

## A CRITICAL NOTE ON TEACHER EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP), 2020

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### Abstract

*Education of a teacher truly drives the greatest change for community and makes progress in achieving societal transformation. The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 recognises and identifies teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process. Hence, the varied dimensions of teacher education mentioned in policy has to be properly analysed with social concern, responsibility and integrated view for policy implementation. Education Commission (1964-66) has mentioned that, "Of all the factors that influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence, and character of our teachers are undoubtedly the most significant." Fifty-four years later, their viewpoint still holds true, and the future of our nation still lies in the hands of our teachers. The present policy proposes significant and radical changes in the education system. Beside the fact that the present system holds dismal conditions of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, and service conditions responsible for the lack of teaching quality and motivation among Indian teachers. The policy emphasizes the importance of high-quality teacher education. Policy aims to initiate several systemic reforms to encourage bright and talented young minds to take up the teaching profession. The broad focus of this article is to present the critical analysis of teacher education component as proposed in NEP, 2020.*

**Keywords:** National Education Policy, 2020; NEP; Critical Analysis, Teacher Education



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### Introduction

Educational policies determine the social and economic development of the nation. To spread education among all economic classes and for the inclusion of common/ordinary people

in the mainstream, the Government of India (GoI) has formulated the education policies time to time. The first National Policy on Education was formulated in the year 1968 on the recommendations of Education Commission (1964-66). The second education policy was formulated in 1986 and revised in 1992 to lay down the principles governing the education system. It has been 34 years that National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 enforced on the recommendations of Kasturirangan Committee report with aims to revamp the educational framework by shifting focus from rote learning to making education more holistic, and promising equitable access to all. In its simplest sense, policy refers to a broad statement that reflects future goals, aspirations, and provides guidelines for carrying out those goals. National Education Policy, 2020 is one such public policy based on the perceived educational needs that the country visualises to address through education.

Education is the composition of varied resources among which the teacher is pivot. The success of any education system actually relies on the quality of teachers who are sole responsible for construction, enrichment and transmission of knowledge from one generation to another. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), (2020) states that, “*teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation*” (NEP, 2020; p.20). Teachers are the real pathfinder, who molds the young minds according to social as well as individual aspirations. Education Commission (1964-66) accepted that all the educational endeavors depend on the quality, character, educational qualification and professional competence of the teacher. MHRD (1986) also endorse the status of teachers and said that, “*no nation can rise above the level of its teachers*” (NEP,1986; p.25).

### **Teacher Education?**

According to one definition of “Britannica” (Taylor, 2016) defines “*Teacher Education, any of the formal programs that have been established for the preparation of teachers at the elementary- and secondary-school levels.*” Teacher education is an academic endeavour wherein educational professional learn to teach young learners in the classrooms. It involves the development of teachers’ knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the requirement of teaching profession and face the challenges therein. According to s. 2 (1) of *The National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993*, “teacher education” means programmes of education, research or training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in schools, and includes non-formal education, part-time education, adult education and correspondence education. The National Council for Teacher Education (<https://ncte.gov.in/>) has defined teacher education as - A programme of

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education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. So, teacher education means programmes which prepares teachers at pre-primary, elementary, secondary, higher education and vocational education levels.

Teacher education has been a matter of concerns and various efforts have been made since independence to raise the standard and quality of teacher education in India. MHRD (2020) observed that, *“The quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, service conditions, and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards”* (NEP, 2020; p.20). In ancient India, teachers bear high place in society and NEP, 2020 speaks to retrieve that by uplifting their educational, professional, social and economic standard. Keeping in view the importance of teachers and teacher education, policy made a number of provisions in the document through teachers (Chapter-5 in Part-I School Education) and teacher education (Chapter-15 in Part-II Higher Education).

### **Recommendations on Teacher Education as mentioned in NEP, 2020**

National Council for Teacher Education (2009) mentioned that, *“Teacher quality is a function of several factors: teachers’ status, remuneration, conditions of work and their academic and professional education. The teacher education system through its initial and continuing professional development programmes is expected to ensure an adequate supply of professionally competent teachers to run the nation’s schools”* (NCFTE, 2009; p. 2). In the words of Jamwal (2012) teacher education refers to the policies, procedures and provision designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills. NCFTE (2009) mentioned that, the role of teacher has continuously been evolving as s/he has to respond to social, economic and political changes taking place in the society. That’s why the main aim of teacher education should be enhance teachers’ competence to accomplish their duties as per the prescribed standards (Kapur, 2018). The present system of TEIs is deeply problematic (Nair, 2020). Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (2012) in its report titled *‘Vision of Teacher Education in India Quality and Regulatory Perspective’* raised serious issues and put question mark on the whole process of teacher preparation in India and later NCTE in 2014 constituted Poonam Batra committee to revamp the mechanism of teacher education. Batra Committee (2014) advocated to stop one-year B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes and proposed two years B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes to check the arbitrariness of self-financing TEIs. Recently, NEP, 2020 has shown serious concerns on the status and quality of teachers and recommended to retrieve the status of teacher by raising the standard of teacher

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education. Quality teacher education is needed for quality teachers who will be shaping the future of our children and nation. So, keeping the importance of teachers the following ideas has been suggested/recommended by NEP, 2020 to reform the status of teachers and teacher education in India:

- **Multidisciplinary approach of teacher education and preparation of teachers:** According to NEP, 2020, teacher education is vital in creating a pool of school teachers who will shape the next generation. Preparation of teachers is an activity which required multidisciplinary perspectives and development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions and equipped with modern technology in education and pedagogy.
- **Strengthening Teacher Education Institutions:** Policy has shown serious concern about the quality of teacher education by mentioning the findings of Justice Verma Commission (2012) that, “Majority of stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are selling the degree of different teacher education programmes”. But regulatory efforts are not adequate for these malpractices. Therefore, urgent need of revitalization through radical action, in order to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy, and high quality to the teacher education system. Policy endorse to strengthen the quality of TEIs by means of promoting multidisciplinary institutions.
- **Regulatory System of Teacher Education:** Policy endorse that only educationally sound, multidisciplinary and integrated teacher education programmes shall be in force by 2030. In order to maintain the integrity and credibility of TEIs, the regulatory system of teacher education shall be empowered to take stringent action against substandard and dysfunctional TEIs that do not meet basic educational criteria, after giving one year for remedy of the breaches.
- **Mission 2030:** All teacher education programmes must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions. All multidisciplinary universities and colleges will establish education department for running B.Ed. programmes and carry researches with collaboration with other departments like psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, Science, mathematics etc. The policy further announces that all stand-alone TEIs will be required to convert to

multidisciplinary institutions by 2030, since they will have to offer the 4-year integrated teacher preparation programme.

- **New Signature in Teacher Education:** The 4-year integrated B.Ed. (dual-major holistic Bachelor's degree) will be the minimal degree qualification for becoming school teachers by 2030. The HEIs offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed. may also run a 2-year B.Ed. (for candidates who have already received a Bachelor's degree in a specialized subject) and 1-year B.Ed. (for candidates who have received a 4-year undergraduate degree in a specialized subject). Scholarships for meritorious students will be setup for the 4-year, 2-year & 1-year B.Ed. programmes.
- **Network of Experts and Schools:** HEIs offering teacher education programmes will ensure the availability of a range of experts in education and related disciplines as well as specialized subjects. Each HEI will have a network of government and private schools to work closely with, where potential teachers will do teaching along with participating in other activities such as community service, adult and vocational education, etc.
- **Admission in Teacher Education Programme:** In order to maintain uniform standards for teacher education, the admission to pre-service teacher preparation programmes shall be through suitable subject and aptitude tests conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), and shall be standardized keeping in view the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country.
- **Strengthening Teacher Educators:** The faculty profile in Departments of Education will necessarily aim to be diverse and but teaching/field/research experience will be highly valued. Faculty with training in areas of sciences and social sciences that are directly relevant to school education will be attracted and engaged in TEIs for supporting multidisciplinary nature of teacher education.
- **Researches in Teacher Education:** All fresh Ph.D. entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject during their doctoral training period. Exposure in pedagogical practices, designing curriculum, evaluation systems, communication etc. will be ensured during their research work. Ph.D. students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means.

- **New Platforms and Techniques for Training of Teachers:** Digital revolution and pedagogical innovations are perpetually creating new platforms of learning and techniques for teaching. In-service continuous professional development for college and university teachers will continue through the existing institutional arrangements and ongoing initiatives. For benefitting large numbers of teachers within a short span of time, online training of teachers will be encouraged through the platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA.
- **National Mission for Mentoring:** A National Mission for Mentoring shall be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages.

The quality of teacher defined the status of teacher education. Policy discusses following issues related to preparation of quality teachers in the Chapter-5 Part-I School Education:

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD):** A teacher cannot teach well until s/he is learning continuously herself/himself. Policy ensures to provide opportunities to each teacher for her/his continuous personal as well as professional development by which s/he can learn about innovations, advancements and best practices in the field of teaching profession. This will provide holistic approach to teacher education. Systematic reform in the process of CPD will initiated by reforming National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2021). Policy endorse that each in-service teacher will participate in professional development programmes for at least 50 hours per year for their own professional development, driven by their own interests preferably through online platform.
- **National Professional Standards for Teachers:** By 2022 a set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be created by the NCTE in its restructured new forms as a Professional Standard Setting Body (PSSB) under the General Education Council (GEC), in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organizations in teacher preparation and development, expert bodies in vocational education and HEIs that will determine all aspects of teacher career management, including tenure, continuous professional development efforts, salary increases, promotions, and other recognitions.

- **Preparation of Special Educators:** Policy addresses the need for additional special educators in the areas of school education who have subject-teaching along with the relevant skills for understanding the children with special need. For preparing the special educators the course curriculum of NCTE and RCI will be synergized greatly.

### **Critical Note**

Apart from being open, liberal and full of visions, this policy still represents many limitations with respect to teacher education. For example, shut down of stand-alone teacher education institution is a controversial matter because most of the teacher education institution running in India are stand alone. Furthermore, making NCTE empowered to take stringent action against substandard and dysfunctional TEIs is again a big challenge in itself. Many distressing facts about teacher education as mentioned in NEP, 2020 are as:

- International Bureau of Education (IBE) defines multidisciplinary as, an approach to curriculum integration which focuses primarily on the different disciplines and the diverse perspectives to illustrate a theme or issue. A multidisciplinary curriculum is one in which the same theme/issue is studied from the viewpoint of more than one discipline (IBE, n.d.). Policy says that teacher education should be in multidisciplinary perspectives and the teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions and equipped in education and pedagogy. Glebe (2020) mentioned that multidisciplinary approach may be helpful in teaching of some courses of teacher education but policy does not specify and clarify how multidisciplinary perspective would be helpful in quality of teacher education. Further, different commission and committee have been formulated by Government of India since independence recommended that the process of teacher preparation should be oriented with constitutional value and Indian culture but policy document focuses on ancient Indian values and ignores constitutional values.
- Policy admits that majority of stand-alone TEIs are selling degree of teacher education programmes and the efforts of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body established by an act of parliament for ensuring quality teacher education in India are not sufficient to forbids these types of practices. It also recommended that to maintain high quality teacher education system urgent revitalization will be required. But it has been almost one and half year to the implementation of policy and government has not appointed regular chairperson of NCTE. However, the position has

been vacant since long and hold by in-charge chairpersons. Another important point is that the Vice-chairperson position of NCTE has been vacant since last 5 years. The role of NCTE, which is solely responsible for the standard and quality of teacher education, is very doubtful. School Internship programme is an essential component in any teacher education programme but during Covid-19 pandemic period, NCTE has not issued not a single guideline to the TEIs that how teaching practice and other practical aspects (viz. EPCs) of teacher education will be conducted. Policy does not discuss what strategy would be adopted by the government for shut-down of stand-alone TEIs. Verma (2020) in his article reported that politicians in Uttar Pradesh have invested heavily in the education sector over the past few years and more than 30 percentage of elected politicians in the state either own a school or a college or both. So, it is notable that how the policy implementers are going to shut down the TEIs of political powerful people?

- The world is changing rapidly on the front of multidisciplinary approach of education. Global universities and higher education research are unequivocal about the need of multidisciplinary education. In this context, the NEP, 2020 has placed the right emphasis on the need to move to a multidisciplinary form of education, conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions which enables the development of skills like critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, flexibility among learners. Most of the Indian universities has department of education and it is easy for them to collaborate with other departments like departments like psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, science, mathematics etc. for teaching and research. Further, the stand-alone TEIs will convert themselves easily in to multidisciplinary institutions by 2030 and then they will not sell teacher education programme degree only but many liberal programmes degree also. Many stand alone TEIs has already started multiple programmes to meet the requirements of running teacher education programmes as per NEP, 2020 guidelines.
- The policy recognises and identifies teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process and will require training in high-quality content as well as pedagogy. Policy is proposing a 4-year integrated B.Ed. dual major holistic bachelor programme as essential for becoming a teacher in future that will offer a variety of knowledge content and pedagogy and will include robust practicum training/internship in the form of



student-teaching at local schools. Policy declares that this 4-year integrated programme will be the minimal degree qualification for school teachers by 2030. It is important to mention that uniformity and clarity of structure is largely missing in the current 4-year Integrated B.Ed. programmes due to rise of multiple formats. For example, the NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulations-2014 in its Appendix-13 through Gazette of India via Notification No. F.51-1/2014-NCTE (N&S) on 28 November, 2014 has given norms and standards for 4-year integrated programme leading to B.A. B.Ed./B.Sc. B.Ed. (4 Year Integrated Programme) degree in a very brief way. Again, in 2018, the NCTE has added two new appendixes via the Notification F. No. NCTE-Reg 1011/80/2018-MS (Regulation)-HQ on 20th November, 2018 namely Appendix – 16 and Appendix – 17 related to Four years Integrated Teacher Education Programme (Pre-Primary to Primary) and Four years Integrated Teacher Education Programme (Upper-Primary to Secondary) respectively. Then, in 2019, the NCTE has brought another revised version of the appendix-16 and 17 on 29th March, 2019. In this way, two different types of formats are existing at present for this integrated programme. Recently, NCTE has launched Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) as per the guidelines of NEP, 2020 on 22nd October, 2021. The guidelines of ITEP on academic qualification of teacher educators have raised rage among the teacher educators. Thus, multiple guidelines creating a lot of confusions. Policy declares that 4-year integrated B.Ed. programme will be the minimal degree qualification for School teachers by 2030. Then what is the need to announce that institution offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed. may also run a 2-year B.Ed. and 1-year B.Ed. programme. Scholarships for meritorious students of teacher education is the appreciating part of the policy.

- Education Commission (1964-66) highlighted the isolation of the teacher education institutions from other higher and school educational institutions. In universities, the department of education remains isolated from other academic departments and this results very little interaction between an academic department and department of education in the universities. There is a poor and ineffective linkage between them (Dhull, 2017). Chauhan (2004) reported that colleges of education get inadequate and insufficient support from university departments of education and SCERTs (as cited by Parvin, 2021). In the light of the above facts the announcement of policy is very

challenging regarding to create a range of experts in education and related disciplines as well as specialized subjects.

- National Testing Agency (NTA) has been established as a premier, specialist, autonomous and self-sustained testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions. Policy announced that NTA will conduct subject and aptitude tests to admit candidates in pre-service teacher education programmes keeping in view the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country. This is a welcoming initiative of the policy.
- Policy aimed that the faculty profile of teachers working in the field of teacher education will be diverse and gave importance to teaching in the place of research. Further, policy announced that faculty with training in the areas of social sciences will be attracted and retained in TEIs, to strengthen multidisciplinary education of teachers and provide rigour in conceptual development. The aim of the policy is appreciable but how TEIs retained the diverse faculty profile in teacher education institutions? It is a quite complex question. Siraj (2021) mentioned in his article that most of the TEIs have poor number of faculty members, further anecdotal evidence of the TEIs tells that teachers for subjects like mathematics, English and geography are in short supply then how they deploy the other discipline teachers in their institutions.
- Health and physical education are inseparable part of school education. The aim of health and physical education is not just to attain physical health but also sound psychosocial development (NCTE, 2009). Diploma in Physical Education (D.P.Ed.), Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed.) and Master of Physical Education (M.P.Ed.) programmes are teacher education programmes in this area. But policy is silent on this important section of teacher education. However, during Covid and post-Covid situations we have realised that health is most important aspect of the personality. A sound and systemic health education programme can be very effective to aware the students about health and hygiene (Gray, Kurscheid, Mationg, *et al*, 2020; Simkhada, Mahato, Tamang, Teijlingen and Shahi, 2020).
- The quality of human capital is the touchstone of education in any country. A well-educated generation with a high literacy rate is required to undertake social, economic, and political roles responsibly with an overarching awareness of the global issues. The policy recognises the importance of technology in aiding teachers, bridging the

language barrier between teachers and students, creating digital libraries, popularising language learning as well as ensuring greater access to education (specifically for differently-abled children). However, most of rural areas are not equipped with high-speed internet facilities (Biswas, 2021). Data say that many schools do not have electricity connection (PTI, 2019) than how they benefitted with the such initiatives.

- NCTE has proposed a nationwide mission and launched draft document entitled '*Bluebook on Mentoring*' to incorporate mentoring to improve the acquisition and sharing of knowledge, skills, and mindsets across the Indian education system. Delhi Government has launched mentor teacher programme in 2015 (<https://www.edudel.nic.in/>)
- Policy committed that School teachers must undergo 50 Hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities every year to keep themselves by attending workshops or on-line teacher development modules, a welcoming initiative.
- Measured in terms of its members, teaching is the world's largest profession (Havighurst, 2020). Ministry of Education (2022) reported that 96.96 lakh teachers are engaged in school education during 2020-21. The teacher education through pre-service and in-service programmes is expected to ensure an adequate supply of professionally competent teachers to run the nation's schools (NCTE, 2009). NEP, 2020 states, "*The quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, service conditions, and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession.*" For this purpose, NEP proposed to introduce professional standards for teachers which will encompasses the role of teacher at different levels of expertise/stage, and the competencies required for that stage, standards for performance appraisal and also provide bases to design the pre-service teacher education programmes. The academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals (NCTE, 2009). A draft on National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) has already been published by NCTE in November 2021 and the suggestion has been invited from concerned stakeholders. NPST has been designed to attract the best talent to the teaching profession so that students at school education

level be taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained and well-equipped teachers (NCTE, 2021). Hence, NPST will develop professionalism among teachers.

- NEP, 2020 focuses on the training and education of special teachers to meet the diverse learning needs. 'Respect for the diversity' and 'full equity and inclusion' are among the fundamental principles of policy. In a judgement, the Supreme Court of India stated that, "As of today, there is a dearth of rehabilitation professionals or special teachers recognized and registered by the council, who alone can impart education and training to handicap person/CwSN," It is evident that we need to prepare a large pool of professional who can teach the CwSN. Policy proposed to develop greater synergy between the course curriculum of NCTE and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) to ensure adequate availability of qualified special educators who can handle subject teaching as well.

### **Suggestions**

The main indicator of the quality of teacher education can be visualized in terms of its products the learner's achievement both in scholastic and co-scholastic areas i.e., the performance in various subjects of study and habits, attitudes, values and life skills necessary for becoming a good citizen. The need of teacher manpower planning has resulted in mushrooming growth of teacher education throughout the country. The following suggestions may be helpful for improving quality of teacher education:

- Education programmes should be divided in to two categories: Liberal and Professional programmes. The liberal programmes include B.A. (Education), M.A. (Education) and Ph.D. (Liberal Education) while the professional programmes deals all teacher education programmes viz. B.Ed., M.Ed. etc. Further, the liberal programme may be conducted through Department of Education while the professional programmes may be conducted through Department of Teacher Education of colleges and universities.
- NCTE should revise its guidelines as per the directions of NEP, 2020. If ITEP will be essential teacher education programme, then previously four years integrated programmes should be discontinued or renamed as ITEP. Further, two year or one-year B.Ed. programmes should also be stopped otherwise this multiple B.Ed. programmes will not only mar the status and uniqueness of B.Ed. Programmed but also compromise the quality of teacher education.

- The eligibility criteria in the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) should also be revisited. For example, 4- Year Integrated Programmes pass out candidates are not eligible for teaching at primary level however B.Ed. (2 Year) pass out candidate are eligible for the primary level after six-month training.
- Teacher education programmes related to health and physical education, fine arts including yoga should also be revisited.
- The existing status of vocational education in India is pathetic. The 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) estimated that less than 5% the Indian workforce in the age group of 19–24 received any kind of formal vocational education (Cited in NEP, 2020) Policy envisages vocational training for at least 50% learners by 2025. For this purpose, a road map is needed to be prepared. First it should be made the part of school education, then teachers should be prepared accordingly. Further, vocational education should be directly linked with industry so that student may get proper internship and placement facilities.
- The status of special educators is very pathetic. Beside of the fact they are eligible to teach pedagogical course in general schools, they are not given equal opportunity and treated as special. Second, they are not appointed on regular bases. So they should be given equal treatment and get regular appointment.
- Teacher education needs an overhauling. First it should be linked with school education. Second, government should launch a special policy on teacher education to revitalise the status of teacher education. Third, teacher education should be provided in government institutions only.

## **Conclusion**

Since the teachers play a major role in education of children, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Quality teacher education is a matter of grave concern for the whole system of education. With the view of the current education system and the teacher's status, it is believed that the policy may bring a change in the educational policy. But there is a lot of scope in the policy regarding the teacher education and status of teachers. There are a number of quality issues in teacher education and policy recognized the same. However, what measures should be adopted by the Government for resolving the same. This article was an effort to analyse critically NEP with reference to teacher education and tries to contribute some suggestions for improvement during implementation. The most admirable part of the policy is

to make Indian students equipped with universal knowledge which helps the students to launch themselves in the global platforms. This objective cannot be attained without improving the quality and status of teacher education. There need a strong will power and determination of the policy implementers to work for the quality teacher education.

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