

Reflections on Two years Teacher Education Programme

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We have witnessed major changes in the structure of teacher education, which came after 67 years after independence. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) recently came up with a new regulation called NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulation, 2014, which was published in the Government of India Gazette on December 1. As per the new regulation, the B.Ed and M.Ed have been recognized as a professional course with duration of two academic years instead of one-year course. The fresh curriculum for B.Ed. and M.Ed. has been implemented with new prospects and priorities across the nation. NCTE document, December 2014 states: “The course structure offers a comprehensive coverage of themes and rigorous field engagement with the child, school and community. The programme comprises three inter-related curricular areas - i) Perspectives in Education, ii) Curriculum and Pedagogic Studies, and iii) Engagement with the Field. All courses include in-built field-based units of study and projects along with theoretical inputs from an interdisciplinary perspective. Implementation of the courses will be carried out through a variety of approaches, such as case-studies, group presentations, projects, discussions on reflective journals, observations of children, and interactions with the community in multiple socio-cultural environments”. (Curriculum Framework for the NCTE Two-Year B.Ed. Programme, National Council for Teacher Education, New Delhi, December 2014, page 2). Above said ideas reflect some good steps of new model curriculum, but a mere change of curricula to restructure the content of teacher education can turn out to be eyewash unless or until its transaction at grass root level is not improved.

Above said changes in norms and curriculum were made to make qualitative improvements in teacher education in India and providing it true status of a professional course. After implementation of new regulations, the second semester of two year B.Ed course is going on across the nation. It is observed that there is confusion over many aspects of new B.Ed curriculum among administrator’s, teacher educators, students and other stakeholders. Teachers and students are in problematic situation by the complexities of the



rapid changes in educational programs and planning. So an attempt is made to highlight some of the dilemmas, fear, problems which are overcoming some positive points of Two Year course of B.Ed as well as M.Ed.

Gaps in Policy making: First of all a big question is raised at many platforms that policy makers who were involved in framing above said regulations were not from the field of education. They were not having an experience of grass root level problems related to teacher education. Nothing explicit has been mentioned about inadequacies and limitations of the previous system. All these comments/ talks are raised in all the seminars, conferences and other such gathering of teacher educators. All stakeholders may not be given a chance for their involvement as they desire or some communication gaps created non acceptance of new regulations with warm feelings. It is felt that the whole approach to formulate these regulations was from higher level to grass-root level which made it more difficult to accept. If majority of the people are thinking on same lines then a review process can be started to improve it.

Theoretical difference: No doubt about that new curriculum a significant departure from the previous one-year programme in some areas instead of simply a sort of course-extension, But some teacher educators are not satisfied with model curriculum which was put in public domain. Some voices are raised that philosophical foundation of education are not given their due importance in model curriculum prepared by NCTE. Certain important parts have not been covered. It is undeniable that the curricula area under Engagement with the Field - the Self, the Child, Community and School with its three components particularly the last one viz, courses on EPC including reading and reflecting on texts, drama and art in education, critical understanding of ICT, and understanding the Self - suffers from ambiguity and appears to be a little too ambitious. So NCTE should come forward and try to address these issues so that it should be practiced in true spirit.

Questions on quality improvements: These new regulations were made for qualitative improvement in TEI but at the end of first semester of these courses, discussion among most of the teacher educators are not related to quality dimension at all. New trends of dummy admissions, confusions over the content to be taught, questions, doubts and criticism on the curriculum prepared by various universities are main points of discussion in the community

of teacher educators. These may be due to initial stage of implementation but it is also true that some fundamental issues are yet to be addressed. Some of them are given below

- What types of arrangements are made for training and orientation of teacher-educators toward new curriculum?
- What should be the criteria to give number of units to teacher Education Institutions?
- How states and Centre will frame policies in school education to create jobs for the teachers?
- How schools will accommodate pupil teachers for long duration of internship?
- What will be the structure of internship and how it will be practiced and supervised?

Low admissions: - It is true that in most of the countries across the world have two year teacher education courses, so same was the demand in our country. But we are facing admission crisis in every state after increase of time duration of these courses. Some of the reasons cited for low admissions are such as the majority of the students, who join B.Ed, M.Ed courses, are from socially and economically weaker sections of the society. Due to increase in duration of the course, it will deter many bright students from taking up this profession due to increase in financial burden, Due to marriageable age of girl students, parents are showing their reservation to allow girls to go for two year B.Ed and M.Ed. Next reason for low admissions is that in most of the northern states a large number of unemployed trained teachers are waiting for their turn to get good job. So, how new students can plan to join two year course when there is so much uncertainty of job. The low admission is also due to the implementation of Teacher Eligibility Test at centre and state level. Why we are forcing them to go through a test of eligibility to teach after spending two precious years and spending huge money which has more than 75% syllabus from school level or graduation level? This type of test should be administered before admission to B.Ed course to save money, efforts and two precious years of students. All these factors are adversely affecting teaching aspirants and some bright candidates are also reluctant to join two year B.Ed course. NCTE should come forward by providing guidelines to find some appropriate solutions of these problems.

Lack of detailed guidelines at grass root level: Teaching practice is most important part of B.Ed curriculum, where would be teachers gets a chance to apply learned theories, methods and strategies in real classroom scenario. It was felt that 30-40 days are not sufficient for practice teaching. Now in two year course a full semester is devoted for internship but no clear guidelines are available in the colleges of education and school authorities regarding this. How we can expect uniformity and quality in internship under such scenario? I have fear of fake internships as were in practice during one year B.Ed in some colleges. Now the problem will be more severe because earlier this type of bad practices for approximately one month, now it will be for 5-6 months. So there is dire need to frame some concrete plans with the involvement of representative's of state education board, CBSE, ICSE and Teacher education Institutes. Some procedures should be implemented to ensure quality practice during internship.

Lack of vision among Teacher Educators: For so many years Two Year B.Ed course was buzz word in all academic gathering related to teacher education. Most of the teacher educators have recommended increase of time duration of teacher education courses through their discussions, research papers and articles on different platforms from past many years. But after few months of implementation of two year course, the situation is reversed. Now the buzz word is changing from two year to one year. Should we interpret it as recommendation for two years course in different seminar/conferences by teacher educators was without looking its probable effects or consequences? This confusion is beyond the understanding of a common man. It shows the lack of vision of teacher educators and research based factual information while recommending or endorsing something for future. This also reminds us about Muhammad Bin Tughlaq who was a scholar of logic, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, physical sciences and calligraphy. He was well known for his wisdom and character. People had a lot of expectations from him. But due to his wrong decisions in different matters he has been called a mad Sultan. It is sure that he had many good ideas, but he had not the capacity to execute them. We all teacher educators would not like to be compared with such examples in coming years. So each recommendation for policy change should be research based or logic based because it has long term impact on each and every stakeholder of education.

So above said points are main questions in the mind of each and every stakeholder who is concerned with the quality in teacher education. There may be some problems but we know each problem has solution in itself; sometime there is more than one solution. Psychologist has rightly emphasized on the contribution of positive Attitude toward success or solution of a problem. In the case of teacher education, we also need attitudinal changes among all the stakeholders. It is the major factor which is making something good or bad. So now all should move forward with positive attitude toward these changes by making best possible efforts at classroom level, college level or university level to make things realistic, practical and utilitarian for pupil teachers. All stakeholders of Teachers education can write to NCTE/Affiliating University/State Governments by personally or through some other channels regarding required changes to address these issues from different platforms. Like in case of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation in schools, we have witnessed some sweeping changes in our system. There were confusions regarding CCE in all the stakeholders of schools at initial stage of implementation, so are with us, so instead of criticizing for the sake of criticism, we need to work in planned manner as CBSE did.

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