

EDITORIAL
RESEARCH ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN
INDIA¹

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The complexity in initial teacher training scenario has made it a Bermuda triangle. The teacher education policy is fragmented, incomplete and, more often than not, simply underdeveloped and many key problem areas frequently go unaddressed. Courses in initial teacher cannot, in a time table which is often tightly constrained, equip teachers fully for all the tasks that they have to undertake. Not satisfied with effectiveness of initial teacher training programmes, many developed nations have made successful completion of induction programmes in schools mandatory for individuals having completed initial teacher training courses, before they are allowed to work as regular teachers. With same training and same resources, teachers differ in their effectiveness. Instances of some untrained teachers performing better than trained teachers are not rare. Instances of some teacher trainers without formal Master of Education degrees performing better than teacher trainers with Master of Education degrees are also not rare. The level of sincerity of teacher determines finally the quality of his/her work. Functioning of a teacher is mostly influenced by internal forces such as state of physical and mental health, philosophy of life, etc. Attributes such as personal autonomy, morality, teaching aptitude, attitude towards teaching profession, love for students, creativity, resourcefulness, flexibility are difficult to develop in case of adult learners, especially those who enter teacher training programmes after obtaining a degree. However, there can be some possibility in case of teacher trainees, who are in their teen ages and take admission in four year integrated courses and pre primary and elementary teacher education courses.

New areas in teacher education have been appearing at intervals,

which require attention of teacher educators. Research in teacher education has not been able to give exact direction as the issues involved in teacher education are not as pin pointed as found in case of researches in physical sciences. Research in teacher education has assumed importance in the present juncture, when teacher education has been taken lightly. Issues concerned with teacher education are teacher testing, basic skills testing, subject matter knowledge testing, professional skill testing, authentic assessment, portfolio assessment etc. Although follow up studies of products of teacher education provide valuable feedback for improving teacher training strategies, teacher education institutions rarely carry out such researches.

Researches in teacher education are generally short lived. This happens due to fluidity in the situation on which researches are undertaken. Review of Indian researches in teacher education reveals that majority of researches are on training modalities of teachers at the pre service stage followed by researches on development of teaching skills. Majority of the survey studies pertain to the field of secondary teacher education, followed by elementary, higher secondary and pre primary. Least coverage of pre primary stage might be due to the fact that there are not many teacher training institutions at this stage. Most of the existing ones are also in the private sector and are not affiliated to any Board or State Govt. examination conducting body. Teacher training at elementary stage has not got its due importance.

Certain issues in teacher education are peculiar to Indian situation. Indian society is a caste based society. In ancient times the population was distributed into four categories priests, warriors, traders and service providers to above three categories. In course of time a section of people from the last category were termed as untouchables. At the time of independence, these were named as scheduled castes and special provision was given in the constitution for their integration with the main society. Constitution provided

also reservations for students from tribal communities, known as scheduled tribes. Special schools and hostels were created for such children in addition to reservation in other institutions. Whether such special schools and hostels facilitate or hinder the process of their integration with the larger community and whether special training is needed for teachers for such schools and general schools having such children and what should be the content of training are serious research issues, not yet found due place.

India is a miniature world. When one comes to certain urban areas one forgets that it is a developing country. There exists huge gap between high fee charging schools in urban areas and schools in remote rural areas. Whether, there is a necessity for area specific special teacher training is another issue. Similarly, there are central government run schools for talented children established in each district. Whether such teachers need special training to teach gifted children is another issue.

There are issues which have come up because of suggestions by agencies like UNESCO, World Bank and UNICEF to improve quality of school education. Whether education of physically handicapped children can be better given in special schools created by them or in the general schools having adopted inclusive education is another issue that has not been appropriately researched. Developed countries can afford to have equipment necessary for education of such children available in each school, which is a myth in case of a developing country like India. Whether each teacher can be trained in using Braille or in using sign language or a roving teacher trained in such skills can do justice by attending a school, once a week is another research issue.

1. Presentation made at the Symposium on the World's Educational Issues, Policies and Research in the 21st Century: Seeking to Stimulate Collaborative and Comparative, Cross-National, and Worldwide Research organised by the World Educational Research Association at Vancouver, Canada on the venue of the Conference of the American Educational Research Association.