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Responsibilities of Teacher-Training Institutions in Preparing Teachers for Effective Implementation of Right to Education Act

Vimal Kishor & Jyoti

Abstract

The Parliament enacted The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 to provide elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality to all children in a formal school. But there are some problems which are proving to be impractical to the implementation of this Act. Such as rote-driven, textbook centered teaching and lack of support as well as motivation among teachers to address the specific situation of diverse kinds of children etc. According to the rule of RTE Act, only trained teachers can be appointed and they have to perform certain duties. The researchers have, in general, pointed out certain drawbacks in the existing Secondary Teacher Education Programme being run in India as well as abroad. In the present paper, the authors focused on some points regarding the responsibilities of Teacher-Training Institutions in preparing teachers for the effective implementation of Right to Education Act.

Keywords: Teacher-Training Institutions, Right to Education Act, Competency-based-Teacher Education

Introduction

The need for providing education to all children has been recognized by the Constitution since its adoption. The Directive Principles of state policy casts a duty upon the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of fourteen years. In the year 2002, a new Article 21A was inserted in the Constitution which made free and compulsory education a fundamental right to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Pursuant to this Amendment, the Parliament enacted this Act (The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009) to provide to every child full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school.

The Tribune (April 5, 2011) under the head 'One year of RTE- School Education faces many challenges' reports the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act with its egalitarian provisions has completed one year of successful implementation. Successful because 15 states have notified it. But there are some problems which are proving to be impractical to the implementation of this Act. Such as rote-driven,

textbook centered teaching and lack of support as well as motivation among teachers to address the specific situation of diverse kinds of children etc. The Act emphasizes the need for child-friendly approaches but very little are provided for the need to have teacher-friendly and teacher-initiated processes in the school system. Lack of assessment of learning achievements makes it impossible for him to be identified for remedial assistance.

According to the RTE Act, only trained teachers can be appointed and they have to perform certain duties. In Chapter-IV of the Act namely 'Responsibilities of Schools and Teachers' under section 24 have mentioned that a teacher appointed who possesses such minimum qualifications, as laid down by an academic authority, authorized by the Central Government, by notification shall perform the following duties, namely:-

- a) maintain regularity and punctuality in attending school;
- b) conduct and complete the curriculum within the specified time by taking into consideration the following, namely:-
 - conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution;
 - all round development of the child;
 - building up child's knowledge, potentiality and talent;
 - development of physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent;
 - learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child-centered manner;
 - medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue;
 - making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely;
 - comprehensive and continuous evaluation of child's understanding of knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same.
- c) assess the learning ability of each child and accordingly supplement additional instructions, if any, as required;

- d) hold regular meetings with parents and guardians and apprise them about the regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child; and
- e) perform such other duties as may be prescribed.

Teachers make a difference. The success of any plan for improving educational outcomes depends on the teachers who carry it out and thus on the abilities of those attracted to the field and their preparation. Yet there are many questions about how teachers are being prepared and how they ought to be prepared. It is the teachers who are called as the nation builders. It is in the school where the teachers modify/develop the students' mental set-up and prepare them for the forthcoming competitions. These teachers who prepare the future, themselves are prepared by a professional course called B.Ed./J.B.T.

The over-all objective of teacher education is to equip the prospective teachers with necessary skills, knowledge and techniques/strategies for the education of the child (or to assist the child in his learning). The main objectives of the undergraduate level programme in Education at present as given in the syllabus of the various universities/boards are as follows:

- To create an awareness on role of teacher in realizing the objectives of school education;
- To develop skills for continuously evaluating pupil growth;
- To promote understanding, interest, attitudes and skills which would enable him to foster all-round growth and development of the pupils under his care;
- To enhance competency to act not only as a leader of the children but also as a guide of the community and as a liaison between school and the community;
- To make student teachers understand not only the subject but also the unity of knowledge among different subjects;
- To develop among student teachers an integrated and holistic approach in the teaching of social sciences and technology;
- To develop among student teachers the competencies in the use of locally available educational resources;

- To empower student teachers to know how learners construct knowledge and to facilitate the process;
- To develop among student teachers the skills of communication and language proficiency;
- To acquire repertoire of strategies, competencies and skills for transaction and evaluation among student teachers;
- To find out the impact of various changes taking place in the society i.e. liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), etc. on different aspects of life and their imperatives;
- To enable student teachers to promote self-learning/mutual learning in and outside the classroom in order to eventually become independent learners;
- To inculcate among student teachers social, cultural, aesthetic, moral and spiritual values and scientific approach and the skill of integrating and transacting these;
- To make student teachers appreciate India's unity in diversity;
- To enable student teachers to integrate values in all subjects/activities;
- To develop among student teachers awareness and sensitivity towards environment concern and promoting skills for meeting environmental challenges;
- To enable student teachers to develop competencies for an error free, responsive and transparent evaluation.

While considering the objectives of teacher-training courses, an important question arises here that whether we are really achieving them or not? The researchers have, in general pointed out certain drawbacks in the existing Secondary Teacher Education Programme being run in India as well as abroad. These include:

— There was a great diversity regarding aims, titles, combinations, content classification, practical work, etc. in the foundational courses prescribed for B.Ed. Degree (Sharma 1982, p. 838).

— The comprehensive B.Ed. Curriculum was not effectively implemented due to time-shortage, semester-system and internal-assessment, etc (Hemambujam 1983, p. 943).

— There exist no significant difference between the classroom performance of trained and untrained teachers irrespective of the subject taught (Jones 1991, p. 390-A).

— There is a disconnection in the various teacher educational program between the theoretical components and the realities of the classroom (Ackerman 2004, p. 960-A).

— The main purpose of teacher-education programme is to develop values, skills, professional attitude and personality among Student-Teachers, which is not possible within a short duration of one year or effective eight to nine months (Chandra, Beri and Beri 2008, p. 7).

Nanda (2009) in India News mentioned the different views of the experts like; the task before the country is to overcome the huge shortfall of teachers, specially in remote areas, and provide them effective training to make them competent enough to influence future generations, say experts. At a time when India is on the verge of educational reform, the big problem is that quality education is not possible without quality teachers.

“Teachers training is very important. We need to contextualise the training process. While upgrading our textbooks, the competence of teachers needs to be upgraded,” said Rukmini Banerji, director (research and assessment) of voluntary organisation Pratham, which conducts regular surveys on schools in India.

“The Right to Education bill, which has already been passed by parliament, opens up opportunities but what is now required is effective teachers training,” Banerji told IANS Friday, the eve of Teachers Day.

“I am disappointed with the institutes providing training to teachers. We need to have a re-look at them,” Sibal had told reporters here after having discussions with parents, students, teachers, academics and CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) stakeholders on examination reforms,” he said.

A study in 10 districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh by Pratham has found that over 65 percent of teachers in both government and private schools fail to solve simple mathematics of class 5 level.

Based on the above research findings it is found that there are some issues in the teacher-training programmes which are deteriorating its quality day-by-day. As far as the effective implementation of Right to Education is concerned, it is necessary to improve the quality of the teacher-training programmes. It is only possible when the teacher-training institutions recognize their responsibility in preparing effective teachers for the betterment of nation. The preparation of teachers should be based upon some important features like; the appropriate/qualitative selection procedure of teacher-trainees to the programme, effective curriculum planning and its procedure of transaction, process of recognition and accreditation of teacher education institutions, practice teaching, teachers accountability and evaluation system. It is mentioned in NCFTE-2009 that a glaring weakness of existing teacher education practices is the restricted scope of evaluation of student teachers and its excessively quantitative nature. It is confined to measurement of mainly cognitive learning through annual/terminal tests; skill measurement is limited to a specified number of lessons. The qualitative dimensions of teacher education, other professional capacities, attitudes and values remain outside the purview of evaluation. Further, evaluation is not continuous as it should be; the teacher education process is characterized by a wide range and variety of curricular inputs spread over the entire duration of training according to a thought out sequence. These need to be evaluated at appropriate stages and feedback given to the trainees.

Thus, to achieve the objectives of the teacher-training programmes and for the effective implementation of the Right to Education Act, a teacher will have to perform diverse roles and responsibilities. For ensuring these, it is necessary that teacher-training institutions must provide competency-based teacher education to their teacher-trainees. The teacher-trainee must be well aware about the relevance and applicability of teacher-training curriculum in their day-to-day happenings. However, to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum a Handbook for B.Ed. Teachers with regard to Transaction of Curriculum may be developed by the competent authority and it should be provided on priority basis to the teachers. Teacher-training institutions should not only give the attention towards the cognitive development of the teacher-trainee but also for the affective and psychomotor development. Concept of teacher accountability and professional ethics should be given more emphasis, so as to increase the qualitative output and desired educational outcomes in terms of achievement performance and expertise in overall teaching skills and competencies. Mainstreaming of special or exceptional children need due attention under the horizon of RTE. Teacher-

trainee should also be well acquainted with the concept of Action Research so that he/she solves their individual/local problems at their own level. It is the responsibility of the teacher-training institutions that they must appoint well qualified teacher educators so that they could prepare effective teachers for the national development and educational reconstruction in the purview of RTE. Finally, society and educational institutions must cooperate and collaborate with each other effectively.

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