

INDIAN EDUCATION IS ON THE CROSSROADS: THE ROLE OF TEACHER-EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

There is a view that the present system of education is, after all, quite reasonable and what we need is to make it a little more sophisticated, much more polished, with some modifications here and there like vocationalisation and job-orientation, and what we further need is to ensure accountability of teachers and educational institutions. It has even been prominently asked, in defence of the present system, if we ourselves are not the products of that system and whether we are not, more or less, quite well-equipped to deal with our responsibilities. It is noteworthy that the greatest representatives of the Indian renaissance, from Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati to Sri Aurobindo had perceived in the ancient Indian system of education such an uplifting and inspiring model that they had all advocated for free India a national system of education, rooted in the ancient Indian conception of education, which would, at the same time, cater to the ideals of internationalism and universality. They had all dreamt of a free India where students would relive the presence and guidance of the wise and benign and courageous Rishis who had sown in the soil of India the seeds of perennial inspiration. They wanted to recreate sanctuaries of living souls who could be fostered by teachers who would, like *Vashistha* and *Vishwamitra*, *Vamadeva* and *Bharadwaja*, remain unfettered by dogma or any restraining force of limitation or obscurantism. The home of the teacher, which came to be called the *ashrama* or *gurukula*, was centred on students, and each student received individual attention. The teacher looked upon his task as that of an observer, as a helper, as a guide, — not as that of a taskmaster. He taught best, not so much through instruction, as through the example of his wisdom and character and through his personal and intimate contact with the soul of each student. He had no rigid or uniform methods; but he applied every possible method in a varying manner in regard to every

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student. By K. Rasheeduddin , While much is being touted about the higher education in the country, the scene at the primary and higher secondary education level remains dismal as ever. We celebrate what we have achieved in the course of our progression as a nation. But we have no time to ponder over what we could have achieved. School was the big thing for a long time. School is tests and credits and note taking and meeting standards. Learning, on the other hand, is 'getting it'. It's the conceptual breakthrough that permits the student to understand it then move on to something else. Learning doesn't care about workbooks or long checklists. For a while, smart people thought that school was organized to encourage learning. For a long time, though, people in the know have realized that they are fundamentally different activities. Our education system is suffering from a systemic failure. We failed to evolve a system of education which could provide all our citizens with a level playing field. We have inherited from our foreign masters a legacy of education which did not suit our culture. In due course of time we successfully perpetuated a system where education has become pawn in the hands of a few, a monopoly of the rich and the elite.

Key words: *Indian Education, Crossroads, Teacher-Education.*

Introduction

"Education has continued to evolve, diversify and extend its coverage since the dawn of history. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of time".

The education in India is at a crossroads. Its liberal and secular character and content, carefully nourished during the last fifty years, despite several vicissitudes, is now undergoing fundamental transformation. Education is the best instrument for moderating people behaviour but its real impact is the rewards it brings for the country. Lack of education, is as much of a handicap for an individual as it is an obstacle for country's operations. Education is one of the four major issues that hinder the prosperity of a nation. The other three are *population, poverty and corruption.*

People may hold subjective opinions about which of these challenges should be tackled first, but perhaps a chicken and egg situation exists here. For tangible results, we will have to put in efforts on all of them together. There is this profound perception that education can control the others, but this observation is unfounded. Our system of education is the legacy of the colonial past. Sixty years have passed since we attained independence, but even though, promised during the freedom struggle, we have not been able to change the system, except very marginally. The country needs a kind of education that is not yet being conceived, although greatest pioneers of the freedom struggle have already given us the glimpses of that education. If India has to play a leading role in meeting the challenges of the contemporary civilization and also the contemporary crisis; we have to redesign our Education System during the next ten years. In a poor country like India, illiteracy of the majority continues to pose a serious challenge. The central and state governments have promised to wipe out illiteracy and have engaged in many projects to achieve that goal. The ruling establishment has sought local and international financial support to eradicate illiteracy. While the policies and pronouncements have been ambitious, many marginalized communities have gone from bad to worse.

Many educationists argue that a class-divided system of education has played a central role in molding the patterns of uneven development and disenfranchisement in postcolonial India. In much of urban India, there are two systems of education--English medium (the upper tier of English-medium schools in cities) and vernacular medium (often state run). At the individual level, English-medium education has been a ticket to vertical mobility in Indian society. At the societal level, English-medium education has played a critical role in producing what Kothari calls a modernized techno managerial elite that continues to have disproportionate influence in shaping the discursive terrain of development and the policies that affect the social fabric. Less visibly, English-medium education widens fractures in society by creating and reinforcing a social, cultural, economic, and discursive divide between the English educated and the majority.

This is not to say that the vernacular medium is egalitarian or free of political agenda.

India's first education minister, Maulana Azad, founded a system for free and compulsory education at the primary level for children from 6-14. In 2009, also the right to education clause was inserted in the constitution for this purpose. To make this feasible, child labour was banned. Incentives such as mid-day meals were introduced. Educational cess was added to income tax.

The largest of such initiatives was the *campaign for education of all* (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), for which the UPA government aimed to increase expenditure on education from three percent to six percent of the GDP. Despite these initiatives, education continues to elude the poor and it persists as an unrealised dream in the country.

It is important to note that there is an increasing awareness both in India and the world that the contemporary crisis is fundamentally the crisis of the disbalancement, of an exaggerated development of the outer structures and organizations and means of physical and vital satisfactions, on the one hand, and the neglect of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of human life, on the other. One, therefore, hears of the crisis of character, crisis of values and crisis of spiritual evolution. Gripped as we are in this crisis, we are bound to look for the knowledge of ethics and spirituality, of values and of the knowledge that can bridge the gulf between the life of matter and the life of spirit. In the West, increasing number of leaders are now speaking of return to basics, and in India we have begun to conceive of programmes of value-education. This subject has not yet received the attention that it deserves, but there is no doubt that under the pressure of circumstances or of our enlightened foresight, when we shall explore this subject, we are bound to raise three important questions, helpful answers of which will largely be found in our ancient Indian conception of education.

A Historical Perspective

The system of education evolved during the post-independence period is essentially liberal and secular in character. It draws upon the historical experience, both colonial and pre-colonial, and the social, cultural and intellectual legacy inherited there from. Although an enclavised system, mainly serving the interests of the elite, it respected the social plurality and cultural diversity of the country. While attempting to construct the nation and unify the people, differences were accommodated, even if the class and caste biases were apparent in policy formulation and implementation. That education is a concurrent and not a central subject reflects the respect for diversity.

Education

“In Indian thinking, a human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource, which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care, coupled with dynamism”.

Need and importance of education

Education, as you are aware, is vital to the human resources development and empowerment in the stages of growth of a nation. In any education system, higher education encompassing Management, Engineering, Medicines etc., plays a major role in imparting knowledge, values, and developing skills and, in the process, increase the growth and productivity of the nation. While the Government is committed to providing primary education and certain facilities/subsidies for higher education, given the higher cost involved in the establishment of higher education institutes, we are witnessing the entry of private sector to run educational institutions. On the need for education, I wish to quote our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said that education not only moulds the new generation, but reflects a society's fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals which compose it. The famous philosopher Einstein while discussing the need for education has projected the following fundamentals:

- To educate the individual as a free individual; to understand and use critical thinking skills.
- To educate the individual as a part of society – virtually all our knowledge, our clothes, our food is produced by others in our society, thus, we owe Society and have responsibility to contribute back to Society.
- Through education, knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost. It resembles a statute of marble which stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun.

Quality of education

Given that we need to compete globally in the 21st century, our education system should adopt certain benchmarking techniques for improving instruction models and administrative procedures in universities/colleges to move forward. I suggest that we need a thorough study and evaluation of models implemented elsewhere and work out strategies to adopt such models

in our system. Benchmarking in my opinion would provide benefits to our education system in terms of reengineering, setting right objectives, etc. The country is showing consistency in economic growth pattern, leading the world in terms of information and technology, modernization various economic activities and pushing for higher share of industries and services sectors of the economy but there is one area which needs reform is “education system”. While it is true that some investments are taking place in the country’s higher education system, we are yet to establish world class research facilities, recruiting profound academicians in universities/colleges/research institutions, etc. to sustain and forge lead in economic development. It is important to understand that countries like China, Singapore, South Korea, etc. are moving fast in investing in education system. Therefore, it is imperative that our educational institutions are equipped with the desired quality and standards which are essentials for transforming the younger workforce into productive ones. Needless to reiterate that in the higher education system focus on use of technology for effective learning by students also need to be encouraged to have cutting edge over our competitors in the globalised world.

Child, Teacher and Teacher Education

The children of today are different in the sense that they are,-future-oriented; they tend to be more and more comprehensive, global and universal. They attach a great value to the virtues of friendship and commitment to the relations that are rooted in impartiality, team spirit and freedom from rigidities of conventions, dogmas and all the conflicts of ideologies that prevent free inquiry leading up to discoveries and inventions that will sub-serve the ideals of mutuality and harmony.

Indian Education is on the Crossroads

The twentieth century has been an unquiet age of ferment, chaos of ideas and inventions, clash of enormous forces, creation, catastrophe and dissolution amid the formidable agony and tension of the body and soul of humankind. In the 21st century we need to turn to a new orientation that we require in the field of education. From a practical point of view, education must prepare individuals to carry out tasks that are required primarily for running the country. Be it defending the sovereignty, or marching ahead on the road to prosperity, or producing goods and services for its citizens. The country requires professionals, entrepreneurs and administrators. In practice,

the pressures of surviving in a materialistically rich world divert attention to education that can fetch employment or foster entrepreneurship. Character building is driven to the background, a trend that needs to be moderated. Like any other serious effort, education has different stakeholders and unless everyone's interests are taken care of, the process will be neither stable nor sustainable. The most apparent ones are the regulatory bodies of the government, the funding agencies, schools, institutes, universities, students, teachers and parents. Charitable establishments should come forward to join hands with the government to extend the reach of elementary education to the nook and far of the country; here the volumes are very large. Others, such as business houses with profit in mind, must not exploit people, because this way they distort the intellectual fabric of the society. The management of education over a vast and populous country like India is more complex than it appears.

Towards a New System of Education

India has had in modern times five greatest educationists. Significantly, all of them were stirred by the teacher-pupil relationship that flourished in the ancient Indian system of education, and all of them renewed for us the ideal and practice of education that the *gurukulas* or the ashrams nourished in the days of *Vasishtha* and *Vishwamitra*, of *Aruni* and *Yajnavalkya*.

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati visualised clusters of teachers spread over the entire breadth and length of the country nestled in groves of woods and trees where pupils could be trained in the ancient knowledge contained in the Veda as also in rational modes of thought so as to be equipped with invincible knowledge and robust character that is forged by constant practice of truth, self control and fearlessness.

Swami Vivekananda, inspired by the Upanishads and their message of divine perfection inherent in every individual, strove to give to the youth of modern India the lessons of man-making education so as to cast them in the image of heroic builders of new India and new world.

Mahatma Gandhi conceived, even when he was in South Africa, a scheme of ashram education and developed it further in India at Sabarmati Ashram and at Wardha into what came to be called "Nai Talim" that would reflect the ancient spirit of blending head, heart and hand so as to create new types of human beings that would be self-reliant, chaste, truthful, non-violent and devoted servants of the country and the world.

Rabindranath Tagore established in Shanti Niketan a school and a Brahmacharyashram where, like the ancient Upanishadic Guru, he lived and taught as a companion of the children who came and lived with him.

Indian Education Today

Education is a cultural construct meant to socialize the citizen; transmit knowledge from one generation to another; and generate new knowledge to better all generations. The education system is supposed to contribute to individual growth and social transformation. In the same way, society and polity are supposed to determine the framework of the educational system and to help maintain the educational superstructure. In course of this interaction, conflict and crisis arise. The crisis leads to the formulation of policy frameworks, which introduce debate on education and promote societal reconstruction

Technical Education at a Crossroads

Onkar Singh says, Technical education in India was in response to a felt need of nation-building. Once again, the time has come to heed the call of the country, crying out for reforms to rejuvenate this much-maligned stream.

Technical Education Today

Today, India has 31,324 colleges, 559 universities and university level institutions, while there were only 500 colleges and 20 universities at the time of Independence. Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of the country alone accounts for four central universities, 21 state universities, seven private universities and seven deemed-to-be universities. In the technical education sector, the approved intake has currently blown up to around 8.5 lakh in the engineering and 1.5 lakh in the management education sector respectively. This shows the keenness amongst students for education and the potential for establishing institutions of higher learning in technical education. However, in the past few years, the rate of upcoming new institutions has slowed down a little due to the changing mood of students. Due to the unregulated enhancement in intake, alarm bells have started ringing over the sustainability of many of these degree-level technical institutions. However, from the placement point of view, the prospects of diploma and certificate holders are quite good and sensing this, a number of new institutions are coming up, even as existing technical institutions have started diploma and ITI courses on their premises.

- It had become essential that the curriculum in school and colleges be modified, to teach these values to our future citizens. The participants reached the conclusion that teachers should be trained in spiritual values first, so that these can be imparted to the children.
- There has been great contribution by the scholars such as Aryabhatta, Varahmihira and Nagarjuna in science and Charaka and Sushruta in medical science but it is only Plato, Aristotle and Democritus who find mention in our science books.
- To initialize the foundation course on Indian culture and human values for all students and to encourage systematic and scientific study of contributions made by ancient and contemporary Indians in fields like physics, chemistry, botany, medicine, surgery, astronomy, environment and ecology. The resolution demanded the encouragement of government and non-government organizations to carry out systematic professional studies to create an interface between Indian heritage and modern knowledge.

Dr. Doreswamy said, "It is appropriate to say that teacher education in the state is at crossroads today. Only the number of teacher training colleges has increased, with no increase in quality of training. Those institutions that do not meet NCTE norms should be disaffiliated." He said he was "pained" to close down a BEd college as the system was corrupt. "In our BEd college, there was no scope for malpractices."

Dr. Gururaj Karjagi, chairperson of the Academy for Creative Teaching (ACT), said that universities have to play an active role in regulating teacher training. "I am scared to send children to school, considering how bad the training of teachers is. Universities have teeth, and they cannot absolve themselves from their responsibility in ensuring that the colleges are adhering to rules," he said, adding that the future of the country will be at stake in the next 20 years if the teachers will be 'trained this way'.

The Challenges for India's Education System

India's education system turns out millions of graduates each year, many skilled in IT and engineering. This manpower advantage underpins India's recent economic advances, but masks deep-seated problems within India's education system. While India's demographics are generally perceived to give it an edge over other countries' economies (India will have a youthful population when other countries have ageing populations), if this advantage is restricted to a small, highly educated elite, the domestic political ramifications could be severe.

Do we Need to Change the Present System of Education?

There is a view that the present system of education is, after all, quite reasonable and what we need is to make it a little more sophisticated, much more polished, with some modifications here and there like vocationalisation and job-orientation, and what we further need is to ensure accountability of teachers and educational institutions. It has even been prominently asked, in defence of the present system, if we ourselves are not the products of that system and whether we are not, more or less, quite well-equipped deal with our responsibilities. There is, on the other hand, a more progressive view, which does not admit that we, the products of the system of education, are what we ought to be, that a better system could have made us better equipped, in terms of both personality and skills, and capable of meeting the demands and challenges of our times.

Need for Bolder Reforms

It is in the context of this situation that serious and sincere educationists feel hesitant to make some further and bolder proposals, particularly in the context of the Indian system of education, — proposals which are indispensable and which can be postponed only on the peril of risking loss of cultural identity and even of crippling the very soul of India.

Teacher Education

It is also increasingly recognised that corresponding to the aim of the integral development of personality, the teacher also must have a personality that is very well developed and integrated. Our present system of teacher education is not only superficial but also mechanical and uninspiring. The time that we have allotted to the programme of teacher education, which practically comes to eight months, is hopelessly inadequate, and the wiser counsel that we are now hearing in our country is that we should institute an integrated course of teacher education, which can extend over four to five years. This wise counsel seems destined to succeed, and we shall, therefore, be in a better position to design a comprehensive programme of teachers' education. In that design, all the valuable aspects of the ancient concepts of education and the ancient concept of the role of the teacher will find some kind of rebirth and renewal. Teachers and parents have to realise that the perils of their inertia are not only great but disastrous. If the present crisis is a crisis of character, if it is a crisis of value-system, if it is a human crisis, then the only way by which this crisis can be met, is to replace the colonial goals of education by the new goals of education, and new methods of education, which necessarily reflect our Indian

aspirations but which imply very hard work and very creative and careful work. Fortunately, there is a new awakening among parents and teachers, and we can trust that they will eventually rise to the occasion and will not disappoint the great aims. The education in India is at a crossroads. Its liberal and secular character and content, carefully nourished during the last fifty years, despite several vicissitudes, is now undergoing fundamental transformation. That this change rather hurriedly pushed through by the government and its agencies is not in consonance with the guiding principles of our republic and would adversely affect the well being of our plural society is a widely shared concern. For, the change is being engineered by a government committed more by its ideological needs and the entrepreneurial interests of the ruling classes rather than the requirements of the society.

The role of Teacher-Education

Education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demand of the system, but also functions as a bridge between schooling and higher education. It has to meet twin demands : (a) challenges of the education system including higher education, and (b) the ever-changing demands of the social system. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognised. Its objective is man-making and producing enlightened citizens. But teacher education in India, because of its history and also due to various factors beyond its control, has by and large been confined to school education only.

Meaning of Teacher Education

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation.

The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

According to Goods Dictionary of Education Teacher education means,

—all the formal and non -formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.

Teacher Education : Current Status

India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Besides the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and government aided institutions, private and self-financing colleges and open universities are also engaged in teacher education. Though most teacher education programmes are nearly identical yet their standard varies across institutions and universities. In certain areas, the supply of teachers far exceeds the demand while in others there is an acute shortage as qualified teachers which results in the appointment of under-qualified and unqualified persons. In the situation as it obtains manpower planning becomes an imperative. Teacher education programmes are essentially institution-based. Their students need to be exposed more and more to the realities of school and community. Internship, practice of teaching, practical activities and supplementary educational activities need to be better planned and organized more systematically. The curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation of teacher education programmes need to be made more objective as well as comprehensive. Despite improvement of service conditions and perks, the profession is yet to attract the best talent. Teacher education has to be responsive to the challenges faced by educational system in general and the school education in particular. Besides, teacher education is essentially a context-sensitive activity. It has to respond to various changes in its social, political, economic as well as cultural contexts. Developments in science and technology during the last two decades have transformed human life and the world. New technologies related to storage and communication of information have impacted the instructional process, given rise to e-learning and re-defined the concept of library and library service. Education that does not review and rethink its content and processes soon loses its relevance. These concerns give rise to educational challenges i.e. challenges from within the educational system. Teacher education has to support the efforts for the solution of problems of education of the country. These problems can be divided into two categories : problems of education as a whole with special reference to school education and problems of teacher education itself. The latter includes general problems as well those caused by school education curricula which put the responsibility of its implementation on teachers. The education system now faces challenges from neo-colonialism which is not the same as its traditional counterpart. It is economic, ideological and cultural. If not checked, it will lead to further 'educational divide'. Teacher education has to be responsible

to this. It has to understand its many dimensional consequences and take appropriate safeguards against it. The country has to fulfill its constitutional commitment of providing universal elementary education to all and achieve the obliteration of illiteracy. Education is a fundamental right. To meet this obligation many programmes have been initiated. For achieving the target, the country needs well qualified and properly trained teachers. The system has to prepare them and also train underqualified teachers professionally. Increase in the population of school going children, rising aspirations of the people and their greater desire for more useful knowledge, complete with explosion of knowledge and techniques for imparting knowledge have emerged as new challenges to teacher education. The possibility of acquiring knowledge from sources other than the teacher, books and from outside educational institutions has increased tremendously. The educational system has to respond in full measure to this development. To impart more knowledge within a shorter period entails proper structuring of knowledge and use of new transactional strategies including ICT resources. Students should be encouraged to pursue independent learning and make use of the skills of 'learning to learn'. In this new paradigm students will approach teachers for getting information about the sources of knowledge rather than knowledge itself. In the emerging context the possibility of teachers and educators becoming outdated and professionally less effective has increased. Constant re-education and inservice programmes for teachers and their educators have become the need of the day. we should just continue building more government schools and hiring more civil servants to act as school teachers, and we'll be fine. In 2008, the failure rate with private schools was roughly 17 per cent. Government schools were much worse at over 30 per cent. A short three years later, conditions had deteriorated sharply in government schools. The failure rate had gone up to 40 per cent. Private schools had also worsened slightly, to a failure rate of 20 per cent. By 2011, a big gap had opened up between the two: private schools are failing to teach 20 per cent of the kids while government schools are failing with a full 40 per cent of their kids. Parents in India face the *choice* between sending their children to a government school, which is free and serves a mid-day meal, versus sending them to a private school where they pay fees. Yet, an increasing fraction of parents *choose* to send their children to a private school, paying tuition fees from their own pockets, while government schools are free. The relationship between a parent and a private school is a transaction between consenting adults. The relationship between a parent and a government school involves all of us, because we are paying for it. We need to start over in the

field of education, with a fresh management team, one that is not a part of the status quo, one that is rooted in the worlds of incentives, public policy and public administration. Civil servant teachers, who have tenured (permanent) have no incentive to teach well, regardless of their qualifications or high income. We can't sack them, but what we need to do on a massive scale is to stop recruiting them. The existing stock can be reallocated to other civil servant functions where staff is in short supply. Through this, it would become possible to whittle away at the accumulated stock over the coming 20 years. we need to expand the list of "What is to be done ", We need to intensify the debate, create awareness, find alternative models, support poeple and project taking radical paths and so on! The expense on education is not too high, it is the accountability that is the problem because we are looking at getting garbage for peanuts here. The government needs to have transparent and open parameters for their licencing act to differentiate between education merchants and professional facilitators. There is a coalgate there that no one is unearthing. Everyone who makes a few bucks wants in on education, so film stars, politicians and builders have clusters of schools. Schools themselves have no mandatory criteria for reinvestment in teacher education, the pathetically outdated B.Ed courses are never looked at and revamped by Kapil Sibals. Pick up the rigour in final levels of your Board level examinations in terms of higher thinking questions and application based problems and see how the machinery gears up to make it happen. It is simple.

Our teachers need a good education

Teachers make the highest impact on quality in the classroom. They are at the heart of education but the status of overall teacher education in India is pathetic, to put it mildly.

We need high quality teacher educators. The vicious cycle of poor quality in-service teacher development begins with the absence of high quality teacher educators. A school principal can make or break a school. Education functionaries need to be well equipped.

The role of a teacher

Education of teachers in the country has been considered crucial, not only for ensuring greater professionalism in teachers but also for facilitating improvement and effectiveness of schools. According to Shulman (Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of New Reforms, published in Harvard Educational Review, 1987), a teacher should possess subject content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and the knowledge of educational contexts and goals; and

should be able to use this knowledge creatively to deal with ever changing classroom situations. In the present time, teacher education has gained visibility as a well-differentiated network of institutional programmes and categories meant for different groups of educational functionaries. It is in this context that teacher education has become institutionalised. Professionalism requires knowledge, authority, skills, commitment, competency, mission, ability to provide the exclusive expert service and adherence to a professional ethical code.

The key issues

Though the quality of pedagogical inputs in various teacher education courses that serve the purpose of nurturing prospective teachers depends largely on the professional competence of teacher educators and the way in which it is imparted; a lot is also dependent on the responsiveness and interest of the teachers-in-the-making. As the common understanding goes, anyone with a BEd degree is considered qualified to become a teacher educator for elementary stage teacher education, and anyone with a higher degree in education (say MEd) is deemed fit to become a teacher educator in a secondary teacher education institute. However, contrary to this understanding are the views of several critics who argue that learning to become a good teacher and actually teaching effectively does not mean that one has also learnt how others can be helped or trained to be effective teachers. Though newer programmes of teacher education have continually evolved, with substantive and curricular streamlining; it is a continuous process to accommodate the changes in teaching practices. It is in this regard that a national framework for teacher education has been put in place.

Education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demand of the system, but also functions as a bridge between schooling and higher education. It has to meet twin demands: (a) challenges of the education system including higher education, and (b) the ever-changing demands of the social system. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognized. Its objective is man making and producing enlightened citizens. But teacher education in India, because of its history and also due to various factors beyond its control, has by and large been confined to school education only.

Conclusion

To sum up, we need to recognize that the knowledge, skills and productivity of our growing young and dynamic work force forms the backbone of our economy. To reap the benefits of such a young work force, we need to implement the reforms in the education system and also bring forth new factors of production, namely knowledge, skills and technology which have the ability to unleash the productive frontiers of the economy in the most efficient and dynamic way. Education requires thoughtful planning that takes into account the real needs of the people and the country. It should not result in the mad rush, that outwardly aims for inclusive education but in reality it is profit making. Education should be a natural, practicable and sustainable process and not a commercialized industry, or a playground for the corporate. Education, when it is commercialized, loses its sheen because it goes out of the reach of those who need it the most. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) aims at improving the quality of teacher education by addressing the prevalent concerns as they exist today, bring in key changes, so as to reorient teaching that emphasizes on activities, discovery and exploration of environment and surroundings. The aim is to have inclusive education that also makes use of information and communication technology and e-learning tools.

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