

Policy on Teacher Education in Historical Perspective - A Critique

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Introduction

In the development discourse, school education, especially in a developing country like ours, is assigned a special significance as it reaches out to highest number of young people - the most productive group of a population. It helps enhance productivity of common citizens, assures prosperity of the largest chunk of the population, especially in countries enjoying demographic dividend, impacts their socio-political development and brings visible contribution to the national income as well. Besides, it also lays necessary foundation for higher education. Achievement of all these aims ultimately depends on quality of education that is imparted to children and young people. Among various factors responsible for imparting quality education to enrolled students, teachers unquestionably occupy the most critical place. Besides teachers' availability in sufficient number, what really matters for quality education is their initial preparation as teachers and their continued professional development as well as their willingness to teach with interest.

Indian school education system comprising of one of the largest network of educational institutions in the world, after China, has seen remarkable expansion after Independence of the country. Today the country has 8.77 lakh primary schools, 4.25 lakh upper primary schools, 1.35 lakh secondary schools and 1.09 lakh senior secondary schools or a total of 15.17 lakh schools which enroll 130.5 million, 67.2 million, 38.3 million and 23.5 million students at these levels, respectively or a total of 259.5 million students in the entire school sector (MHRD, 2016). In 1.5 million schools spread across the country teaching is imparted by an army of 8.6 million teachers (ibid). Barring around ten percent (8.5 lakh) of these teachers who have not received any training for their job and they are mostly located in elementary schools, the rest are trained and qualified. A recent Amendment to the RCFCE Act 2009, as passed by the Lok Sabha in 2017, has allowed these untrained or unqualified working teachers to complete their qualifications by March 2019 or else they may have to lose their jobs.

Policies on Education

An educational policy is a set of resolves of the government that indicates its vision for education of its citizens and commitment to make investment to organize specific programmes and activities and take precise actions over a given period of time so that the envisioned goals of education are attained. This policy is framed in response to felt needs for education gauged in the light of the national educational goals, international commitments, contemporary issues and emerging concerns of society, new trends in different fields of knowledge and technology, population growth and trends and existing status of educational

provision, access and achievement. The nature and content of the policy on education and on any of its various aspects also depends on the priorities held by the people and the state and its political will to own the responsibility to develop this social sector.

Policies represent intentions of the people and the government which have to be followed by sincere actions to turn them into reality. It is rightly said, ‘when there is no sense of dedication, policies, good or bad, become words without meaning. A policy takes a concrete shape only in the process of its implementation. If those involved with programme planning, resource allocation and the actual operation of the teaching-learning process do not understand their tasks or take these casually, no worthwhile results can accrue’ (Govt. of India, 1985).

Just to have an idea of the state of educational policy response of the government in power in pre-Independence period, we may have a look at the first policy statement made by the British rulers in the Charter Act of 1813 passed by the British Parliament. The Act for the first time delineated the intent of the colonial rulers to organize and systematically promote modern education in India. Besides defining the objectives of this policy, the provisions of the Charter Act 1813 had also earmarked a specific minimum amount of funds that the East India Company was required to spend on educational activities annually. In the next more than one hundred years that followed this first policy declaration on education several other Indian Educational Policy Resolutions were pronounced by the British rulers. Primary goal of these Policy Resolutions was to ensure establishment and progress of the modern education system in India in a manner that it helps in spreading western knowledge and in sustaining the colonial rule here. Providing education to the Indian masses as a welfare good on equal plain was never the goal of these education policy declarations. Quite late in the day of the colonial rule, however, the Post War Educational Development Plan, prepared under the leadership of Sir Sargent, the then President of CIBE, in 1944, *inter alia* provided for free and compulsory education for all children. But that Plan could never see the light of the day as it was flawed on many aspects. Indians had summarily rejected that plan for valid reasons.

Post-Independence India saw more clearly articulated attempts to frame educational policies which were egalitarian in approach, grounded in the vision of national economic and socio-political development reflected in the Constitution, addressed the needs and aspirations of the people and often incorporated many recommendations of series of commissions of education appointed by the government. Almost immediately after achieving freedom, education in Independent India had begun to develop in a planned manner, particularly with the launch of five year plans for development of the country. But the first specific policy on education was passed by the Parliament only in 1968. The National Policy on Education (1968), which was based on the elaborate recommendations made by the Education Commission (1964-66), observed, “A major concern of the Government of India and of the States has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to national progress and security” (Govt. of India, 1968). Though it took some years to start implementation of this policy due to some Constitutional constraints relating to center-state relations on the subject of education yet, “the National Policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in post-Independence India. It aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship

and culture, and to strengthen national integration” (Govt. of India, 1998). However, despite many achievements that followed this education policy, the nation could not get optimum benefit from this policy for the reason that, “the general formulations incorporated in the 1968 Policy did not get translated into a detailed strategy of implementation, accompanied by the assignment of specific responsibilities and financial and organizational support” (ibid). While laying the proposals for the next National Policy on Education (1986) before the Parliament, the Government observed that “the above mentioned situation prevailing over the years has resulted in accumulation of problems of access, quality, quantity, utility and financial outlay, which have now assumed such massive proportions that they must be tackled with the utmost urgency. Besides, a variety of new challenges and social needs make it imperative for the Government to formulate and implement a new Education Policy for the country. Nothing short of it will meet the situation” (ibid, 1998). Hence, the National Policy on Education 1986 which was revised in 1992. The cardinal principle which was declared to be the key to the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 was, ‘Education is a unique investment in the present and the future’. Much water has flown down the Yamuna since the NPE 1986 and lot of socio-economic and technological developments have taken place since then. Hence, the nation needs to have a fresh look at its policy on education.

Teacher Education Policies

Policy on teacher education is a part of the broader spectrum of education policy. On the one hand, teacher education policy replicates the sentiments of the overall policy on education and contributes to attainment of its broader goals and, on the other, it responds to the demands created by the changing context of school education and other related developments and emerging concerns.

In colonial period establishment of schools offering modern education required teachers trained to teach in such schools. Their shortage was hampering the progress in opening new schools. Wood’s Despatch (1854) recognized ‘the great deficiency in the facilities for teachers’ training, and desired to see the establishment, with as little delay as possible, of training’ (NCTE, 1998). With support received from Wood’s policy declaration, the East India Company representing the colonial government resolved to set up Normal Schools for training primary school teachers. As a consequence, a number of Normal Schools for training primary school teachers were set up in the Presidency towns. Later, on the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission (1882), training schools for elementary teachers and training colleges for secondary teachers were also set up both by the government and the private educational societies. Lord Curzon during his term as Viceroy laid emphasis on quality of education and considered teacher training as an essential condition. His Resolution on Indian Education Policy (1904) declared that ‘one of the conditions to be satisfied by schools for receiving recognition and grant-in-aid from the government would be that teachers are suitable as regards character, number and qualifications’. The Policy Resolution fixed the period of training for school certificate holders for two years and for graduates for one year, besides emphasizing the components of theory and practice and attachment of a practice school with each training college. An important contribution to teacher education development came through the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) which

recommended establishment of Departments of Education in Universities and study of education as a subject at intermediate, graduate and post graduate levels. In the meanwhile, in response to Gandhi's call for imparting indigenously conceived Basic Education or *Nai Taleem* in junior basic and senior basic schools, in 1938, Basic Teacher Training programme was started in Jamia Millia Islamia and some other institutions. Later, the Sargent Plan for Post War Educational Development in India (1944) also emphasized, besides pre-service education, the need to organise in-service education for teachers through refresher courses.

By the dawn of Independence teacher education had become a distinct component of the education system and by that time several significant developments had taken place in this component. The teacher training, earlier organized for working teachers while they taught in Normal Schools, was now organized for prospective teachers as pre-service training in a variety of institutions viz., normal schools, training institutes, training colleges and departments of education in universities; training certification became a distinct qualification to become a primary or secondary school teacher; theoretical inputs and practice teaching became two significant components of any teacher training programme; primary and secondary teacher training programmes were differentiated as certificate/diploma and degree courses, the former having a duration of two years after schooling and the latter of one year after graduation; in-service training of teachers had begun to be recognized as necessary for updating knowledge and skills of teachers though its organization was almost rare.

Teacher Education policies in the pre-Independence period have to be commended for being instrumental in highlighting the need and importance of training of teachers for quality education in schools; in establishing a distinct system of teacher preparation; in making the government commit its resources for this purpose; in bringing progressive changes in the structure and content of teacher education; and in setting in motion a visible trend in teacher preparation that was initially seeded in the concept of Normal School. However, due to limited investment made by the government of the time to implement these policies, progress in teacher education remained slow, its provision was inadequate, and its in-service component could hardly be implemented. Nevertheless, this period left behind a legacy of sorts which included: a teacher education policy framework; a qualification framework for school teachers; a structure and curriculum framework for teacher education; a set of teacher training practices; and a bunch of different types of teacher education institutions.

Teacher education policies in post- Independence period

Though the Indian policy makers had inherited an operational system of teacher education from the pre-Independence period, it was not adequate enough to address the needs of the country in the changed situation, both in content and number. Some of the challenges that were expected to be addressed in the teacher education policy formulations now included, the huge backlog of untrained and under qualified school teachers, enormous demand of teachers for opening large number of new schools to fulfill the Constitutional commitment of universal elementary education, professional renewal of working teachers, teacher education curriculum reforms in the light of the new political context and national resolves, preparation of commensurate number of teacher educators to enable expansion of pre-service teacher education facility, etc. These challenges may be classified into three broad areas viz.,

provision, structure and quality of teacher education. A look at the teacher education policies in post-Independence India as discussed below suggests that the policy response in all these areas has helped in the development of teacher education system over the last seven decades, though with varying degrees of satisfaction.

Provision for teacher education

After independence, teacher education policy was required to be framed to provide for additional teacher training facilities to meet two types of demand: 1) to train and clear the backlog of untrained teachers; and 2) to prepare new teachers to man new schools to be set up in large numbers to achieve the goal of universal elementary education and consequent expansion of secondary education.

As regards the first, we had inherited a huge backlog of untrained and under qualified teachers. In 1950-51 there were only 10.3 per cent qualified teachers in primary schools and 47.2 per cent in upper primary schools. These proportions rose, though at a slow pace, to 50 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively, in 1965-66. Dissatisfied with this progress, the Education Commission (1964-66) observed, “Unfortunately, the professional education of teachers has been comparatively neglected in the post-Independence period” (NCERT, 1966). It recommended organization of summer courses, part time B.Ed. courses and correspondence teacher training courses to clear the backlog of untrained teachers within a period of five years. Policy decisions were taken to start summer courses, vacation courses, part time B. Ed. course and correspondence-cum-contact teacher training courses for untrained working teachers which together helped clear the backlog to a great extent and eventually these courses were discontinued. However, the B. Ed. Correspondence programmes continued in some universities until nineties. Massive enrolment in these programmes in late eighties and early nineties invited lot of criticism from all quarters for poor quality and commercialization of these B.Ed. programmes by some universities. This forced the government to hasten the process of giving statutory status to the NCTE so that control could be exercised on such poor quality teacher education programmes. In 1993 statutory NCTE was formed and in 1995 it imposed a ban on all such correspondence and part time teacher education programmes. Other means were visualized to deal with the remaining part of the backlog issue. Later, as a matter of policy, NCTE permitted universities and distance education centers to organise distance teacher education programmes for working untrained teachers with a ceiling on intake and restriction of geographical area, besides other conditions.

To address the second issue, training facilities were to be so expanded, both in volume and pace, that the output of trained teachers in any given year (in a particular region) would be equal to the demand for additional teachers in the following year (Education Commission, 1966). This required meticulous planning based on the projections of teacher demand and needed supply of teachers in the years to come and commitment of state resources to set up new institutions of teacher education as per requirement. The Education Policy of 1968 did not throw much light on how all this would be done. But the presence of a large number of elementary and secondary teacher training institutions in 1986 that is, 1200 and 360, respectively, which were mostly run by the state governments, indicates that conscious

attempts were made by the governments to expand teacher training facilities in preceding years. Still, for meeting the demand of additional teachers which was rising every year, there was a need to develop a state wise blueprint of teacher demand and supply. The NPE and POA (1986) focused on strengthening the existing teacher training institutions. The Policy (1986) also envisaged to phase out poorly resourced and poorly performing teacher training institutions. In follow up, a centrally sponsored scheme for teacher education was launched in 1987 which envisaged to identify and upgrade one primary teacher training institution in each district as District Institute of Elementary Education and Training (DIET) and 250 secondary teacher education colleges as Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE) and 50 of them as Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE). Except these provisions, neither the 1986 Policy nor the centrally sponsored scheme for teacher education (1987) carried any plan to open new teacher education institutions by the government except some, as explained above. It is argued that, once the government had agreed to provide quality school education to all children as a matter of their entitlement, it should have owned a much larger responsibility to invest on the expansion of teacher education facility for this has a direct bearing on quality of school education. During the last three decades, since the launch of the teacher education scheme of 1987, government's investment on expansion of teacher education facility has been insignificant though it did invest funds on strengthening the existing teacher education institutions and programmes organized by them.

In early 90s, when the country began to reel under the influence of neo-liberal economic policies it swiftly brought the social sector of education also in its ambit. As the demand for teachers was steadily rising and the government had no plans to come forward and create facilities to meet this demand, in 1995 it liberalized its policy and allowed the private sector to step in and organise self-financed teacher education programmes/institutions and boost up the supply of trained teachers subject to satisfaction of norms and standards laid down by the NCTE. The liberalized teacher education policy had its own fall outs. The number of teacher education institutions swiftly went up from 1500 odd in 1986 to 11,861 in 2009 (NCTE, 2009). This number shot up further to 18,839 teacher education institutions/programmers (TEIs/TEPs) in 2016 which were duly recognized by NCTE, as was reported by the NCTE to the NCTE Review Committee appointed by the Government of India (MHRD, 2016). The growth in TEIs/TEPs particularly during the last 12 years from 2003 to 2015 has been exceptionally high in the private sector, while there has been almost a complete moratorium in the growth of Govt. and Govt. aided TEIs. The NCTE Review Committee (2016) found the proportion of private self-financed teacher education institutions as high as 92 percent, followed by six percent aided TEIs and only two per cent government TEIs in 2015-16 (MHRD, 2016).

The policy of privatization of teacher education as an attempt to fill the gap created between demand and supply of teachers due to lack of interest of the government to invest in this area of education and supplement government's efforts in this regard and seek a helping hand of the private non-profit sector to assist the society in achieving the long pending goal of universal education, in fact, turned out to be a process of "commodification of teacher education by the new generation teacher education institutions" (Kumar, 2016). Access to this commodity depends on one's capacity to buy it which many potential and deserving

teachers may not possess. Such a private system of education, argues Panikkar (2011), contributes to the continuous exclusion of the marginalized and preserves the power of the privileged. The private sector dominated teacher education arrangement in India once again shows that “social inclusion and neo-liberalism are contradictory and incompatible” (Hill, 2009).

It is evident that though, as a matter of policy, NCTE is mandated to ensure planned and coordinated development of teacher education, and check mushrooming of institutions and commercialization of teacher education, it has been able to do very little in enforcing this mandate. The irony is that, instead of enforcing the policy resolve that ‘sub-standard institutions will be phased out’ (NPE-1986, 26), the number of sub-standard teacher education institutions in the country has multiplied due to uncontrolled mushrooming. Privatization of teacher education has taken place in highly unplanned, uncoordinated and unbalanced fashion. Until 2008 the NCTE was not equipped with scientifically drawn estimates of demand and supply of trained teachers at different levels in each State and Union Territory for the coming years. Availability of these estimates could have greatly helped the Council enforce its mandate of ensuring planned and coordinated development of teacher education. In the absence of such vital information, NCTE had no option but to grant approval to open new TEIs wherever and whenever the private players found them economically viable and satisfied the laid down norms, without looking into its impact on mushrooming of institutions. This resulted in a serious mismatch between demand and supply of trained teachers, some states and some levels having more institutions and more out turn of trained teachers than the demand and others, despite having demand for teachers, suffering from short supply. In states which suffered from shortage of teachers neither the government nor the private players took any interest in setting up new facilities for teacher education for obvious reasons- governments for shortage of funds or lack of political will and private players for lack of capacity of students/parents to pay high rates of fees that they charge. However, after NCTE completed a detailed demand and supply study of teachers in 2008, it allowed new institutions only in supply deficient states and for deficient levels, and strictly banned opening of new teacher education institutions in surplus states for surplus levels and thus it began to check mushrooming of TEIs. This controlled and coordinated development of teacher education during a short interregnum continued until the NCTE promulgated a new Regulation in 2014 and thereafter it again resorted to approving new institutions in all states and at all levels subject to satisfaction of norms.

As an adverse effect of such weak policy orientations and interventions as discussed above, the backlog of untrained teachers in some states has persisted and even gone up through these years. Fast expansion of elementary education has forced the state governments to appoint untrained teachers and para teachers in large numbers which has further aggravated the issue of backlog of untrained teachers. Today, there is a chunk of 8.5 lakh working school teachers awaiting training which, as per the RCFCE (Amendment) Bill 2017, has to be completed by these untrained teachers within a period of two years or by March 2019 or else they will have to face removal. This is a stupendous task to be accomplished in the given time frame. Accomplishment of this target is as much a responsibility of the governments of the states as it is of the untrained teachers. Some innovative fast track alternative training arrangements

will have to be put in place for these teachers without any loss of time which should also satisfy the conditions of NCTE notified qualifications and quality parameters.

Structure and duration of Teacher Education

Two important dimensions needed policy makers' attention on the structure and duration of teacher education. As a part of pre-Independence legacy, primary teacher training programme was of two year duration after schooling, training programme for post primary teachers was of one year duration after graduation and post graduate degree programme in education for teacher educators was for one year. Right from the inception of these programmes in pre-Independence India until this date, the first programme has generally been organized by the school education boards in the states, whereas the latter two are offered in universities. Interestingly, the duration of all these major programmes remained unchanged until 2014 barring some minor variations. In 2014, NCTE, on the recommendation of Justice Verma Commission (2012) and its endorsement by the Supreme Court, extended the duration of both B. Ed. and M. Ed. courses to two years, though the Education Commission (1964-66), had consciously desisted from suggesting extension of duration of secondary teacher education programme from one year to two years. Instead, it had advised better use of existing duration of one year by extending the working days from 180-90 days to 230 days (NCERT, 1966). As an innovation in secondary and post graduate teacher education, NCERT had started four year integrated secondary teacher education programme and two year integrated post graduate education programme for teacher educators in its Regional Colleges of Education (now RCIs). But neither of the two successive education policies adopted this integrated model as a norm for the whole country. On these lines, University of Delhi started a four year integrated graduate programme for elementary school teachers in its affiliated colleges but that programme also could hardly be replicated elsewhere.

Like many other issues, the Education Policy of 1968 was silent on the aspect of structure and pattern of teacher education. Hence, the pattern of teacher education in operation in 1968 continued without any change ever after. Interestingly, the NPE 1986 also endorsed this old pattern of teacher education i.e. primary teacher training of two years, secondary teacher education of one year and teacher educators' education of one year duration. This was despite the strong recommendation of the National Commission on Teachers-I (1983-85) that both elementary and secondary teacher education programmes should be turned into integrated courses of four year duration which can later be extended to five years on the pattern of professional courses in medicine, engineering and law (Govt. of India, 1985). The only exception made in the 1986 Policy in this regard which was implemented through a centrally sponsored scheme for teacher education launched in 1987, was that the primary teacher training course was upgraded to elementary teacher education programme. As per the Policy, one primary teacher training institute in each district was to be upgraded as DIET. The upgraded and better resourced DIETs gradually set up in almost all the districts, were assigned multiple functions including pre-service and in-service teacher education. Besides, the Policy also envisaged to upgrade 250 secondary teacher education institutions into Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and 50 of them into Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs), both with some extended roles to be played by them for pre-service and

in-service teacher education. Both, CTEs and IASEs, were set up but not in the stipulated number. Performance of all the three sets of institutions (DIETs, CTEs, and IASEs) could never be optimized due to an inherent flaw in the policy which promised financial support to them in project mode extendable on Plan to Plan basis and on sharing terms between the center and the states. This kept the entire reform initiative in teacher education in a state of limbo which in turn led to other related problems like, the state governments continuously avoided till date, to create a cadre of elementary teacher educators, share the financial responsibility as stipulated in the policy, etc. The funding support from the central government to these institutions has been irregular and thinning overtime. As a consequence, the upgraded CTEs and IASEs with enlarged functions assigned to them that are relevant even today, have mostly returned to their original limited roles which ultimately renders the reform initiative almost ineffective. With a view to help TEIs improve their activities, the NPE 1986 had resolved that 'networking arrangements will be made between institutions of teacher education and university departments of education'. Initially some work was done in this direction but as the funds under the teacher education scheme (1987) diminished the linkages created became ineffective. What was needed to effectively implement this policy was that all the universities should have opened departments of education so that the linkages built between them and the TEIs within their reach became viable and fruitful.

None of the education policies addressed the long pending demand that structurally the entire teacher education should be brought under the ambit of university system for its better health and development. In recent years, the NCTE Review Committee (2015-16) in its report has again recommended a five year integrated model to be followed for all levels of teacher education across the nation which will bring the entire teacher education system under the umbrella of universities. The Committee has suggested to draw lessons from the widely appreciated and successful five year integrated Finnish model of teacher education (MHRD, 2016). The debate on structure and duration of teacher education programmes is inconclusive till date. It is high time to take a final call and make a bold decision in this regard particularly in the light of recommendations of the NCTE Review Committee (2015-16) and the National Commission on Teachers (1983-85).

Quality of teacher education

Essence of a programme of teacher education is 'quality'. In its absence, teacher education becomes not only a financial waste but a source of overall deterioration in standards (NCERT, 1966). Quality of teacher education is primarily determined by two broad factors viz. *curriculum and the processes followed in implementing this curriculum in teacher education institutions*, besides others.

Curriculum is an expanded reflection of an education policy which details out the nature of experiences that the students will have on way to realize the policy objectives. For many years after Independence, curricula of different teacher education programmes could hardly respond to the changed conditions and demands in the society. The Education Commission (1964-66) therefore rightly observed that, 'vitality and realism are lacking in the teacher education curricula and programmes of work continue to be largely traditional' (NCERT, 1966). It made several suggestions to raise the quality of teacher education encompassing

improvement in content courses, professional studies, methods of teaching and evaluation, student-teaching, etc. However, these suggestions could not be incorporated in the Education Policy of 1968. It was the non-statutory NCTE's Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (1978) which highlighted the Education Commission's concerns and, for the first time, translated these concerns into a workable scheme of courses having three common components viz. (1) Pedagogical Theory, (2) Working with Community, and (3) Content-Methodology of school subjects and practice teaching. However, not many teacher education institutions followed this framework and its scheme of courses, as is clear from the observations made in the POA of NPE (1986), that 'the teacher education curricula have remained unrevised for years, reading lists out of date and practices adopted by teacher educators are in direct contradiction to ones being prescribed to prospective teachers' (MHRD, 1986). It is for these reasons that the NPE 1986 called for a complete overhaul of teacher education as the first step towards educational reorganization. POA 1986 and Revised POA 1992 led many reforms in the structure and organization of teacher education but the curricular changes that followed the Education Policy declaration could hardly match with expectations conveyed in the two POAs. Much later, an attempt was made to realize the teacher education vision of NPE 1986 through the Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (CFQTE) developed by the NCTE in 1998. The CFQTE stated, 'the changes at the level of teacher education have not adequately responded to the emerging realities at the school level, particularly after the introduction of the 10+2+3 pattern and other developments which, out of necessity, demand training of teachers in new pedagogy and innovative evaluation techniques' (NCTE, 1998). The Framework stressed on teaching of stage specific and culture specific pedagogical practices and development of competencies and skills which would help in shaping the teacher for effective role play (Siddiqui, 2009). Changes were brought in the teacher education curriculum in response to recommendations of CFQTE- 1998 but these initiatives also remained unsatisfactory as is evident from the comments made in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 for school education. The Framework aptly observes, 'attempts at curricular reform (at school level) have not been adequately supported with efforts at teacher education,....existing teacher education programmes do not address curricular design and issues of relations between school and society' (NCERT, 2005). A teacher education curriculum framework needs to be in consonance with the curriculum framework for school education and with other developments that have taken place in relation to school education (NCTE, 2009). Keeping in view the school curriculum reform plan contained in NCF 2005 and other developments during recent years, the NCTE developed National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) in 2009 which has over the years helped teacher education institutions revise and update their teacher education curricula. The Justice Verma Commission Report (2012) re-emphasized implementation of NCFTE (2009) and for this the Commission considered it necessary to enhance and double the duration of B. Ed. and M. Ed. programmes which was accordingly done by NCTE vide its Regulations 2014.

An equally important issue that determines quality of teacher education as pointed earlier is the actual implementation of revised curricula in teacher education institutions by following desired teaching learning processes and practices. It is said that the core of quality education

lies in the quality of pedagogy whose process aspects are found scattered across different dimensions of quality but concentrated under classroom practices and processes (Alexander, 2008). Pedagogic quality is manifested primarily in the decisions and interactions of teachers and learners, though role of others concerned with quality education cannot be completely ignored. In schools these processes depend on the competence and commitment of teachers and in TEIs on teacher educators which, in turn, depends on their own education and development and their service conditions. Like the mediocre quality of education imparted in most of the B.Ed. and D. El. Ed. programmes, the quality of M. Ed. programmes offered in most of the TEIs also leaves much to be desired. The quality issue gets confounded when teacher educators particularly in private TEIs are found under-paid and exploited by their employer institutions due to their commercial outlook towards organization of these and similar programmes. They are able to indulge in such practices due to ineffective monitoring and control on the arrangements made and processes followed by them for implementation of TE curriculum. Effective monitoring demands close cooperation between educational policy makers and administrators that is, the concerned regulatory authority-NCTE and affiliating bodies. In teacher education institutions where processes and practices are implemented at the hands of mediocre, unmotivated and exploited teacher educators, their pass-outs are destined to be run-of-the-mill school teachers. Education imparted by such teachers, in ripple effect, is bound to be of mediocre quality.

Conclusion

At the dawn of Independence the country inherited a legacy of teacher education which was an outcome of various educational policy initiatives taken in the pre-Independence India. Although teacher education continued to grow thereafter, teacher education policies and their implementation could not keep pace with fast changing conditions in the society in general, and in education, in particular. The consequent gaps that persisted within the policies and between policies and their implementation affected the development of teacher education and made it a weak link in the drive for quality education. In recent years the Government of India has launched the Pandit Madan Mohan Malviyah National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNTT) with an outlay of Rs. 900 crores in the XII Plan (MHRD, 2015). The Mission is expected to meet the challenges for the teacher education system arising from the massive expansion of education at all levels ranging from elementary, secondary, higher, technical and also vocational education and the consequent corresponding increase in the demand for teachers. The Mission envisages to address comprehensively all issues related to teachers, teaching, teacher preparation, professional development, curriculum design, designing and developing assessment and evaluation methodology, research in pedagogy and developing effective pedagogy. It is hoped that the Mission's activities in the listed areas will help improve the quality of teacher preparation and development through innovative measures. The NCTE on its part has also taken some initiatives to address the issue of sub-standard TEIs and improve their performance in collaboration with Quality Council of India. In this regard the recommendations made by the NCTE Review Committee (MHRD, 2016) are of contemporary relevance and need to be looked into by concerned educational planners, policy makers and administrators to bring meaningful reforms in teacher education. The drive for improving the delivery and effectiveness of teacher education programmes in TEIs, the

real source for transforming the novices into professional and humane teachers, would be complete and fully successful only when the affiliating universities and organisations are taken on board and they collaborate with NCTE and monitor the curriculum renewal and pedagogic processes and practices as these are actually carried out in the TEIs on regular basis. Time has come to declare a comprehensive teacher education and teacher recruitment and placement policy in the larger interest of quality education at all levels.

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