



## **CHALLENGES OF SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM -WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEGHALAYA**

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The socio, cultural, economic, scientific development and advancement of a country depend on the quality of the people. The quality of the people depends largely on the quality of the education system prevailing in the country, and the quality and efficiency of education system depends on the quality of teachers. Without maintaining the quality of teachers, no innovation should be expected. It is a universal fact that the progress of any country directly varies with the quality of teachers, and today when there is a virtual explosion of information, it is highly essential that teacher education is of the highest quality and standard. No system of education, no syllabus, no methodology, no textbook can rise above the level of its teachers. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers. The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) document of 1998, stresses that teachers are the torchbearers in creating social cohesion and national integration by revealing and elaborating the secrets of attaining higher values in life. Only enlightened and emancipated teachers lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life. The world is changing rapidly due to the science and technological developments. The new technologies have also greatly influenced the educational fields. Teachers need to be prepared as per the need of the innovative concepts of education and the need of the learners of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. Educationists throughout the world have agreed that the training of the teachers is of utmost

importance in any educational endeavor. The wealth of a nation depends on how effectively its young minds are trained and educated to take up the challenges of the future. With such a great responsibility, it is very important to strengthen the teaching profession. There is a need for greater emphasis on continuing education for teachers to meet the growing demands of teaching profession.

Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. The strengthening and revitalization of the teacher education system, is therefore, a powerful means for imparting quality education in the country. Teachers play a vital role in the improvement of the quality of education. Therefore, in any assessment of the educational system, it is important to know whether there are enough teachers, who are not only well qualified to teach different subjects, but are also able to cope with the changing curriculum and growth in knowledge. Teaching is a noble profession both conceptually and ideally. Teachers are the largest professional groups engaged in human development activities. Professional training of a teacher implies his mastery in knowledge of the subject in pedagogy and teaching techniques, in his/her love and dedication for his/her best to the world of learning and to the society and above all to develop the ability to carry the whole world along with it and more ahead to the future.

Training of teachers is an important component of teacher education. Teacher education covers the whole gamut of activities involved in the accomplishment of the teaching profession. Pre-service and in-service training are the major activities involved in it. Traditionally, the teachers have enjoyed the great respect in our country. The principal role of the teachers is teaching and guiding their pupils, not only through the class room instructions and tutorials but by personal contacts. A teacher is expected to influence the life of the students for the art of living.

Today's teacher has a great challenge as today's children come to school bearing the imprint of a informative world constructed by media. The teacher has lost the monopoly of instruction. In the past the pupils accepted whatever teacher offered without a word. Today the community wants a greater involvement in deciding what is taught to the students. This infact is a great task and only the professionally qualified teachers can meet the demand of the community.

The powerful relationship between the teacher and the learner is central to the teaching profession. Teaching is not merely transmitting information and knowledge but presenting it in context and perspective so that the students learn to apply the solution of problems taught into broader contexts, and which makes teaching meaningful. In fact teaching should help the students to foresee the challenges and adjust to them. So training of school and post-school teachers is an important responsibility of higher education.

In Meghalaya teacher education has a long history. As early as in 1867 Normal School to train teachers was established at Nongsawlla, a village near charrapunjee by the pioneer missionaries. But the ratio between trained and untrained teachers did not show mark improvement. As in 1997-98, out of 10637 primary teachers 4025 were trained and 6612 were untrained. At the upper primary level out of 4441 teachers 1000 were trained and 3441 were untrained. At the Higher and Higher Secondary level out of 5320 teachers, 2191 were trained, and 3129 were untrained.

The present status of trained teachers in the state is still inadequate. The programme of Action 1995 of Meghalaya states that, “The present position of teacher in the state depicts a dismal picture. Since teacher education is a most crucial component for educational development it is therefore necessary that this important area of education should be revamped.”

### Present status of Secondary Teacher Education Programme in Meghalaya

At present there are four colleges of teacher education in the state for training of secondary teachers.

Sl.No	Name of Institute	Year of Establishment	Administration & Financial Management
<b>Secondary Teacher Training Institutes</b>			
.	St.Mary’s College of Teacher Education	1937	Private
	College of Teacher Education, Shillong	1964	Deficit
	College of Teacher Education, Rongkhon, Tura	1993	Government
	Don Bosco College of Teacher Education, Tura	2005	Private

### Bachelor of Education Course (B.Ed)

The B Ed colleges in the state have to follow the NCTE norms and accordingly they have to increase the intake capacity up to 100. According to the council norms, the B Ed college also

should have seven fulltime teaching staff and a fixed deposit of Rs. 5 lakhs jointly operated by the college authorities and the NCTE. Out of four B Ed Colleges in the state, two colleges viz. college of teacher education Shillong and College of Teacher Education, Ronghknon, Tura are recognized by NCTE.

College of Teachers' Education, Shillong stated in March 1964 as one of the first institutions for training teachers, Besides the BT course run by St. Edmund's College and St. Mary's College . In fact, the college of teacher education, known as post-graduate training (PGT) then, was the first full-fledged teacher training institution of Meghalaya. Form 1986 the college was brought under the deficit system of grant in aid by the government of Meghalaya. It was upgraded to the status of college of teacher education by the MHRD, Government of India in 1996. Recognition from the NCTE, New Delhi came in 1997.

College of Teacher Education, Tura was opened on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1993 under the name government B Ed college. The present name was given on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1996. The college is recognized by NCTE and NEHU (North Eastern Hill University).

St. Mary's college, Shillong was opened by the catholic society of nuns. The college was founded in 1937.

Under NEHU, the professional BT course was changed to B.Ed in 1976 as per NCET norms. The NCET also required that all B Ed college should be independent institutions with their own campuses and principals.

Accordingly, the St. Mary's college was bifurcated in 1999. The B Ed section is hence-forth to be known as the St. Mary's college of Teacher Education.

Another college of Teacher Education is functioning from the year 2005 in Tura known as Don Bosco College of Teacher Education, Tura, which actually is the B. Ed section of Don Bosco College of Education Tura established in 1987.

Besides this regular B.Ed course, the two year B.Ed programme of IGNOU is also active in the state. However, it may be mentioned here that One year B.Ed course which was in practice till the last academic session will be replaced by Two year B.Ed. under semester system w.e.f. August 2015. Two year B.Ed programme spread over four semesters shall consist of nine full and four half theory papers (core & Electives/Optional ), twenty weeks of School Internship cum Field work and Four Half papers on Enhancement of Professional Capacities.

### **Training Programmes Provided for Inservice Teachers**

Some of the programmes organized by Teacher Training Institutes for the professional growth of in-service teachers are follows:

<b>Orientation Programme</b>	<b>1 day</b>
<b>Workshop</b>	<b>2 days</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>5 days</b>
<b>Symposiums</b>	<b>2 days</b>

### **Challenges of Teacher Education**

1. *Curriculum*: The courses offered in the Teacher education programme were of general nature and did not appear to be relevant for the professional development of teachers. The theory courses in particular have no articulation with practical world and teaching skills requirements. There was over emphasis on theory and under emphasis on practicals. There were also time constraints to complete the syllabus on time. With the implementation of 2-year course with a new upgraded curriculum, it is hoped that this problem will be solved to a considerable extent.
2. *Ineffective method of teaching*: Student-teacher after passing out are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of method of teaching. There is shortage of infrastructural facilities in most of the schools to facilitate the teachers to use new technological innovations in their class room including audio visual aids.
3. *Practice Teaching*: Practice teaching continues to be the weakest link of the entire teacher education programme. The attitude of most of the schools towards practice teaching is discouraging. Teaching practice is considered as a disruption in their normal teaching. The school authority consider it as waste of time and resources.
4. *In service Training*: It is expected that teachers at any stage will bring out the best child in youth and help them to realize their maximum potential. There is no permanent mechanism for the in service education programme for the continuous growth and development of the teachers. Most of our teachers undertake the training programmes once in their lifetime.

5. *Professional development*: It is very unfortunate that professional attitude is missing from our teachers. In the present scenario most of teachers teaching is confined only to lectures and dictating notes. Their acquaintance with modern class-room devices is negligible.

6. *Poor academic background of the student teacher* :In many cases student teachers do not have requisite motivation and adequate academic background for a well deserved entry in the teaching profession. Such student teachers remain indifferent to studies and work.

### **Strategies for Quality Assurance in Teacher Education**

The present age of information explosion necessitates the teacher educators to be multifaceted personalities. Keeping in view the rapidly changing education scenario around the world, it is imperative to plan teacher education programme for the fulfillment of the emerging needs of our society.

1. *Curriculum*: The curriculum of teacher education has been suitably reoriented to respond to the emerging realities at the school level. ICT Skill Development, which is a part of the training programme will enable the teacher trainee to develop competency in using of offline and online electronic resources and encourage them to use internet for improvement of school teaching. ICT skills if properly utilized by computer literate teacher educators, transfer of newly exploded knowledge over an expanded area will be possible in minimum time with maximum efficiency. Proper use of audio visual aids and proper application of the concept of education technology are strongly desired to convert the traditional and more or less lifeless teaching practices into an effective and lively teaching-learning system.

Further, teacher education programme should result in 'Total Quality Teachers'. Thus there is an urgent need to develop teachers personality. Training Institutions should organise various workshops on Personality development and body language at regular intervals.

Teacher education curriculum should focus more towards practical aspects rather than theoretical dominance. Universal values need to be included in teacher training programme through value education that is to be transferred to the younger generation. Peace is must for all development activities in any society. Looking into the value crisis and alarming crime rate of our society and considering the fact that teachers are the torchbearers of building peaceful culture, it is desirable that along with value education, peace and human right education should find place in the sessional work of teacher education curriculum. This practice will

help the student teachers to teach school students about peace, universal values and human rights.

Again, it is found that adolescent many a time becomes emotionally disturbed. Increased depression, fickle mindedness, emotional imbalance, suicidal tendency, antisocial activities, rebellion etc. are the indicators of emotional changes that adolescents do face. The ability to manage feelings and handle stress is one of the important aspects of emotional intelligence that has been found to be important for success. Teachers should be very much vigilant about these cases. Student teachers need to be trained to handle these cases. Along with teaching theoretically -Emotional Intelligence: What it is and why it Matters, the teacher education institutions must organize sessional work on case studies about adolescent issues and concerns in order to realise their first hand problems. Student teachers must be trained to handle emotional issues with humour as teachers are expected to support the students as facilitators and guide.

Keeping in mind all the above strategies for a successful teacher education programme it has become an urgent need to develop time bound action plan for the up gradation of professional competencies of the faculty of various teacher training institutions.

2. **Method of teaching:** Instead of traditional chalk and talk method of imparting instruction, teaching method should be aid-oriented. Scope for maximum teacher-student interaction during teaching must be created to make teaching-learning process attractive. Technology based teaching will be highly effective method towards transfer of knowledge.

Further to cope with the problem of infrastructure more financial grants should be provided to the schools so that they can provide more infrastructural facilities to the teachers (example improving library, setting well-equipped laboratories, acquisition of teaching aids etc).

3. **Practice Teaching:** Another pertinent issue which needs urgent attention is that training institution are not having practicing schools attached to it. Teaching practices play an important role in B.Ed programme. And since training colleges do not have practicing schools of their own, in most of the cases the student-teachers are not allowed to practice the desired number of lessons by the school authority. To ensure better coordination and co-operation, training colleges should tie-up and sign MoU with some schools for sending their trainees for internship. It is also expected that during the period of internship the trainee students will



involve themselves with all types of school activities in addition to teaching to become effective teachers.

**4. *In Service Training:*** Teachers are expected to play a crucial role in the development of nation. If teachers are to ensure high proficiency and quality of school education, it is desirable that they should undergo in service training at regular intervals atleast once in every 5 years. This will promote sound teacher performance and high quality learning among students in cognitive, affective and psycho motor areas of human development. Inservice training programmes develop and instill in them the essential competence.

Active participation in workshops and state/national seminars should be encouraged by all possible means. Providing periodic refresher courses, professional enrichment courses, orientation courses in emerging areas like special education, value education, environmental education etc are necessary. Besides these courses and programmes it would have been very effective and interesting if the school authority develops a mechanism of inhouse workshop once in a year where school teachers can share their expertise and experiences and learn from one another.

**5. *Professional development:*** Teaching is one of those occupation which confer special privileges and obligations on those who practice it. The professional development of the teacher is mainly concerned with teaching competence commitment, value frames an emotional stability associated with teacher work. For the professional development, the teacher should be dedicated towards their profession and should be sensitive to the day to day problems. The professional responsibility of a teacher leads to quality teaching as quality come from these people who cares and who are committed. Teachers training should teach the teachers to prepare teaching learning materials easily and attractively which will help them in improving pedagogical skills. A teacher must be equipped with the use of computer through computer education. For the full personality development training institutions should also organize personality development which is an essential component of professional development of teachers.

**6. *Poor academic background of the student teacher:*** Attempt should be made to recruit first and good second class students to teacher training institutions and methods to be adopted to enhance the english language proficiency of the student teachers. The teachers who do not



have command over the knowledge of English develop a lack of confidence and inferiority complex in them. Spoken English classes should be compulsorily organized by the teacher training institutions and due weightage should be given on this.

7. **Raising the economic status:** To keep the quality teachers in teaching profession salary and other conditions must be sufficiently attractive as compared to any other top profession. Lack of quality to some extent may be responsible for lack of security in terms of service, stability and salary. If the teachers are provided with high salary and better living condition, it will motivate them to be true to their profession.

8. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and continuous evaluation should be an integral part of teacher education programme to know the strengths and weaknesses and make it more objective and transparent for optimizing the effectiveness of the programme. A systematic review of the teacher education programme at regular intervals can bring about drastic changes in teachers and improve the quality of teachers at all levels. A system of supervision by the higher authorities can improve the functioning of teachers training institutions.

### **Conclusion**

Quality has become the defining element of education in the present century in the context of new social relations. The teacher education institutions should be innovative, creative in their approach to skill developments among the students. Although skill development is crucial to success of the teachers in the job market, skills are of no value in the absence of an appropriate value system. Teacher education institutions have the additional responsibility of inculcating the desirable value system among the student teachers. The teachers are not merely to teach but to inspire the learners to seek knowledge, arouse curiosity, sustain interest and increase the span of attention. The teacher has to be a friend, philosopher and guide and not merely dispenser of knowledge.

*No system of education, no syllabus, no methodology, no text book can rise above of its teachers. If a country wants to have quality education it must have quality teachers.*

Today the whole world has realized the importance of knowledge in its manifold forms. Previously, there used to be a conflict between the 'haves' and 'have nots' whereas now we have a conflict between the 'Knows' and 'Knows nots'. There has been knowledge explosion in every discipline. A teacher has to continuously update his/her knowledge. In other words

teacher education is a continuous process where in both pre-service and in-service educations have to be well integrated for making teachers effective. Organizing refresher course, seminars, extensions lectures etc adds to the effectiveness of teachers and also promotes sound teacher performance.

It is a fact that the road to an educated, enlightened and an empowered India can be laid only by qualified, competent and dedicated teachers on whom the entire edifice of education is constructed. One way to draw excellent minds and committed individuals to the teaching profession is to have promising policies and practices that can attract creative talent which meets high quality standards and has the potential to meet future challenges. Teachers' education must be able to equip teachers with contemporary and relevant set of skills to make classroom learning as effective as possible. Teachers must be able to accommodate continuous changes to improve the quality of education which in turn will improve the quality of our citizens, essential for building a prosperous nation.

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