



## CHALLENGES FACED IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

**Anjali Monga**

Lerha Bega, Bathinda

### *Abstract*

*Teacher education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the culture and character of a nation. Various Commissions and Committees appointed by the Central and the State Governments in recent decades have invariably emphasized the need for quality teacher education suited to the needs of the educational system. But still teacher education is facing many problems such as economic, social, cultural reconstruction, crisis of values and morality and isolation of teacher education from schools, peer institutions, universities and other institutions of higher learning as also the community. The nature of school education is changing day by day but the changes at the level of teacher education have not adequately responded to the emerging realities at the school level. All that the teachers are expected to do in their work places need to be reflected in the teacher education activities and programmes.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Challenges, Teacher Education*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the culture and character of a nation. When India attained freedom, the then existing educational system was accepted as such because it was thought that an abrupt departure from the same would be disturbing and destabilizing. Thus a predisposition to retain the system acquired preponderance and all that was envisaged by way of changes was its rearrangement. Consequently, education including teacher education largely remained isolated from the needs and aspirations of the people. During the last five decades certain efforts have been made to polish the system. The gaps, however, are still wide and visible. The imperatives for building the bridges may be as follows:

- To build a national system of teacher education based on India's cultural patterns, its unity and diversity synchronizing with change and continuity.

- To facilitate the realization of the constitutional goals and emergence of the new social order.
- To prepare professionally competent teachers to perform their roles effectively as per needs of the society.
- To upgrade the standard of teacher education, enhance the professional and social status of teachers and develop amongst them a sense of commitment.

These are but a few of the major concerns which call for an immediate action. A comprehensive, dynamic and responsive system of teacher education needs to be continually evolved keeping the overall scenario in view.

### **Scenario of Teacher Education**

The need for improved levels of educational participation for overall progress is well recognized. The key role of educational institutions in realizing it is reflected in a variety of initiatives taken to transform the nature and function of education -- both formal as well as non-formal. Universal accessibility to quality education is considered essential for development. This has necessitated improvement in the system of teacher education so as to prepare quality teachers.

Various Commissions and Committees appointed by the Central and the State Governments in recent decades have invariably emphasized the need for quality teacher education suited to the needs of the educational system. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) observed that a major factor responsible for the educational reconstruction at the secondary stage is teachers' professional training. The Education Commission (1964-66) stressed that 'in a world based on science and technology it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people' and that is a sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education. The Programme of Action (POA 1992) has emphasized teacher education as a continuous process, its pre-service and in-service components being inseparable. The POA, among others, has pointed out the following in respect of teacher education:

- a) Professional commitment and overall competencies of teachers leave much to be desired;
- b) The quality of pre-service education has not only not improved with recent developments in pedagogical science, but has actually shown signs of deterioration;
- c) Teacher education programmes consist mainly of pre-service teacher training, with practically no systematic programmes of in-service training, facilities for which are lacking.
- d) There has been an increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices; and

e) The support system provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the University Departments of Education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level.

During the last decade, new thrusts have been posed due to rapid changes in the educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels. Curriculum reconstruction has also become imperative in the light of some perceptible gaps in teacher education. Teacher education by and large, is conventional in its nature and purpose. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system still remains inadequate. Teachers are prepared in competencies and skills which do not necessarily equip them for becoming professionally effective. Their familiarity with latest educational developments remains insufficient.

### **Teacher Education and Problems of the Nation**

It is universally acknowledged that education is an effective means for social reconstruction and to a great extent it offers solutions to the problems a society is faced with. These problems may be economic, social, cultural, political, moral, ecological and educational. Since the teachers play a major role in education of children, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Teacher education must, therefore, create necessary awareness among teachers about their new roles and responsibilities. Education of teachers needs to strengthen and stress upon the main attributes of a profession, such as, the systematic theory, rigorous training over a specified duration, authority, community sanction, ethical code and culture, generating knowledge through research and specialization. It is acknowledged that formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct.

### **Economic Problems**

Poverty, unemployment, and low rate of growth and productivity are some of the major economic problems of the country which have led to the compulsions of the backward economy. These problems seek immediate solution and demand a realistic co-ordination between economic planning and manpower planning. Education can help find solutions if it is properly coordinated with manpower needs. Introduction of work education and vocationalisation of education in secondary schools will have to be given a modern and meaningful direction. The attitude towards the work culture needs a transformation. The Indian society needs education with special emphasis on science and technology, vocational inputs and realistic work experiences. Teacher education curriculum, therefore, has to promote such attitudes as are necessary for the emergence of a new economic order. Along with the vocational competencies and skills a new work culture will have to be created which necessarily involves the inculcation of dignity of work, the spirit of self-reliance and scientific temper among students. The courses of teacher education need to be enriched to enable teachers to understand the attributes of modernity and development.

### **Social Problems**

Casteism, communalism and regionalism are some of the problems in the body politic of the society which misguide the youth. Increasing delinquency, violence, terrorism and fissiparous tendencies and use of inappropriate means to get one's ends served are threats to the national integration and social cohesion. Democracy, violence and terrorism cannot coexist. Education has to develop a peace loving personality and the programme of teacher education has to contribute in this regard.

The explosion of population with all its allied disturbing trends is not only neutralizing the economic gains but also creating many problems for the country. Indian society still suffers from evils like child labour, child marriage, untouchability, and discriminatory treatment to women, violation of human rights, etc. and most of the people are unaware of their legal rights.

Strengthening national and social cohesion in a diverse and plural society, accelerating the process of economic growth, improving the life of the downtrodden and the people living below the poverty line, removing the widely prevalent ignorance, superstition and prejudices from the masses, inculcating scientific temper and developing a critical awareness about the social realities of Indian life are some of the issues which call for immediate attention. Teachers and the teacher educators have a special role to play in such efforts.

### **Problems of Cultural Reconstruction**

Education is the process of transmission of dynamic and responsive components of cultural heritage and its continuous enrichment. There is a need to reinterpret the Indian culture in its distinct identity and composite strength. Its capacity to absorb the sublime from the other cultures needs to be highlighted. The teachers will have to play their role in cultural transmission and reconstruction.

### **Crises of Values and Morality**

There has been a persistent erosion of values in the society. In the present day context certain values need to be redefined and reinstalled. There are situations when the values imparted and inculcated in schools are not generally practiced in society. Value education demands a planned and purposive approach. It is through education and as of necessity through teacher education programmes that the task of inculcating values can be substantially accomplished. Whereas values are emotive, the other related significant dimension is that of moral education which is essentially cognitive in character. Morals are situation-specific and demand immediate decision and action and yet there are morals which are considered to be eternal and universal. Through committed teachers, the art of ensuring moral development in a secular, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society needs to be cultivated.

### **Problems within Education System**

The nation has yet to fulfill the constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children till they attain 14 years of age. India is also a party to the global commitment for achieving the goal of Education for all. The education system however, has to respond to several major issues and problems which

have hindered the progress in this regard. Maintenance of educational standards against the pressure of increasing enrolment, relevance and quality of school education, efficacy of school functioning under the decentralized role of political power through the enactment of Panchayati Raj Act are some of the pertinent issues. In addition, specific requirements and need of social and economical groups of the society and of the minority communities, vocationalization of education, scientific and technological literacy, alienation of youth, rush for urbanization, perceived urban orientation of educational system and its inflexibility to respond to rural, tribal and regional requirements are some of the dominant issues. These would determine the nature and shape of teacher education programmes and the efficacy and functioning of teachers in their new and emerging multifaceted roles.

### **Isolation of Teacher Education**

Teacher education institutions which were considered 'islands of isolation' have gradually developed linkages with schools, peer institutions, universities and other institutions of higher learning as also the community. However, much remains to be done in this direction. The curriculum of the school, its actual transactional modalities, examination system, management processes and its ethos need to be the main thrust areas of teacher education programmes. To achieve these ends, teacher educators need to be made conversant with various aspects of school experiences. It is observed in day-to-day functioning that teacher educators often tend to lose contact with content areas relevant to their own disciplines resulting into gaps in communication and latest information. It is, therefore, a felt need in the present-day context that teacher education institutions keep in continuous touch with institutions of higher learning and peer institutions for effective transmission of knowledge and its up gradation.

The breaking of isolation from the community is essential for enabling teachers and teacher educators to reconstruct pedagogical and educational principles and practices in the light of experiences gained from mutually beneficial community interactions. Teacher as a professional and intellectual cannot remain indifferent to the events that are taking place in society. The academic and social issues are inter-related and inter-dependent. In contemporary context, the role of the teacher is no longer confined to teaching alone. The teachers are expected to play an active role in the developmental activities responding to progress of the community.

### **Expanding Scope of Teacher Education**

Education of teachers is not an end in itself. Its target is the school. Any change in the nature, purpose, quality and character of the school demands a concomitant change in teacher education, especially in its curriculum. The implementation of the 10 + 2 scheme at the school level has transformed the complexion of education to a considerable extent from the pre-primary to the + 2 stage. There has been an increase not only in the quantum of knowledge, but also in its nature and purpose. In addition, new transactional techniques and strategies have also been evolved. Certain new subjects have replaced the old ones whereas some others have changed their context, content, orientation, theme and philosophy. These changes at the school level, out of necessity, demand a new pedagogy and evaluation techniques. But the changes at the

level of teacher education have not adequately responded to the emerging realities at the school level. All that the teachers are expected to do in their work places need to be reflected in the teacher education activities and programmes.

The problems of teacher educators coupled with their poor salary and working conditions itself reflects the neglect of the administration on teacher education. It should not be forgotten that the quality of school teacher depends on the training he/she receives from the training institution and allowing teacher education to rot adversely impacts education sector. Hope that the Education Administration will start focusing on the teacher education, where the roots of the education system lie. Improving the teacher education would positively impact the education sector as a whole.

### **References**

Kaur, Parminder (2006), Teacher Education in 21<sup>st</sup> Century; “Miracle of Teaching” VI:14 16, Published by AAEC, Bhopal.

Rao, V.K.(2003) ; “Quality Improvement Issues in Higher Education.” APH Publishing Corporation: New Delhi.

Sharma, Shashi Prabha, “Teacher Education: Principles, Theories and practices” 2006 Kanishka Publication, New Delhi.

National Council for Teacher Education “Anweshika” Indian Journal of Teacher Education Vol.3 June, 2006

University New “A Weekly Journal of Higher Education Vol. 44 May, 2006

DeviShakuntla, 2003. “Systems of Education”. Omsons Publication.

Taneja,R.P. (1989). Dictionary of Education, Anmol Publications, New Delhi (India).

Taylor, William (Edited, 1969). Towards A Policy for the Education of Teachers, London, Butterworths Publishing.