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ENSURING QUALITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we explore the concept of quality in teacher education .This paper consider quality education from multiple perspectives. It focuses on factors that contribute to or detract from the professional development as complementary fields of activity and discusses the less quantifiable but nonetheless essential ingredients of quality in the way programs and courses are conceived and delivered. Quality in general education has been defined through aims, Qualifications organizational standards, didactic requirements and well-being. They acquire the complex range of knowledge and skills that they will need as citizens and as workers. It is school teacher who mediate between a rapidly evolving world and the pupils who are about to enter it. The success of a student depends most of all on the quality of the teacher. With the advent of standard based reforms, the quality of teachers has become a major concern of policy-makers, college and university presidents, especially at the colleges of teacher education and the public in general. Every child deserves a quality teacher. In an era of increasing standards and accountability in education, teacher quality and teacher training will be more important than ever. This article aims at making contributions to the ongoing debates in the challenges and quality of teacher education and the creation of a new knowledge base that can serve all endeavors at different levels for teacher quality and development in different parts of the world. In facing up to the numerous challenges to teacher education in the era of digital technology and globalization, this article will facilitate the quest for new teacher education for the future. This is emphasized for teacher educators, educators, graduate students, researchers, policy-makers and those interested to reform teacher education for the future.

KEY WORDS: *Quality education, Teacher education*

INTRODUCTION

“Now in the womb of yesterday, today is being conceived and the birth of today gives rise to the challenges of tomorrow. So there is continuity between the past, the present and the future. This is being carried forward by the educational institutions and also through them by the teachers.” Again, “the teacher was there in the past. He is in the system at present. He will be there in future. He is an integral part of education. He continues through the ages as a central figure to

guide and build the destiny of the country and mankind.” The society by and large looks up to the teacher as a pathfinder, pole-star or light-house to carry the torch of learning forward and to alleviate men and women and distress and depression towards higher levels of thought and action in morality and intellect.” The concern of the teacher is to make a learning society by providing education from the womb to the tomb. That is way Tagore says, “A teacher can never truly teach unless he himself

continues to learn.” Teacher education is not teaching the teacher how to teach. It is needed for kindling the initiative of the teacher, for keeping it alive, for minimizing the evils of “hit and miss” process and for saving time, energy, money and trouble of the teacher and the taught. So teacher education is that knowledge, skill and ability which is relevant to the life of “teacher as a teacher”. A course in teacher-education should seek to reshape the attitudes, remodel the habits and in a way to reconstitute the personality of a teacher. The nation’s well-being depends on teacher’s well-being. Teachers act as role models. It is important for pupil attainment that the profession fully reflects the diversity of the society in which it operates (in terms, for example of culture, mother tongue, and disability). Member States could take measures to ensure that the composition of the teaching workforce fully reflects the diversity of society and in particular remove obstacles to culture and gender balance at all levels. Initial Teacher Education Organization Initial Teacher Education in many countries takes place largely or exclusively in institutions of Higher Education. 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 first university degree), and then studies for a further period to gain an additional qualification in teaching; (in some systems this takes the form of a post-graduate degree, increasingly, this is a Masters). 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 qualification 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. 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.

Dr. SarvepalliRadhakrishnan dreamt that “teachers should be the best minds in the country.” Indeed, teachers are the main pillar of a sound and progressive society. The ultimate test of a nation’s greatness is the quality of its citizens. If a nation possesses innovative people of sterling character, it is bound to make rapid progress on all fronts. Such people are moulded in the factory of teachers. In any country, the quality of education system rests on the quality of its teachers. Enlightened and empowered teachers can lead a nation towards progress and prosperity. Therefore, no nation can be negligent in giving necessary professional inputs to its teachers. As

teachers play pivotal role in creating social cohesion, national integration and knowledge society, their own education and training becomes a matter of vital concern. Therefore, quality assurance in teacher education programs is the key to meet the challenges of a dynamic society.

QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education (TE) or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip (**prospective**) teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. Teacher education means professional preparation of teachers. It is acquisition of that type of knowledge, skills, aptitude and ability which helps a teacher to discharge his professional duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. In his *Dictionary of Education*, Good (1973) defines teacher education as “all formal and informal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume the responsibilities as a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.” Collins and Brien (2003) in their *Greenwood Dictionary of Education* refer to teacher education as the “intentional and unintentional curricula, infrastructural settings and experiences that enable teachers to promote learning and changes in others.” On the other hand, ‘quality’ refers to the basic and essential character, the distinguishing element of a product, service or entity. According to Bennis (1993) ‘quality’ often is not measured at all, but is appreciated intuitively. One’s response to ‘quality’ is feeling or perception that is connected intimately with our experience of meaning, beauty and values in life. It is an eternal quest to attain perfection; there is always scope for improvement. Quality is attained and maintained by ceaseless effort. It is a construct of vision turned mission which demands inner driving force. In the context of education, ‘quality’ can be defined in terms of satisfaction level of stakeholders viz. students, parents, government and the society at large by developing appropriate knowledge level of stakeholders viz. students, parents, government and the society at large by developing appropriate knowledge and skills. When applied to the field of teacher education, ‘quality’ refers to the totality of features and characteristics acquired by and universalization of secondary education.

ISSUES REGARDING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education in India has been trying hard to strengthen its quality. After Independence, Government of India had taken up a number of steps to promote quality teacher education. Bodies like

NCERT, SCERT and NCTE are there to ensure quality in teacher education. However, there is still scope for improvement. During the last three decade, new challenges cropped up due to rapid changes in educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels. Some of the issues relating to quality teacher education may be pointed out thus:

□ **Lack of integration between theory and practice:**

The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system is poor. The skills acquired and methodologies learnt during teacher education are seldom practised in the actual classroom situation.

□ **Problems related to practice teaching:** Most of the student-teachers are non-serious to and lacking innovative measures during practice teaching. So their pedagogical skills do not develop up to the desired level. Besides, lack of supervision during practice teaching cripples the objective of honing practical skills in teaching.

□ **Issue of inclusive education:** There is the urgent need to equip teachers to handle the challenges of exclusion prevailing in schools; firstly the exclusion of children with disabilities and secondly the social exclusion of children who come from socially and economically deprived section of society. Kalpan and Lewis (2013) [5] stressed that inclusive education needs to be recognized as an essential learning objective for all student-teachers. Teacher for inclusive classroom has to be highly resourceful because it may consist of audio and/or visually challenged, dumb and children with learning disabilities. Less importance has been given on this issue in the present teacher education programmes.

□ **Poor integration of professional and humane skills:** In teacher education programmes, besides content and methodology, there should be scope for understanding individual difference with regard to learners' needs, learning styles, multiple intelligences and rates of learning. Teachers' professional competencies should also integrate self-awareness, social sensitivity, self management, empathy, effective communication, decision making, leadership etc. However, the present teacher education system fails to cultivate most of these skills within the teachers.

Lacking in techno-pedagogic skills: In spite of unprecedented development in the field of information and technology, digital lesson designing, web based instruction, electronic data processing in education, production of computer assisted learning material, digital technology based courses and programmes have not yet been integrated in teacher education curricula. As a result, most of the teachers do not have knowledge of the availability, benefits and

know-how of technology in teaching-learning situations

NEED OF QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION

Quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure, upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teachers." The quality of pupils' achievement is determined primarily by teachers' competence, sensitivity towards learners and motivating power. The quality of professional preparation of teachers goes a long way to meet the needs of diverse learning needs of the students. Teacher education promotes commitment to the profession and sensitivity to contemporary issues that directly influence the quality of life. In order to upgrade the professional status of teachers, developing among them greater commitment to society, increasing their professional competencies and performance skills and empowering them to face new challenges, continuous quest for quality teacher education is a primary requisite.

Measuring quality in teacher education perspective that favors equal opportunity in education; Comfort with diversity, which is a reported ease of interacting with other. Providing information on a dispositional measurement system for teacher education will help ensure the development of quality professionals. As professionals we are charged with responsibility to not only teach dispositions but develop a way for systemically measuring it as well. Relevance of teacher educator has always measured the dispositions of their candidates. Recently, NCTE has specified that the process must be formalized and the documentation of candidates' appropriate dispositions is now required. Many teacher education institutions have hesitated to aggressively pursue measuring the dispositions of their candidates.

Teacher Education in Higher Education To ensure that there is adequate capacity within Higher Education to provide for the quantity and quality of Teacher Education required and to promote the professionalisation of teaching, teacher education programmes should be available in the Master and Doctorate (as well as the Bachelor) cycles of higher education. Links between teacher educators, practicing teachers, the world of work and other agencies need to be strengthened. Journal of Education & Social Policy Vol. 1 No. 1; June 2014 15 Higher Education institutions have an important role to play in developing effective partnerships with schools and other stakeholders to ensure that their Teacher Education courses are based upon solid evidence and good classroom practice. Those responsible for educating teachers (and for educating teacher

educators) should possess practical experience of classroom teaching and have attained a very high standard in the skills, attitudes and competences demanded of teachers.

QUALITY CONCERN IN TEACHER EDUCATION AS REFLECTED IN COMMISSIONS' REPORTS IN INDIA

India is the second richest nation in human power which needs to be flourished into fertile human resources. Quality teachers will take the leading role towards this end. From time to time, various commissions and committees appointed by the Government at Central and State levels consistently emphasized the need for quality teacher education. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) observed that “a major factor responsible for the educational reconstruction at the secondary stage is teachers’ professional training.” Later on, the Education Commission (1964-66) stressed that: “Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant”. In 1986, National Policy on Education also echoed the same tune. The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) voiced that “.... inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools...” National Curriculum Framework (2005) opined that we now need to define the path that can be taken to empower individual teachers who can then empower learners. Besides, the constitutional commitment towards universal elementary education (UEE) 86th constitutional amendment in 2002 that makes education a fundamental right – provides the context for the need to focus on preparing teachers adequately to address the growing demands of quality education. Further, the development of national curriculum framework for teacher education (NCFTE) in 2009 took cognizance of quality teacher education in the light of right to education (RTE) Act, 2009

The purpose of this paper is to describe a model that may be utilized to better implement instructional practices and measurement of dispositional concepts in teacher education programs. The model is based on an administrative view of the development of dispositional measurement practices applicable to teacher education programs. Review of literature, the first component of the proposed model is the identification of dispositions. The identification of dispositions involves three related activities leading to the subsequent integration of dispositional instruction and measurement into the curriculum and conceptual framework. Conclusion Teachers help young people to take responsibility for mapping out their own learning pathways throughout life. Teachers should be able to take charge of their own learning pathways also.

Furthermore, as with members of any other profession, teachers have a responsibility to develop new knowledge about education and training. In a context of autonomous lifelong learning, their professional development implies that teachers: Continue to reflect on their practice in a systematic way; undertake classroom-based research; incorporate into their teaching the results of classroom and academic research; evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and amend them accordingly; and assess their own training needs.

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