



TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are teachers. As stated by NCTE (1998) in Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education, —The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage.// This shows that it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers, so that the future of a nation is secure. The 2 importance of competent teachers to the nation's school system can in no way be overemphasized. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 places demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education.

Keywords: *Teacher Education, Meaning, Nature of Teacher Education*



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Introduction

Teacher education or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, approaches, methodologies and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. The professionals who engage in training the prospective teachers are called teacher educators or, in some contexts, teacher trainers.

The process by which teachers are educated is the subject of political discussion in many countries, reflecting both the value attached by societies and cultures to the preparation of young people for life, and the fact that education systems consume significant financial resources.

However, the degree of political control over Teacher Education varies. Where teacher education is entirely in the hands of universities, the state may have no direct control

whatever over what or how new teachers are taught; this can lead to anomalies, such as teachers being taught using teaching methods that would be deemed inappropriate if they used the same methods in schools, or teachers being taught by persons with little or no hands-on experience of teaching in real classrooms. In other systems, teacher education may be the subject of detailed prescription e.g. the state may specify the skills that all teachers must possess, or it may specify the content of teacher education courses.

Policy cooperation in the European Union has led to a broad description of the kinds of attributes those teachers in European Union member states should possess: the Common European Principle for Teacher Competences and Qualifications

Meaning of Teacher Education:

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation.

The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as – A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

According to Goods Dictionary of Education Teacher education means, —all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.

Nature of Teacher Education:

- 1) Teacher education is a continuous process and its pre-service and in-service components are complimentary to each other. According to the International Encyclopaedia of Teaching and Teacher education (1987), —Teacher education can be considered in three phases: Pre-service, Induction and In-service. The three phases are considered as parts of a continuous process.
- 2) Teacher education is based on the theory that —Teachers are made, not born|| in contrary to the assumption, —Teachers are born, not made. Since teaching is considered an art and a science, the teacher has to acquire not only knowledge, but also skills that are called —tricks of the trade
- 3) Teacher education is broad and comprehensive. Besides preserve and in-service programmes for teachers, it is meant to be involved in various community programmes and extension activities, viz adult education and non-formal education programmes, literacy and development activities of the society.
- 4) It is ever-evolving and dynamic. In order to prepare teachers who are competent to face the challenges of the dynamic society, Teacher education has to keep abreast of recent developments and trend

The need for teacher education is felt due to the following reasons;

It is common knowledge that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation.

The focus of teacher preparation had to shift from training to education if it had to make a positive influence on the quality of curriculum transaction in classrooms and thereby pupil learning and the larger social transformation.

The aspects that need greater emphasis are; the length of academic preparation, the level and quality of subject matter knowledge, the repertoire of pedagogical skills that teachers possess to meet the needs of diverse learning situations, the degree of commitment to the profession, sensitivity to contemporary issues and problems and the level of motivation.

The Status of Teacher Education

In many countries, Initial Teacher Education also known as pre-service teacher training takes place largely or exclusively in institutions of Higher Education. In countries like Sri Lanka there are separate institutes called National colleges of Education to provide pre-service teacher training while Teacher Training Colleges provide in-service teacher education. Further institutes called Teacher Centres provide continuing professional development for teachers. It may be organized according to two basic models.

In the 'consecutive' model, a teacher first obtains a qualification in one or more subjects often a diploma in teaching or an undergraduate bachelor's degree, and then studies for a further period to gain an additional qualification in teaching this may take the form of a post-baccalaureate credential or master's degree.

In the alternative 'concurrent' model, a student simultaneously studies both one or more academic subjects, and the ways of teaching that subject, leading to a combined bachelor's degree and teaching credential to qualify as a teacher of that subject.

Other pathways are also available. In some countries, it is possible for a person to receive training as a teacher by working in a school under the responsibility of an accredited experienced practitioner. In the United Kingdom there is a long tradition of partnerships between universities and schools in providing state supported teacher education. This tradition is not without tensions and controversies.

In the United States, approximately one-third of new teachers come through alternative routes to teacher certification, according to testimony given by Emily Feistritz, the President of National Centre for Alternative Certification and the National Centre for Education Information, to a congressional subcommittee on May 17, 2007. However, many alternative

pathways are affiliated with schools of education, where candidates still enrol in university-based coursework. A supplemental component of university-based coursework is community-based teacher education, where teacher candidates immerse themselves in communities that will allow them to apply teaching theory to practice. Community-based teacher education also challenges teacher candidates' assumptions about the issues of gender, race, and multicultural diversity. This assists to make an attitudinal change in the teacher trainees in order to eliminate segregation within the school community

A teacher educator also called a teacher trainer is a person who helps in-service and pre-service teacher trainees to acquire the knowledge, competencies and attitudes they require to be effective teachers. Several individual teacher educators are usually involved in the initial or ongoing education of each teacher; often each specialises in teaching about a different aspect of teaching e.g. educational ethics, philosophy of education, sociology of education, curriculum, pedagogy, subject-specific teaching methods etc.

Not every culture has a concept that precisely matches the English term 'teacher educator' Even where the concept exists, the range of roles that is covered by the term varies significantly from country to country. In some traditions, the term 'teacher trainer' may be used instead of 'teacher educator'.

Conclusion

Teacher education reaches teachers at all levels of education, namely Pre-primary, Primary, Elementary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and the Tertiary. The needs and requirements of students and education vary at each level. Hence level and stage-specific teacher preparation is essential. Teacher education also helps in the development of teaching skills in teachers of professional institutions. The teachers in professional institutions have only the theoretical and practical knowledge of their respective subjects. They require specialized teacher training inputs to deal with students entering their professions. Teacher education also reaches special education and physical education. Thus where there are teachers, there would be teacher education. The knowledge base is adequately specialized and diversified across stages, in order to develop effective processes of preparing entrant teachers for the functions which a teacher is expected to perform at each stage.

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