

Role of Stakeholders & Teacher Education Institutions for Promoting Innovative Practices for Professional Development of Teachers

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Abstract:

To make Indian education a strong contestant in the scholastic competition of the globe a thorough professional development of teachers with highly innovative paradigms and practices is called for. This augments the responsibilities of stakeholders and teacher education institutions for stimulating state-of-the-art practices for improving teacher proficiency. The core areas to be addressed are preparing the student teachers for the future trends, making them technologically adept with special emphasis on digital literacy and collaborative learning. Also, an ideal teacher training program should encompass clear relevancy of what is expected and to be taught, focus on roles, functions and professional development of teacher educators and incorporate a hands-in-hands theory practical curriculum. Catering to the present educational needs is not enough, anticipating and preparing for the future trend is required too.

Keywords: Teacher Education Institutions, Teacher Training Programs, Education, Teachers

Article History: Received: 14th September 2019, Revised: 19th September 2019, Accepted: 19th September 2019, Published: 30th September 2019.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the 2019 world education rankings have revealed an encouraging improvement in Indian education sector, the fact that our top institutes prevail somewhere in the two hundred's position disheartens us. Addressing this issue Ellie Bothwell, the rankings editor and international reporter at Times Higher Education remarked, "In this year's table, India's institutions perform well in teaching. However they are significantly behind the global average in terms of international outlook. Strengthening this will further elevate the nation's global reputation for higher education, encourage important research collaborations and help attract international students." This urgently calls for the active investigation and revamping of the role of stakeholders and teacher education institutions for promoting innovative practices for professional development of teachers. The American Council of Education, 1999 has rightly commented, "Where teacher education programs operate at the periphery of the institution's strategic interests and directions, they should be moved to the centre or moved out."

II. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE AND NOT JUST THE PRESENT

A key area that today's teacher training programs need to address is the way to deal with the ever-changing educational patterns of the world. In order to be able to match up with the pace of this revolution, it is mandatory to make today's pupil teachers to intelligently anticipate the future technology and be ready to act accordingly. The crux is that, we need to integrate both today's and tomorrow's technology to obtain the optimum synergy in quality education.

India's former President, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee has once said, "The big challenge that we in India today face is to

improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes in our schools. This cannot be done without upgrading the skill and knowledge quotient of our teachers and without involving them fully as equal partners in the nation's progress." Identifying the objectives of teacher education in accordance with the present and the future is utmost important. The primary need of the hour is to chalk out an in-depth and transparent data of the exact requirement for a teacher-to-be for an effective teaching learning output and to cater to the need.

III. TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION & DIGITAL LITERACY

The need for preparing teachers for technology education is being emphasized since over three decades now. Surprisingly, the lack of revolution in the usage of technology is still a pain area that must be dealt with for veritable professional development of prospective teachers. Despite today's classrooms being well equipped with technology, the pedagogical results are not as expected. Even now, many teachers feel apprehensive in using technology confidently to expand the learning experience for their students. It is therefore imperative for both the mentors and the future teachers to design technological integrated lessons to fulfil the digital requirements of current knowledge terra firma.

Teachers tend to teach the way they were taught. It thus calls for creating self-sufficient instructional workforces fully capable to match the digital skill expectations of potential employers as well as students. It is important to understand that digital literacy cannot take place on its own by making traditional written reports. For acquiring the real proficiency in teaching, the habit of accessing, filtering and applying both

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analogical and digital information must be inculcated in the soon-to-be teachers. It makes complete sense to view digital literacy as a powerful skill that can easily surpass the conventional pedagogical skills of teachers. This can be achieved through appropriate usage of up-to-the-minute teaching aids.

Both stakeholders and teacher education institutions must acknowledge that younger minds are growing up in a highly aware digital environment. They are bound to feel uncomfortable if the same kind of technological ambience is provided to them. Instant chatting, video calling, social community networking and interactive video games form the language of the students of the new world. Hence, today's teacher training programs must be well equipped to make the tomorrow's teachers acquire cutting edge skills to teach such technology loving audience.

IV. PROVING THE BEST OF THE BEST TEACHER EDUCATORS

With the policy-makers giving more emphasis on raising the quality of teachers, raising the quality of teacher educators becomes the prerequisite. Thus, the key areas that need to be focussed by all teacher education institutions encompass the training of the trainers, the post-appointment staff development and the hiring and orientation preparations for initial teacher educators.

Umpteen numbers of researches conducted in the last decade has revealed stimuli conducive to student's achievement. Observations showed students imitating the same content and methodologies used by their teachers. This throws lights on the importance of teacher's qualification, knowledge and skills. It is thus clear that stakeholders and teacher education institutions must invest in teacher's learning in order to convalesce student learning. Teachers entering the educational workforce must not only have a hold in their content area, they should be completely aware of the ways and methods that make their students adept in the subjects.

V. MODEL OF COLLABORATION & IDEAL THEORY PRACTICE RELATIONSHIP

For the future oriented teachers' training program, what is mandatory is collaborating with groomed veterans from different walks of scholastic genres. In India, the customary teacher's training methods used have been carried on from one generation to another since years. Therefore, a partnership model between college faculties and practitioners at school or district level can bloom a need-of-the-era program for teachers. Collaboration between members from different universities, institutes and schools to share knowledge and ideas can go a long way in the development of teacher education. Study-visits between different teacher education institutions can enable faculty members and student teachers to benefit from collaborative studies.

It is always a good idea to create opportunities for continuous, informal professional development of educational mentors and mentees. One can do so by organizing guest lectures, weekend field trips, films, debates, quizzes, exhibitions and endeavour to inform and invite teachers across institutes and schools to participate in such events.

Another significant zone of contemplation for the teacher training programs is the theory practice relationship. Giving overdue importance of either of the two can create barriers in producing fundamentally strong and skilful teachers. What we need to understand is that theory acts as a base for practice while practice examines theory. Separation of the two will lead us to only one-sided curriculum for grooming teachers. Therefore, an ideal and reciprocated theory practice relationship should be built into the course process.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the words of our former President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, "In the present context, the education system has to be designed in a way that produces large number of employment generators and not just employment seekers." We need to find and conceptualize a proper educational model, which has the right blend of technology, and region specific tradition as ours is still a developing country and we need a uniformly developed teaching infrastructure. In order to meet the expectations of the twenty-first century educational audience empowering the innovative pedagogical practices for and by the teachers is a must. This can begin with having accurate information of today's objectives of teacher education, providing technological and digital literacy and making the pupil teachers ready to anticipate and handle future demands, grooming roles, functions and professional development of faculty members moving on to facilitating collaboration and partnership and executing a method based on amalgamated theory practice relationship. After all, the revolutionary educational demands can only be satisfied by revolutionary teaching practices!

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