



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The teacher training in India was first started in Vedic period. In that period the senior students among the Brahmins were given the chance to teach junior students and thus were trained in teaching. The modern teacher training in India was first started by European missionaries. In the beginning they trained the students in teaching different subjects but later on they also started to develop in the trainees some basic concepts regarding education and teaching. Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. The revitalization and strengthening of the teacher education system is a powerful means for the upliftment of educational standards in the country. There are many issues that need urgent attention for improving the quality of teacher education programme. One of them is the need of innovations in teacher education programme. Innovativeness means the ability to think beyond the boundaries and create something which is different from that which already exists. Without innovations, no progress is possible. Teachers have to be innovative and their grooming has to start from their training institutions. Innovations in teacher education include IT literacy, interactive teleconferencing etc. NPE (1986) stated "The existing system of teacher education needs to be overhauled or revamped." Unfortunately, the secondary teacher education institutions in India are stated to be largely not innovative. There are some resisting factors in our education system which prevents the teacher education institution from being innovative such as lack of physical facilities and funds, lack of diffusion of innovations among teacher educators, rigid framework, lack of research orientation etc. This paper provides an overview of Assessment in teacher education in India. It traces the development of India's assessment system in education and the legislative policies aimed at reform of examination focusing on the progressive changes in the policies for betterment of assessment/evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Effort began for the expansion of teacher education in our country after achieving independence. To fulfill the demand of teacher the process to establish teacher training institutions began and along with it began the process to reform the teacher training programmes. The first to suggest reform in this field was Radha Krishnan Commission (1948-49). Problems in education have no fixed answers. No teacher education program can prepare teachers for all the situations they will encounter. Teachers themselves will make the final decisions from among many alternatives. Such judgments may be good or poor. Therefore, it is important for teachers to constantly reevaluate their decisions. This can be achieved through collaborative and reflective practices in teacher education. Co-operative learning in teacher education can instill in future teachers the value of social interactions. Reflection improves a teacher's ability to make appropriate and sound judgments and,

therefore, become an empowered decision-maker. Teaching and Learning discourse has been changed. New roles of the teaching process have been derived from the concept of —knowledge society| at all educational levels. In the context of the information and/or knowledge societies and lifelong learning strategy, a new frame of pre-service and in-service teacher education needs to be defined. The current level of the learning technology development provides opportunities for collaborative engagement, access to information, interaction with content and individual empowerment. Rapid changes in communication technologies enable teachers to move from traditional classroom activities to online classrooms, or online activities in the traditional classrooms. Cooperative or collaborative learning is a team process where members support and rely on each other to achieve an agreed upon goal. The classroom is an excellent place to develop teambuilding skills you will need later in life. Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is

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taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it. The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of the citizens depends upon the quality of education system and the quality of education depends upon the combined efforts planners, educationists and administration, however, the most significant factor is the quality of the teachers. It means excellent and efficient teachers can change the fate of the nation. A teacher helps a child in bringing out the hidden capabilities. He/she unfolds what is within, hidden and untapped. He/she makes explicit what is implicit in the students. So teachers' importance in teaching-learning process is very much. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) report stated, "We are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the community." It is very right that, "no people can rise above the level of its teachers." (NPE, 1986). The Teacher is the real and dynamic force of any institution.

Innovation means the ability to think beyond the boundaries and create something which is different from that which already exists. Without innovations, no progress is possible. No innovation or change can be implemented without teachers' awareness, involvement and commitment. Teachers have to be innovative and their grooming has to start from their training institutions. For having innovative teacher education, we have to reconstruct our educational system. Reconstruction of educational system started in India from the beginning of independence and efforts to improve teacher education can be traced back to that period. The University Education Commission (1953), Education Commission (1964-1966), International Secondary Education Project Team (1954), The Committee on Plan Projects (1963), The Study Group of the Secondary Teachers in India (1964), Indian Association Teacher Educators (1973), National Policy of Education (1986) and National Council for Teacher Education (1998) have all recommended innovations in India in order to meet the present day requirements and to strengthen all aspects of teacher education system.

Concept of Innovative Practices in Teacher Education

There is a wide variation among countries with regard to what they believe constitutes an innovation, reform or development in the teaching learning process. For example, the use of colored chalk and basic audio-visual materials may be regarded as being an educational innovation in some developing regions, whereas in other more affluent countries innovations may refer to the development and use of sophisticated technologies and methods, practices etc. In our country also, this electronic technology has dramatically penetrated into every area of our society and every aspect of our social and cultural lives. Today's children have grown up with remote controls and they spend more time in computers, internet, playing video games etc. than reading books; even toys are now filled with buttons and blinking lights. In such a condition, it is very important to focus on "How can we educate this New Generation?". To answer this, a supportive environment, one in which they can create their own ideas; both individually and collaboratively, must be provided. Etymologically, the word "Innovation", is derived from the

Latin word "Innovate" which means to change something into something new. It is a promotion of new ideas and practices in education and training. There has been seen a tremendous shift in the ways and means of education services over the years. Research and innovations play an important role in improving the quality of teachers and the training imparted to them for all levels of teaching. They demand to introduce new ideas and practices in classroom transaction and other curricular and co-curricular activities. The teacher's effectiveness can be enhanced with good leadership and appropriate teaching methodologies. No teacher education programmer can prepare teachers for all situations that they will encounter. Teachers themselves will have to make the final choices from among many alternatives. The purpose of teacher education is to prepare teachers who have professional competencies to lead the nation forward through their manifold roles.

Some Innovative Practices In Teacher Education: Following are some of the innovative ideas that need to be focused:

1. Team Teaching, Cooperative or collaborative learning process:

When teacher and students have to work under so many constraints, then the practice of "Team teaching or cooperative or collaborative teaching" is always a good option. Team teaching or cooperative learning process is a team work where members support and rely on each other to achieve an agreed-upon goal. Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

2. Reflecting Teaching and Reflective Teacher Education:

Reflection on one's own work is a key component of being a professional and is essential to teacher education. Teachers must examine their belief, assumptions and biases regarding teaching and learning and determine how those beliefs influence classroom practice. Reflection is a natural process that facilitates the development of future action from the contemplation of past and current behavior. Reflection refers to the ongoing process of critically examining and refining practice, taking into careful consideration the personal, pedagogical, societal and ethical contexts associated with schools, classrooms and the multiple roles of teachers.

3. Constructivism and Teacher Education:

The concept of Constructivism has evolved from cognitive psychology. Constructivist paradigm is based on the contributions of Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Dewey, Tolman and many others. Thus, it is a synthesis of many dominant perspectives on learning. It is believed that the key element of constructivist theory is that people learn by Innovative Practices in Teacher Education: An Overview Manisha Das Volume-I, Issue-IV May 2015 17 actively constructing their own knowledge, comparing new knowledge with their previous understanding and using all these to come to new understanding. Constructivist learning is based on student's active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity. Students construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying them to new situations and integrating new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs. The teacher is a facilitator or a coach

who guides the student's critical thinking, analysis and synthesis abilities throughout the learning process. The teacher is also a co-learner in the process. Hence, teachers should facilitate cognitive change by presenting difficulties through specific tasks that pose dilemmas to students. In this context, problem-solving teaching procedure is defined as a process of raising a problem in the minds of the students in such a way to stimulate purposeful, reflective thinking in arriving at a rational solution.

4. Blended-Learning and Teacher Education: Blended-learning describes an approach to learning where teachers use technology, usually in the form of Web-Based instruction, in concert with and as a supplement to live instruction, or perhaps utilize components of a learner-centered Web course with components that require significant instructor presence and guidance. The strength of a blended-learning approach is that it provides a means to ensure learners are supported and guided as they undertake independent learning tasks. Use of the Web in such settings provides many affordances for the teacher and students in the form of communication channels, information sources and management tools. These aspects appear to make blended-learning particularly well suited to teacher training students, especially those in large groups where direct instructor support may be difficult to deliver. Blended-learning commonly describes learning that combines traditional teaching and learning approaches with information and communication technologies. It is anticipated that blended learning will enhance the student learning experience, at the same time it also demands that the teachers should be trained as online facilitator.

5. Soft Skills and Teacher Education: Development of human capital is an important asset since it drives the development of a nation. Quality human capital comes from quality education process through carefully designed and well-planned education system. Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects and hard skills which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity. Soft skills refer to personality traits, social gracefulness, and fluency in language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills are broadly applicable in teacher education programme, thus the curriculum of teacher education could contribute to the development of a holistic human capital that can foster economic, social and personal development. Infusing the soft skill in the curriculum of teacher education is the need of the profession for it to be successful.

Problems of Raising the Standard of Teacher Education

Very many factors are included in the standard of teacher education at any level-its aims, its curriculum, its institutions, the teacher working in the institutions and the product of the teacher education institutions. The most important factor of all these is the product. This is the real touchstone of the standard of teacher education. Whereas the reality at present is that the product of teacher education at any level is not up to the mark. The teachers coming out of these institutions possess neither insight nor attitude towards education and teaching, nor the skill of training in activities. Lack of honesty and of devotion to duty has become an endemic disease of the country, and if it is found among the teachers, coming out of these institutions, then it is not they but the entire society and the controlling agency is to be blamed.

Initiative steps of Innovation in Teacher Education System:

NPE (1986) stated "The existing system of teacher education needs to be overhauled or revamped." This has resulted in a number of initiatives being launched and they are-

- Establishment of NCTE by the government of India on August 17, 1995 as a statutory body responsible for the regulatory as well as professional aspects of teacher education.
- Programme of Mass Orientation of School teachers (PMOST) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in all the states and Union Territories during 1986-1990.
- Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT) was taken up in 1993-94 to provide orientation to primary school teachers.
- In the light of recommendations of NPE 1986, Block and Cluster Resource Centers were established for professional growth of elementary school teachers and heads.
- Interactive teleconferencing has been successfully tried in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh in in-service training course.
- Three National Curriculum frameworks on Teacher Education have been brought out by the National council of Teacher Education (1978, 1988, and 1998).
- To acquire ICT literacy, the NCTE has produced a CD-ROM entitled 'IT Literacy'.
- NCTE has developed self learning modules on 'Human Rights and National Values' with a view to familiarize entrant teachers with values enshrined in our constitution.

Suggestions

The above observations clearly indicate that teacher education programme at secondary level needs to be examined critically in terms of its innovativeness. Here are some suggestions which can be used to overcome these problems-

- Identification of the innovative research could be done if all the Departments of Education Countrywide contribute in this area. They may periodically produce the Research Abstracts of the Studies conducted in their respective Departments, which may be made available on the World Wide Web.
- Every Teacher Educator may be given Unique Identification Number. It will facilitate Manpower Planning in Teacher Education.
- There should be networking amongst all the Teacher Education Institutions to learn from the innovative practices of each other.
- Efforts should be made to realize holistic Teacher Education by integrating various skills, such as, microteaching, info-savvy, techno-pedagogic, life skills in the various Teacher Education Programs. Along with cognitive development there should be adequate focus on emotional maturity, psycho-motor development, health and environment, and inter-disciplinary development.
- It is imperative to strengthen Vocational Teacher Education in almost all the domains of Vocational Education, such as, agriculture, horticulture, sericulture,

servicing of the electric and electronic appliances. Innovative approaches need to be evolved.

- Physical facilities and funds should be adequately provided to the institutions by the government, local bodies and organizations.
- The internship model of practice teaching should be adopted.
- The conventional system of a few demonstration lessons given by a few teacher educators at the beginning of the practice teaching may be replaced by display of some video recorded good lessons in each subject delivered by expert teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees.
- Relevant methods of instruction such as tutorial, discussion seminar, team teaching and interactive teaching learning should be adopted.
- More co-curricular activities such as physical education, social services, tree plantation, and formation of eco club should be organized.
- Modern technological gadgets like computer, video, mass media, OHP should be used at the time of instruction.
- Counseling and follow up programs should be initiated and made effective.
- Teaching staff should be given adequate representation in the management.
- The teacher educators should be made mobile so that they can see their professional world outside their institutions.
- The service and support from practicing schools, administrators, students- teachers, guardians and community should be encouraging.
- Teacher educators shall be given proper incentives for the professional growth.
- Publication and subscription to professional journals by the institutions should be encouraged.
- Research wings in the university departments and selected government colleges should be started.
- A healthy relation among teaching staff would evolve new procedures and move towards new goals.
- The management and administrators should be watchful in maintaining the health of the institutions so as to make them innovative and progressive. Conclusion to meet the challenges of the new millennium, teacher education in India

Conclusion

In innovation is to take of research based knowledge and education the two sides of the same coin and their integration within single policy framework is necessary to achieve the culture of innovation which will energize and sustain the knowledge economy. Teacher education in India is at a new stake in view of the new policies laid down and the globalization processes. Indian Teacher education needs to orient itself to the new challenges and enable its pupil to compete level. The pupil who are pursuing teacher education

are required to place community and future citizens at a higher place by possessing new skills and attitudes as well as competitive knowledge in the stream of education concerned. All these can be possible through practice of innovative teaching practices in Teacher Education. If the innovative teaching practices being in vogue as well as promoted by different institutions working in the arena of teacher education, there is every possibility that these practices would certainly attract the attention from the academic fraternity. They, in turn, may initiate steps either to follow the existing innovative teaching practices in teacher education or eschew new path of innovative teaching at their respective institutions. To meet the challenges of the new millennium, teacher education in India needs a tremendous change. The teacher educators need intensive training in various aspects related to new innovations. The above stated problems are challenging and strategies to overcome these problems are the need of the hour. Therefore NCTE, SCERT/SIE and university department of education should take immediate action for making education system innovative. There is nothing to get disheartened. Indian Education is a state of flux. The national vision mission will definitely nurture innovations as evident through the emergence of National Curriculum for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009) and Teacher Education: Reflections towards Policy Formulation (NCTE, 2009).

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