

# Professional Preparation of Pre-service Teachers Post NEP-2020: Some Suggestive Changes for Quality Improvement

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## Abstract

*Teacher education preparation have undergone sea changes since its inception from colonial times. Most of the teacher training programs in the early phase of teacher education were influenced from western ideologies. Even after Independence, the influence of western thoughts found its place in the preparation of teacher education programs, though preparation of teachers was for Indian classrooms. Even today, foundation of teacher education program is more based on philosophical, sociological and psychological ideologies and theories which often does not suit to Indian classrooms or Indian children. More importantly, it has been highlighted in many reports that teacher preparation process is faulty and more often than not non-contextual in terms of need and aspiration of Indian children studying in various types of schools. So, it can be said that professional preparation of teachers has never risen to the level of expectations of school and society. NCF (2005) and NCFTE (2009) has questioned the practices of teacher education and raise their concerns over the ill-preparation of teachers in TEIs and recommended to overhaul the teacher preparation process. Practices of teacher education programme hasn't changed much even after revamping of curriculum in 2014 as most of the TEIs suffer from various ill-practices which are detrimental to profession. That's why when debate arises, whether to restructure the teacher programs, NEP-2020 comes with the solution that all teacher education institutions will no longer be stand-alone and they have to become multidisciplinary by 2030 and only four-year Integrated Teacher Education Program will be run in the country post 2030. The present paper suggests few of the imminent changes that need to be done to improve the teacher education programs in the country.*

## Introduction

Teacher education and its quality has always been the concern among the educationist of the nation. Several commissions and policy documents in the past had highlighted the poor quality of professional preparation of the teachers in the nation. University Education Commission (1948) while highlighting about

the initial teacher preparation in the country had pointed out that teacher education programs suffer not only physical isolation but also suffers from intellectual isolation. Kothari Commission (1964-66) too commented that teacher training programs of the country do not cater to the needs and demands of the schools and society. National Commission on Teachers popularly known

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as Chattopadhyay Committee which was commissioned for looking after the affairs of teachers of the country had critically remarked that *“If the university falters in this key function, there is little that can be done to save the school system from the deleterious effects of its dysfunctionality (GOI, 1985 p.3)* and teacher education institutions and their program have faltered in their functions. The commission highlighted that the high status of the teachers can only be re-claimed back if teachers have high level of knowledge and professional competencies. The two highly acclaimed and most refereed policy document of 21st century in India in teacher education-National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) and National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) has highlighted the present condition of teacher preparation in the country and showed their serious concern towards the mechanised and routinised form of teacher preparation as well as the sub-standard quality of teachers being prepared in the country. Both the documents opined that, the quality of teacher preparations could be substantially improved, if the process of teacher preparations and its curriculum is revamped. Justice Verma Committee (2012) report on teacher education came as the nail in the coffin for teacher education wherein it not only highlighted the substandard quality of teacher preparation but criticized regulatory body NCTE heavily abouts its failure in performing the regulatory functions. Justice Verma committee (2012) pointed out that teacher education institutions have become commercial shops and degrees are being sold with different price tags under the nose of NCTE. Post Justice Verma Committee, NCTE tightened its noose and came down heavily on teacher education institutions and started to derecognise those institutions that does not fulfil the norms and standards as per NCTE (2014) regulation. NCTE through gazette notification introduced not only changes in the curriculum as prescribed by NCFTE (2009) and reiterated by Justice Verma Committee, but also took some more

measures to enhance the quality of teacher preparation along with stringent regulatory functioning. After 2014, NCTE has taken several initiatives to improve the quality of teacher education and its program and thus collaborate with National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Accreditation Board for Education & Training (NABET) to not only inspect the teacher education institutions but also accredit them so that prospective teachers of teacher education be made aware of the quality of teacher education institutions and its programs before getting enrolled in the institution. Moreover, some other initiatives taken by NCTE to improve the quality of teacher preparations in this direction are: mapping of teacher education through Geographical Information System (GIS), Online selection of Visiting Team (VT), Online Selection of Appeal etc. On the professional front, NCTE brought out two-year teacher education curriculum which is in tune with what has been prescribed by NCFTE (2009). The curriculum revised by NCTE is made of three key components: liberal/foundational studies, curricular and pedagogical studies and third institutionalization of internship model of school experience program. Notification of change in norms and standards published vide gazette notification in 28th November, 2014 and all teacher education institutions across the country implemented it thereafter. In spite of suggesting slew of changes by the recent policy documents NCF (2005), NCFTE (2009), Justice Verma Committee (2012), NCTE (2014), Draft of New Education Policy (2016 & 2019), the efforts of improving the quality of professional preparation of teachers has always eluded in teacher preparation (Kumar & Wiseman, 2021). Various research reports published in last six years regarding the quality of teacher education have made teaching professionals to re-think how to improve the quality of teacher education. It is true that quality is not a magic wand, that by mere uttering the word “quality”, quality would come into teacher education institutions. Quality has several facets and if

each and every facet of teacher preparation is addressed in a professional manner, then automatically quality of teacher education falls in line. NEP-2020 has highlighted that there are almost 10,000 sub-standard teacher education institutions in the country which needs to be shut down if they haven't improved themselves in a year's time. In the recent past many of the government institutions have also faced the wrath of NCTE when the order of withdrawal of recognition of several state-run teacher education programmes was notified when

it was thought that state-funded TEIs are immune to such type of stringent action, as most of the institutions do not fulfil the norms of teacher education programs. Most of the teacher education institutions suffer from severe shortage of qualified faculty. Quality of teacher-educators plays a important role in professional preparation of teachers. The given table below is the data taken from annual reports of NCTE of last five years from 2015-2020 about the number of TEIs operating B.Ed (only) and M.Ed (only) programs across India.

**Table No.1: Number of TEIs and their Intake Capacity for B.Ed and M.Ed Programs from 2015-2020**

Sr. No	Year	No of B.Ed TEIs*	Intake capacity of B.Ed	Difference In intake capacity	No. of Qualified Faculty Required as per NCTE norms	No. of M.Ed TEIs	Intake capacity of M. Ed	No. of Teachers Required in M.Ed	NET Qualified Candidates as per UGC Portal in Education Discipline#
1	2015-16	8612	861174	-	137788	1021	33865	6773	59415
2	2016-17	9812	947952	86778	151672	1198	50795	10159	
3	2017-18	10008	960087	12135	153614	1213	54022	10804	
4	2018-19	10068	996185	36098	159389	1346	66442	13288	
5	2019-20	9634	953660	-42525	152585	1292	63745	12749	
6	Total		953660		152585	1292	63745	12749	

\*Assuming that each TEI have an intake capacity of 100 students

\*As per NCTE norms 16 teacher educators are required for 100 students

\* The ratio of faculty and students is 1:6.25in TEIs

# Numbers available in UGC website

The last five-year data obtained from NCTE reports indicated that from 2015 onwards, there is a constant rise in the number of TEIs offering B.Ed program in the country

along with increase in the intake capacity. As per the NCTE norms of 2014, for every 1 unit of B.Ed program (50 students) there would be 8 qualified teacher-educators to be

appointed in TEIs whereas this number for M.Ed program is 10 for 50 students. It means teacher-student ratio in M.Ed program is 1:5 and 1:6.25 in B.Ed. The NCTE norms, to be qualified as teacher-educator for both B.Ed and M.Ed programme is that a faculty must hold a postgraduate degree in education with either NET in education or Ph.D in education or both. If we look at Table No. 1 it indicates from 2015 to 2020, the intake capacity of only B. Ed program is 953660 whereas for M.Ed program annual intake capacity of 1292 TEIs are 63745. If we calculate the number of faculty members required for both the programs, only B. Ed program requires 1,52,585 qualified teacher-educators whereas M.Ed program requires 12,749 qualified teacher-educators. Therefore, in the crudest sense the total number of qualified faculty required for both the programs are 1,65, 334. As per the UGC website, the total number of NET qualified candidates in education subject is almost 59415 from 1993-2020 (Source: Academic Jobs for NET/SET/Ph.D qualified candidates, dated 8th November, 2021). Assuming all the NET-education qualified candidates are being appointed in B.Ed program only, then also, country requires additional 90,000 teacher-educators to prepare B.Ed teachers. Another fact that can be inferred from the table that the number of TEIs offering M.Ed program is only 1292 whereas for B.Ed it is 9634 i.e., 7.5 times higher than the M.Ed program and in terms of capacity it is almost 15 times higher. Since the M.Ed. program and its intake capacity along with the number of students qualified the NET exams are not commensurate with the number of teachers required to train them. Therefore, there is a big gap between demand and supply; as a result, it directly affected the quality of preparing the professional teachers. This is one aspect which has been highlighted and there are many others which have been discussed in the following section to improve the quality of professional preparation of teachers:

### **1. Manpower Planning of Teachers & Teacher Educators:** A decade back,

NCTE has started manpower planning in terms of the number of teachers required in schools and projection for next 10 years would be taken up so that the demand and supply chain could be matched both for teachers and teacher-educators in the country. The project was started in 2008 by NCTE, but somehow it could not be sustained. There are still regions where there is a dearth of trained teachers in school but there are regions where trained teachers are in abundance. Moreover, trained manpower planning is not only required for different stages of education like pre-primary, elementary and secondary but also with respect to different school subjects. Unfortunately, TEIs have been mushroomed all across countries and also thriving without having adequate attention regarding demand of teachers at each stage and for each school subject. NEP-2020 recommends multidisciplinary education starting from secondary level to teacher education institutions, but it is important to remember that four year Integrated Teacher education Programme (ITEP) is not only a capital intensive but also investment of 4 crucial years of students, therefore it is necessary that government must ascertain the number of teacher and teacher-educators to be required in next one-decade both in terms of stage specific as well as subject specific including teachers for performing and visual arts, crafts (vocational), physical education, yoga, special education, etc. When we have manpower planning for school teachers, we would be in a position to find out how many teacher-educators are needed to train the prospective teachers.

As per Table No.1, demand and supply of teacher-educators required in TEIs to prepare quality school teachers is unmatched. In other words, there is huge shortfall of qualified teacher-educators in the country (Pritam, B., 2018). How would this gap of demand and supply be bridged when there is low



availability of the number of NET/Ph.D qualified candidates? The answer lies to the question: Does the country need almost 9 lakh teachers every year? If yes, then, not only increase the number of teacher education institutions offering the M.Ed program proportionately but also increase the pass percentage of NET qualified candidates. If we do not require a large number of teachers in the school, then the next alternative is to shut down the teacher-education institutions which do not have qualified faculty. So, it is essential that a quality teacher education program requires quality faculty and one of the parameter of quality is equated with faculty having NET and Ph.D. (Source: UGC Minimum Standard, 2018). The biggest challenge that will come up is, to do the exercise of manpower planning at school level for school subjects teachers in B.Ed. program and for teacher-educators with respect to pedagogy and foundation-based subjects in M.Ed program that is required to train pre-service teachers.

**2. Quality Curriculum:** Professional preparations of teachers are generally guided by well-defined curriculum operating in the TEIs. Curriculum framework provided by NCFTE (2009) followed by NCTE (2014) norms and standards has given an outline to design curriculum of teacher education program. The curriculum framework is based on the three broad areas: first, perspectives of education; second, curriculum and pedagogic studies; and third engaging with the field/practicum which includes enhancing professional capacities, practicum on perspectives, curriculum, pedagogy studies and school internship. Many universities designed their curriculum within the framework and bring out the institution curriculum of the aforesaid programme. Curriculum was diluted by majority of TEIs and essence of preparing teachers from the point of view of NCFTE (2009) was missing in soul and spirit (already discussed in point uniform curriculum). The result

was that nothing substantial changed at the grass-root level except the increase in the duration of program. The reason behind that is due to dearth of qualified faculty in the TEIs, entire philosophy and perspective of teacher education was misinterpreted. In many of the TEIs syllabus, author scrutinized the syllabus and found that the nomenclature of the paper of psychology of education as per NCTE but majority portion of the content of the syllabus was old what they used to teach (name of the universities was kept anonymous by the author). In one of the surveys done by the NCTE (2014) to find out how many universities and state education department have changed their curriculum in tune with NCFTE (2009), it was reported that only 30 per cent of universities changed their curriculum whereas this percentage for M. Ed program was 46 per cent and for D.El.Ed it was 37.5 per cent (NCTE Annual Report-2014-15, p.10). It itself is indicative that universities and TEIs are highly resistant to curriculum reform. Post 2014, most of the universities have designed the curriculum as per NCTE (2014) wherein flexibility is given to design 30 per cent of syllabus on their own. Many of the TEIs are unable to design their curriculum especially in emerging areas of teacher education like understanding the discipline, knowledge and curriculum, language across curriculum etc. in these courses and the TEIs that have designed it interpreted in their own way. It is essential to carry out a study to see how many TEIs in the country are following the prescribed curricular norms of NCTE (2014). Recently, NEP-2020 recommended for four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) and suggested that by 2030 all teacher education institutions be changed to multidisciplinary educational institutions. But, the foundation of four-year ITEP was laid in the year 2018 wherein NCTE laid down the norms and

standards of four-year teacher education programme wherein two programmes were prescribed: one meant for pre-primary to primary and another upper-primary to secondary. But after NEP-2020, NCTE has brought out norms and standards of ITEP vide gazette notification in the month of October, 2021 wherein it was reconfigured as per the latest structure of school education 5+3+3+4. Model/suggestive curriculum would be provided by NCTE in due course of time and TEIs has the flexibility to adapt/adopt the curriculum with institutions having an autonomy of deviating from curriculum up to 30 per cent. The gazette notification has said that within 90 days a model curriculum would be uploaded on website. Hopefully, NCTE would come out with the model curriculum so that TEIs would follow it. Also, it is imperative for NCTE to take stock of the situation on a periodic basis that universities and TEIs offering four-year ITEP programme must have at least aligned their curriculum at least 70 per cent to what has been suggested in model curriculum otherwise errant TEIs would take the benefit out of it and offer sub-standard/obsolete curriculum to prepare teachers.

**3. Social Status of Teachers:** To become teachers in schools is the least preferred options among the youth. It has been observed in the past that bright young minds never come into the field of teaching professionals. In other words, teaching as a profession has never attracted the bright young minds of the country. As a result, most of the people who have come into this profession are more by chance than the choice. The reasons may be several, ranging from social status and recognition, monetary benefits and incentives, limited opportunities for professional growth in career, etc. If, one compares the professional growth curve of different professionals like doctors, engineers, management, lawyers, architecture and

even scientist, automatically one would find the lowest among them. In a global study conducted by Peter Dalton et al, in 2013, surveyed 21 countries to find out the global status index of teachers among the various professionals and reported that teaching professionals ranked 7 out of 14 different professionals in terms of respect though it varies with countries and their cultural and social milieu. Moreover, report also highlighted that 75 per cent of the countries people believed that social status of teachers is similar to that of social workers. Countries like China, South Korea, Turkey and Egypt encourage their younger generations to become teachers as these are the countries which showed high respect to their teachers whereas most of the European countries participated in the survey did disclose that pupils of their countries do disrespect their teachers. In regard to pay, almost 95 per cent of the people surveyed reported that teachers should be paid higher than what they are getting now. Another, outcome of the report is that teachers pay be linked with performance of students. Report also highlighted that, countries have full faith and trust on their teachers that they were providing quality education to the children. Finland and Brazil teachers are top ranked in terms of providing quality education whereas Israel, South Korea, Egypt and Japan are lowly ranked among the countries. Thus, teachers' social status, salary and other benefits should be commensurate with other professions. Similar study was conducted in 2018 where the sample was extended to 35 countries and almost similar result was obtained what was obtained in 2013. Surprisingly in a 2018 study, Indian population was surveyed and found out that more than 50 per cent of parents encourage their children to become teachers. NEP-2020, has acknowledged in the document that "*..... empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and*

*consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards” and therefore reiterated that “high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession” (GOI, MOE, p. 20). The NEP recommends the following to restore the high respect and social status of teachers:*

- Merit-based scholarships to attract best talents into teaching professions;
- Appointment of high-quality teachers;
- Incentives to youth for taking up teaching professions in rural areas;
- Accommodation facilities in and around school or increased House Rent Allowances;
- High quality and performing teachers would be identified and they would be given faster promotion, incentives, social recognition etc
- Outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be inducted and trained for taking positions of educational administrators
- Transparent online system of transfers of teachers only in special cases;
- High Stakes Entrance exams for entry into teaching profession like IITs and NEET;
- Mapping of subject-wise teacher vacancies in state for better manpower planning to match demand and supply;

**4. Raising the Bar of Eligibility:** As already stated, that teaching profession fails to attract the young and bright minds of the country, yet entry into teacher education programs only requires a graduate with minimum of 50 per cent marks (relaxation for SC/ST groups) whereas the percentage for any other professional programs to pursue is more than 60 per cent. Definitely, some improvement has been there over the past few years when NCTE made it mandatory that the first degree in teacher education should be face

to face mode and entry into the teaching profession should be through entrance examination. But many of the States or its Universities are defying the order of NCTE and resorting to the minimum eligibility criteria and thus inviting applications from students who merely fulfils the minimum criteria to enter into teacher education programs. It is true that marks cannot be the benchmark for ascertaining the quality of students but definitely, it does correspond to a certain level that a higher percentage would mean attracting good students to teaching profession. If one looked closely at IITs and NEET examination, one would find that, students who qualified these examinations their performance in 12th public examination, is equally outstanding (much higher than 60 %). So, it is imperative, that at least raise the bar of eligibility in entering into teaching profession so that at least one would expect academically sound students would enter into teaching profession. Another reason why the bar of eligibility should be raised that Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) is mandatory for appointment into schools, and the minimum criteria for qualifying the TET is 60 per cent. Therefore, it would be better that only students with minimum 55 per cent marks in graduation degree be made eligible for entering into the teaching profession like it has been there for NET-UGC for appointment of teachers in higher education and 75% for IIT-JEE Advanced aspirants.

**5. Uniform Curriculum:** In the year 2014, NCTE brought out the gazette notification wherein new norms and standards for two-year teacher education programmes were published. As NCFTE (2009) curriculum framework was available at that time, the proposed curriculum retain the three components of NCFTE (2009) — perspectives in education, curriculum and pedagogic studies and engagement with the field. Most of the TEIs including

education departments of Universities have tried to align their curriculum within the broader curriculum framework of NCFTE (2009). Universities are autonomous institutions, they have the freedom to design their own curriculum and get ratified by their academic and executive council, therefore many of the state universities post 2014, designed their own teacher education curriculum without understanding the soul and spirit of curriculum as proposed by NCTE. In one of the state University, within Curriculum and Pedagogic studies, it was observed by the author that a paper was kept called "Understanding the Discipline" wherein Discipline is equated with Punishment and entire syllabus was drafted on it (author was asked to set the question paper based on the syllabus). In another University, author experienced that courses of the program were overloaded with content for example in one of the paper Assessment for Learning, though it had five units but almost everything was included including the statistical portion generally meant for post-graduate program. It was observed by the author that in many of B.Ed syllabi the name of the courses hadn't changed like philosophical foundations of education, sociological foundations of education, sociological perspective of education, psychological foundations of education, philosophy and sociology of education etc. Many of the universities simply added and deleted the content of the courses without seeing its relevance and implication on training programs as well as its effect on schools. These are few instances. In one of the surveys done by NCTE (2014) on curriculum reform in context to NCFTE (2009) found out that, many universities did not change their M. Ed curriculum in tune with NCFTE (2009). Another major observation of the study was that referenced material provided in the curriculum of most of the universities are old and outdated. Internship component

is almost missing in 50 per cent of the universities, reflection and maintenance of reflective journal was found only in four universities whereas seminar and panel discussion were there in 14 universities. This study itself reflects that when curriculum of the teacher-educators is lop-sided, how could one expect the prospective teacher-educators would train his teachers. Most of the TEIs are practicing in same old fashioned as they were doing before and after 2014. It is also surprising to note that many of the Universities either do not have education departments or understaffed and they are preparing curriculum for all the affiliated TEIs. As a result, it has been observed that poor and faulty curriculum has been designed and developed and teacher preparation has been going based on these curricula. Therefore, each state should constitute Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) and prepare curriculum for various teacher education programs in consonance with national curriculum framework and run these curricula across state. This will lead to more professional preparation and less dilution in standards of teacher education preparation. Similar type of exercise should be started at the central level so that both state and central level curriculums have more commonalities or uniformity in the curriculum. This will help to prepare teachers of high quality in the nation.

**Single Entry & Exist System of Teacher Preparation:** In almost all the states, either state education department or universities are responsible for common admission process. In case of central universities, they have their own admission process for teacher education program. It means within a state if there is Central University, State University and education department, all are conducting separate admission processes with no parity in them. While one is taking entrance exam, other



prefers merit and some prefer choice filling. But on graduation, all become trained teachers. This multiple method of entry into professional programme has created more mess. As majority of the TEIs are functioning in private sector and many of them are shadow TEIs, their monopoly is clearly visible in admission and examination process in the teacher education programs. University merely formalised the process of admission and examination. Many of the TEIs sold the teacher education degrees at variable cost (Justice Verma Committee, 2012). This mars the quality of teacher education in the country. NEP-2020 is critical about these shadow TEIs and recommend that sub-standard teacher education institutions will be shut down if they do not enhance the quality of teacher preparation in their institutions. In regard to multiple entry, NEP recommends that a single-entry system will be put in place for entry of prospective teachers in teacher education program through common entrance examination just like CTET. But it is also important that not only single-entry system should be put in place but also single-exist system be put in place so as to ensure high quality teachers to be fed into the school system.

#### **6. Approval, Accreditation & Certification of Teacher Education Programs:**

In India, HEIs are governed by many educational agencies. These multiple agencies at times instead of facilitating the process of smooth management and governance, makes it more difficult and complex to run an institution. Many times, their functions overlap with each other and as a result none of the educational agencies keeps a vigilant watch on the functioning of educational institutions. Same case happens with TEIs. TEIs are being given approval by the NCTE to run the teacher education programs but most of the TEIs functions under universities as an affiliating institution. Therefore, university acts

as an academic watchdog for affiliating TEIs (exception where university runs its own teacher education programs). UGC, the third educational agency which is a regulatory body for university run programs including teacher education provide direction to universities to follow the guidelines related to admission of students, curriculum development, curriculum transaction, examination, teaching-learning process, teacher recruitment etc. which has its own implications for TEIs. Along with it, state education departments, fee regulatory bodies, etc., also plays their own role of controlling, monitoring, supervision, etc. NEP-2020 observed that conflict of interests among these regulatory bodies resulted into lack of accountability of each of them and as a result too much of governance has been in the education system. NEP-2020 recommends a light but tight system of regulations with few independent and empowered bodies to ensure “check and balances in the system, minimize conflicts of interest and eliminate concentration of power” (GOI NEP-2020 p. 47) and that’s why for approval of the course/program, accreditation of course/program and certification of the program will be done by separate bodies as the provision made by NEP-2020 by forming four verticals under Higher Education commission of India.

**7. Quality of Teacher-Educators:** It has been already well established from Table 1 that the number of NET qualified candidates in education discipline is far less than the actual number required. Even if we add number of Ph.D. candidates awarded in Education discipline in last five years, still it will be lesser than what is required. So, there is huge dearth of qualified teacher-educators in TEIs. As per the NCTE norms (2014) a teacher educator must be post graduate degree in education along with post graduate degree in school subject or post graduate

degree in foundation subjects. In addition to it, as per UGC norms, UGC-NET/SLET or/and Ph.D. degree in education. Since NET qualified candidates are handful in numbers so is the case of Ph.D., therefore, majority of the teacher education institutions appoint faculty who are merely post graduate degree in education. Like, in school education, in teacher education too, large percentage of prospective teacher-educators are those who lack quality. In one of the studies done by Yadav (2013) found that M.Ed program run by the private institutions lacks qualified faculty. Another key aspect is that professional development of teacher-educators teaching in private institutions and even in many of the universities have been over-looked/neglected resulting into stagnation of professional development which affects directly the quality of teacher education.

#### **8. Process-based Teacher Preparation:**

NCFTE (2009) proposed for the process-based teacher preparation programs wherein rather than looking at the product of the teacher-education programs in the form of trained teacher, focus should be on how the teacher is being trained in TEIs. NCFTE (2009) proposed that teacher preparation should be more participative, engaging and reflective wherein teachers linked the theoretical inputs received in TEIs be tested and validated in the classrooms. Teachers can generate their own ideas and validated them in the field. It further stated that teachers should not acknowledge the knowledge received from the teacher-educators or from books but critically look into it from social-cultural, political, economic and local perspective and make the knowledge more contextual while teaching students in the classroom. This would help the teachers to evolve themselves over the period of time. Teachers will be truly reflective practitioner in their own field when they are exposed to different practices of school education and they

critically reflect upon those practices and if possible, innovate them so that benefits should reach to the students, schools and other stakeholders. NCFTE (2009) proposed the following process-based preparation in its document:

- To develop understanding among teachers the socio-cultural and political milieu in which students live and thus engage with students in real settings of life with theoretical enquiry.
- Students generate knowledge based on their personal, social and shared experiences, observations and critical theoretical enquiry
- Self-learning, reflecting thinking, critical enquiry etc with contemporary issues must be encouraged among the teachers;
- Engaging with liberal studies, humanities and arts during teacher education program will widen the horizon;
- Collaborative learning among the peer-groups of different abilities must be promoted;
- Teacher identity and its social position in society must be examined by the teachers during their classroom discourse;
- Structured “space” is created to revisit, examine and challenge (mis) conceptions of knowledge;
- As far as possible, internship should be outside the boundary of rigidity, wherein teachers are given opportunities to study the schools, and its interrelationship with community. (Source: NCTE, NCFTE, 2009)

#### **9. Multiple Evidence-based Evaluation System:**

NEP-2020 highlighted that the entire education system is oriented towards rote learning and as a result evaluation seldom goes beyond information checking. Moreover, the conventional assessment tools are being used to assess the learning outcomes

of the students mostly written and sometimes oral. In recent years use of technology in education institutions has been increased and teachers are using varied technology based online/offline platforms for assessment purpose. These web-based and app-based platforms are available not only to assess the performance of the students but also finds the grey areas in their learning and simultaneously suggest ways to act upon it, so that the performance of the learner could be improved. Often a question arises, with hardly any internet penetration in the rural areas and low accessibility of digital devices among the underprivileged, how the existing digital divide would be bridged. As per the latest report and websites of government of India, all the central universities, 230 state universities, 80 deemed universities, 45 private universities and in all 1633 different institutions are connected under National Knowledge Network (NKN) through multi-gigabyte high speed internet connectivity (source: website of NKN, 2022). Moreover, under National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT) wherein government is not only providing internet connectivity to all colleges and universities but also providing low-cost affordable devices to institutions, teachers and students to access e-content generated by the different subject experts which are pooled at various web-based platforms available under ministry of education like UG and PG Pathshala, SHAKSHAT, NPTEL, SWAYAM, DIKSHA to bridge the digital divide. Further, under One India One Digital Platform, all the learning resources of different disciplines (e-resource) are pooled up which are scattered in different national web platforms. This will ease students and teachers to access the content (audio, videos, text-material). In the recent pandemic period, DIKSHA portal (app based or web-based) has been extensively

used by teachers and students. According to Ministry of Education, almost 3 crore hits per day was recorded indicating that large chunk of teachers and students' population were using to continue their education when face to face education was completely off (source: The Print 26th July 2021). Now with the launch of PM e-vidya scheme there has been the convergence of all digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to contents to students and teachers of school and higher education. The NEP 2020, has put huge thrust on using technology in education so to reach to the maximum learners and thus to realise the NEP objectives. Several key initiatives have already started like National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR) to enable the use of technology in curricular process and Structured Assessment for Analysing Learning Levels (SAFAL) to focus on testing core concepts, application oriented questions and higher order thinking skills.

In the recent report by KPMG (2022), highlighted hybrid learning as new emerging norm in educational institutions especially in tier-II and III cities, personalised adaptive learning technologies are creating space among government and private schools. Edtech companies are focusing on content generation in vernacular languages because of its huge market (NEP-2020 stressed on content generation in local languages especially till primary). In KPMG survey, it was reported almost 65 per cent students of higher education students enrolled themselves for online courses for upskilling during pandemic though 31 per cent also said that they were stuck due to pandemic effect. Another report of Government of India (2021) on Digital Education 2021 has highlighted that different states and Union Territories are making efforts and started several initiatives to bridge the digital divide and even reaching

to the unreached. The Government of India report on Digital Education has mentioned that almost 3304 schools of Bihar equipped with smart TV in one classroom. Maharashtra government too provides various electronic devices like tablets, laptops, projectors, plasma TV, DTH-TV antenna, digital boards with LMS under ICT scheme. Similarly, Uttarakhand government too distributed laptops, tablets, digital boards, PC with Integrated Teaching Learning Device, LED/LCD Plasma Screen, and Desktop to schools for effective implementation of ICT and digital learning. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi Government has also provided tablets to all regular and guest teachers (source: GOI, India Report Digital Education Remote Learning Initiatives Across India, 2021 P. 7-8). Those students who have no access to digital devices, also have been connected through local cable TV, door to door learning, or pairing with teachers, alumni, NGOs, and others. Several multinational companies under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility have started several initiatives (TATA, GOOGLE, Microsoft, etc) to digitalise education content in vernacular languages and providing training to learners how to use it and also providing various hand-held devices to local learners for using it. All efforts are being done with different stakeholders to upscale the use of ICT in education in schools, colleges and universities to encourage and support the digital learning and “No” to digital divide. In fact, many private EdTech companies are coming out with both web-based and App based platforms (offline and online) wherein they give opportunities to teachers and students to interact, engage, and learn as per their own pace. Moodle, Google, CANVAS, MOOC, etc platforms are now being widely used and offers multiple learning and assessment tools like quiz, MCQ, assignment, test, project,

rubrics, portfolios etc. to assess students knowledge that are more transparent, objective and fair and thus work towards holistic development of learners. Based on such evaluation certification may be provided.

#### **10. Licensing of Teaching Professionals:**

In India, normally graduates of teacher education program are considered as trained teachers be it in distance or face to face mode. Most of the recruitment agencies seek trained teachers for appointment at various stages of school education. It has been in practice in many of the Western and Asian countries, that trained teachers register themselves and they would be issued license as registered practicing teachers i.e., they would be given license to teach students. This license would be similar in nature to other professions like doctors, architecture, pharmacist, lawyer, special educators who are being given practicing license by their regulatory bodies. Similarly, teaching professionals would be issued license by a national agency like NCTE to become professional practitioner. Presently, TET has become the minimum norm to be appointed as elementary teacher. Centre and states are already deliberating and discussing upon extending till grade XII. NEP-2020 is silent about licensing of teaching professionals, but it has recommended of creating a body of National Professional Standard for Teachers (NPST) wherein fixing of competencies of each stage of education, appraisal of teachers based on the standards along with tenure-based review of performance is indicative of moving towards in same direction.

**Quality of Internship:** Internship is said to be the backbone of any professional programme. The quality of internship decides the quality of professional programme. As per NCTE (2014), in the secondary teacher education programme, prospective students have to spend around 20 weeks in schools spread



across the duration of the program. It includes preparing and delivering 40 lessons, along with completing other activities related to school. It has been a common observation of almost all policy documents that the students deliver isolated lesson plans in classroom in very mechanised manner and thus completing the ritualistic aspect of internship. Many times, these lessons are being delivered without being supervised. Practice of internship fails to develop in teacher the requisite competencies as required to teach in classrooms. NCF (2005) and NCFTE (2009) observed that, teachers are being trained to prepare lesson and deliver them without understanding that knowledge written in textbooks is not to be transmitted as it is but it has to be interpreted and validated contextually. Moreover, internship involves understanding the roles and responsibilities of being teacher as facilitator, manager, counsellor etc. In fact, they recommended that a true teacher should be a reflective practitioner. Unfortunately, in all these years, the practice of becoming a reflective practitioner has more or less remain in the curriculum. In ITEP programme, school internship has been exclusively dealt in the gazette wherein internship has been spread across four years for 18 weeks and 6 weeks of specified field work/practicum/activities

with 2 weeks for community engagement. It is imperative the process of internship may be made robust wherein prospective teachers may be evaluated based on multiple evidences collected by different stakeholders during the internship and based on it certification of completion of internship may be awarded.

## Conclusion

Teacher Education program and its process needs revitalization especially in context to NEP-2020 wherein future teachers of the schools will be professionals of academic excellence who not only nurture the young minds but also enhance their self-capacities and competencies to match with global education system. Post NEP, teacher education bodies have to act firm against the slightest violation of norms and standards of teacher preparation. Starting from entry to exit, it should be robust and filtered one so that only bright young minds can come into this profession. Teacher preparation process must be closely monitored and regularly audited so that they are in tune with school system as well as with global standards. Curriculum should be revamped after every five years with addition of more professional components. Most important like any other profession, teaching license must be issued for professional practice. These few suggestions will bring quality to teacher education programs.

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