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QUEST FOR NEW PARADIGMS OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The development of a nation depends on the availability, quality and utilization of its resources, both physical and human. Out of these two resources, human resource is of greater importance because proper utilization of physical resources is dependent on the human resource. Therefore, development of human resource of our country remains the prime responsibility of the Indian society. It is education, which is main force for developing the human resource. Role of teachers in the educational system is of paramount importance. It would be the quality of teachers, their knowledge, skills, values and loyalty to the profession which would determine the quality of human resource of our nation. It is for such reasons that the Education Commission (1964-66) in its report stated in the first sentence itself, "The Destiny of India is being shaped in her classroom". Thus the responsibility of the teachers and the institutions which prepare teachers is tremendous. In the knowledge based economy we now inhabit, the future of our country as individuals and as a nation would depend on our capability to learn more powerfully on a wide scale. The outcome rests in turn on our ability to teach much more effectively, especially those who are weak in understanding instruction, economically and socially. To enable teachers to do their functions effectively, the teachers preparation programme has to be powerful enough for transforming teaching and learning and empowering teachers to face current challenges in the field of education. Our Teacher Education prepare teachers who impart common instruction to all students of the class. Rather as teachers we appreciate good students particularly intelligent and high achievers and snub low achievers, weak and poor students which in turn develops inferiority complex in our citizens. If teachers have to take care of those who do not understand instruction in the class, then, would be the first aspect which creates the Quest

for New Paradigm in Teacher Education. This would require teachers who are committed to the profession, who have passion for teaching and are highly involved in the welfare of all students. Such attributes enable a teacher to devote more time for their students.

Changing Demands of the Social System Due to Globalization.

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. Schools are also being confronted with many problems due to changing societal situations and concerns due to globalization, and technology inputs in teaching learning process. India is passing through a period of an all-pervasive change. Science, technology, information and communication technology are transforming the traditional way of life and making inroads into beliefs, values and norms. In spite of their desirable contributions, science, technology, industrialization, westernization and modernity are creating considerable social instability and value crisis. The impact of value crisis, especially among the educated youth is a matter of grave concern. Teacher Education has to continue due emphasis on scientific and technological development in order to compete with the world, but, it needs to lay adequate stress on developing life skills and concentrate its efforts on inculcation and restoration of values as its integral component. Development of life skills and capacity

for productive and healthy living among children should engage the attention of teachers and teacher educators. In the contemporary context, despite prosperity and abundance of amenities of life, man is not able to lead a happy and healthy life because he has forgotten the art of living. His relationship with man and nature and also with himself has been disturbed because of his attitude and philosophy of life. It is necessary for man to keep his desires and temptations within reasonable limits and keep attuned to search for higher values in life. Teacher education needs to make serious effort for achieving these by developing students' multifaceted personalities and inspiring them to achieve the set goals.

It may be noted, that, there has been growing interdependence of society and nations in the modern times. Globalization has far reaching impact on education as well and this is intensified because the information and communications revolution is helping transcend barriers of time and space. Educational Institutions established by developed countries may have better infrastructure and learning resources and create a competitive environment. Teacher Education has to transform itself and be equipped accordingly.

The Teacher Education Institutions have to develop teachers who have very high integrity, commitment, loyalty and very high moral values. Teachers have to be trained not only in using technology rather they have to be trained in developing software materials and E-learning materials to be used in providing education in the schools and every in the institutions of higher learning. Teachers have to be trained to deal effectively with multicultural society and have to be empowered to develop feelings of internationalism in students. This is in my view another aspect which necessitates Quest of New Paradigm of Teacher Education.

Quest for New Paradigm Due to Changing School Context

The Teacher Education Programmes have to be developed in accordance with the curriculum framework for school education. Teachers have to be developed professionally as per the requirements of the schools, particularly the content, learners and the learning environment. The expectations of the School from teachers change from time to time, responding to the broader social, economic and political changes taking place in the society.

School education has been significant development over the decades since independence. According to Government of India estimates about 82 percent of the 20 Crore children of the 5-14 age group were enrolled in the school (Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-2005, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi). It is worth noting, that, the Annual Report, 2007-2008 of MHRD, Government India shows that nearly 50% of these children drop out before completing standard VIII. There are very serious challenges posed by the regional, social and gender disparities. This reality increases the challenge of implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and, in particular, the role and Place of School teacher. The Act mandates that, "The teacher should refrain from inflicting corporal punishment, complete the entire curriculum within the given time, hold parents meeting and appraise them and as part of the School Management Committee, organize the overall running of the School". The Act vide section 29(2), emphasizes the following areas while laying down the curriculum and evaluation procedures:

1. Conformity with the values enshrined in the constitution.
2. All round development of the child.
3. Building up child's knowledge, potentiality and talent.
4. Development of physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent.
5. Learning through activities, discovery and exploration in child friendly and child- centred manner.
6. Medium of instruction, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue.
7. Making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views

freely.

8. Comprehensive and continuous evaluation of child's understanding of knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same.

In addition to the above points, the NCF requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children's learning in a manner that helps children to construct knowledge and meaning. "The teacher in this process is a co-creator of knowledge. It also opens out possibilities for the teacher to participate in the construction of Syllabi, text books and teaching learning materials. Such roles demand that teachers be equipped with an adequate understanding of curriculum, subject content and pedagogy on one hand; and the community and school structures and managements, on the other" states the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCTE, 2009. It further describes the school context and its demands which are reproduced here in next four paras.

The launch of the massive Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2002 and the financial commitment and education cess to augment the UEE mission have underscored the need to prepare the teachers adequately to address the growing demand for quality education. A similar demand may arise in the context of the impending universalization of secondary education in the coming years.

The continued decline in quality of the state school system and the proliferation of sub-standard unregulated private schools pose several challenges to the national declaration of catering to the basic learning needs of all children in the 6-14 group through the elementary education system. Increasing privatization and differentiation of the school system have vitiated drastically the right to quality education for all children. In addition, the pressure of globalization leading to commercialization in all sector including education and increasing competition are forcing children into unprecedented situations that they have to cope with. It is expected that the right of children to Free and Compulsory

Education. Act will play a major role in arresting some of these trends dictated by the market forces.

There is now a public acknowledgement that the current system of schooling imposes tremendous burden on our children. This burden arises from an incoherent curriculum structure that is often dissociated from the personal and social milieu of children as also from the inadequate preparation of teachers who are unable to make connections with children and respond to their needs in imaginative ways. Teachers need to be creators of knowledge and thinking professionals. They need to be empowered to recognize and value what children learn from their home, social and culture environment and to create opportunities for children to discover, learn and develop. The recommendations of the NCF on school curriculum re build on this plank. Educationists are also of the view that the burden arises from treating knowledge as a 'given', as an external reality existing outside the learner and embedded.

This view of education points to the need to take a fresh look at teacher preparation. Education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teacher need to be looked at as crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted and knowledge is co-constructed along with learns. Textbooks by themselves do not help in developing knowledge and understanding. Learning is not confined to the four walls of the classroom. For this happen there is a need to connect knowledge to life outside the school and curriculum by making it less textbook-centered.

Developing National Leadership Requires New Paradigm

The educational system has a major responsibility to provide leadership in all walks of life. A nation would progress if it is governed by committed, dedicated and capable leaders. Today's education system has not taken up this responsibility seriously; rather; parents and teacher

often say that good students should remain away from the political leadership. Teachers must take the responsibility of identifying the leaders and nurture them so that they could serve the nation with complete dedication. Samrat Chandragupta was identified by a great teacher Chanakya and he proved to be a wonderful king in India. During his rule the peace, happiness, and prosperity in the society increased. If this is to be achieved today then, teacher education programme have to include appropriate content in their curriculum, train them, so that they develop positive attitude towards this function and identity and nurture leaders. These leaders would be the role models for the society.

Promotion of equity, social justice, liberty and fraternity necessitates quest for new paradigm

The Indian constitution has granted and tried to promote equity, social justice, liberty, fraternity etc. and there has been lot of improvement. However, in our society and culture there are certain factors particularly caste system and gender which have inherent injustice due to hierarchy perceived by people and practiced by people in the society? As certain systems have been practiced in the society for a very long time, it is extremely difficult to eliminate them from the society just by framing rules and laws.

We also observe, that, today life on earth is under threat, racial, regional, communal and religion conflicts have destroyed peace, prosperity and fraternity of the people. Terrorism has increased world over and harmed common people. There is tension in the society.

In order to solve such problems, educational system has to be made more sensitive. It requires mental transformation in our younger generation. It needs attitudinal and ideological transformation in our younger generation this requires social revolution which can be brought only by the teachers. Till date teachers world over have not taken up this responsibility on their shoulders. It is not their fault as they have not been trained for this important task. The teacher training programmes have to bring certain changes in their curriculum inputs and modes of transaction, so that, teachers could be empowered to eliminate injustice, inequality from the society and develop a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious society where people have belongingness and care for each other. It needs teachers who have knowledge, skill and committed for the task and above all are fearless. Infact, "Timid people and Great Institutions go III together", Education commission 1964-66.

Need to Develop a Questioning Mind

In Indian society, there has been a tradition, that, one must respect teachers and should never doubt and question the authority of the guru. One must listen to the Guru with full concentration and respect. In order to obtain knowledge, one must fully devote one's life to the Guru with complete faith. This has influenced our students and teachers both.

It must be noted at this stage that, in last 50 years efforts have been made to have active involvement of learners in the process through activities, discussion and responding to the teacher's questions. The teacher is being exposed as a friend, philosopher, guide and more recently as co-creator of knowledge. In addition to these efforts, teachers must develop a questioning mind along with keen observation of an individual and then questioning the occurrence of a phenomenon which generates new knowledge. The penicillin could not have been discovered if the scientist Alexander Fleming had not observed growing fungus on the bread. Such observation we all make. But, it was his keen observation which made him aware that fungus is not growing in the same manner, at some places it is more and at some places it is not there. It was his questioning mind which questioned why fungus is not growing at certain places? It is this questioning mind which led to the discovery of Penicillin. Fruits falling down every one observe, but it was the questioning mind of Issac Newton which questioned, why the apple falls down? It gave birth to the gravitational force.

Considering the importance of the questioning mind the teacher training programmes have to train teachers in the skills of developing the questioning mind.

Changing Evaluation into a Motivating Force

The evaluation has considered an integral part of the teaching learning process. Efforts have been made to make it comprehensive and continuous. Efforts also have been made to use it for feedback purpose along with grading and certification. However, it remains a process of finding mistakes of the learners and assessing them objectively. Due to this fault finding process, it remains demotivating for students and creates an undue pressure and tension for them even at early stages. It happens even in those classes in the school where marks are neither used for admissions nor for placement in jobs.

In order to reduce this burden, there have been efforts to eliminate exams at primary stage and a process of passing all children at primary stage. In my personal view this is not good as many children pass primary stage without having the knowledge of basics. It would be better if tests are conducted by the teachers regularly and while assessing in place of giving the 'red cross' at the mistakes, teachers just put green dots. After assessing a teacher gives the answer sheets to the children back and says to the class, "Children I have assessed your answer sheets and you have learnt most of the things. This is very good, but, there are some more things which I have marked in your answer sheets which you have to learn more. Now identify those things which you have to learn more." Let them identify and call them to tell you 'WHAT MORE THEY HAVE TO LEARN.' As the student identifies and comes to you, tell him/her that, "You have been able to identify correctly, you will succeed in your life."

This will motivate the child and then ask them to learn in the class itself you will find good result. Thus the process which was creating fear of failure will change into the motivating force to learn and create happy atmosphere and develop positive attitude in the students towards examinations.

At the end I may also state here, that, if teacher have to be trained and made professionals, then, one year duration for B. Ed. is not proper, it has to be increased to two years. I am also of the view that, considering the requirement of the higher secondary stage the training programme may be separated from secondary education. Higher Secondary Education could be more specialized and being more specialized only one method of teaching may be offered. The training for science teachers may involve training in conducting practical work also. Institutions may offer specialized training for science teachers, social sciences and humanities separately.

The Secondary Education could be of two years duration and Higher Secondary could be of one year duration.

In brief it can be stated that considering the present requirements of the educational system and society there is really a quest for new paradigms of Teacher Education in the new millennium.
