

Chapter 16

Conceptualizing Future Trends of Teacher Education in India



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Abstract India possesses a rich heritage of education that started from the ancient period which attracted scholars from different parts of the world. In the glorious Vedic period, Indian teachers were well competent in materialistic as well as mystical knowledge and they were exemplary models of what they preach. During those periods, the prime objective of education was self-actualization. In the Mediaeval period also there have been some remarkable changes in Indian education which has contributed in its way by Mughal emperors. Both in the ancient and mediaeval periods, the teachers had enjoyed a respectable position in society. In the post-independent period, many efforts have been made to transform the role of teachers to meet social demands. Accordingly, some efforts have been made to reform the teacher preparation programmes across the country. The expansion and rapid growth of school education have brought out great pressure to the system of teacher preparation then prevailed. This necessitated a significant updating of the curriculum and its mode of transaction according to the changing societal needs. Even though national and state-level resources are used in the field of teacher education, pre-service, and in-service skill enhancement, the teacher education system of the country is lacking the prospective vision corollary with the changing socio-economic perspectives and technological advancements. The present system has been subjected to sporadic changes to meet the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought in all realms of life. There is a great need for rigour to produce prospective teachers and teacher educators who can respond to the changing needs of society vibrantly and meticulously. Here an attempt was done to analyse the progressive pathway of the Indian teacher education system with due stress on the quality apprehensions. The effort is made to present a futuristic curricular approach to teacher education envisaged to meet the challenges of the present and to lead the progressive movement of the nation sustainably.

Keywords New model of teacher education · Self-actualization · Vedic education · Social demands · Progressive pathway · Futuristic curricular approach · National sustainability

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Introduction

Any discussion that aims to present a futuristic perspective on socio-psychological issues is not possible without a reflection on the existing portfolio. Such a treatment provides a lot of learnings and empirics which can be utilised as inputs to design a road map for further progression. Hence, such an attempt is made here as a prologue.

India has a prolonged heritage of education starting from the Vedic period itself that attracted and satisfied scholars from different parts of the world. In the ancient period, knowledge transmission was mainly done orally and disciples had to memorise what the teacher said through repetition and manana. A teacher was considered as the treasure house of knowledge including worldly knowledge as well as spiritual wisdom. Different methods are used by the teacher for the effective transaction of the content. The Gurukul system was followed where Guru and disciples lived together as a family during the entire period of education. Knowledge transaction was never treated as a matter of commodity at that time. The transition of the education system from the ancient period to the present, especially the path of teacher education deserves most care that can be categorised into education during the Vedic period, development under the western invasion, mediaeval education, and growth of education in the post-independent period. Pre-independent and post-independent Indian teacher education progression is discussed in brief as follows.

Development Under Western Power

The education system introduced in India by the Western invaders was entirely different from the education system followed by Indians till that time. Many schools were established by foreign missionaries and education was provided without the barrier of caste and creed. This led to the popularisation of education among ordinary people and more stress was given to systematic teacher education. Various teacher training institutes were established in this period in different parts of the country. In 1819, the Calcutta School Society was established which took initial steps in the field of teacher training. Governor of Madras Sir Thomas Munro stated that “no progress in education can be made without a body of better-instructed teachers”. In 1847, normal schools were instituted in Bombay, followed by teacher education centres at Calcutta, Poona, Agra, Meerut, and Banaras. Wood’s Despatch of 1854 caused revolutionary changes in education that triggered the pace and quality of education in all domains. Hunter Commission in 1882 also made a remarkable recommendation on the establishment of normal schools for the training of teachers. Later on, the Sadler Commission (1917) suggested more systematic teacher education. With this analysis of the rich tradition of teachers and speculations under British invasion, it will be worth enough to analyse the issues of the contemporary scenario.

Teacher Education in India—Contemporary Scenario

Before the in-depth analysis of the different issues about teacher and teacher education in the contemporary scenario, there is a felt need for discussing the present profile at each level. The present teacher education requires transformation. Contemporary teacher education centers on nurturing the professional abilities of aspiring educators, emphasizing comprehension of curriculum, pedagogical methods, and strategies for student growth. But unfortunately, the present teacher education is not given much training on how to manage emergencies in education and how to cope with real-life situations. It indicates that teachers should possess a clear understanding of how the changing social environment is reflected in education and what are the strategies to be adopted in such circumstances rather than merely engaged in traditional classroom activities. Community participation of teachers is deserving more attention in teacher education programmes to understand the changing social, economic as well as political circumstances and how it demands the restructuring of teacher education.

The most important aim of education is to nurture socially responsible skilled manpower. For this purpose, various educational committees and commissions have been constituted by the government from time to time. It is teachers who can help to achieve this goal. Hence, a teacher education programme must encompass all these factors along with updated advancements in educational technology. The quality of training provided in teacher education institutes would affect the performance of the teachers in the community. Moulding a group of teachers who are not competent to address the present issues and foresee future changes, and plan to meet these challenges is a futile attempt. The working teachers who are already in the system should be empowered with the skills and competencies to design appropriate operational strategies and implement them effectively.

Well-planned teacher education programmes can improve the performance of teacher educators by equipping them with innovative technology as well as a changing pedagogical approach. The educational policymakers are also interested in improved methods of assessing teachers' effectiveness with the concern for improved learning outcomes. The local level decentralisation of the educational institution governance may bring local societies into direct connection with school performance as well as teacher assessment.

Following this juncture, it will be worth enough to have a micro-level treatment on the different levels of teacher education that are existing now to yield a constructive synthesis.

Teacher Education at Various Levels

Teacher education programmes are based on the educational level of the students to be taught. The eligibility criteria also differed at each level.

- Pre-Primary Level

In the pre-Primary level teacher education, preparation is given to teacher trainees to deal with the kids of pre-primary schools. Various courses are available for this purpose recognised by the government.

- Primary or Elementary Level

At this level, training is provided for preparing teachers for elementary schools. Usually, it has a two-year duration. Qualifying the course leads to a certificate under the name of Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.) or Diploma in Education (D.Ed.) or Trained Teachers' Certificate (T.T.C.), or Junior Basic Teachers' Training (J.B.T.).

- Secondary Level

It is intended for preparing teachers for secondary schools. It is generally a two-year course that is open to graduates, with an emphasis on the principles and methodology of teaching, leading to the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree.

- Master's Degree in Education

This is to prepare teacher educators at the higher education level there are various agencies to provide Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree courses. Also, there are provisions for taking Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in education and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in education in various Universities.

Policy Initiatives for Augmenting Teacher Education

Teacher education policy in India has been developed based on the recommendations made by various education committees and commissions over time. Remarkable recommendations for the improvement of teacher education were done by the Kothari Commission (1966), National Policy on Education of 1986 and its Programme of Action (1992), the Chattopadhyay Committee in 1985, Acharya Ramamurthi Committee in 1990, Yashpal Committee in 1993, National Curriculum Framework in 2005, and new National Education Policy 2020. The revolutionary Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education in 2009 was a milestone in Indian teacher education.

Both central and state governments have taken efforts to implement diverse programmes, policies, and frameworks on teacher education, and stress is given to pre-service training for prospective teachers for various levels of education and to provide in-service programmes to improve the skills and capacity of the existing teachers. Monitoring of the pre-service training in the country is done by a statutory regulatory body, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), by providing norms and standards for different teacher education programmes, minimum educational qualification for each course, and duration of teacher education course at different levels. It also grants recognition to the teacher education institutions and regulates the quality and standards.

In-service programmes for school teachers are provided by a network of government-planned teacher training institutions (TTIs). The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and the Regional Institutes of Education (REIs) concentrate on preparing modules for different teacher education courses and organise specific courses for the training of teachers and teacher educators. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) also affords institutional sustenance. Both NCERT and NIEPA are national-level autonomous bodies. At the state level, the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) conduct focused programmes for teachers and teacher educators and develop modules for teacher training. For the training of secondary and senior secondary school teachers, the Institutes for Advanced Studies in Education (IASes) and the Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) are working. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) provide in-service training at the district level. In-service training for school teachers is also conducted by the Block Resource Centers (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs). Financial support to the government and aided teacher education institutions for pre-service training is done by respective state governments.

National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education

The present National Curriculum Framework of teacher education was published in March 2009, by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) on the background of NCF 2005. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act greatly influenced the curriculum framework. Various attempts have been made by NCTE for the quality enhancement of the teacher education system. An inclusive teacher education curriculum framework was released in 1978 giving due stress on the theories of pedagogy, community interaction, methodology of teaching, and practice teaching. The practical-oriented approach is also equally considered along with theoretical components. Keeping this framework, universities and other state-level agencies modified the curriculum of elementary teacher education programmes.

The national curriculum for secondary education was released in 1988 that made significant implications in the improvement of various stages of teacher education programmes. NCTE acknowledged the necessity for developing the autonomy of educational institutions and organisations responsible for teacher education curriculum development. A two-year professional preparation framework of elementary and secondary school teachers was also endorsed by NCTE in 1998.

The significance of the education system in social, cultural, and economic participation is stressed in this framework. Two-year M. Ed. Programme with proper provision for specialisation in pedagogic and curriculum studies as well as foundational studies was recommended by the Justice Verma Commission in 2012. NCTE has brought out four Curriculum Frameworks for Teacher Education in the years 1978, 1988, 1998, and 2009 to enhance the quality of Master of Education programmes. Finally, the recent National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) also made remarkable

suggestions regarding teacher education. In the NEP (2020), teacher education is given due stress and suggested possible means for quality improvement of teacher education, recruitment, service, deployment, and enrichment of teachers. National Education Policy 2020 emphasises the essentiality of restoring the glory of the Indian tradition of teaching. Some of the pertinent thrust areas need a separate discussion.

An inclusive and holistic approach regarding the recruitment of eligible individuals to the teaching field is the most important step for quality improvement in any education system as recommended in NEP (2020). It demands the necessity for the implementation of merit-based scholarships, especially for outstanding students who wish to enter into the teaching profession from rural areas. Implementation of a four-year integrated B.Ed. programmes also will be effective in attracting competent students to the teaching field. Posting of teachers based on their qualifications as well as their place for preference in the job also will reflect in the quality of teaching. The unscientific transfer of teachers to distant institutes leads to mental stress, which adversely affects their performance. Excessive transfer will affect the learning environment of students also. Transfer of teachers should be transparently based on specific reasons and circumstances. The shortage of teachers should be rectified from time to time for ensuring the uninterrupted education of students.

New teachers must be entering into service in the proportion of retirement through qualifying examinations and interviews. For this, teacher eligibility tests at the state level, as well as national level in terms of teaching aptitude, content knowledge, and pedagogic competencies, must be strengthened. The scores of such eligibility tests also can be taken as recruitment criteria along with detailed personal interviews. Not only the government institutes, but the private educational institutes also should keep quality criteria while recruiting teachers. An adequate number of qualified teachers in each subject also should be ensured including art, vocational education, physical education, and language education.

Realising the fact that teachers must need training in pedagogy as well as thorough content knowledge, teacher education should be incorporated into accredited multi-disciplinary institutes. A four-year integrated bachelor's programme in education will be the future minimum eligibility for teaching with a strong foundation in content, pedagogy, and practical experiences. Separate two-year B. Ed programme will also continue to be offered by such institutes for those who have already completed their bachelor's degrees or master's degrees in their concerned subjects.

The curriculum can be robust with recent pedagogic techniques, effective evaluation strategies, and educational techniques. Learner-centred as well as a collaborative learning environment drawing the full potential of the students should be developed. Community-based activities and involvement in social affairs would be compulsory domains of teacher education programmes. Environment education and the development of sensitivity and responsibility towards environment conservation also must be integrated into the teacher education curriculum. Sufficient time for in-classroom teaching in local education institutes also ensured practice teaching. Teacher education in the coming years must include practical knowledge of using technology and how the novel advancement in technology can be integrated with effective classroom activities. New strategies for teacher education for students with special needs should

be designed based on empirical research in the field. Short-term post-B.Ed. courses will also be made available at universities and multidisciplinary colleges for teachers who are interested in expertise in specialised areas of teaching like special education, school management, legal provisions of the teaching profession, counselling, guidance, etc.

Along with internationally recognised pedagogical approaches for teaching specific subjects, nationalised and regional studies, research reports, documents, and empirical findings also can be compiled with the curriculum that would provide better results. National Education Policy recommended restoring and sustaining the glory of the Indian teacher education system, through taking firm actions against substandard Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) functioning in the country.

All the above-mentioned commissions and committees stress the need for a qualitative reformation. Hence, it will be relevant specifically to probe into the weaker areas of the present teacher education system to submit a futurist approach.

Teacher Education in India: Present Issues and Concerns

At present, the education system mainly concentrates on the examination achievements of the students. Teacher education programmes also stress the means for enhancing student achievement and marks in the subject. Other domains of child development like innovative thinking, creativity, self-exploration, and community participation were poorly considered. The education system varied greatly according to the nature of the society even though there are some common educational standards of the country.

Institutional inertia is very much prevalent in the Indian teacher education system due to the diversified societal, judicial as well as state norms. The education system cannot work as an independent institution as it is influenced by various social factors.

There exists a quality divide between private and public educational institutes. This inequality leads to the commodification of education and the quality crisis to a great extent. In teacher education also there exists a remarkable difference in the actual quality and expected performance. The distribution of teacher education institutes over the country is also not in an even manner that affects the accessibility to the aspirants, especially students from rural areas. Many teacher education institutes are working in substandard conditions.

The degradation of the quality of teaching is the most threatening condition the country is facing in the present scenario. This is largely because of the quality degradation of teacher education programmes. Some teacher education institutes stressed the academic achievement of the teacher aspirants rather than holistic development.

Along with the knowledge of pedagogy and content, a positive attitude towards society as well as personal qualities are inevitable attributes of a teacher. Unfortunately, teachers with personal integrity, ethics, and teaching attitudes are decreasing day by day. Life skills education can be very much useful to teacher educators to

develop such qualities among the students and to produce teachers with emotional integrity and social responsibility.

Even though various advanced educational technologies are available and used worldwide, these technologies are not appropriately integrated into the teacher education curriculum so far. Robust practical experience should be provided to become an expert in such education technologies that will help teachers handle students with high technological knowledge.

To produce good teachers, teacher education institutes must provide rich field experience to the learners to understand real-life situations, social issues that affect education, difficulties in practice teaching, empirical research regarding educational problems, and self-study. Research in teacher education must not be the repetition of previous students. It should be genuine and worthy. Different research approaches including qualitative as well as quantitative approaches can be utilised for finding solutions for the carefully selected education problems. The research methodologies also need to be renovated according to the new trends in education research. Laboratory practices regarding psychological tests are also not done in teacher education programmes.

Mere theoretical knowledge is not sufficient enough for understanding psychometric methods, rather psychology labs should be equipped with all test items and equipment and utilised well. Education technology labs also must be used in the same way to understand various techniques as well as statistical software. Distance education programmes in teacher education are also causing a quality crisis for teachers. The actual vision of teacher education programmes is not matched with actual performance and productivity.

Strategies for Quality Enhancement for Future

After independence, various education commissions have analysed the conditions of Indian teacher education and made recommendations and suggestions for quality improvement. Policy initiatives and implementation of such recommendations are not done appropriately because of the heterogeneous nature of teacher education programmes across the country. In Indian culture, teaching was considered a divine profession. But the decreasing teacher qualities and faulty educational practices diminished that concept. Recently, National Educational Policy (2020) recommended that India has to regain its glory in teaching. Quality degradation of teaching is evident from that statement itself. It is the peak time to think and act seriously to make the teacher education programmes more productive since it is most important to make teachers with good personal as well as professional calibre. Teacher education programmes must be empowered with appropriate strategies and facilities for the training of the selected teacher aspirants. Unbiased research should be done regarding the quality concern of teacher education programmes and teacher aspirants. There should be all infrastructure facilities according to the standards. The curriculum must be reformed periodically according to social needs in terms of

content and technology. Various changes have been attempted in the pedagogy and academic content based on new policies and practices without much success.

Integration of the most appropriate curriculum that reflects the range of Indian diversities is the primary step in quality augmentation. Admission for a teacher education system based on an entrance examination testing the teaching aptitude, attitude, and content knowledge would increase the quality. Seldom attention is given to community involvement and utilisation of community resources in the areas like health and physical education, cultural studies, and social education. Teacher educators can integrate the curricula with hands-on experience in different occupational activities like pottery, agriculture, and craft-making to provide a better understanding of work experiences. A feeling of cultural belongings also developed through such activities.

The growing tendency of privatisation and liberalizations also affects the learning ecosystem of the Indian education system along with other challenges like cultural, religious, and ethnic diversifications. The Indian teacher education system needs a revisit to analyse the role of teachers in developing self-respect, personal dignity, good conduct, and productivity among students and to make them social engineers. To attain the great vision of Education for All, teachers should come out from the narrow thoughts of caste and race barriers. All learners deserve equal opportunities for quality education. For this, the positive interrelation between teacher education and school education needs to be maintained and renovated. Increasing the course duration by introducing meaningless curricular inputs is not the right way of quality improvement. Well-planned curriculum development is essential to ensure the successful functioning of the teacher education system so that teachers become the most powerful agents of social reformation.

Future Prospects of Teacher Education—Global Scenario

The teacher education system should not restrict merely to the present social scenario, but it must vision the future of the destiny of education. A futuristic perspective of education must be a fundamental element of any teacher education programme. The most fundamental aim of teaching is to prepare the learners to lead a happy, productive, and socially responsible life. Education must enable the students to face the challenges they are going to face in the future also. Teacher education must be capable of making teachers empowered to ensure education for the future generation.

There is a growing need for understanding the global perspectives of the teaching profession. With the help of novel technologies, it is very easy to interact with teachers all over the world to know more about different strategies adopted for effective teaching and learning. Teachers must be sensitive and responsive to the social dimensions of education. There exist various issues regarding social justice, equity, and so many such controversies in the global context. A keen observation of how educators and policymakers handle such issues is essential for the professional growth of a teacher. Hence, the new era of teacher education would facilitate opportunities

to observe, understand, engage, and communicate with children. Teacher education must be a centre for self-learning, absorption, and articulation of innovative ideas, and to develop novel educational strategies and practices that enable critical and progressive thinking. To develop adaptability and flexibility among the learners to the changing society as well as personal life situations is also the responsibility of education.

Both professional, as well as personal skills of teachers, must be nourished through teacher education programmes by providing opportunities for improving self-awareness, tolerance, knowledge, understanding, interdisciplinary awareness, social realities as well as professional skills like in-depth knowledge in pedagogy, document writing, inquiry, evaluation techniques, and innovative teaching strategies.

New Model of Teacher Education

Teacher education institutes should have a good learning environment as well as physical infrastructure along with other quality standards. A positive learning environment with adequate spacing and appropriate physical facilities must be there for creating such a healthy atmosphere.

Eligible teachers and trainers are the backbone of any teacher education institute. Permanent teachers recruited who meet all the quality standards can help the teacher aspirants to metamorphose into good teachers. For this training, basic theoretical knowledge related to the psychological and pedagogical approaches suitable to students from different socio-economic backgrounds is essential. Along with that a thorough understanding of what is happening in the local as well as a global society is also important to involve and find the solution for various societal as well as educational issues.

New trends in education at the national and international levels also must be watched and analysed carefully to be updated. Students also need teachers who can survive in the digital era. Teacher educators, as well as teacher trainees, should be aware of innovative educational technologies and research trends along with traditional educational theories. Teacher education institutes must act as the centre for nurturing self-discipline, good character, honesty, and self-reliance among the aspirants. Cooperative and collaborative learning strategies can be utilised for this purpose. Residential institutes are more appropriate for teacher education programmes so that more time can be spent on various activities. Good infrastructure facilities like classrooms, furniture, a good library with sufficient resource materials, a reading room, etc. should be there. Educational programmes like seminars on various educational as well as social issues, conferences, symposiums, workshops, and discussions should be conducted from time to time for the development of student teachers as well as teacher educators. Different teaching approaches like team teaching, programmed learning, SWOT analysis, brainstorming, and research methods like case studies, action research, empirical surveys, etc. should also be taught effectively in teacher education institutes. The teacher aspirants should

develop a lifelong self-education attitude and adaptability to uncertainty and emergencies. Teachers should possess the ability to handle unexpected adverse situations with appropriate and intelligent strategies. For this, emotional development, as well as understanding, is essential.

Teacher Education in the Post-Pandemic Period

The unexpected attack of the COVID pandemic has affected the education system all over the world. Education institutes are forced to close to prevent the further spread of disease and the future of the students was in question. Soon after the initial stages, educators found alternate ways to continue the spirit of education through various innovative ways. The immediate need of restoring schooling was addressed through various online as well as offline platforms. Even though these arrangements were done for a short term, their impact would last for a very long time. Teachers acted as the backbone and power source for the successful restoration of education during the pandemic period. Teachers and teacher educators have passed through the transition in the uncertain period of their profession.

Even though devastating consequences and crises have been made by the pandemic on mankind, it has also been an astonishing period for learning new things and practicing a life that is now called the “new normal”. Students, teachers, and policymakers together learned how to be adaptable and resilient to the alternative systems in such emergencies.

Teacher education in the post COVID period demands certain changes in the curriculum and transaction to meet the changing social demands. This shift must touch all the aspects of education like the “what, when, how, where, and who” of education. The changes must begin from the drafting of the curriculum to its transaction and from the teacher to the student radically. The spontaneous shift to online modes of curriculum transaction led to the development of more student-friendly software that triggers academic activities. The new curriculum should be tailored to facilitate the development of innovative skills in learners, empowering them to excel in the digital age while fostering creativity. Along with content knowledge, skills, and other competencies, emotional and social wellbeing must also be treated equally.

A digital transformation is inevitable to meet the educational requirements of the students. Most of the students are living with technology, but still some students don't have the possibility of accessing such facilities. This digital divide must be treated very carefully by teachers and education policymakers since it will lead to social disparity.

Teacher education institutes must act as resource centres for area-specific as well as general education. These resources and expertise can be shared with society according to the need. Sound in-service programmes also should be conducted for professional development. A strong foundation in educational research should be developed that enables teachers to solve future educational problems more systematically and scientifically.

Teacher education should be sufficient enough to train each prospective teacher to equip and handle emergencies with thorough knowledge in growing educational technologies, intelligent decision-making, and the right choice of technologies that are most appropriate to the social and intellectual demands of the learners.

Conclusion

To attain the cherished goal of Education for All, more renewed efforts have been made all over the globe in recent decades. Since young people are going to determine the future of the world, it is very much essential to provide quality education to all youngsters that would equip them to sharpen their knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, and social involvement. To accomplish this aim, the education system and teachers should be competent enough. Teachers must be well prepared to work efficiently in ever-changing social circumstances, especially in pandemic situations and other adversities. It is the teacher education programmes that determine the quality of teachers as well as the education to a great extent. Various commissions and committees made remarkable suggestions for the improvement of the quality of teacher education and the effective implementation of these recommendations. The eligibility and competency of the teacher is the primary factor affecting education along with the learning materials, school infrastructure, and other learning environments. So, the recruitment of teachers into the system must be treated very carefully. Teacher education should address the real-life issues of the students and the realities of contemporary society. In the future, the responsibility of teachers in social involvement and social ethics would increase. Effective teacher education programmes are essential for developing teachers with a society-friendly attitude. For this, the isolation of teacher education institutions must be changed to materialising the recommendations made by various policies. Teachers need to be well equipped with the most advanced educational technologies and additional skills and content knowledge to guide digital native students.

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