

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF TEACHERS BY TEACHER EDUCATORS

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### ABSTRACT

A profession considered as a noble one is also greatly influenced by the good work of those who are ideally responsible for it. As it is expected from teachers to continuously motivate the learners, a teacher, also needs motivation and appreciation for undertaking an arduous task that requires action from multiple fronts and perspectives. Teacher education is a process for preparing the teachers professionally to deal with the challenging situations arising during the teaching and learning journey. Preparation of teachers for undertaking such huge responsibility takes long period of academic training that involves an organized body of knowledge and its effective dissemination amongst the prospective teachers. To become a teacher requires formal and rigorous training professionally in sync with the practical experience and expectations, following the code of professional ethics, simultaneously. A teacher is considered responsible for the total development of the learner and to motivate the learner to reach the full human potential for moving towards the direction of achieving excellence.

### INTRODUCTION

India is moving rapidly towards becoming a more open and global society with the expansion in information and knowledge, bringing opportunities for economic development, growth, human rights awareness, peace education and international partnership. Simultaneously, such movements are also creating new sets of problems that are related to the existing patterns of educational system. "People in this country have been slow to recognize that education is a profession for which intensive preparation is necessary as it is in any other profession". This concern was expressed in the University Education Commission Report (1948-49). It is alive in its relevance even today. Education has become an essential pre-requisite for personal and societal growth and development in a holistic manner. Education is considered as an ideal source of knowledge. Knowledge is dynamic in nature, meaning; what is true today may not be true tomorrow.

At the same time, access to information is perceived to be vital to economic growth and development. In order to achieve this goal, it is of utmost importance that there is always a need for timely modifications in the existing knowledge frameworks, education system and the ways and means of disseminating knowledge amongst the prospective teachers. More focus should be given on incorporating the constructivist approach in the teaching and learning process to promote knowledge construction by the learners and the role of the teacher should be of facilitator. It is vital to understand that there is a need to learn how to deal with the changing educational demands of our society and at the same time, develop the capacity that allows adapting the current scenario by all means smoothly.

## EXPECTATIONS FROM A TEACHER

A teacher is concerned with the total development of human beings, especially for the learners—physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally and spiritually, in an important way. While the dimensions of teaching other than the informational and cognitive may have suffered neglect in modern times due to a variety of factors, one cannot deny that they constitute an integral part of the teachers' role and functions. The implication of this is to give due emphasis for developing reflective teacher practices with positive attitudes, values and perspective, along with the skills for the art of teaching.

The importance of competent teachers to the nation's educational system can in no way be ever overemphasized. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. On a similar note, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 places varied demands and expectations on the teacher that need to be addressed both, initial and continuing teacher education. It is considered as common knowledge too that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals. For this, the teacher education must be of apt duration so as to prepare the teachers and match with the level and quality of subject matter knowledge and the pedagogical skills to meet the needs of diverse learners and challenging learning situations. If taken proper care, it shall definitely play a pivotal role in desired social transformation.

## PILLARS FOR FACING DYNAMIC TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS

A teacher functions within the specified broad framework of the education system that is yet unspecified – its goals, curricula, materials, methods and expectations from the teacher. A teacher education curriculum framework needs to be in sync with that of the curriculum framework for school education. A teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and changing demands arising in the existing teaching and learning context, to engage with questions of knowledge, the learner and the learning process. The following figure 1 attempt to depict the role of a teacher educator.

The expectations of the education system for a teacher change from time to time, as it is

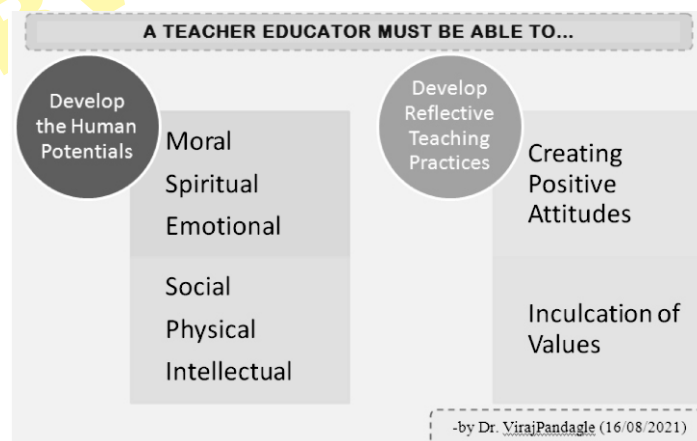


Figure 1 – Role of a Teacher Educator

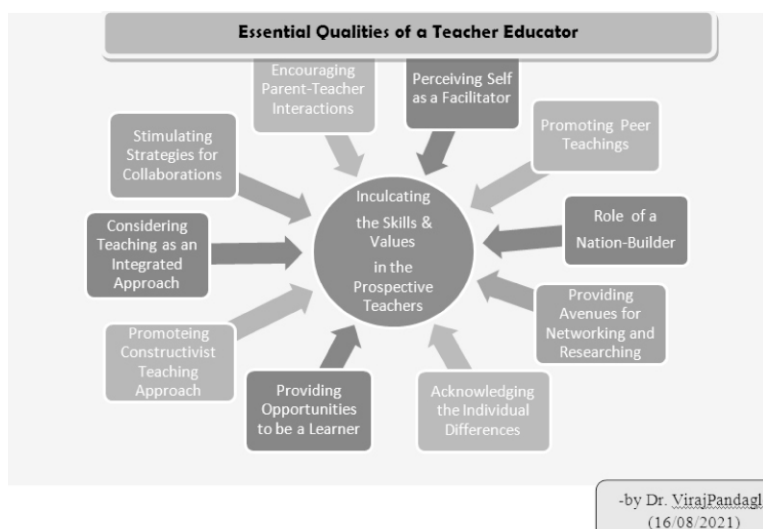
responding to the broader social, economic and political changes taking place in the society. The Education Commission (1964-66) professed, “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms”. More focus was shifted towards providing quality education as it worked as a major factor contributing to development. It was mainly driven by the thinking represented in the emerging human capital and modernization theories, thus, it resulted in expansion of school enrolment and increases in educational expenditure in absolute terms on a global level. Such actions have been stimulated and reinforced by various educational conferences. But, as these actions were being applauded for the achievements in achieving higher enrolment figures, at the same time it was seen that how teacher education institutions were increasingly failing to provide the quality learning opportunities and experiences to the prospective teachers that are required to meet to days need.

It is a fact that the society's learning needs cannot be addressed holistically only by expanding the formal education system but it also requires new ways to look at both, access to and quality of education for the efficient and effective working of teaching and learning process. It is always better to create more open and flexible learning opportunities and educational programs for all rather than simply focusing on constructing multi-storied educational institutes. It is essential to focus not only on the facilities and infrastructures but also on the creation of cohesive learning environments.

#### **TEACHER EDUCATORS-REFORMERS OF THE TEACHING PRACTICES**

Teachers mostly often operate in isolation; they mostly have no opportunity to reflect on their own practice or to exchange experiences and ideas with colleagues due to high work pressure and the necessity to have more than one full time job could also be another reason for the same. At the same time, those teachers who are enthusiastic, capable and highly motivated are may be frustrated with their contribution to change and often a supporting and understanding environment seems to be lacking at the work place.

According to a UNESCO report (1996b, 1), teachers constitute the 'largest single group of trained professionals in the world'. Teachers are the actors who really are in the position to make things happen as desired given their central role in the current practice of education. The idea of a teacher as change agents is a key to several education reform programs that emphasise the importance of improved teacher training. But somehow such programs still need to work upon to get the expected results. According to Visser (1997) it becomes a tremendous challenge when we realise that the teachers are also often considered the largest force against change. Fullan (1993, 108) describes teacher training as society's missed opportunity: 'Teachers and teacher educators do not know enough about subject matter, they don't know enough about how to teach, and they don't know enough about how to understand and influence the conditions around them. Above all, teacher education - from initial preparation to the end of the career - is not geared towards continuous learning'.



**Figure 2 – Essential Qualities of a Teacher Educator**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act mandates that the teacher should refrain from inflicting corporal punishment and meet the other set requirements. For this, a teacher must be equipped not only to teach but also to understand the learners and the community of parents so that students are regular in class. To meet the desired change at a rapid pace, the prospective teachers could be stimulated during their teacher education training through varied techniques to meet the need of the time. This requires introducing capacity building programs to inculcate the skills and values in the prospective teachers as shown in the figure 2. However, introducing such capacity building programs in teacher education is a challenging task and a complex process. Moreover, the success depends equally, on all the stake holders involved in the entire process. It is important to understand that learning is not confined to the four walls of the classroom only but rather, learning to take place, it has to be connected with the knowledge outside the school and making the process more learner-centered.

### CONCLUSION

The National Policy on Education 1986 emphasize: “The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”. Such views are indeed an expression of the vital role played by the teachers. Education must not be considered as a mechanical activity of information transmission and it also should not treat teachers as information dispensers. Teachers play a significant role as transmitters, inspirers and promoters of learner's eternal quest for knowledge. Teachers need to be looked as pivotal mediating agents via whom curriculum is transacted and knowledge is co-constructed by the learners.

Although teacher quality is a function of several factors but teachers' status, remuneration and conditions of work must also be given the due attention. The teacher education system through its initial and continuing professional development programs has a major part to play in the making of a teacher and is expected to ensure an adequate supply of professionally competent teachers.

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**PURVA MIMAANSA**