

Chapter 7

Decline in Quality Schooling and Quality Teacher Education: Concerns and Way-Outs



Sajid Jamal

Abstract We are living in the knowledge society and information age of twenty-first century. In a knowledge-based society, a nation's capacity to increase its competitiveness in a globalised world depends heavily on the quality of its educational system. Further, it is supposed to enhance the quality of life by providing more employment opportunities for individuals in the society. Though the quality schooling in itself includes many components, the quality teachers are undoubtedly the most important because teachers are the heart of the education system. However, the quality teachers will not be produced unless and until we have a sound and quality system of teacher education. There are many surveys and reports that prove that there is a declining trend of quality schooling in India and that teacher education is trying hard to find the way out. The present chapter highlights these facts, discusses the reasons for concerns of quality teacher education and suggests the way out for this gloomy situation.

Keywords Quality concerns · Quality education · Teacher education

Introduction

Before proceeding further, the readers are requested to consider the following facts:

- India will be the most populous country of the world by 2050.
- Every fourth worker will be an Indian by 2025.
- Top 20 jobs of today did not exist 20 years ago.
- We have the most youthful population in the world and it is the most important resource.
- We are facing the fourth industrial revolution which is related to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

S. Jamal (✉)
Department of Education, AMU, Aligarh, India
e-mail: shadansj07@rediffmail.com

- In the era of AI, learning does not stop with the school bell and it further necessitates quality schooling.

Moreover, while writing this article, the author went through the draft NEP (2020) and in that it was found that the word “quality” has appeared 84 times, which shows the quality consciousness of today’s students, parents, and policymakers. Further, it is observed that in most of the webinars on NEP (2020), the speakers were found quite worried about the poor quality of schooling and they repeatedly focused on the importance of quality schooling. After listening to the opinions of those learned scholars, it was felt and our mind got engrossed in thinking about what makes quality schooling. The pondering over the issues of what quality schooling means, we concluded that it contains the following components:

- quality students,
- quality curriculum,
- quality teachers (in terms of qualifications, training, potential and competence),
- quality infrastructural facilities (building, library resources, provision of guidance and counselling, ICT facilities and internet connectivity) and
- quality research and development.

Declining Trends of Quality Schooling

There are a lot of hushed voices from many quarters of the society regarding the poor quality of schooling in India which are well supported by the surveys conducted in the country by the various organisations. Important among them are placed below for the quick perusal:

- The Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2012, released by NGO Pratham based on a survey conducted in rural schools across 567 districts and covering approximately 6 lakh children ages 3–16, indicates that the basic learning levels of children in rural India have declined; in 2012, only 5 of 10 students in Class V in rural India could solve a simple arithmetic problem (NDTV, 2013).
- The research goes on to note that there has been a significant drop in the reading ability of children, particularly in government schools, and that an increasing number of parents in rural India appear to be relying on private schools for their children’s education. In 2011, students enrolled in Classes I through VIII made up 45% of the total student body at private institutions.
- Another survey conducted by KPMG (2017) across various states says that the percentage of schools having electricity was 60.8% whereas the percentage of schools having ICT facilities in the year 2017 was 14.1%.
- The survey further says that the percentage of school teachers professionally qualified was 81.2% whereas Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR) in elementary and secondary schools having 30 or <30 was 70.4%.

- KPMG (2017) survey also tells a very interesting fact that in the year 2017 percentage of correct response on learning outcomes in languages, mathematics and EVS for class V students was 54.7%, whereas for class VIII, it was 44.6%. The dropout rate at secondary level in 2017 was 17.1%, GER for Higher Education was 25.8% and average unemployability rate per thousand persons (male and female) was 63.5%.
- KPMG (2017) further opines that the challenges in achieving SDG-4 by 2030 will be teacher quality, their professional development, and their thrusts on outcomes focus/accountability as well as insufficient funds for improving quality and enhancing the employability of the students passed out after class 12th.
- According to Kingdon (2017), enrolment in government schools across 20 Indian states declined by 13 million between 2010 and 2011 and 2015–16, while enrolment in private schools increased by 17.5 million. Over a 5-year period, public school enrolment fell from 122 to 108 on average, while private school enrolment grew from 202 to 208. (Hindustan Times, April 17, 2017).
- According to Kingdon (2017), when compared to public schools, many parents believe their children will have a better educational experience if they attend a private school. The “better environment for learning” is a major factor in why 58.7% of Indians send their children to private schools for primary education. Despite spending \$17.7 billion on the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), educational quality declined between 2009 and 2014.

Quality Teachers

Out of all the above-mentioned factors related to quality schooling, the quality teachers are most important because they are the heart of the school system. The quality of teaching in schools is one key factor in determining whether a country can increase its competitiveness in the globalised world or not. It is crucial to the realisation of the aims of social cohesion and economic advancement since it has a direct impact on students’ levels of accomplishment and their learning experiences. According to research (Rivkin et al., 2005), the quality of the school’s teaching staff is the single most important explanation for student success. Student academic performance has been shown to improve after teachers have participated in in-service training programmes, confirming the positive impacts of such training (Angrist and Levy, 2001).

In this context, it would not be out of place to mention here that the report “India: Education for All—Towards Quality with Equity” (2014) prepared by NUEPA and released by MHRD, Government of India says that improving teachers’ quality and performance is essential to developing high-quality education systems. In light of these realities, the report goes on to say that the XII FYP plans to implement a number of initiatives aimed at (i) addressing teacher shortages, particularly through new and rigorous approaches to imparting teaching certifications, (ii) improving the quality of pre-service teacher education, (iii) improving the quality of in-service teacher

professional development and options for their upward career mobility with special attention to para-teachers in many States, (iv) enhancing the status of teaching as a profession and improving teachers' motivation to teach well and their accountability for ensuring learning outcomes, and (v) improving the quality of teacher educators.

The XII FYP also included plans to initiate a National Mission on Teachers and Teaching. The major objectives of the said National Mission included: (i) enhancing the availability of teachers to meet the demands of the education systems; (ii) ensuring that all the existing corps of teachers are provided with continuing professional development opportunities and that teachers are supported with congenial working conditions to ensure high levels of teacher performance; (iii) development of guidelines/frameworks for the improvement of the existing institutional structures and processes involved in the continuing professional development of teachers; (iv) formulating strategies for attracting and retaining talented youth into the teaching profession and significantly raising the social and professional status of teachers; and (v) enhancing quality of teaching, teacher education and training programmes and promoting the use of technology for qualitative improvement of teacher education. The National Mission was about to focus on teacher-related issues in a holistic manner, dealing with the whole sector of education without fragmenting the programmes based on levels and sub-sectors such as school education, higher education, and technical education etc.

In the context of the quality of teachers, it may be understood that we have to prepare the youths of the twenty-first century. Life is heavily dominated by artificial intelligence, techno savvy youths, growing expectations of parents, cut throat competition in all fields and unbearable pressure..... It is all part of the twenty-first century. This vehemently requires a change in the approach of teachers. If we compare the anatomy of the classrooms, then we'll find that today's classrooms are much different from that of the twentieth century classroom.

Anatomy of 20th century classroom

- Time bound
- Teacher centred
- Fixed placed

Anatomy of twenty-first century classroom

- MASP Pro
- Digital Infrastructure
- ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)
- Parent portal

Further, it is said that the following 4Cs are necessary for twenty-first century

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity

And, in turn it requires the changed role of teachers in the twenty-first century. A twenty-first century teacher should be a:

- planner for twenty-first century career
- resource provider
- digital instructor for different ways of learning
- learning facilitator
- technology lover for learning
- digital learner for the lifetime and
- genuine predictor

This change in the role of the teachers demands that they should be professionally prepared and efficiently trained and this responsibility mainly lies on the shoulders of teacher education institutions.

Teacher Education

Having spent almost two decades as a teacher educator, the author would like to place the following reasons for the dissatisfactory role of teacher education in India:

1. **Lack of quality entrants:** Almost all the entrance tests conducted for giving admission in B.Ed. Courses are concerned with judging the IQ, teaching aptitude, GS and some type of mastery over the subject, but they are not concerned with the quality, creativity and commitment of the prospective teachers. Even in some states in India formal interviews are not conducted before giving the admission to the candidates to check the communication skills and confidence of the candidates. After the tests, the trainees who rush to the teacher education institutions usually have very poor knowledge about their subject matter. Even some of the trainees have never seen the laboratories and libraries of the colleges from which they have graduated. Even a few had not seen Vernier Callipers, Screw Gauge, Dissection Box, Microscope, and they do not know how to hold the holder of the test tube when it is heated up. Their motivation level is very low and they are not concerned about how to become a good and effective teacher rather to get a job anyhow. Most of them are not teachers by choice rather by chance. All these factors tend to lower the quality of pre-service teacher education programmes in India.
2. **Lack of quality teacher educators:** If we expect quality prospective teachers then it is necessary that we must have quality teacher educators as well. These teacher educators must be well equipped to shoulder the various responsibilities of the teacher education institutions/departments. Basically, the teacher educators must possess two major qualities—one related with the mastery of the original subject in which they have master's degree and second is associated with the master degree in education. They must update themselves by attending various seminars, symposia, workshops and conferences, deliver quality lectures, give

good demonstration lessons and should be able to organise simulated lessons and micro-teaching lessons.

But, in reality, though the government colleges and universities follow these norms, the situation is somersaulted in private colleges. What to talk of additional qualifications, even if they do not fulfil the main qualifications prescribed by NCTE. The management of the institution gives reason for the shortage of competent staff and on this ground, they are appointed. Even in universities and good colleges, teachers usually teach one paper for 10, 20 years and do not bring any change in their lectures with a course of time. In some cases, it has been observed that they are afraid of giving demonstration lessons and show no interest in organising simulated lessons and micro-teaching lessons. Besides the above-mentioned factors, the teacher educators do not have much chance to grow themselves academically. All these tend to lower the quality of teacher education in the country.

3. **Poor working environment and infrastructural facilities:** Most of the teacher education institutions managed or funded by the government are in poor conditions because of the resource crunch. Almost 85–87% of the budget goes for the salary of the teaching and non-teaching staff and a little is left for spending on creating infrastructural resources. The building, classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, libraries, canteen, toilets, etc. are in very poor conditions. Even in a few institutions black board and chalk are not available, what to talk of LCD Projector, OHP, and various other audio-visual systems. Even if few institutions have these instruments, its maintenance is not done in a proper way. Most of the instruments are there in the store room only because when they are needed to run, there is no electricity back-up. Further, the teacher education institutions are plagued by politics, internal conflicts, poor colleague relations, mismanagement etc. which hamper in creating a healthy organisational culture and proper learning environment. So far as the institutions managed by private bodies are concerned, only few have the requisite facilities and rest are in very poor conditions. All these tend to lower the quality of teacher education institutions because nowadays it is thought that unless and until we shall have good physical infrastructure, the proper working environment will not be created and we will not be able to produce quality.
4. **Poor curriculum design and implementation:** A sizable part of the curriculum of pre-service teachers training programme is dominated by theory and weightage to the practical is given less. Although NCTE 2014 regulations have issued certain guidelines in this regard, most of the institutions fulfil only formality in the name of practical. It is agreed that psychology practical, ICT skills, soft skills, managing stress, doing SWOTA, handling language lab, ET lab etc. are very important for the prospective teachers, but neither they are serious for them nor those who are imparting teacher education. Moreover, it is reported that the timetable of the teachers training institutions is hectic, boring, monotonous, and sedentary and in isolation with the curriculum prescribed and with the practising

schools. It does not take care of the individual differences. It is very much traditional and there is no creativity in it. All these factors tend to lower the quality of teacher education in India.

5. **Lack of training in teaching through interactive methods:** This is also one of the reasons for poor quality teacher education in India. Usually, the student teachers do not understand the monotonous lectures delivered by the teacher educators. It is very unfortunate that those prospective teachers who are going to teach through activities, play way, project, laboratory, heuristic, and problem-solving method get only theoretical and formal ideas about these methods and no practical knowledge or demonstration about these. Even in the practice teaching phase also they are required to teach through lecture or lecture demonstration method only.
6. **Lack of training in high moral values:** Teachers are supposed to be nation builders and custodians to the traditions of the society. In India, history has witnessed that teachers have sacrificed themselves for the common good of the country and people. They were a lot committed to their cause and showed honesty and integrity for the purpose. These qualities are essential for today's teachers also, though society has changed itself a lot, their preliminary roles have been the same. The professional and organisational commitment among the teachers is formed during their rigorous training and a lot of values and skills as well are inculcated among themselves because only then they will be able to inculcate values in their students. But unfortunately training in moral values is absent from the curriculum of teacher education institutions that is why it is reported that teachers do not want to teach, do not perform other duties diligently, search short cuts for success and show no commitment to the cause of teaching.
7. **Lack of proper guidance and counselling:** Guidance and counselling are supposed to be one of the important tasks of the prospective teachers in today's world. In some universities and teacher training institutions, it is taught as an optional paper. But usually most of the students do not prefer it and become unaware of how to perform one of the most important tasks of the teachers. Even in those institutions where it is taught, the curriculum is stereotyped and centred about the theoretical aspects and provides no chance for practical activities to the prospective teachers.
8. **Lack of quality research and development:** This is one of the important aspects missing from the teacher education institutions. In university departments, researches must be conducted about how to make the quality of teachers' training better, how the teachers must be made more committed to their jobs and institutes in which they are working, how to deliver quality in classrooms through teaching and how to meet the expectations, aspirations, and challenges of the country through education. But unfortunately, there is a dearth of research of this type in India. Though some university departments of teacher education are conducting few researches, they are not up to the mark and merely copy of those researches conducted in the west. We should realise that our conditions are different, our problems are different and our society is different, hence instead

of following west we should conduct our own research to meet the challenges of our people. This is one of the reasons for the poor quality of teacher education in our country.

9. **Lack of fair and transparent assessment and evaluation system:** In most of the teacher education institutions, it has been observed that summative assessment still prevails and if there is a little provision of formative assessment then it is not fair and it is plagued by a lot of subjectivity, i.e. a lot of inflated marks are awarded to the inferior candidates. Even the summative assessment suffers from low reliability, validity and objectivity. Furthermore, compulsory attendance is a very important component of quality teacher education because when prospective teachers will be given tough and rigorous practices only then seriousness for the purpose will be developed and a kind of commitment for the teaching profession will be formed. In this context, NCTE has made a provision of biometric attendance but still it has not been implemented and in most of the teacher education institutions compulsory attendance is only on the paper, even those students who hardly come to attend the classes or participate in practice teaching and internship, they are also allowed to appear in the exams, they get degrees, get the job as well and in long run do injustice with the teaching profession and the society.
10. **Isolation from the other departments of the university/college, schools and society:** Education and society are closely interrelated and they influence each other. Same is the case with teacher education. The needs, aspirations, expectations and demands of the society must be reflected in the various programmes of the teacher education institutions. It will be possible only when the community and society will come close to each other. Besides this, prospective teachers belong to various disciplines (for example, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, English, History, Commerce, etc.), so it will be better if the teacher education departments develop a close relationship with other departments so that the prospective teachers may be aware about the latest developments in their original disciplines. But if we see the reality, we will find that these institutions are oblivious and engaged in their own activities. In fact, they are isolated with society and with various other departments of the university/colleges. Also, due to various reasons, there is a lack of coordination and cooperation of the teacher education institutions with the practicing schools. This is one of the reasons for lowering the quality of teacher education in our country.

The Way Out

Having discussed the problems and quality concerns of school education as well as teacher education, here are some of the probable ways out which may be adopted to tackle the problem and to bring quality in education at schools as well as in teacher education.

1. **Attracting quality entrants to teacher education programmes and training them in the best possible manner:** According to a report titled “India: Education for All—Towards Quality with Equity”, compiled by the National Urban and Environmental Policy Analysis Council (NUEPA) and published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (2014), the greatest obstacles to improving teacher quality are recruiting and retaining qualified individuals and providing them with sufficient resources to succeed in the classroom. Challenges in this area of education include: recruiting teachers who are socially closer to children and professionally prepared to meet the learning needs of diverse groups of learners; and implementing institutional mechanisms to overcome the shortage of professionally qualified teachers without jeopardising the long-term goals of a sustained cadre of professionally qualified teachers.

In this context though, it is very humiliating but the author of this paper wants to report here very humbly that as a member of the interview board to give admission in class VI and IX of AMU Schools in various academic sessions, he asked to every student what they are aspiring for in the future and none preferred teaching as a career. It simply implies that today’s youth are not interested in opting teaching as a career and they much prefer engineering, medical, finance, sells, marketing, mass communication and other attractive and glamorous professions. It also implies that the prospective teachers are not popped out easily and most of the teachers to whom we are preparing in teacher education institutions have come there as a chance and not by choice. To cope up with this situation, following points are being suggested:

- The young students in schools should be motivated to choose teaching as a career by their school teachers themselves. The teachers should present themselves in the schools as the role models of their students. They should diligently select some bright students, groom them, train them and give the responsibility of teaching to their peers at a young age and this in turn will develop some interests among them to be a teacher in the future.
- Further, a quality entrance test based on teaching aptitude, social and emotional intelligence, creative potentials and commitment to the teaching profession if conducted followed by personality tests and interviews in a fair, just and transparent manner, can bring some warmth even in the frostier environment. In this context, whatever methods are being adopted in the foreign countries to attract calibre pupils to the teaching profession, we may also try in our own country based on their suitability for our cause.

- At this juncture, it would not be out of place to mention here that after NCTE Regulations, 2014 the duration of B.Ed. and M.Ed. Courses in the country have been increased from 1 to 2 years and most of the teacher educators opine that it has further stopped the entry of calibre pupils in pre-service teacher education programmes. While it is clearly mentioned in NEP 2020 that from 2030 4-year integrated teacher education programmes will be enforced in the country and after passing class 12th only those will enter the teaching profession who really want to become teachers, it is a debatable issue. The integrated programmes already run in the country by various institutions do not give us hopeful results. But I think this system should be given a chance and after 5 years it should be reviewed and continued only if it is giving the desired results.
 - The admitted teacher trainees must go through specific tests in the teacher education colleges/departments to check their mastery over the subject matter of their graduation/post-graduation. If it is found that they are poor in the subject matter, then they must be instructed to go through the books seriously before the practice teaching. Since nowadays we are offering a 2-year B.Ed. course, and the trainees are offered two teaching subjects, hence focusing on one teaching subject every year will be a nice idea. How much mastery they have developed over the content may be checked if we give some weightage of that in the assessment.
 - Overall, all the prospective teachers must be motivated by the teacher educators, principals and head of the departments directly or indirectly to be committed to the teaching profession. They must be told that they are about to shape the destiny of India in the classrooms and it is not an ordinary job. Their morale must be kept high by citing good and inspiring examples of the great teachers from the pages of history who have changed the whole human race by their actions and teachings. The teacher educators who teach the compulsory papers of philosophical foundations of education, sociological foundations of education and educational psychology of B.Ed. might be of great importance in this connection. Besides, various scholarships must be started to help the needy as well as meritorious students. For this, the help of various industrialists, philanthropists and influential persons of the community may be taken.
2. **Attracting quality teacher educators and ensuring their proper professional growth:** Every educationist of experience is familiar with the reality that preparation of quality teachers depends on quality teacher educators. However, there are so many hurdles in attracting good people towards the teacher education institutions and those should be dealt with accordingly. We should consider the following points seriously:
- At this stage in order to become a teacher educator one has to invest nine (five in obtaining Master's degree in some school subject and 4 years in obtaining Master's degree in Education) precious years of his/her career. In comparison to this in other disciplines one has to invest only five years which is one of the

important hurdles in attracting calibre teacher educators. Hence, in order to overcome this, some quick promotion schemes for newly appointed teacher educators should be started in consultation with NCTE and UGC.

- Visiting professor schemes and adjunct professor schemes to take the services of good scholars from other fields should be immediately implemented in teacher education institutions. The retired teachers who are in good health may also be invited to deliver the lectures and to share their experiences with the prospective teachers.
- After the new API rules set by UGC for the promotion, flunking in publications will be unthinkable to the teacher educators that is why many of them are busy in writing frivolous research papers and sub-standard quality articles to increase API scores. It has been observed by the author of this paper that some of the teacher educators even do not attend the seminars and conferences rather they manage the certificates with the help of their friends or through paying the high registration fee to the organisers. This should be strictly checked by the Principals/HODs/Deans, etc. The teacher educators should be relieved to attend the seminars/conferences only after a thorough scrutiny. Fixing the limit of the number of seminars per academic year will also be a good idea. They must be issued guidelines regarding the quality of research work and attending various seminars, symposia, workshops and conferences for seeking knowledge and not only for API scores.
- They must also be instructed to give good demonstration lessons and organise micro-teaching lessons and simulated lessons. The good researchers must be invited to deliver the extension lectures as it will boost up the teacher educators and students to conduct research. In addition to this, the regular and permanent teacher educators need to be given the instruction to increase their professional competence while staying connected to the latest advancements in the subject in which they specialise. The teacher educators are required to be proactive and should play the following role besides performing their regular duties:

As a Catalyst—to provoke the prospective teachers to perform their duties diligently.

As a Leader—having a vision to contribute towards the material and spiritual advancement of the country.

As a Mentor—to groom the potential of the prospective teachers.

As a Counsellor—to teach the prospective teachers how they themselves will provide counselling to their students in the classrooms.

As a Creator—of various knowledge resources particularly Open Educational Resources (OERs).

3. **Creating good work environment by ensuring sufficient infrastructural facilities:** To deal with the insufficient infrastructural facilities and poor work environment in the teacher education institutions, the following points are suggested:

- To meet the challenge of poor infrastructure the teacher education institutions should start the scheme of public-private partnership (PPP) after getting the nod of the state governments and UGC. Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) funds may also be utilised in this direction.
- The meagre funds released by the UGC and state governments for development should be used judiciously and wisely.
- The help of the community may also be taken by providing various consultancy services.
- Alumni associations may be formed immediately and made active for fundraising.
- Shramdaan weeks should be organised twice in an academic year and this should be utilised for cleanliness drives in the teacher education institutions.

These efforts in turn lead to a good work culture and environment in the institutions.

4. **Reforming and enriching the curriculum of teacher education institutions:**

In 2014, the Indian government's Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) released a report with the title "India: Education for All—Towards Quality with Equity". The report focuses an emphasis on revising the curriculum for and the process of initial preparation of teachers in order to achieve the goal of preparing teachers for diverse surroundings (rural and distant areas), as well as addressing diversity inside the classroom. The report focuses a particular emphasis on the need to meet the educational requirements of children who originate from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. It is strongly suggested that the following steps be taken with reference to this matter:

- (i) Although the curriculum of teacher education courses is not designed at institutional level but implementation on that is done at institutional level. The principals and teachers must ensure that the practical works are conducted seriously and all the students are participating in it. Working with the community must be organised in such a way that it should benefit the community maximum. The prospective teachers must be instructed to participate in the literacy march, cleanliness drive, save the water and protect the environment programmes etc. Practice teaching and internship must be made most fruitful to the prospective teachers in which they get the maximum exposure to different types of teaching methodology, various problems related with students and teachers and how to run the institutions successfully. Besides that when the curriculum is designed at centre level it must be ensured that the prospective teachers are not given only theoretical knowledge rather they are practically exposed to

the various situations and theoretical knowledge must be oriented in such a way to equip the prospective teachers to face employment needs.

- (ii) The timetable of the teacher education institutions should match with the curriculum prescribed and that of the practising schools. There should be efficiency so as time and energy is concerned and creativity as well in it. It should cater to the needs of individual differences and should have proper recess also. There must be one or two library periods, zero period and one or two periods for games, sports and yoga per week.
- (iii) In the teacher education institution, the teacher educators must be encouraged to follow a two-way communication process. They are required to be creative thinkers who can come up with novel teaching strategies that can help the student-teachers have more fulfilling educational experiences. They should realise the purpose of their communication, the mental set up and educational qualifications of their students and accordingly communicate. They should come fully prepared and should encourage the students to ask relevant questions. Instead of relying on only one method of teaching, i.e. lecture method they should use interactive methods like discussion and debate and use the latest instruments of technology, if available in their institutions. And to make the teaching-learning process an active intellectual engagement that clearly transmits information and competence, they should make intense use of case studies and current projects.
- (iv) In teacher education institutions, training in higher moral values must be given directly or indirectly to the prospective teachers so that they can perform the social responsibilities of a teacher by inspiring and motivating the students to become responsible and productive citizens of the country. The teacher educators must themselves talk about values and give good examples by their behaviour. Psychologists, sociologists, and people belonging to non-governmental organisations who are working in the field of value education must be invited to these institutions to share their experiences with the prospective teachers and talk about values.
- (v) Guidance and counselling must be a compulsory paper in the curriculum of teacher education courses. Trained counsellors must be invited to deliver extension lectures to acquaint the prospective teachers with various problems associated with guidance and counselling. They must be provided a chance to work practically besides having theoretical knowledge.
- (vi) Online teaching is of immense importance nowadays. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that sooner or later we have to shift from the traditional teaching methods to online mode. Hence, besides training the prospective teachers in traditional methods and approaches of teaching, they should be well trained in how to take online classes smoothly and demonstration lessons should be organised for them.
- (vii) In all teacher education courses, the exams must be conducted fairly and transparently. Those students who use unfair means and approach the examiners for favour, their admission must be cancelled. Not only this,

the invigilators in the examination hall must be instructed to be strict and vigilant and do their duties honestly and in an unbiased manner. Technological support may also be taken in this context, if required. Compulsory attendance is very necessary to improve the quality of teacher education in our country. Though the NCTE has fixed the criteria of 80% attendance in theory paper and 90% attendance in practical but there are only very few institutions that follow this rule. NCTE must be strict in this direction and should derecognise those institutions that give relaxation to the students in attendance. Besides, in all types of internal evaluation the attendance should be given the proper weightage and in the annual functions etc. the regular students must be rewarded.

- (viii) The isolation of teacher education institutions from the other departments and from the society needs to be checked. Collaboration with the other departments needs to be encouraged by inviting the teachers from various departments to deliver extension lectures on various relevant topics and inviting them in various discussions, exhibitions, poster presentations and debates etc. The institutions must get closer to the society by community work. The influential persons of the society and people belonging to the non-governmental organisations must be invited to the institutions for discussions to know exactly what the society expects from these institutions and accordingly the plans should be formulated. The prospective teachers must be encouraged to visit the nearby schools regularly and observe what exactly is happening in schools so that there may be no gap in theoretical knowledge and reality.
- (ix) The report “India: Education for All—Towards Quality with Equity” (2014) by MHRD focuses on ensuring that in-service teachers have adequate access to subject-specific education through regular refresher courses, that periodic in-service education is complemented with sustained on-site academic support to teachers, and that in-service education programmes address the particular needs and classroom concerns of teachers. On the similar lines, NEP (2020) also emphasises at least 50 h training to in-service teachers every year for their professional growth and this provides a nice opportunity for teacher education institutions to do that. They may develop close rapport with DIETs, SCERTs etc. and should offer their services for in-service teachers’ training.

5. **Conducting quality research on the issues related to teachers:** In teacher education institutions, the teacher educators should not be smug by teaching only, rather they must be encouraged to conduct quality research that can improve the teaching-learning situation and create new knowledge in the domain. The following points may be worth mentioning in this direction:

- (i) Research should be conducted on the topics related to teachers like how to minimise teacher stress, how to increase the job satisfaction level of the teachers, what measures should be taken to increase the professional and organisational commitment level of teachers and how to increase teacher

morale. Further, which portions of the ancient educational system are relevant to the modern educational system and how we can implement them, how the theory of constructivism may be used successfully to make the teaching-learning process more effective etc. should also be thoroughly researched.

- (ii) Since quality schooling and attracting the calibre pupil to the teaching profession are broad areas, hence trans-disciplinary research should also be encouraged. The Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE) launched by UGC may be of immense importance in this connection and funds may be obtained from that scheme to conduct trans-disciplinary research.
- (iii) The necessary infrastructure must be provided to the teacher educators for quality research and those teacher educators who are engaged in research must be given advantage in appointment, promotions etc. Some financial incentives must also be given to them in terms of salary increment. Research allowance must be given to them in the same way as transport allowance and house rent allowance etc.

Conclusion

NEP (2020) clearly says in its vision document, “The vision of the policy is to instil among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen”. In order to realise this dream of NEP (2020), quality schooling is the need of the hour and India can ill afford to neglect its importance for its growing economy and to get a respectable place among the important nations of the world. In a nutshell, all those factors which are responsible for quality schooling must be given due importance but attracting, training, grooming, recruiting, and retaining calibre people to the teaching profession and providing them a congenial environment in which they can perform well is most important. For this, an excellent teacher education programme in the country is the prerequisite.

References

- Angrist, J., & Lavy, V. (2001). Does teacher training affect pupil learning? Evidence from matched comparisons in Jerusalem Public Schools. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 19(2), 343–369.
- Enhancing Quality of Education in India by 2030: A F.I.T. approach for realising SDG4. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/in/pdf/2019/11/enhancing-quality-of-education-in-india-by-2030.pdf>.

- India: Education for All—Towards Quality with Equity. (2014). National University of Educational Planning and Administration (India), released by MHRD, Government of India. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000229873>.
- Kingdon, G. G. (2017, April 17). In 5 years, private schools gain 17 million students, government schools lose 13 million. *Hindustan Times*. IST. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/education/in-5-years-private-schools-gain-17-million-students-government-schools-lose-13-million/story-6FV1ic7RLtmWc0ZkhBQBM.html>.
- National Education Policy. (2020). Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.
- Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417–458.
- Sharp decline in education standard across country: study. Written by Alok Pandey (A. Chaturvedi, Ed.) (2013, January 18). IST (NDTV). Retrieved November 14, 2020.