



**Research Paper**

## **How Can Pre-Service Teachers Better Prepare For the Initial Days of Teaching**

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**ABSTRACT** - The New Education Policy 2020 has recommended a slew of changes in the country's education system. It clearly states that teacher quality is the foundation stone of any education system. Teachers training in preparation for the real classroom teaching must incorporate self learning, classroom observation, practice teaching and apprenticeship. The present system of pre-service teacher training is deeply problematic where teaching practice remains very disconnected with the actual requirements of a classroom. To enliven the classroom environment, what is needed is inspiring, dynamic, enthusiastic and skilful teaching. Professional development of teachers must begin from the pre-service stage of teaching.

**KEYWORDS** - Training; Pre-service; NEP

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Providing education to the pre-service teachers is important as competent, committed, innovative and resourceful teachers can make a lot of difference to the onerous task of education. Quality of education is determined by the quality of teachers which is based on their professional development and aptitude. It is indeed ironical that the concern shared by the University Education Commission (1948-49) - "People in this country have been slow to recognise that education is a profession for which intensive preparation is necessary as it is in other profession" still holds ground. National Curriculum Framework for teacher Education (NCFTE 2009) reiterated this concern by saying that it is unfortunate that teachers are trained in an insular manner, intellectually impoverished environment that are completely detached from the aims of education that they espouse.

Teaching is a dignified profession and the teachers are looked up to as reservoirs of knowledge. Gradually the profession has turned into an occupation and the process has become mechanical for delivering information. Over a period of time it has become the easiest way to earn a livelihood with minimal preparation and investment. Forced career choice is one of the reasons for lack of preparedness of the teachers for the initial days of teaching. There are many a degree courses where degree can be obtained without attending classes and B.Ed. has become just a perfunctory qualification for getting into schools. Pre-service teachers can rarely talk about the principles and theories of education and their relevance to classroom teaching. Also, there is a missing link between theory and practice which is further deteriorating the quality of pre-service teacher education. National Curriculum Framework (2005) stated that knowledge is treated as a 'given', embedded in the curriculum and accepted without question, without any engagement with the curriculum. Teachers have to co-construct knowledge along with learners which doesn't happen in real classrooms.

It is important to test teaching aptitude as well as subject knowledge before entering the profession. Only interested and deserving candidates must come to teaching. Besides, the theoretical grounding into educational philosophy, teachers also need a practice of teaching with genuine feedback. Short duration of B. Ed. course was a prominent hurdle in the success of teacher education program and in the new National Education Policy, many welcome changes have come for improving the duration as well as the robustness of the program. But it needs to be remembered that however excellent the program of teacher training may be, it does not produce an excellent teacher by itself. Efficiency and efficacy will come into teaching only with teaching practices that are reflected upon, critically analysed with a focus on continuous development. One of the glaring weaknesses of pre-service teachers is that there is a restricted scope of their evaluation which doesn't take into account the competencies, attitudes and values of the teachers.

Clearly, challenges are immense but so are the possibilities to meet with them. A pragmatic research program must be conducted to design the best course structure for realising the goals of teacher education. The method of teaching should be such that it transforms the future teachers into active learners, critical and creative thinkers. We need to promote experimentation and exploration among pre-service teachers, providing them with opportunities for innovation. Practices such as micro teaching, simulation and interaction analysis procedures must be encouraged. Admission process for B. Ed. should be completely systemised against tempering and meddling so that only passionate and deserving candidates get admission. The new National Education Policy proposes to move teacher education into multi-disciplinary colleges and universities by 2030. These institutions are also expected to offer a 4 year in-class integrated B. Ed. Program with blended and ODL mode of teaching to students in remote areas. A two year B. Ed. course for those who have already obtained a Bachelor's degree and a one year B. Ed. for those who have completed the equivalent of a four year multi-disciplinary Bachelor's degree are some of the steps in the right direction,

Pre-service teachers should be evaluated for attitudes, values, disposition and habits in addition to conceptual and pedagogical aspects through both quantitative and qualitative measures. Teacher education institutes and schools can not operate in silos. There needs to be greater interaction between them to be prepared for the initial days of teaching. Pre-service teachers need greater understanding of India's pluralistic nature, identity, gender and diversity issues to be able to deal with the class in a well-prepared manner. Research facilities must be provided to the pre-service teachers for learning about the best practices from around the world. Research will further help them in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary teaching - the need for modern day education. For continuous professional development of pre-service teachers, there should be opportunities for seminars, summer programs and research symposia at regular intervals. Libraries must be enriched with world class educational journals to help teachers keep herself abreast with new knowledge and skills. Given the interactive nature of teaching, dispositional characteristics will always play an important role in preparing pre-service teachers for initial days of teaching. We need empathetic teachers to enter into the profession with desired aptitudes, skills, values and knowledge.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

Pre-service teacher preparation must get due recognition since it ensures educational outcomes for the students. The dysfunctional system should be replaced by a very robust one, failing which the student-learning will continue to languish. The emerging India has new aspirations to reach its potential and the need for preparing our teachers for guiding the future of the country can not be over-emphasised. Let us take charge of pre-service teacher education - the greatest asset of any learning system. Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers will pave the way forward for our country.

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