

Teacher Education Scenario in Punjab: A Status Study

Neeru Sharma

Assistant Professor, Ramgarhia College of Education,
Phagwara neeru001@hotmail.com

MonaVij

Assistant Professor, Ramgarhia College of Education, Phagwara

Abstract

Increasingly demanding and complex market forces require revitalized teacher education systems. It is a pertinent expectation that the teacher education institutions exhibit vibrancy adequate for responding to the emerging paradigms of school education and the teacher roles thereof. It is thus necessary that quality concern is explicit in every aspect of teacher education programmes. But today all the universities want to privatise teacher education programme without any quality control. As of today teacher training is one such professional qualification quality, relevance and efficiency of which is under severe criticism. Although the bodies like NCTE and NAAC are constantly striving not to dilute the standards of teacher education programme, still the mushrooming growth of the teacher training colleges raise eyebrows regarding the quality of the profession. The framework for this study includes study and comparison of quality concerns for teacher education institutions in the light of NCTE norms. Findings indicate the declining standards and quality in teacher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher learning is a lifelong activity that starts from his/her school days and continues throughout the life. The techniques through which a teacher was taught during his/her school days, plays effective role in the techniques he/she uses in his/her own teaching (Schwille, Dembele and Schubert 2007, P. 27). Some individuals are born teachers and do not need much training for learning skills of teaching. Their sincerity paves the path for self-learning and some times, such self-made teachers have been found more effective than formally trained teachers. However, in case of majority, teacher learning is facilitated by training programmes delivered before entry into teaching profession and also while continuing in teaching profession. They need appropriate knowledge and skills, personal characteristics, professional prospects and motivation if they are to meet the expectations placed on them (Delors 1996, p.142). Teacher education has been given importance throughout the world. Teacher learning through participation in initial training programmes or through continuing education programmes is a complex activity. Teaching is an art as well as science, so also teacher training. Cultural roles and identities of teachers, details of definition of

teacher quality and details of initial teacher training programmes including nature of practical training vary from one country to another. Within a nation, these also vary from one State to another. "Teacher preparation has become a controversial issue all over the world." (Bray 2007, P.11). This is also true for teacher education scenario in India.

Education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demand of the system, but also functions as a bridge between schooling and higher education. It has to meet twin demands: (a) challenges of the education system including higher education, and (b) the ever-changing demands of the social system. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognized. Knowledge Commission (2008) stated that both pre-service and in-service training of school teachers is extremely inadequate and also poorly managed in most States. "Pre-service training needs to be improved and differently regulated in both public and private institutions, while systems for in-service training require expansion and major reform that allows for greater flexibility.

TEACHER EDUCATION: CURRENT SCENERIO IN PUNJAB

India possesses one of the largest systems of teacher education. Besides, the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and aided institutions, private and self-financing colleges and open universities are also engaged in this venture. Teacher educators and teacher training institutions play an essential part in the process of strengthening the role of teachers. The programme of teacher education is institution based. The programmes are almost identical but the standard varies. Certain institutions are being run with motives other than educational. In certain areas, the supply of teachers far exceeds the demand while in others there is acute shortage and unqualified teachers are working under different names.

Recently it has been noticed that fast diversion towards commercialization in education has led to mushroom growth of Colleges of Education. There has been manifold expansion in the number of training colleges and university departments which train graduate and post-graduate teachers. At the time of independence we had only 20 universities with about 500 affiliated colleges having a total student enrolment of about 2.5 Lacs. The estimated number of universities at present has crossed 300 mark with about 15000 affiliated colleges and over 96 Lac students.

Quality in teacher education is of primary importance and to maintain that, National Council of Teacher Education came into origin in 1973, however due to inherent weaknesses in its structure it was unable to maintain quality standards in Teacher Education so it was given the needed statutory status in pursuance of NCTE Act, 1993 on 17th August 1995. Of late the numbers of applications received by Regional Committees for grant of recognition in year 2002-03 were 739 and as many as 353 recognition orders were issued by Regional Committees. As on 31st March 2003 in all there were 2953 recognized teacher-training courses at different levels with an intake of 2,26,203 candidates. In 2003 there were 35 Colleges of Education in Punjab and it

increased to 119 Colleges of Education in 2005. So within a span of 2 years there was 3 fold increase in quantity of Colleges of Education. Now at present there are 185 Educational College in Punjab. There are 49 Colleges under Guru Nanak DevUniversity, 57 College under Punjab University, Chandigarh, 78 Colleges under Punjabi University, Patiala and 1 is Lovely Institute of Education. Mind boggling 3 fold increase in the number of B.Ed colleges has created a grave situation with regard to the quality of teacher training programmes. The situation is still alarming in 2011, with 3431 pending applications lying with NCTE for recognition of various teacher education programmes.

Lately management quota seats have come into existence. Another main factor responsible for opening of many new Colleges of Education is that in Punjab with positive pursuance of Hon'ble supreme court of India's Judgment in T.M.A Pai foundations and others versus state of Karnataka in view of the Policy Regulation, Notification dated 10th June 2003 issued by the U.G.C, 15% of the seats out of 85% state quota seats in unaided private self financing institutions shall be treated as management quota seats.

Rapid growth in the quantity of Colleges of Education and the physical facilities available in these Colleges of Education has direct bearing on quality of teacher education. Despite of NCTE's best efforts and laying down of norms, quantity has out powered the quality in teacher education institutions. Due to such (above stated) changes many important questions have arisen as to what will be the effect of setting up these unplanned privately run Teacher Education Institutions on standards of education? Can the standards be maintained?

It is, in this context, that research in these areas to explore not only what exists today but what is required for the future becomes a priority. Keeping into consideration of the above factors, the present study was under taken to assess facilities available in Colleges of Education affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in the light of NCTE Norms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study were:

To study and compare the existing conditions in government, government aided and self financed colleges of education in the light of NCTE norms.

To give a critical review of the quality of Teacher Education Institutions in Punjab.

METHOD

Keeping in mind the nature of the present problem, the survey method has been used.

Sample

Study was conducted on one Govt., six Govt. Aided and ten self finance colleges of education affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University (G.N.D.U.), Amritsar. All the government and government aided institutes affiliated to G.N.D.U., Amritsar were selected, while the random sampling was done for Self financed colleges of education.

Tools

Two main tools were used to collect data and information:

Questionnaire for the status of Teacher Education Institution in Punjab.

Opinionnaire on teacher education.

Besides these two tools (enquiry form) certain documentary techniques were also used to collect the required information. These tools were adopted after standard procedure of construction and development of tools.

Questionnaire:

In present study, the qualitative dimensions like programmes and admission procedure, availability of infrastructure facilities, utilization of educational technology, curricular and co-curricular activities, student and welfare facility, finance, in- service programmes and research activities regarding teacher education programmes were used to collect data. The questionnaire comprised of a total of 32 questions from nine major areas as stated above. Sequential arrangement of questions was as follows.

S. No	Dimension	No. of Questions
1	General Information	6 (1-6)
2	Programmes and admission procedure of institution	3 (7-9)
3	Infrastructure facilities	1 (10)
4	Utilization of educational technology	1 (11)
5	Curricular and co-curricular activities	5 (12-16)
6	Student welfare	2 (17-18)
7	Finance	1 (19)
8	Staff welfare and development	10 (20-29)
9	In-service programmes and research (28-30) activities	3 (30-32)

Opinionnaire:

An opinionnaire was used to collect the opinions and suggestions of teacher educators/experts for the improvement in quality of teacher education programmes. Keeping in mind the objectives of study major areas of teacher education programmes such as admission criteria and selection procedure, revision and development of curriculum, effective practice teaching, evaluation procedure, effectiveness of teacher education programmes, problems of teacher education institutions were selected.

Procedure

Data and existing facts regarding facilities available in colleges of Education affiliated to G.N.D.U were collected through questionnaire and documentary techniques. The sample in the present study comprised of 17 Teacher Education Institutions (1 Govt., 6 Aided Colleges of Education and 10 Self Financed Colleges of Education). In order to obtain complete information data through questionnaire and opinionnaire were collected personally. It was found that 3 to 7% questions were not answered properly.

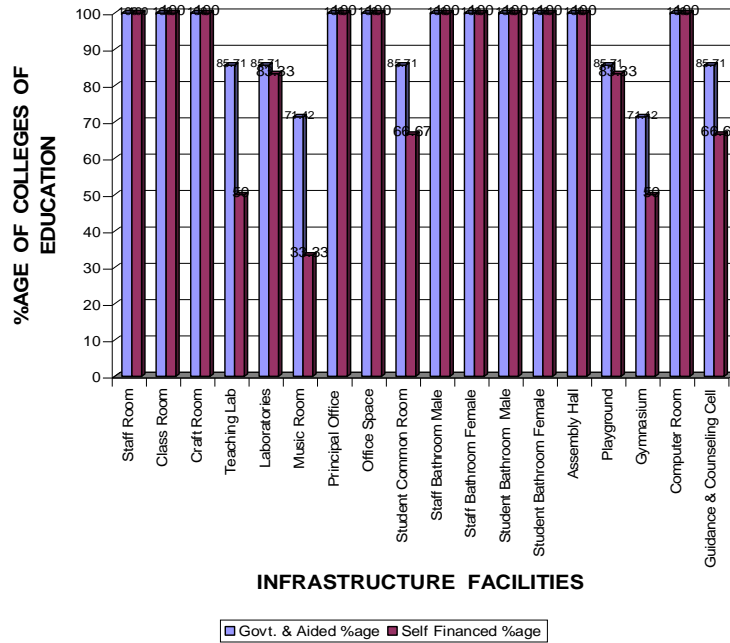
MAJOR FINDINGS

Analysis of data regarding qualitative dimensions of Teacher Education Programmes provided us with the following results.

Programme and admission procedure: Admission to B.Ed. was done on merit basis and in Self financing Colleges it is through federation of Self financed Colleges of Education Punjab. In Govt. College admission was done purely on merit base. There was no interview in admission procedure. However 13% seats are reserved for Management quota in Self financed Colleges of Education which degrades the quality standards.

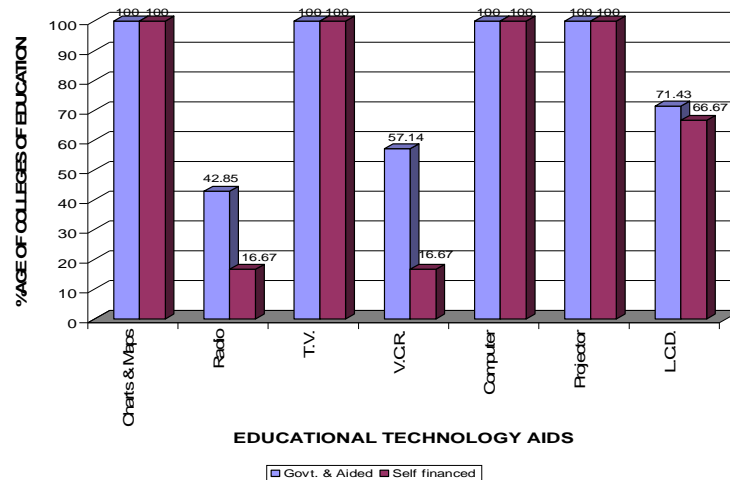
Infrastructure facilities: Findings reveal that classrooms, principal's office, staff room and bathroom for boys and girls were available in all institutions. Many other infrastructure facilities were not available in self finance colleges. Findings bring into notice that many of the private Self financed colleges did not have required facilities as per NCTE norms. The extent of variance differs from institution to institution as shown in the graph no.1.

GRAPH NO. 1 AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION



Utilisation of educational technology: The survey reveals that Govt. and Aided institutions use more technological aids than Self financed Institutions as shown in graph no. 2. It was found that in technological aids projectors and computers were used to a large extent as compared to TV and radio. Since adequate emphasis is not given to the "Educational Technology" during the pre-service training of teachers, it is necessary that the deficiency be overcome by well structured programmes.

GRAPH NO. 2 UTILISATION OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AIDS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION



Organization of teaching practice:

Findings indicate that Teacher Education Institutions did not have their own demonstration schools. Govt. and Aided Colleges use more Govt. and aided schools while Self-financed Colleges use more private schools for teaching practice. The organization of practice teaching depends upon the willingness of schools to allow teachers to take their classes. Most of the institutions followed block teaching for carrying out teaching practice.

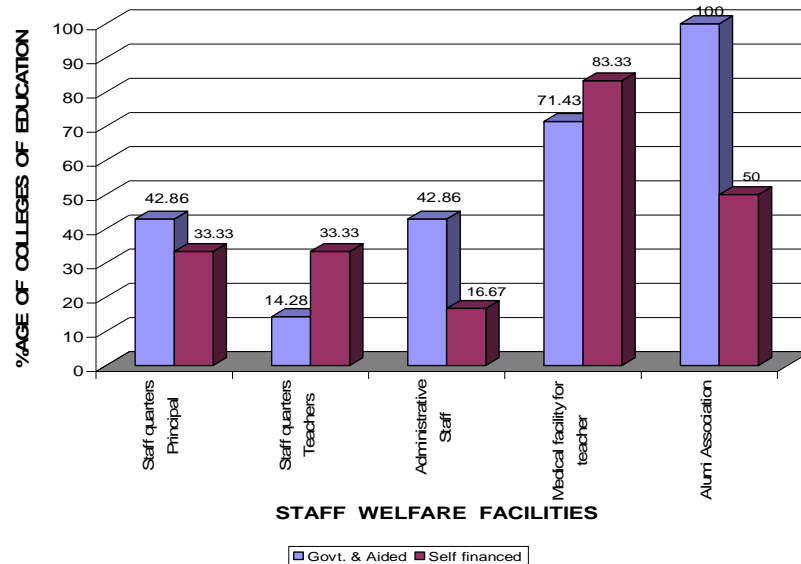
Student welfare facilities: Findings of study reveal that hostel facility and medical facility is provided by all Institutions, however hostel facility for boys is far less as compared to girls. Although placement cell was existing in many institutions but very few institutions had the provision for follow-up of students, as no record of employed/unemployed graduates was maintained. It is concluded that student welfare facilities were not upto the mark.

Finance: Findings reveal that Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education charge less amount of fees and have less hidden charges than Unaided Colleges of Education. Provision of Fee Concessions is more in Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education than in Self-financed Colleges of Education.

Staff welfare and development: Survey findings bring forward the fact that staff welfare facilities at secondary level teacher education institutions are meager. However Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education are endowed with more staff welfare facilities than Self-financed Colleges of Education as depicted in graph no. 3. Survey results concerning staff qualification shows clearly that total number of teachers employed in Govt. and Aided TEIs is more than in Self-financed Colleges of Education. It was revealed that 69.23% of teachers are permanent in Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education. However it is only 30.61% in Self-financed Colleges of Education. It was further observed

that at secondary level unaided teacher education institutions had more percentage of under qualified staff.

GRAPH NO. 3. STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION



In-service programmes and research activities: It is found that seminars, conferences and workshops were the major in-service programmes, for which the opportunities were provided more in Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education than Self financed Colleges of Education. Findings also indicate that Govt. and Aided Colleges of Education performed more research activities than Self financed Colleges of Education.

Various qualitative dimensions of Colleges of Education have been examined in the discussions given above. Quality concerns require that norms as prescribed by N.C.T.E must be adhered to by various teacher education institutions. Furthermore in-service programmes, use of educational technology, mode of curriculum transaction are the areas which need major attention. For maintaining the quality standards in teacher education programmes, there is an urgent need to abolish the 13% existing management quota seats in Unaided Colleges of Education. Only professionally qualified teacher educators must be employed in Colleges of Education. In addition to this there is a need to analyze and understand the dynamics of acquisition of teacher related skills and attitudes among pupil-teachers in the light of curricular and institutional parameters of teacher education in an integrated way. The need of the hour is that NCTE must ensure that norms are followed strictly by all colleges of education and actions are taken against violations.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study have important implications as follows:

Basic infrastructure facilities like common room, teaching labs and laboratories, separate bathroom for male and female students and teachers, gymnasium, music room should be provided in all Colleges of Education.

Staff welfare facilities should be upgraded in all institutions and full pay-scale should be paid to the teacher educators of Self financed colleges.

Student welfare facilities should be improved as they are not up to the mark.

Expansion of Colleges of Education should be need based.

Only professionally qualified teachers should be employed.

Each Teacher Education Institution should have at least one attached demonstration school.

Educational Technology equipments should be used regularly by teacher educators and pupil teachers.

Internship should be used instead of block teaching for teaching practice.

Scholastic subjects like music and drawing should be provided in all Colleges of Education.

More funds should be provided to Colleges of Education for in-service programmes and research activities.

CONCLUSION

Whatever may be reasons and whatever may be the excuses, it is clear that the quality of teacher education is deteriorating day-by-day. In view of the quantitative growth & qualitative downfall, high demand of fees, underpaid & non-qualified faculty, lack of infrastructural facility & leniency of governing bodies the whole teacher education scenario has become a mess. If the state Govt. or NCTE is not taking serious steps on these mal practices, the mushrooming of these B.Ed. Colleges will become mere shops of Teacher-Training.

In the present competitive world there is no way to escape or to run the system in a half phase manner; it is right time to act in the right direction through a holistic approach to improve the quality of teacher education. Let us all join hand in this direction.

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* Assistant Professor, Ramgarhia College of Education, Phagwara (Punjab) – 144401
neeru001@hotmail.com

** Assistant Professor, Ramgarhia College of Education, Phagwara (Punjab) –144401