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## Editorial

This issue of the *Voices of Teachers and Teacher Educators* is on teacher preparation and development. It is expected that this may also have issues more due to the importance of the theme and also because of the large churning in ideas around this. Various consultations and discussions have brought out the status of the teachers, their stratified reality, the way they are governed, their ability and preparation as major concerns. And on top of all there is the concern about the attitudes to them and their motivation. All these factors have inter-relationships and mutually strengthen each other. The fact that teachers are key to the enterprise of teaching has been stated very often but in terms of its reality on the ground the appearance is far different. The teachers not only have a low self image but are also have a low social image. Obviously these two images mutually feed each other. The community, administration and even children do not consider teachers as models for others and not even worthy of great respect. A common teacher in general is just one more person and not considered worthy of too much respect even though many people may remember and revere their own teachers and consider them as special contributors to their lives.

The teachers feel oppressed and also confused about their role and their status as there are many diverse kinds of expectations, ideas and statements about their role. On one hand they are expected and declared to be the builders of the society and expected to build the ethics of the society through the education of children and on the other they are lowest rung employees of the large bureaucratic and political system that very rarely showcase motivating examples on ethical front. They may be deputed to whatever sundry formal or informal tasks that come the way of the system. And then they are to build a feeling for and understanding of the democratic country as per the constitution but are themselves governed and administered arbitrarily without much scope for using their own ideas and being able to explore and learn through the experience of exploration. Increasingly the scope and meaning of education itself is getting restricted and limited to the task of having the student acquire minimal arithmetic and reading skills. Today the loudest voices suggest and indeed demand that teachers and school just facilitate students to show performance and get marks and percentage in examinations. Their role is reduced to mechanically following the procedures and activities given in the order and in the manner provided. In this they are expected to follow the guidelines attempting to help reach answers with all types of shortcuts, often without an understanding of why they work. They are to be away from school multiple times and do a lot of paper work spending a lot of time in these and other such tasks leaving them with no scope and time for fulfilling the wider educative agenda or even the classroom needs of children.

The teaching community in all schools whether public or private schools, is arbitrarily stratified. In each school there can be many types of teachers with different conditions of employment. With different histories and manner of appointments the terms of service are also different. It is not as if the role and responsibilities of these sets are very different and in this situation it is very difficult to keep motivation when people doing the same job have very different status and/or compensation structures. Such a stratification destroys for both sets of teachers, the seriousness and the gravity of the role. In the public system, in many cases the teachers in the same institution or school are governed by different rules and administrative bodies. In private schools teachers have always

been hired arbitrarily with no service rules and conditions and maybe fired if they cannot ensure success or they do not toe the line. This arbitrariness is not seen in the public school system but having guest teachers and such other devices is with the same principle. In spite of the rhetoric, there is a reluctance towards long-term investment on teachers with a view to empower them in both systems and the effort is to make them deliver quickly and for that the chosen strategy now is controlling and directing them. Besides this even in the public system, the kind of governance and administration processes teachers generally have to deal with and navigate every day shrinks their motivation, space and occasions for learning. While there is a sense of security of being in a profession for those who are regular, there is no mechanism for involving and engaging them in making the system work better. The teachers are considered to be shirkers and referred to in variety of derogatory terms as tonal distortions of the word “teacher or master”. Apparently well intentioned people and improvement processes also contribute to the threat to the notion, profession and role of the teacher through the suggestions that emerge from them as they keep only the short term and the superficial purposes in mind.

In a deep sense much more than any other profession the general impression is that the best do not come to teaching and those who come are not interested. It is not their first choice and they can not be expected to do better and make judgements or even contribute to deciding what should be done. There is a disdain about the requirements from the role of the primary school teacher, she is not expected to have to know too much or do too much. The feeling in most people who are educated is that I could do better than the teacher. This influences the conversations on how much should the teachers be compensated and how should their work be judged. They are the butt of everyone’s comments and advice. While some who advice are justified in their attempts to do so, many ‘advisors’ have not taught in a school and many not even been to the school and classrooms for a reasonable time with independent interaction even with children of one or two classes. These persons yet consider themselves capable and authorised to dictate and direct what the teachers should do. The result is that for the teacher school experience is not a means of growing and reflecting or an opportunity to attempt to create for herself and for children a deep sense of interaction within the school but is just to obtain and practice the techniques to manage children and deliver content. It is focussed at how to somehow survive in the class-room as a teacher. There is no occasion for and expectation of having situations that give the teacher a sense of experiencing the joys, the pains and challenges and somehow to feel close to the children, the community and their learning.

Given their low esteem even the colleges that prepare them for teaching and the teacher educators also feel un-motivated. Their preparation program at the school, university/college or the teacher college stage does not expect them to read, understand and interpret on their own. This leaves both the teachers as well as teacher educators cognitively under-prepared with limited scope of improvements. The focus in programs of teacher development is on methods and techniques, it is about obeying and following procedures. Their preparation or even the in-service programs does not urge them to articulate their ideas, understanding, experiences and their methods for appreciative inquiry. They rarely get the opportunity to think on these issues to explore and challenge their own and other naive beliefs about education and society as well as their

interplay. The system only adds to their reluctance to engage their held beliefs with reasoning and new ideas. Due to inadequate preparation and opportunity they find it difficult to develop a questioning and challenging attitude and instead continue with the tendency to accept what is told or given in written (or oral form) as the correct knowledge.

Given that the world around is changing, the context of education also is undergoing changes. The notion of what is worth knowing and what it means to be educated and the key principles of teaching learning are all evolving leading to a somewhat changed notion of knowledge, education and educational process. There is therefore a need to create, accept and construct shared alternate definitions of a teacher, a learner and the learning process among all those who interact with the schools. This requires efforts in multiple dimensions and from multiplicity of people. The major issues that need to be kept in mind can be defined as creation of an ambience that preserves the purpose and possibilities in a capable and willing person. Indeed it should be able to even create some purpose and possibilities for the teachers. It requires a structure, a process and its implementation such that the basic principles are reflected at all levels of the system. It certainly requires better teacher preparation programmes and more carefully constructed and implemented in-service interactions among and with them. In the present context the variety of views and perspectives need closer inspection and critical review. We need to examine the overuse of terminology and concepts in alien formulations. Deeper organic understanding of what teaching-learning process requires must not be replaced by terms that sound profound but convey very little. The essential need is to understand children their social context, their aspirations, strengths, the political environment and be sensitive to the communities children come from. All this is essential to complete the purpose of education for these children. There are wise practices among teachers and that can be learnt and shared through exchange of ideas and mutual observations. All this should not be allowed to be clouded over by terminology like pedagogic content knowledge, competency, etc. Teaching and learning is a human process that evolves for each teacher/child group and should only be informed and enriched by such terms rather than bury the natural possibilities under the tension and fear of following the terms.

These programs must see teachers also as trainers and as presenters of ideas and not just receivers. The trainers must have reasonably long experience of being in school, of teaching children and have a sense of how to convert the 'complex' principles of education they want followed and developed in to interactions with teachers and suggest ways of making it possible in the classrooms. Clearly the focus of the effort should be to make teachers and educators feel freer and experience freedom and responsibility. They must develop a shared vision of education and scaffold each other to make it happen. Avoiding quick fix solutions and slogans, helps us work towards setting up cohesive processes of engagement between the community, teachers, civil society organisations and the govt with its administration. Teachers need to have spaces for the expression of their personality and an image that is of a responsible contributor to the society. Governance and management can not be only for control and direction giving just as it can not be allowing what each wants to do. The formal system has been set up for a purpose and must reflect the principles it espouses in words as well as in action. The balance between individuality and collective functioning has to

be evolved and to be consciously and constantly worked towards in all aspects of teacher development and functioning.

This issue of VTTE has a broad spectrum of papers from people with different experiences. The papers analyse the challenges of the system at the institutional as well as individual practitioner level and give examples of possibilities of processes and mechanisms that show promise of hope. These include processes in the large public system, process with the public system and in private institutions. They also include studies with teachers and their own reflective experiences.

The papers in this volume reflect the wide scope that teacher capacity development covers and underlines its importance while expressing concern about the way it is today. Even though it has now become an almost acceptable principle that in service interaction is necessary, the papers in this volume point out the challenges in this. The spectrum of papers ranged from the recent changes in the pre-service programme to the idea of preparation of teachers and what does such a process entail in general and for specific subjects. It also includes experiences of being part of processes showing the challenges of in service programmes and the possibility that exist to modify and improve them. The papers also point out that teacher preparation and capacity building is linked to their being recognized as such and having a respectable identity professionally in all aspects of their work including when they are to participate in inservice programmes and which ones.

The paper by Nimrat briefly reviews the issues and challenges related to the quality of teacher education in India and efforts towards assessment and accreditation. In particular the structures such as NCTE and NAAC that are responsible for them and presents the major aspects of a critiques on them. She not only recommends a comprehensive framework for assessment usable for self-assessment by the institute and for accreditation but also points to challenges inherent in such a task.

The next article by Vimla is about the development of a person into a teacher. She argues that pre-service and in-service trainings need to be interlinked. Her paper points to the disorganized, repetitive and uninteresting trainings, teachers have to participate in and suggest that these need to be built from ground up.

The paper by Mythili develops the notion of a reflective practitioner and explores it in the context of the teaching profession identifying the need, the key features and the mechanisms to make it possible.

The paper by Jasim Ahmed revisits development of teacher education in India and analyses present challenges in the light of the recent curricular change. It suggests the need to have a clear vision and mission for teacher education that should be pursued over the long term and not changed frequently.

The paper by Richa Goswami presents a framework for teacher's knowledge for being in a classroom. Her paper includes a small study on merit of the knowledge of the teacher's from a few schools of Udaipur, Rajasthan. She brings out dimensions of this knowledge that reflect the various factors that affect classrooms.

The paper by Indira Vijyasimha presents a case study of how a well thought out teacher develop program can contribute positively towards innovative education of tribal children through analysis of the effort of a non governmental organization towards this. Indira used many sources of data from the classroom.

This paper by Amrit Pal Singh and Pooja Gupta analyses the situation arising out of the implementation of 2 years B.Ed. programme and asks for restraint in the pace of implementation.

The paper by Mukesh Malviya based on his experience as a teacher brings out what he considers as the remarkable features of an in service teacher development program which he was a part of. His paper indicates like the other papers do, the need for a respect and scope for the intellect of the teacher in the interaction.

The article by Latha and Padma presents the experiences and expectations of Beginner Teachers based on a qualitative study of teachers in Karnataka. They point out that collegiality among teacher team is essential. They point out that in the Indian context it is collegiality that beginning teachers find essential for their work.

A paper by Rajni based on her long experience of working with teachers in workshops and her own development as an educator underscores the importance of teachers developing the ability to read with understanding and the process for it. She underlines that shared reading and reflection on the meaning of what the reading is about helps in understanding.

The article by Hriday Kant Dewan explores one aspect of the in-service orientation of teachers and using the experiences of participation in some large scale teacher training programs points out the need for revising of the mechanism of training and the preparation of the resource group that would provide the training.

The paper by Indumathi and Sameera analyses and presents the experience of a teacher preparation programme that is embedded in a school. The program has many important features like reflection, feedback and monitoring.

A Paper by Uma Shankar Periodi and Rudresh is based on the effort of the state of Karnataka to make teacher professional development meaningful for teachers by giving them choice of picking modules they want to join. The online management of the module allocation and group formations is landmark attempt at making training relevant and choice based.

The paper by Jyoti Sethi is based on her work with six elementary teachers who collaborate to explore critical maths education for social justice using a task based programme. It tries to reduce the gap between research learning and on ground work.

The paper by Gurumurthy suggests that digital technologies can affect teacher as it gives them an opportunity to exercise her freedom. He suggests that only by studying its results the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be fully understood itself.

The issue of education of the specially abled has been on the forefront for last decade in particular. The most important group for making it possible are the teachers. The paper by Akhilesh Yadav is a study of the attitudes to such children.

Aerum has reviewed the Resources Book on ICT Integrated Teacher Education specifically for this issue.

This issue has addressed many issues but a lot have been left unaddressed. The importance and the scope of the teacher education merits another volume on this. But we will wait at least for one issue to revisit this. In the meantime we will deliberate upon other aspects of education.