PROFESSIONALLY DEVELOPING TEACHERS AND ENHANCING THEIR COMPETENCIES IN THE PRESENT ERA OF GLOBALIZATION AND PRIVATIZATION: CURRENT EMERGING CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

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ABSTRACT:

The usefulness and effectiveness of any education system is closely linked to teachers' skill and competence. The system has not only to take cognizance of our country's present and future socio-economic needs but also should keep the global scenario in view. Today's teacher-trainees are tomorrow's teachers in schools and higher education system. 'School' is the stage where foundation of strong character and all round development of young boys and girls is laid. Therefore, teachers in schools must themselves be so trained and equipped that they fully realize the significance of their role as teachers and guides for the future citizens of our country. Our existing teachers' training institutes are woefully short of the minimum facilities and infrastructure needed to train them and equip our future teachers in an ideal way. The present paper emphasizes some of the important ways and means to achieve teachers' professional development. The teachers must not only know the most effective methods of teaching and various related strategies but also make the teaching learning process interesting and meaningful for the students. The 'quality' of education indeed has several aspects. For this the teachers themselves have to be trained not only in teaching methods and techniques, but must also be dedicated, motivated and knowledgeable. The government, management of schools and several government-established agencies are doing their bit to improve the quality and raise the standard of education. But still a lot more is needed to achieve our ambition and goals.

KEYWORDS: Quality, Effective teaching, Professional Development, Scaffolding, Co-operative Learning.

INTRODUCTION

"The status of teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society and no people can rise above the level of its teachers" (NPE, 1986). The usefulness and effectiveness of the education system largely depends upon the active, resourceful and competent teachers. It is widely recognized that teacher performance is the single most crucial input to improve the quality of education. Researchers have emphasized the importance of link between the quality of education and adequacy of professional training of teachers. The standard of teacher education programmes determines the quality of training provided to teachers. Today the system of education needs to respond not only to national socio-economic and political needs but also enables us to visualize the system, which could fulfill the larger goals of human empowerment in the wake of globalization and knowledge explosion.

"The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms", has been rightly said by Education Commission Report (1964-66). This implies that teacher, who is the organizer and controller of the classroom, is mostly

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responsible for the future of India. In today's scenario of education, the purpose of teacher education is to produce teachers who have professional competencies. The role of teachers is no longer confined to teaching alone. They need to be thorough professional, fully equipped with high academic standard, pedagogical and practical skills.

At present, the "teacher" is a mere means in the hands of the education administrators for achieving stipulated, designed and desired ends of the state. The state decides what to teach, how to teach and when to teach. The teacher has no say in this regard and he has to follow the instructions. Again with globalization we see an emerging 'global society' driven by technology and communication developments. This 'global society' requires the students to become 'global citizens' and be intelligent persons with multi-skills and knowledge to survive and excel in the competitive and information-based society. Teachers today find themselves in an education system in which they are no longer the sole 'fountain of information' but only facilitators and pointers towards information (Francis, 2000).

Recognizing the global perspectives in education, the Jacques Delors Commission in its report, "Learning: The Treasure within" (UNESCO, 1996) highlights the challenges that are to be responded to by the teacher and teacher education system. The programmes of teacher education for various stages need to be restructured and modernized in their input, process and output to make the system quality-oriented.

Quality has become a 'buzz-word' in the present teacher education system. Today, teacher education is at 'cross-roads' and there is an urgent need to revamp and improve the quality of our teacher education system. Indian institutions of teacher education are far behind than developed countries. We need to make the system of teacher education more innovative and futuristic in order to improve the quality and to meet the ever-changing demands of the society. To maintain the standards and to update the quality of teacher education we require commitment, complete involvement of all the personnel, friendly management and training of personnel involved.

Quality is excellence. Quality is satisfaction. Quality is effectiveness. "Quality is never ending journey". Quality education is that which enhances the quality of life. Sharma (2004), gives five essential aspects of quality education; viz., quality syllabus, quality faculty, quality teaching and evaluation, quality research and quality character. All the teachers may not be alike as far as the above mentioned characteristics are concerned. But one thing is certainly true that every teacher educator should strive to improve the quality of the present teacher education system.

Teaching profession is a challenging one, as each day and each classroom is a novel experience in itself. To make the teaching and the overall Teaching Learning Process (TLP) an interesting one, a teacher should use innovative methods to make the courses interesting for students. Implementing innovative teaching experiments and practices require high level of interest and efforts mainly from the teachers and the managements of the educational institutions. Teachers should be committed, dedicated and motivated so as to foster the global competencies among its students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The following are the objectives of the present study.
- To study the role of teachers in the present twenty first century.
- To study the initiatives and efforts taken by teacher educational institutions and government sponsored agencies for improving the quality of teacher education.
- To study how to achieve excellence and quality in teaching.
- To study strategies adopted for promoting quality in teacher education through professional development of teachers.
- To study other emerging issues, concerns and prospects facing the present teacher education.

METHODOLOGY
Keeping in view of availability of the resources and feasibility of the present research paper, the author conducted his research studies on the basis of secondary sources of data. Secondary data has

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been collected from various books, Journals, research articles etc. The methodology of the study also includes the thoughts and writings of various authors in the stream of academic, research & corporate industry. Thus, the author utilized all resources available and carried out extensive studies for the present research paper.

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN THE PRESENT 21ST CENTURY

Ours is a secular state, our teachers should create an atmosphere of morality based on religious tolerance. In a country like India, access to higher education and ensuring social justice should be the basic objectives of national development. Hence, teachers of today should develop internationally and interculturally-competent human resources to make them fit to survive in today's competitive world.

In the present changing society, the role of the teacher may be given in the following words:

1. The teacher should be able to create and sustain an academic environment.
2. The teacher should continue his/her studies so that he may be proficient and update in the subject he/she is teaching.
3. A teacher must strictly follow the code of teaching ethics, which requires proficiency, sincerity to the pupil and to the society as a whole.
4. A teacher should be conscious of his roles in terms of teaching, training, consulting and research.
5. The teacher should be the manager of the Teaching Learning Process (TLP). To become, an excellent manager of TLP, a teacher of 21st century has to plan, organize, lead and control the effects of all the available new material resources and variables involved in the process of teaching-learning in order to achieve stated teaching learning objectives with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
6. A teacher should not commercialize the teaching profession, she/he should not undertake tuitions.
7. A teacher is expected to dedicate his/her efforts and energy towards the development of the institution they are working for and in the process develop themselves as professionals.
8. The teacher should act as a community manager and thus appreciate the aspirations and expectations of the community. He should act as an agent for modernization and development of the community.
9. A teacher should act as a protector of the environment.
10. A teacher should be very sincere to his clients-that is students - he/she is going to teach.

Initiatives taken by Teacher Educational Institutions for improving the quality of Teacher Education

The quality and efficiency of education and its contribution to national development squarely rests on the quality and competency of teachers and the quality of teachers depends to a large extent on quality of teacher education received by him/her. The Education Commission (1964-66) in its report has rightly stated, that "A sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education". The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) has observed that a major factor responsible for the educational reconstruction at the secondary stage is teachers' professional training. The Education Commission (1964-66) stressed that "in a world based on science and technology it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people" and that a "sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education".

"NPE (1986) states, "The existing system of teacher education needs to be overhauled or revamped". This has resulted in a number of initiatives being launched. These include:

1. Establishment of DIETS in each district. Upgradation of 3000 odd Teachers Training Institutions into Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and 50 Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) in the country, strengthening autonomous status of SCERT and establishment of Department of Education. All the efforts are aimed at creating a viable institutional infrastructure, academic and technical resources for continuous upgradation of knowledge, competencies and pedagogical skills of school teachers and teacher educators.

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2. Teacher education became a new entity with the establishment of NCTE by the Govt. of India on 17th August 1995 as a statutory body responsible for regulatory as well as professional aspects of teacher education.

3. Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in all the states and union territories during 1986-90. About 1.8 lakh primary teachers and secondary teachers were covered under this programme.

4. Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT) was taken up in 1993-94 to provide orientation to primary school teachers in the use of teaching-learning materials under Operation Black Board (OBB) and also to train them in the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) strategies with focus on teaching of languages, Mathematics and environment studies.

5. In the light of recommendations of NPE (1986), Block and Cluster Resource Centres were established for the professional growth of elementary school teachers and heads. The objective of the progrmme is to enhance teacher competency through group discussion and interaction with resource persons on a regular basis.

6. Interactive teleconferencing has been tried in two states, viz., Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh on 850 and 1450 primary teachers respectively in one-week in-service training course. A national plan fro action providing in-service training fro primary teachers through interactive distance education has also been developed.

7. Another pioneering effort for qualitative improvement of Teacher Education was the "Teacher Education Curriculum Framework". So far four National Curriculum Frameworks of Teacher Education has been brought out by the NCTE (1978, 1988, 1998 and 2009). Similar exercise was carried out by the NCERT, in 1998, 2004 and 2005.

8. To facilitate teacher educators to transact teacher education programmes effectively and enable entrant teachers to acquire ICT literacy, the NCTE has produces a CD-ROM entitled, 'IT literacy'. Available both in Hindi and English versions, the IT Literacy CD-ROM is being distributed to all teacher education institutions.

9. Admission Criteria for Teacher Education: NCTE has fixed specific norms and regulations for the recognition of teacher education institution and admission criteria for teacher education (50% marks to open category at degree level and 45% marks for reserved category at degree level.) The common curriculum of teacher education programme is framed by UGC and NCTE with respect to the teaching competency at national and global level. Unfortunately, the delay of admission process in teacher education has become the cause for non-effective training of teachers. The minimum working days for teacher education are 200 as decided by the NCTE. The teacher education institutions (TEIs) do not implement total curriculum transaction due to less working days. To evaluate such student- teachers by using standard and global norms for the process of evaluation, would not work effectively. Unfortunately the process of quality evaluation moves slowly towards quantitative evaluation so that admission criteria should be redefined with consideration of interest, attitude and aptitude of the student-teacher for the better success of teaching profession.

10. Restructuring of Curriculum: When we aim that the teacher should be competent locally as well as globally, there is a need to revise the curriculum, in relation to develop teaching competency in student-teacher. The curriculum of teacher education program should always consistently be correlated with the school education curriculum and the system at various boards of education, such as State board, CBSE, ICSE etc. There is a need to develop cognitive domain, affective domain and psycho-motor domain of the student teacher. While revising the curriculum, we should consider competencies related to their subject and the specialization i.e. science teacher, music teacher etc.

11. Implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) Process in Teacher Education: Today, even though the universities and institutions are using best practices for CCE in teacher education, the quality of product (student-teacher) is not up to the mark. To acquire global competencies in teacher education in a specialized area, the healthy practices should be

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implemented in a process of CCE in teacher education. The best practices in CCE, for example, are: tutorials, internal test, organization of seminar and workshops, field visits to best schools, group assignments for projects, peer assessment, assessment by parents and management, assessment by teachers in practicing schools   and assessment by the college staff.
12. NCTE has 'developed self-learning modules on Human Rights and National Values' with a view to familiarize teachers with values that have cultural context, so that prospective teachers are made aware about the value crisis and its subsequent impact on day-to-day social life and role of education in inculcating human values.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY IN TEACHING

Teacher quality and the strength of educator's leadership are recognized as the greatest determinants of education success. Quality teaching has a measurable impact on student outcomes. Teacher quality affects all stages of the teaching 'life-cycle', from attraction into the profession to ongoing development and retention in schools. To improve equity in educational outcomes, quality teachers must also work in schools where they are needed most including, remote and disadvantaged schools. Improving teacher and school leader quality requires the following action:
1. Select the "best and brightest" students in the teaching profession.
2. Train our future teachers through world-class pre-service education.
3. Stringent norms and regulations in the recruitment process of the teachers at school and higher educational levels.
4. Place quality teachers and school leaders, in schools and TEIs where they are needed most.
5. Develop teachers skills and knowledge through ongoing professional learning; and
6. Retain quality teacher and school leaders in our schools and TEIs.
7. Providing effective teaching through effective teachers at all levels of education.
8. Scaffolding students' task engagement: The teacher provides whatever assistance students need to enable them to engage in learning activities productively. Structuring and support can be reduced as the students' expertise develops.
9. Co-operative learning: Students benefit from working in pairs or small groups so as to build understanding or help one another master skills. Teaching is a complex endeavor, involving classroom management, lesson preparation and organizing of teaching and learning activities, creating and maintaining a certain climate, and evaluate and feedback.

Strategies Adopted for Promoting Quality in Teacher Education system through professional development of teachers

The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality. Teacher quality, teacher learning, teacher's effectiveness and teacher improvement, therefore are becoming the foci of researches, policy makers, program designers, implementers and evaluators.

In both developing and industrialized countries, teachers in the past were treated as semi-skilled workers unable to make responsible decisions about their practice. They were required to follow instructional prescriptions and highly scripted and rigid teaching procedure. For their professional development, teachers received information on how to improve from 'experts' in centralized workshops with little follow-up support at the institutional level.

Action research has led to teacher empowerment and has become an important component of what is considered good teacher development. Action research refers to teachers individually or in groups gathering and analyzing information in order to solve problems at the institutional level. In addition to mobilizing teachers to study and reflect on their practice, action research advances the professionalization of teachers' by helping them develop and validate their knowledge.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) noted that professional development of teachers begins at pre-service stage and gets updated through in-service programmes,

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(NCTE, 1993 & 2009). According to NCFTE, 2009, the broad aims of continuous professional development programmes for teachers are as following:

1. Explore, reflect on and develop one's own practice.
2. Deepen one's knowledge of and update oneself about one's academic discipline or other areas of school curriculum.
3. Research and reflect on learners and their education.
4. Understand and update oneself on educational and social issues.
5. Prepare for other roles professionally linked to education/teaching, such as teacher education, curriculum development or counseling.
6. Breakout of intellectual isolation and share experiences and insights with others in the field, both teachers and academics working in the area of specific disciplines as well as intellectuals in the immediate and wider society.
7. All teachers should become members of important associations which have from time to time taken up academic activities and organized conventions and meetings to discuss professionally important developments. Educational and curriculum planners also seek to provide avenues for the professional development of teachers as a part of implementing curricular reforms to:-

a) Enable teachers to work towards prioritized goals in education such as universalization and inclusion.
b) Influence social attitudes and generate greater commitment to constitutional values and overcoming discrimination in the classroom.
c) Transform existing practices towards more learner friendly methods and methods suited to strengthening conceptual learning and understanding rather than rote learning.
d) Enable teacher to implement and achieve specific targeted aspects in the curriculum, such as the use of technology or the addition of topics such as AIDS and adolescent education.
e) Prepare teachers to play enhanced roles in the education system as resource persons, or head teachers, etc.

The whole approach to teachers' professional needs continues to be determined, planned, implemented and monitored extrinsically, compromising on the concept of the teacher as a professional. Some of the measures that have been proposed to achieve professional development of teachers during the Eleven five year plan are as following:-

1) Restructuring and improving pre-service Teacher Education:

This involves removing deadwood from the existing curricular; making the curriculum components contextually relevant and providing legitimate space for need-based local specifics as a must. The scheme of pre-service teacher education should be flexible and dynamic and should help prepare culturally responsive and caring teachers.Pre-service education curricular needs to be based on the guidelines contained in the NCTE framework and should integrate ICT literacy and promotes its use in theory and as well as in practice of teacher education.

2) Instituting innovative Pre-service education:

Due to inadequacy of one-year secondary level pre-service education programmes, greater emphasis needs to be laid on innovative programmes of duration exceeding one year. Longer duration of pre-service can be helpful in developing teachers' belief and value system so that they become aware of their various pedagogical responsibilities and carry them out effectively, thereby enabling their learners to develop into caring and conscious human beings.

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3) Launching level-specific Post graduate Teacher Education programmes:

Master of education with specialization in pre-school education, elementary education etc; needs to be instituted so that professionally more competent teacher educators can be groomed and made available in various teacher education institutions.

4) Ensuring Professional quality control:

Teacher education institutions should be properly equipped and staffed so that they have the necessary orientation to and commitment for preparing teachers for various levels of school education.

5) Career Development Programme for Untrained teachers and Para-teachers:

All teachers should posses academic and professional qualification prescribed in NCTE norms and standards for the concerned level of school education. Untrained 'and parateachers need to be supported in acquiring the prescribed qualifications through a career development programme, developed especially for them'.

6) Forum for Exchange of Experiences:

Cluster and block level fora need to be created so that teachers may meet at least once a month to discuss their experiences and advance their professional development. These fora should also be utilized for, acquainting teachers with recent developments in their academic areas and pedagogic practices.

7) Use of ICT tools in Teacher Education Institutions:

Every teacher education institution should be equipped with ICT resources so that after becoming functional ICT literates, teacher educators can use ICT resources for accessing latest information in their content area and organizing multimedia-based classroom teaching and learning.

8) Organizing Professional Support Services for Teacher Educators:

Programmes for Personality development, interpersonal skills, communication and evaluation skills, professional skills, time-management skills, and access to reading materials should be provided to the teachers so that they can become life-long learners. Exchange visits within the country as well as abroad can provide excellent support for professional development of teachers.

9) Networking in Teacher Education:

All IASEs, CTEs, SCERTs and DIETs should be networked so that teacher educators working at various levels of education become receptive to teach each other and work on collaborative research projects, sharing their experiences with each other. Thus, teachers' professional development is a process that encourages and enables them to acquire the set of knowledge, skills, values and behaviour, which are essential for them to perform their various expected professional course in the classroom, school and society, besides enabling them to update their knowledge.

Ideally, teachers' professional development should start with pre-service programme, developed through a well articulated school-based induction programme and thereafter be followed by a continuous professional development, sustained by teachers' critical distance and commitment to inquiry. Institutions like NCTE, NCERT. UGC and AICTE should take initiative in this regard.

Some Emerging Issues and Prospects in Teacher Education

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 teachers are teaching at the primary/elementary level. A

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sizeable number of them are untrained or under-trained. In certain regions, like North-East, there are even under-qualified teachers. It is estimated that on an average only 40% of the teachers are provided in-service teacher education once over a period of 05 years.

Despite, India having such a huge system of Teacher Education in place, it is still facing several constraints like inadequate resources and facilities, limited access to basic education and declining standards & quality of education. Therefore, it is has become very essential to search for factors that enable us to foster and promote quality education, in general as well as in teacher education, in particular.

The rapid changes in society lead to teachers facing new and complex issues, resulting in changes in the area of teacher education. One of the most significant developments was the creation of special education for children with special needs. Special education teachers must be taught that how information, especially more advanced and complex subject material can be effectively taught to students in non-traditional ways. Special education teachers are also often required to study additional aspects of Psychology & Sociology. Advances in teaching technology have also posed an issue for future teacher educators. Many educators have focused on ways to incorporate technology into the classroom. Use of latest ICT gadgets & tools like TV, Computers, Radio, VCR and other forms of Mass Media are being utilized to make TLP more effective and thereby involve the students more actively in the classroom. Hence, many teacher education programs now include course both in techno logy operation and how to use technology for education purposes. With the advent of distance learning technologies which are utilizing mobile learning (m-learning), electronic learning (e-learning) & the internet, it is very much imperative for the teachers to keep themselves abreast of these latest ICTs and their role in the delivery of the Teaching Learning Material (TLM). The emergence of a networked knowledge economy presents both opportunities and challenges for teacher4 education. Using effectively, knowledge networks presents opportunities for better informed and supported practice by education professionals' ands more authentic learning by students.

The UN's Millennium Development Project has established eight goals, one of which is to develop universal primary education in every country by the year 2015. Central Asia, Africa & Latin America are all target areas for this initiative. In order to help achieve this goal, the UN has pooled all resources and funds in order so as to improve educational infrastructure and to train more and more new teachers in targeted areas.

The above stated emerging issues, problems and inadequacies of the present teacher education are challenging and the need of the hour is to overcome them on an urgent basis.

All the teacher organizations should come on a common platform and take necessary steps for improving the quality of present teacher education system.

CONCLUSION

Teacher education is a complex issue, especially in our country where teacher education programmes are being delivered by a large number of unaided private teacher education institutions. The present teacher education programme is inadequate to meet the challenges of diverse Indian socio-cultural contexts and the paradigm shift envisaged in the NCF 2005. The pedagogic reform from this perspective require to invest in building on teachers capacity to act as autonomous reflective groups of professional who are sensitive to their social mandate and to the professional ethics and to the needs of the heterogeneous groups of learners.

Recently, the Government has also announced the National Mission on Teachers and Teaching that has various goals & objectives related to teaching and teacher education. The mission proposes to establish various centres of excellence in 40 schools of education to be established in various universities and recognized colleges of education. These centres will engage in various research, resource development and training in the areas of curriculum, teaching methodology, evaluation, pre-service, professional development etc. The mission also proposes to establish centres for educational management at IIMs. A major problem facing teacher education programme in India is the disconnect

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between the classes at teacher training colleges and classroom realities of schools. This divorce also finds an expression in the World Bank Report (1997) as in India teachers' need but do not receive preparation for teaching in the situation that two thirds of them have to face. Students today also need considerable freedom to explore, enquire and investigate. This means that teacher education curricula should give enough space to student teachers to develop logical reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving and meaning making. However, teacher education institutions are often too theoretical and provide only unrelated and fragmented knowledge to teachers. Teacher quality, teaching learning and teacher improvement, therefore are becoming the foci of researchers, policy makers, program designers, implementers and evaluators.

The NCFTE (2009) promises to translate the vision into reality and prepare humanistic and reflective teachers that has the potential to develop more professional teachers and improve the quality of education. ICTs are also playing an important role in teacher education. The teacher education system empowered by ICT driven infrastructure can have a great opportunity to come up to the centre stage and ensure academic excellence, quality instruction and leadership in a knowledge-based society. ICTs has revolutionized the entire concept of education, learning, research and TLP by offering new opportunities and challenges in creation and dissemination of information by way Web, TVs, NET PCs and Web-based education-independent of time, pace and place. A large number of Teacher educational institutions are ill-equipped in terms of installation of various high tech infrastructure including latest ICTs.

To conclude, it could be said that professionalism needs to be instilled in each and every phase of teacher preparation and teacher-education programmes, starting from conception to evaluation and appraisal, so as to promote professional development of teachers and thereby improve the overall quality of teacher education system of India.

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