to new ideas, new practices and technological advancements, to learn how to learn, unlearn and relearn and to understand the need for change. Teacher training institution has undergone drastic change transforming itself to meet the new and emerging dimensions of teacher preparation.

2. Background

The NCTE performs functions that are regulatory and also concerned with academic development of teacher education. The initial preparation of teachers is critically important for professionalizing teacher education. The NCTE Regulations 2014 has shaken the whole teacher education scenario. There are many predictions about the sustainability of the B.Ed. Course and so on. The most challenging part is to survive the B.Ed. program being extended for two years. The two year B.Ed. intends to bring integrated development of the trainee-teachers touching both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of their behaviour for holistic development of the trainee teachers. Different commissions, committees and policies formulated by Government of India, from time to time have aptly expressed the need for extending the duration of the secondary teachers training program for two years.

The proliferation of substandard private teacher education institutes and the current state of teacher education programmes are both serious impediments to fulfilling the objectives of the NCF and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education. Their design or practice is based on certain assumptions which impede the progress of ideas and professional and personal growth of the teacher. (NCERT, 2005). However it has been observed that in spite of many regulations and committees the condition of teacher education in India is struggling for its existence due to the admission crisis. The most directly affected element of this regulation is the prospective teachers i.e., the Student teachers. These drastic changes have raised several question about the future of teacher education which needs to be addressed immediately. Hence the present study tries to find out the perspectives of student teachers about the importance of the B.Ed. course, the challenges they are encountering while pursuing and what will be the future of teacher education according to them.

3. Need And Importance Of The Study

Need

1. Teachers are torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. Teacher education has to be intimately matched with the school curriculum to develop competencies for meeting the needs of the students.
2. The teacher educator should have capability to cater to the diversified needs of the student teacher working under distinctly different conditions and facing peculiar problems
3. Most teacher education program fail to empower the (would be) teachers as an agent of change as they do not provide space for student teachers to reflect on their own experiences and assumptions as part of classroom discourse and enquiry.

4. A teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and demands, arising in the school context to engage with questions of school knowledge, the learner and the learning process. The needs of the student teachers should also be considered which can provide solutions to major issues.
5. The two year B.Ed. Course has brought about many challenges for the student teachers who are just unable to cope up with the ever changing scenario of teacher education
6. The future of teacher education seems very hazy as nothing could be predicted about the mere existence of the institutions.

Importance

1. To understand the importance of B.Ed. course in terms of the student teachers in order to predict the entry level behaviour of the students.
2. It will help the teacher educators for implementing the B.Ed. programme as per the objectives framed and need of the students.
3. The policy makers and the curriculum framers would get clues for restructuring the syllabus to decide goals of future Teacher Education.
4. This study would be beneficial to all those who are involved in the teacher education process to understand the student's view for futuristic development.

4. Statement Of The Problem

A study of the perspectives of student teachers (B.Ed.) about the challenges in teacher education and possibilities of the bright future.

5. Definitions Of Important Terms

1. **Perspectives of Student teachers:** The outlook or views of students who are studying in the first year of the secondary teacher training course (B.Ed. Program).
2. **Challenges in Teacher Education:** The difficult situations the teacher education is facing today to meet the needs of the education system.
3. **Possibilities of bright future:** The ways in which the teacher education can have a successful future

6. Objectives

1. To find out the importance of teacher education program according to the student teachers.
2. To find out the challenges in teacher education as per the student teachers.
3. To predict the future of teacher education program based on the opinions of student teachers.

7. Scope, Limitations And Delimitations

The scope of the study corresponds to all the student teachers studying in secondary teacher training institutions in Maharashtra, India.

The study is limited to only to student teachers of secondary teacher training institute of Pune city.

The study is delimited to B.Ed. Program of SavitribaiPhule Pune University.

8. Research Methodology

a. Method of research

Qualitative study – Grounded theory

In grounded theory the data that is obtained is streamlined to a definite theme or pattern, or representation of a theory or systemic issue or approach. An alternative research hypothesis is

generated which finally provides the basis of the research statement for continuing work in the field.

b. Population and sample

Student teachers who are studying in B.Ed. colleges affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University constitute the population. 40 student teachers of Swami Vivekanand College of Education were selected by purposive sampling.

c. Tools for data collection

Interview was used to collect the data. Standardized open ended interview, wherein the exact wording and sequence of questions were determined in advance, all interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order, questions were worded in completely open ended format.

9. Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

Analysis was done by grouping answers together across respondents

Q.1. The reason for joining B.Ed. would give some idea of the attitude about the entry in B. Ed. Course

The major themes were: Fond of teaching, passionate develop teaching skills, noble profession, role of teacher in child's life, importance of education in life and interest in teaching, secure job to manage family and work. One of the student teacher was very keen to maintain the work-life balance so opted for teaching as career she stated, "Worked for Infosys for more than 10 years, life was hectic with no time left for kids, want to be a teacher so that I will be home when they return"

Some student teachers also commented that they joined this program to be a good teacher, get good salary and join reputed organisation. Love speaking and interacting with audiences and love children, husbands wish and easy to manage kids, to get degree, inspired by grandmother who was a teacher. One of the student for whom teaching is passion said this B.Ed. course provides "Proper platform for pursuing my dreams in the field of education"

Q2. What is the importance of B.Ed. course?

When asked about the importance most said Degree for getting job, enable to understand teaching, right techniques, acquire teaching skills, improve self as a teacher, responsible and mature to handle kids, it trains for all round development. Correct teaching methodology for making teaching more interesting, gives platform for teaching. One student commented, "I feel that B.Ed. course is important for developing the skills of teaching which are very important if we really want to impart the best of education to the future of our country" while the other student had altogether family oriented inclination said "I will like to learn psychology of students so I can understand my own kids mind"

Q3. What do you think about 2 years B.Ed. Course?

Most of the student teachers were not ready to comment as they thought they were still in the process so not ready yet to comment, however some common codes were Good for training of all the skills. One student commented that "Initially was not in favour of it, but as I am going through the journey of learning, I feel that 2 years are actually required for same to understand the proper value of teaching course" to learn all the aspects thoroughly. Because it is a training period of teaching to get deep knowledge. One of the student interacted with past student and was convinced that 2 years B.Ed. course is imperative for development of all the skills. Deepa said "Was disappointed when heard that my 2 years will be invested in getting

to be a teacher, but now I think it has contents to be completed in 2 years otherwise learning would not take place”

Q4 What are the Challenges of B.Ed. Program according to you?

The major challenges includes time consuming activity, difficult to cope with writing work and new things. Faculty issues not upto the mark. No planning, taken lightly by others students has very less time to get very vast knowledge, unnecessary writing work, practical are burdened which are not really useful in teaching, study material not available. One of the student stated, “It is vast, it involves more of writing part rather than learning. So whole energy is utilized in writing, learning output is not up to that extent as I personally has not yet got opportunity to deal with my syllabus, busy completion”

Q.5. What will be nature of your Dream B.Ed. Program?

The student teachers were very keen to answer this question one of the student actually wrote there will be ‘No Donkey work’ different teaching methods, make teaching playful. Flexibility in assignments, annual plan followed by teachers and students, one of the student who is mother of two dreamed of “Institute which provided day care or crèche for kids”. More real school activities. Proper teaching clearing the concepts. “Lead by example not by samples” encourage student teacher ideas. One student said “21st century methods be adopted as per the smart kids of today’s generation” which stated the importance of technology based teaching learning process. Explore talents and avail opportunities to everyone sessions having fun element for student teacher very frequently to refresh them. Another student teacher dreamed of the program where “More opportunity for learning, interaction with students, study school administration and management, core study of syllabus of students like CBSE, SSC, ICSE, IB, problems faced by weak students, gifted, updating knowledge, new researches” will be given.

Q. 6 What will be the Future of Teacher Education?

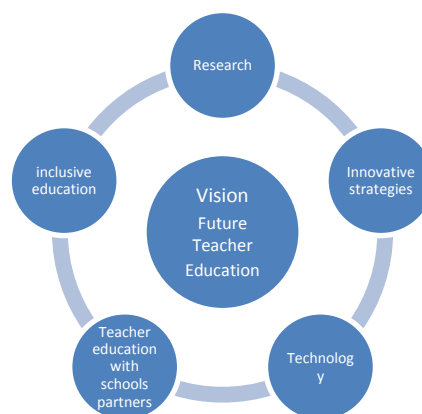
This general question created a sense of excitement among the student teachers who mostly thought that future of teacher education would be totally Technosavvy, teaching from home as technology is progressing rapidly and all study material is available readymade, good explanation with new methodologies and teacher student relationships, fun with learn, one student commented “ in future the teachers would be resourceful but teachers wont loose the individual connection that is generally expected of the teachers from past” other believed that “Teacher could be a program in the computer” education beyond classroom more frank with proper understanding of their problems help students in every possible sense. Help student in every possible way, more advance and pace with the technology and will be able to transfer their knowledge in an easy way. More qualified teacher empathetic to all more concentrate on training and solving student problems. More involved with students, interaction with parent and teacher through technology more conscious towards students. Mentors new generations with technology, manners , cultural values based in Indian origin. Shweta said “I can’t express because when I joined B.Ed. my perceptions about the course was different but actually it works differently, for most of student teacher it is just an option for career, very few have liking for students. Education is superficial and schools are more business oriented rather than education. I really doubt that in this world of marketing, where everywhere right from parents, each one wants to see the greenery rather than the actual education, what the future of Teacher education will be? ”

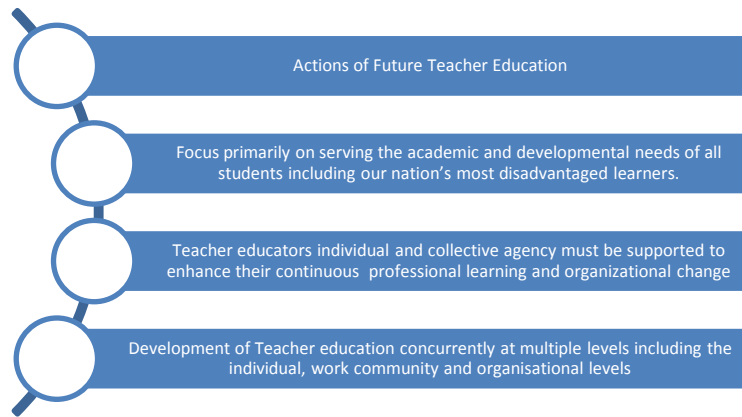
10. Findings

1. The major reason for joining B.Ed. program is to maintain work and family balance.
2. Teacher training program is important for acquiring the necessary skills for teaching.
3. The two years B.Ed. program is good time period for doing justice to the professional course and teachers would be trained in true sense.
4. The main challenge is undue importance given to the completion of files rather than attainment of skills. Teacher education has to be intimately matched with the school curriculum
5. The new trends that are coming up globally should be kept in mind while dealing with teacher education to develop competencies of our future generations and face the new challenges globally.
6. The future of teacher education would be technology oriented with proper amalgamation of the skills for futuristic challenges.

11. Conclusions And Discussions

None of us will ever be a perfect teacher, but all of us can become better teachers than what we presently are. The essence of professional teaching is the continuous process of improving our teaching skills. Good and Brophy, (1986). In a nation whose demography is young both in age and spirit, teachers have the responsibility for providing education which is rich in values and modern in content. Teacher education as perceived is neither mere pedagogy nor acquisition of a training qualification. It is shaping of persons for all round development of the younger generations. It is inculcation of commitment and generation of a strong will to contribute at the highest level of efficiency through a value based approach. The professional education of teachers includes both the theoretical base as well as the practicum focussing on the development of competencies and skills. Vijayalaxmi , (2011). The concept of good teaching embodies a reflective orientation to practice an orientation which emphasises the knowledge, disposition and analytic skills needed to make good decisions about complex classroom processes. The future teachers will be equipped with skills essential for dealing with real issues of school teaching such as strategies for handling large classes coping with multigrade and multilevel teaching strategies for inclusive education etc. Any change initially is very challenging and this period could be acclaimed as the period of stress and storm in Teacher Education. Thus though there are uncertainties in teacher education but its future will be definitely bright and prosperous.





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