

## **IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY**

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The quality of teachers determines the quality of a nation. Teachers have been instrumental in development of the world. Hence, attempts have been going on to improve teacher quality to fit into the changing contexts. Efforts have been made to specify aspects of teacher quality. Normally, teachers are expected to have adequate mastery over content area and to have appropriate level of pedagogical skills. OECD(1994) study on teacher quality referred to three more areas - 1) ability to reflect and to be self-control, 2) empathy and the commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others, 3) managerial competence. Some other factors were - love for children, setting an example of moral conduct, managing groups effectively, incorporating new technology, mastering multiple models of teaching and learning, adjusting and improvising, knowing the students, exchanging ideas with other teachers, reflecting, collaborating with other teachers, advancing the profession of teaching and contributing to the society at large. Not all teachers are made some are born. OECD (1990) Report stated that "successful teaching is primarily due to characteristics such as patience, persistence, the ability to analyse problems, and empathy with students" (p.73). The teachers require personality traits such as (a) complete self-control not only to the extent of not showing any anger but remaining quiet and undisturbed under all circumstances, (b) realisation of the relativity of one's importance, (c) the will and effort to continuously progress, (d) treating students with appropriate respect, etc. (The Mother 1978), It is very much difficult to develop such personality traits in teacher trainees, especially when they enter into teacher training institutions at an age by which their attitude towards life has already been mostly fixed. Training programme can be effective only when the teacher trainee is really interested in applying the learned techniques in real situation. Insincerity among teachers does not make the training programme effective. This leads to questioning the justification for spending money for providing initial teacher training.

There has been an informal teacher-training programme at Mirambika, New Delhi that has been found very much effective. The "Zero lecture programme" that has been undertaken in certain DIETs of Delhi wherein, the normal teacher training processes have been overlooked. The teacher trainees under Zero - Lecture appeared at the formal teacher training examination, without any difficulties. Professors of education have been involved in these innovations. It is also a fact that persons without M. Ed. have been found holding posts of professors/readers in Education in Universities and in NCERT. Some of them have excelled even M. Ed. degree holders. Persons having no formal teacher training qualifications have received recognition from professional teacher education associations as best teacher educators. There are also instances of such persons acting as examiners of Doctorate in Education. Academic Staff Colleges in the country meant for providing orientation and inservice programmes to higher education teachers generally do not insist on M. Ed. or M. A. (Education) qualification for jobs of Director/Asst. Directors. Perhaps, this had led to mushroom growth of B. Ed. through correspondence. These types of situation reveal that in this country, teacher education has not been taken seriously. Teachers acquire skills, as they get experienced. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry is recognised by the Government of India as an Institution of Higher Learning of All India Importance. It does not have any provision for training of its teachers. So also is the situation at the Centre of Education at Auroville. It is also a fact that all trained teachers are not more effective than untrained ones. Such types of realization have led to extended period of training continuing in the school system under the guidance of expert school teachers.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF EXTENDED PRACTICAL TRAINING UNDER EXPERT SCHOOL TEACHERS**

The quality of practical, training in various teacher-training courses can be ascertained by an effective evaluation that is generally lacking. There has been much variation not only in theoretical courses but also extent of practical areas covered from one examining body to another. There are instances of interviewing of candidates for evaluation. In some cases practical teaching evaluation is also undertaken by examiners having no formal degree level content knowledge. In such a

situation, allowing a product of teacher training system'to enter into school as a regular teacher has to be stopped. In advanced systems, a product of teacher training institution is attached to an effective teacher (mentor) for a specific period. During this period of attachment, the trainee receives reduced workload and carries out teaching work under guidance. The said/trainee is evaluated a number of times. On successful completion of the training, the trainee is declared as a full-fledged teacher. Iji the period of huge unemployment, in our ituation, such a system can provide helping hands in schools to taker care of classes when teachers are on leave. Such a system also can reduce the burden of over burdened teachers. This added responsibility will make existing teachers improve their own standard to show examples to the beginners.

### **INTRODUCTION OF TEACHER LICENSING TESTS**

The quality of teacher education programme can be improved indirectly by instituting teacher accreditation tests. Such tests are found in developed countries. The strategies found in case of Educational Testing Service and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards of USA include multiple choice questions, classroom observation, essays, extensive portfolio assessment continued over several months of work, sample of student work, video recording etc. Hence, introduction of teacher licensing system and development of has to be given priority. While introducing the system, the experiences available in developed countries can be of help.

### **INTRODUCTION OF PERIODIC EVALUATION OF TEACHERS**

If teacher appraisal sytem is introduced, the teachers will take more interest in inservice programmes. Dr. R. C. Das in his article, in this issue of the journal, has suggested introduction ofexamination at the end of inservice programmes, provided on payment. He has suggested utilisation of such certificates for promotion or for specific jobs. This can be part of evaluaton strategy for extension of license to teach. Teacher licensing system may be valid for 10 years. After that, the teacher has to be tested for renewal of license,

### **MODIFICATION OF EXISTING NORMS OF NCTE**

The Central Government enacted National Council for Teacher Education Act 1993 to take care of teacher education programmes.

The Norms for teacher education institutions developed by NCTE have brought out some qualitative changes in teacher education programmes. Some of these developments include: 1. Closure of sub-standard distance education mode programmes for initial teacher training, 2. Posting of regular and additional teachers in teacher education institutions, 3. Availability of specified amounts of funds for various types of activities, 4. Improvement in quality of intake, 5. Ensuring minimum number of working days in an academic year, 6. Provision for library cum reading room, and 7. Provision for equipment for psychology and educational technology. In spite of above-mentioned developments, there are certain areas in which Norms are to be modified. Some of these may be as follows:

### **State Norms**

There is much variation found in States as regards necessity of providing teacher training, number of untrained teachers, number of teachers that would be necessary, and minimum qualification of teacher educators and material resources. In such a situation, there may not be any set of norms that are applicable for all States of the country.

### **Providing Course Specific Instead of Stage Specific Norms**

The teachers possessing two-year diploma/Certificate courses now covered under NCTE norms as Elementary stage courses take classes in high schools. The students of One-year B. Ed: Degree course now covered under NCTE Norms as Secondary Stage has their practical training in classes V-VIII. There is no special B. Ed. Course for training of higher secondary school teachers. In some systems B. Ed. Course students also deliver their practice teaching lessons in higher secondary classes. A few years ago, NCERT colleges had B. Ed. (Elementary). The four year teacher education course at University of Delhi is meant for Elementary school teaching, whereas, such courses in NCERT Institutes and in colleges affiliated to Kolhapur University and Pondicherry University are meant for secondary school class teaching. Hence, it is essential that instead of stage specific norms course specific norms be formulated.

### **Upgrading Existing Diploma / Certificate Courses to Degree Stage**

In case of two-year courses for elementary **level** teacher education, a considerable time is spent for teaching content to the trainees, who are mostly undergraduates. In case of graduate teacher trainees, content teaching may not be necessary. There are already one-year courses in Northeast region. The Kothari Commission had suggested two-year course for higher secondary pass applicants and a special course for degree holders. A few years ago, NCERT had instituted, B. Ed. (Elementary) in its colleges. In days of huge unemployment, a large number of graduates enter into two year courses. A two-year Diploma/ Certificate course provides content enrichment. In case of graduates such type of content enrichment may not be necessary. The Kothari Commission had suggested increasing the level of elementary teacher training institution to the college stage. The ILO(1991) document also pointed out that, "**all** teachers should be prepared in general special and pedagogical subjects in Universities or in institutions on a level comparable to Universities or else in the special institution for the preparation of teachers". The DIETs are required to have principals of college reader level. There should be no difficulty in making these get affiliated to Universities for one year B. Ed. Course for elementary school teaching. Hence, there should be one-year diploma/ Certificate courses for graduates for elementary as well as for pre-primary school teaching.

### **Provision for Adequate Number of Demonstration Lessons**

Majority of the teacher education programmes generally provide for one-demonstration lesson per subject. This does not cover all types of methods followed in teaching a subject and all types of content in a subject. There are more than five methods and types of content areas in each subject. Hence, there should be provision for delivery of at least 5 demonstration lessons in each of the method subjects in all types of courses.

### **Provision for Single Method Subject in B. Ed. Course**

As there is no separate course for teachers of higher secondary education, the existing B. Ed. course provides for the training of higher secondary teachers. Such a teacher teaches only one subject. Hence, there should not be any mention about number of method subjects

offered by an individual at B. Ed. stage.

### **Non Specification of Minimum Strength of Teaching Staff**

The strength of staff depends on the type of courses-One year, Two year, Degree, Diploma, Certificate, etc. In North Eastern States, there is provision for part time teacher educators from schools. The practical training in many developed countries is imparted by the school system. The present system of organising practical training by full time staff members of teacher training institutions is very much costly. If the schoolteachers are given the task of supervision, less number of staff members of teacher education institutions shall be necessary. Again, in case of institutions having 30 teacher trainees as found in case of one year B. Ed. Course of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, posting of above mentioned minimum number of teachers will be colossal wastage of funds. Hence, there should not be any minimum strength of teaching staff.

### **Specification of Certain Material Resources as Non-essential**

There have been specifications regarding material resources. Some of the specifications need not be essential category. In case of B. Ed. courses, the material resources that should be treated as non essential include (a) Work experience labs, (b) Play ground, (c) Furniture - work table for laboratory, and (d) Science laboratory. In case of Diploma /Certificate courses for elementary teacher education the non-essential category may include (a) Workshop, (b) Art and music room, (c) Games room, (d) Play fields, and (e) Science section and workshop attached to Multipurpose Education Laboratory. The teacher training institutions can function effectively by utilising the resources available in their co-operating schools.

### **Provision for Observation of Lessons Taught by Good Teachers**

Teacher training can be more effective by making student teachers observe classroom teaching of effective schoolteachers. Such a provision shall not only help student teachers but also help the schoolteachers in improving their own teaching. Many teacher-training syllabi do not provide for this activity. The first set of NCTE Norms prescribed observation of at least 10 lessons in case of secondary

teacher education. No doubt this step was a good measure to improve quality. The Revised set of Norms has not given stress on observation of teaching of good schoolteachers. Hence, the earlier provision needs to be restored. It has also to be introduced also for Diploma/ Certificate courses.

### **Method Master Student Teacher Ratio**

Method master student teacher ratio is an important aspect of teacher training. There are instances of one method master for nearly 100 students. It is impossible to tackle such a large number. The Maximum limit should be 24.

### **Part time Instructors**

There is not enough workload for instructors in physical education and for art / music. There is no necessity of workshop instructor / instructor in work experience. There is no necessity of instructor in educational technology, as there is provision for a lecturer in educational technology. Qualifications have been prescribed for instructors for physical education, art, music, and work experience. In the days of non-formal education, specification of any qualification for instructors may not be necessary. They can be selected on the basis of their knowledge- formal / non-formal and experience and expertise. The revised NCTE Norms provide for sharing of material resources. There should be efforts for sharing of human resources for checking wastage of funds. This type of sharing is also possible in case of human resources in case of ins|factors working in nearby teacher education institutions and other types of institutions. In rich countries one finds roving teachers for physical education, etc. Hence, there should be provision for such instructors with facility for travel allowances, if necessary. These types of teachers do not have adequate workload for whole time appointment. Hence, there should be provision for part time instructors or for roving full time instructors who may work in more than one institution including co-operating school.

### **Acceptance of UGC Norms for Qualifications of Lecturer in Education**

In 1953, Secondary Education Commission suggested that, the qualification for lecturer in Education to be honours/ Master Degree in

first class and M.Ed, with three years of teaching experience or a LTV BT degree with five years of service as Inspector/ Headmaster. Many States accepted this suggestion. In Orissa, an aspirant for lecturer, who was not a first class in M. Ed. had to be an Honours Graduate and a Second class M. Ed. Otherwise s/he had to acquire a P.G. Degree. There are professors of Education in universities who do not have PG Degrees in content areas. Kothari Commission had suggested double Master degree - one in content and the other in Education. However, it suggested two additional increments for such staff members. It even suggested posting of persons without any formal teacher training qualifications. Such suggestions might have been given by the Commission keeping in view four year integrated courses being introduced by NCERT in its Regional Colleges which had scopes for posting of persons of general category for teaching exclusively content areas. NCTE Norms have not specified such increments. NCTE Norms specify that the qualifications for lecturer in Education should be first/ second class M.Ed, with Master degree in a school subject. As per UGC Norms, a lecturer in Education can be a M. A. (Education) or a M. Ed. As UGC is the fund giving authority to teacher training colleges, and departments of Education of general colleges and universities providing teacher-training courses, the UGC specifications need to be accepted by the NCTE. In case of elementary teacher education, NCTE Norms have specified two categories of teacher educators- pedagogy and methodology. Such separation leads to colossal wastage of human resources, as the staff members without M.Ed, cannot supervise practice teaching lessons effectively. Even to-day, there are only B. Ed. Degree holders working as staff members even in DIETs. Hence, there should be one category as found in case of B. Ed. Course.

### **Degree Level Content Knowledge for Method Teachers/ Practice Teaching Lesson Supervisors**

Content knowledge of a method master plays important role in supervision and evaluation of teaching practical. While States like Tamil Nadu insist on postgraduate in the content subject, States like Orissa do not specify any content knowledge. There is one Institute of Advanced Study, which has been producing B.Ed.s for many years, without having any lecturer who has studied science subjects at degree stage. Similarly,



one does not find Geography method masters having content knowledge of Geography at least **at** their degree stages. As the Norms developed by NCTE did not specify minimum content knowledge of method teachers, many teacher education institutions having no method master having studied the subject at least at the degree stage, got permanent type of recognition. Therefore, NCTE Norms should prescribe content knowledge up to degree stage for method teachers and also for schoolteachers supervising practice teaching lessons.

### **Continuous School Experience of Method Teachers**

A method teacher needs to have experience in school teaching to be in a position to give better advice to the student-teacher. A medical practitioner needs to have continuous experience of doctoring in order to teach effectively about tackling of various diseases. This is also applicable for teacher educator profession. Acharya Ramamurti (1990) stated that "Competent persons may be brought into these institutions from schools and other government Institutions on a rotational basis" (p.313). APEID (1990) document reported that the quality of teacher training suffered due to lack of school teaching experience of teacher educators. ILO (1991) stated that "the staff teaching pedagogical subjects should have had experience of teaching in school and wherever possible should have the experience periodically refreshed by secondment to teaching duties in schools" (p.145). OECD (1994) pointed out seriousness of the situation arising due to failure of teacher educators to keep pace with changing curricula and teaching strategies (P.78). Hence, it is essential that teacher educators have not only initial school teaching experience but also continuous school teaching experience.

### **Functioning of Library Out Side Normal Hours**

The quality of functioning of library has much to do in a teacher education programme. The teacher trainees do not have much time to go to the library during normal working hours. Reading room facilities out side normal working hours, i.e. in the morning and the evening is essential for every institution. The NCTE Norms need to specify working hours for reading rooms and libraries.

### **Supervision on the Basis of Observation of Full Lesson and Immediate Feedback**

Supervision of practice teaching programme is an important aspect in teacher training. In many systems, the supervision is carried out with observation of lessons for 3 to 4 minutes. This happens, as a teacher educator is required to supervise all lessons being taught in a school on that day. generally, irrespective of his/ her content knowledge. The observation has to be followed by discussion that can result in making the remarks and suggestions more relevant and effective.

### **Incentives for Practice Teaching Schools**

Ideal teacher training programme has to involve the school system in an effective manner. The student teaching lessons need to be observed by the concerned schoolteachers. They need to give feedback on the quality of teaching. They need to be given certain incentives for the purpose either in cash or kind. Similarly, the student teachers need not only to observe demonstration lessons given by their method teachers but also by school teachers. The involvement of school teachers in teacher training can improve the teaching quality of schoolteachers.

### **Continuous Comprehensive Internal Evaluation**

Quality of evaluation controls the quality of training. In earlier times, most of the teacher trainees were from in-service category. Some of them had even two decades of school teaching experience. Teacher educators of yester day did not take the v{uation of examination of teacher trainees seriously. Although the;y ature of teacher trainee population has completely turned around, the evaluation quality continues in the same old pattern. Lessons, in many situations are evaluated on the basis of observation of 3 to 4 minutes. Evaluation of practical work is not taken seriously. There are instances of a professor evaluating community work practical of 600 B. Ed. Candidates through interview conducted in a single day. The NCTE Norms need to make evaluation of practical work including teaching work completely internal. The National Policy on Education recommends continuous and comprehensive evaluation for school students. There should be both qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation. This can be done only when, the evaluation of practical work is made completely internal.

### **Practical Work**

The Revised Norms provide for certain essential practical activities. Certain modifications are necessary. There are a number of subjects covered in Diploma / Certificate courses meant for preparation of elementary school teachers. These include Art, SUPW, Physical education, General Science, History, Geography and Civics. There should be at least five lessons in each of these subjects. There need not be any specification regarding science practical. Study of a few District Institutes of Education and Training, Colleges of Teacher Education and Institutes of Advanced Study in Education in a State revealed that the computers supplied free of cost a decade earlier remained in those packages, due to non-availability of staff to handle them. Again, the elementary school teachers may not be in a position to have computers in their schools. In that case, the training will be lost due to non-use. Hence computer practice should not be an essential item.

### **CONCLUSION**

Improving teacher quality is a difficult task. The working of a person in any profession depends on the level of commitment. This is specifically valid in case of teachers. In such a situation, there may be debates over the proposal for introduction of teacher licensing system and mentoring system. Above suggestions need the attention of all those, involved in -the process of accelerating the process of improvement of quality of school education in general and quality of school education in particular

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