

# Need for Priam Variate Reforms in Teacher Education

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**Abstract:** This presentation aimed at providing a picture of the present scenario of teacher education at a glance. It also points out the necessities for developing new frameworks for education. The present paper focused on the basic problems of education and pointed the basic fundamentals that should be considered while providing teacher education. It stressed the main attributes of a profession such as the systematic theory, rigorous training over a specified duration, authority, community sanction, ethical codes, generating knowledge through research and specialization.

**Keywords:** teacher education, priam variate reforms, problems.

## Introduction

Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers lead communities and nations in their march towards better and higher quality of life. They reveal and elaborate the secrets of attaining higher values in life and nurture empathy for the fellow beings. Teachers are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. They not only disseminate knowledge but also create and generate new knowledge. They are responsible for acculturating role of education. No nation can even marginally slacken its efforts in giving necessary professional inputs to its teachers and along with that due status to their stature and professions. The universally subscribed goal that "by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality" (Declaration of The World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000) can only be achieved if children can have access to motivated and knowledgeable teachers.

## Teacher Education: Contemporaneous

The changing role of teachers and the changing definitions of teacher effectiveness have been increasingly studied and analyzed, with research undertaken and the outcomes being fed back into the system to facilitate the process of education reform. The current focus of researchers, policy makers and practitioners with regard to teacher education is on the development of professional competencies, and on the most effective ways of achieving higher levels of commitment and motivation for higher-level performance on the part of teachers. In addition, important possibilities are arising with regard to current developments involving the new information and communication technologies. As a result, teacher education in India is on the brink of a major transformation.

The educational expansion, universalization of elementary education, vocationalisation of secondary education, higher and professional education and overall quality of education are major challenges before the country. The task of bringing qualitative change in institutional efficacy of the teacher education system in itself is a huge and challenging one. The last five decades have witnessed several attempts to change, modify and indigenize the inherited system of teacher education. The system however continues to function more or less on the same principles, similar content and approaches characterized by continuity and unwillingness to change. Over the years the magnitude of the task has increased manifold.

The existing programmes of teacher education at primary and secondary stages are generally based upon the teacher education curriculum framework brought out by the NCTE in 1978. There was another attempt to revise the curriculum in 1988. Most of the institutions now conduct programmes and courses which were revised prior to 1988 document. The developments and changes over the last two decades require a fresh look at the teacher education.

During the last decade, new thrusts have been posed due to rapid changes in the educational, political, social and economic contexts at the national and international levels. Curriculum reconstruction has also become imperative in the light of some perceptible gaps in teacher education. The integration of theory and practice and consequent curricular response to the requirements of the school system still remains inadequate.



Teachers are prepared in competencies and skills which do not necessarily equip them for becoming professionally effective. Their familiarity with latest educational developments remains insufficient. A large number of teacher training institutions do not practice what they preach. Several of the skills acquired and methodologies learnt are seldom practiced in actual school system. This highlights the need to bring realism and dynamism in the curriculum.

The Programme of Action (POA 1992) among others has pointed out the following in respect of teacher education:

- a) Professional commitment and overall competencies of teachers leave much to be desired.
- b) The quality of pre-service education has not improved with recent developments in pedagogical science, and has actually shown signs of deterioration.
- c) Teacher education programmes consist mainly of pre-service teacher training, with practically no systematic programmes of in-service training, facilities for which are lacking.
- d) There has been an increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices;
- e) The support system provided by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the University Departments of Education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level.

### **The New Considerations**

The very fact that teaching is a profession entails that teaching is a specialized activity for which specialized knowledge/ training is required through specialized institutions. A good institution will produce individuals who will be devoted to the profession and make their mark in the activities organized by them while going to the field. Considering the resolve to make India a knowledge super power by 2020, more vigorous efforts are required to set foot in the direction. In the context of globalization, there is need to redefine the role of secondary education, consistent with our long term socio economic goals. Teacher educators' way of organizing theoretical framework, practical sessions and skills development programme affect the future teachers. The activities suggested during training are carried to the classroom teaching in the schools.

It has been long proclaimed that an expert teacher is very important in every classroom. Children and young people deserve no less than teachers who are well grounded in the theory and research that form the essential foundation for effective reading instruction, instruction that is evidence based and adaptable to the needs of individual students and communities. These learners deserve teachers who have a command of a variety of teaching methods and approaches that can be applied according to individual needs and circumstances. There is no single method or strategy that will promote high levels of reading achievement for all learners in all circumstances. Education of teachers needs to strengthen and stress upon the main attributes of a profession, such as, the systematic theory, rigorous training over a specified duration, authority, community sanction, ethical code and culture, generating knowledge through research and specialization. It is acknowledged that formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of conduct.

The teacher education should focus on the basic problems such as follows:

#### **1. Teacher Education and Problems of the Nation**

##### **Economic Problems**

Teacher education curriculum, therefore, has to promote such attitudes as are necessary for the emergence of a new economic order. Along with the vocational competencies and skills a new work culture will have to be created which necessarily involves the inculcation of dignity of work, the spirit of self-reliance and scientific temper among students. The courses of teacher education need to be enriched to enable teachers to understand the attributes of modernity and development.

##### **Social Problems**

Education has to develop a peace loving personality and the programme of teacher education has to contribute in this regard. Strengthening national and social cohesion in a diverse and plural society, accelerating the process of economic growth, improving the life of the downtrodden and the people living below the poverty line, removing the widely prevalent ignorance, superstition and prejudices from the masses, inculcating scientific temper and developing a critical awareness about the social realities of Indian life are some of the issues which call for immediate attention. Teachers and the teacher educators have a special role to play in such efforts.



### **Problems of Cultural Reconstruction**

Education is the process of transmission of dynamic and responsive components of cultural heritage and its continuous enrichment. There is a need to reinterpret the Indian culture in its distinct identity and composite strength. Its capacity to absorb the sublime from the other cultures needs to be highlighted. The teachers will have to play their role in cultural transmission and reconstruction.

### **Crises of Values and Morality**

It is through education and as of necessity through teacher education programmes that the task of inculcating values can be substantially accomplished. Whereas values are emotive, the other related significant dimension is that of moral education which is essentially conative in character. Through committed teachers, the art of ensuring moral development in a secular, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society needs to be cultivated.

## **2. Problems within Education System**

### **Isolation of Teacher Education**

Teacher educators need to be made conversant with various aspects of school experiences. It is observed in day-to-day functioning that teacher educators often tend to lose contact with content areas relevant to their own disciplines resulting into gaps in communication and latest information. It is, therefore, a felt need in the present-day context that teacher education institutions keep in continuous touch with institutions of higher learning and peer institutions for effective transmission of knowledge and its up gradation.

### **Expanding Scope of Teacher Education**

Education of teachers is not an end in itself. Its target is the school. Any change in the nature, purpose, quality and character of the school demands a concomitant change in teacher education, especially in its curriculum.

### **Evolving a Culture-Specific Pedagogy**

Every region and state has its typical cultural identity, and there is a need to utilize the same as a basis for developing meaningful, relevant pedagogies. Pedagogy should be culture-specific. Cultural practices such as story-telling, dramatics, puppetry, folk-play, community living, etc. should become a strong basis of pedagogy instead of using one uniform, mechanistic way of student learning. Cultural specificity should get embedded in the pedagogical practices which should be evolved for tribal, rural, urban communities and other ethnic groups.

The process to reform teacher education and teaching profession needs a new frame work so as to develop among teachers and teacher educators:

- the intrinsic and extrinsic values of professional competency, professional commitment and professional ethics
- creating and reconstructing knowledge
- selecting, organizing and using learning resources
- effectively transacting curriculum, selecting and organizing educational activities and programmes for learners with special needs
- using media and appropriate instructional technologies
- communicating effectively and responding to the challenges of continuity and change
- counseling students for personality development, adjustment and learning attainment
- conducting research, especially action research and initiating innovative practices
- organizing student-activities
- a sense of value judgment, value commitment and value transmission
- understanding the import of inter-relationship between culture and education and 'culture and personality'
- fostering interest in life-long learning
- understanding the aspirations and expectations of the community and establishing mutually supportive linkages between school and community
- acting as a change agent for modernization and development



The educational programmes for prospective teachers, therefore, need to be so designed as to develop in them the requisite potential and capabilities but not the least, we should develop in them an ever growing thirst for knowledge.

India has a large system of education. There are nearly 5.98 lakh Primary Schools, 1.76 lakh Elementary Schools and 98 thousand High / Higher Secondary Schools in the country, about 1300 teacher education institutions for elementary teachers and nearly 700 colleges of education / university departments preparing teachers for secondary and higher secondary schools. Out of about 4.52 million teachers in the country nearly 3 million are teaching at the primary/ elementary level. A sizeable number of them are untrained or under-trained. In certain regions, like the North-East, there are even under-qualified teachers. As far as in-service education is concerned the situation is not very encouraging.

It is estimated that on an average 40% of the teachers are provided in-service teacher education once over a period of five years. Regarding non-formal education, though a number of models are in vogue in various states in the country, much more needs to be done to prepare teachers and other functionaries for the system.

A comprehensive theoretical base is essential for a teacher to assume professional role and develop capacity to conceptualize inputs from other disciplines as well and evolve strategies to utilize them. A true professional is capable of perceiving complexities and uncertainties in the society. He has a thorough grasp of the subject, possesses skills to make critical diagnosis, takes decisions and has courage and conviction to implement such decisions. It is rather painful to discern that despite commendable improvement in service conditions and perks, the profession is yet to attract the best brains.

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