

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The teacher training in India was first started in Vedic period. In that period the senior students among the Brahmins were given the chance to teach junior students and thus were trained in teaching. The modern teacher training in India was first started trained the students in teaching different subjects but later on they also started to develop in the trainees some basic concepts regarding education and teaching. The success of educational reforms cannot be achieved without teachers' efforts. In India teacher education program is being provided in universities, colleges and teachers education institutions in order to upgrade teachers " teaching skills. Teacher education has enjoyed an increasingly important status in the strategic planning and development of our country. There are many issues that need urgent attention for improving the quality of teacher education programme. One of them is innovations in teacher education programme. Innovativeness means the ability to think beyond the boundaries and create something which is different from that which already exists. Innovations in teacher education include IT literacy, interactive teleconferencing etc. Without innovations, no progress is possible. Teachers have to be innovative and their grooming has to start from their training centre. Teachers have to be innovative in teaching, curriculum development and teaching practices. In current time the obsolete ideologies and methods of teaching do not work therefore there is earnest need to start innovative practices in teacher education. Unfortunately, the secondary teacher education system which prevents the teacher education institution from being innovative such as lack of physical facilities and funds, lack of diffusion of innovations among teacher educators, rigid frame work, lack of research orientation etc. This paper is discussing the overview of on new ideas and innovative practices in teacher education.

Keywords: Innovative Practices, Teacher Education, Constructivism, Team Teaching, blended learning, reflective teaching.

INTRODUCTION:

The progress of a nation to great extent depends on the quality of the teachers for this reason teaching is being considered as the noblest professions. Therefore occupies a pivotal position in the educational system as well as in the society. But teaching is not a mechanical process; it is a challenging profession because the teacher unconsciously designs the growing plastic young child. Like an artist the teacher is also responsible for shaping or reshaping the behavior of the young socially desirable way. Now a day, advanced technology has effectively revolutionized human society. An unexpected byproduct of this revolution has been the emergence of a generation of children weaned on multidimensional, interactive media sources; generations whose understanding and expectations of the world differ profoundly from that of the generations whose understanding and expectations of the world differ

profoundly from that of the generations preceding them. If we are to give these children the education necessary to succeed in our technologically intense, global future then a new form of educational practice that builds on children's native learning abilities and technological competence must replace our existing methods. There are many issues that need urgent attention for improving the quality of teacher education programme. Innovation is the key to improvement. One has to be innovative with teaching, integrated teaching, teacher curriculum and teacher education for the development of nation. Time is constantly changing and the only way to keep up with it is to keep growing and evolving and this is also applicable to teachers. In order to relate with children teachers need to keep themselves upgraded with new ways of teaching. Learning never stops. To be a good teacher, need is to explore themselves, and try innovative educational measures in teaching. With internet

being so widely used, knowledge is just not restricted to textbooks, and children have access to internet and information. In such times if teachers stick with a decade old way of teaching then it's difficult for children to relate to them. Teachers have to look beyond textbooks and take help from audio and visual aids of teaching to make a subject interesting.

OBJECTIVES OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

- | To make the process of teaching and learning an enjoyable and non-monotonous process.
- | To bring about the aspect of student involvement and making class more interactive.
- | To use of Visual and audio aids with Emphasis on thinking rather than just learning.
- | To Increase the preparedness of Teachers.
- | To involve teachers in preparing teaching material.
- | To make students work in collaborative and competitive fashion

IMPORTANCE OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION :

There may be several advantages of using innovative practices in teacher education. A few of them are given below-

I. Student Motivation Levels Increases:

Innovative practices are easy to manage the students and direct them towards the task. There is no chance of students " distraction which ultimately increases the motivation level of students.

II. Removing Stressful tasks:

Innovative practices are better in satisfying teachers' experience and make tedious tasks simple an easy to understand which makes students to be busy and engaged, thus remove stressful task of teachers.

III. Self-Learning: Innovative practices provide self-learning opportunity to learners. Learning may not be directed towards teachers " objectives in classroom teaching but extra coordination can be observed in the classroom.

IV. Extension of students thinking:

Ideas and thinking of students may go beyond teachers' capabilities and experience which may bring and provide double confidence of levels of teachers.

V. Active Learning Process:

Using innovative practice in teacher education students' may go beyond the teacher's own subject of expertise. Learning becomes active and complex subject matter becomes easy.

VI. Instruction to the right learner:

Teachers feel easy to spend time with students that need extra attention and practice to catch up with the subject.

VII. Attention: Using innovative practices slow learners have also concentration on the teaching-learning process without deviation and distraction.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE :

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) report stated, " We are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the community" It is very right that " no people can rise above the level of its teachers".(NPE-1986). The teacher is the real and dynamic force of any institution. A UNESCO publication, The Changing Role of the Teacher, states: 'There was a time when the teacher's role was to pass down to the younger generation the knowledge, experiences and mythology of a slowly evolving society. The pace of change in contemporary society has made this role redundant. The modern teacher must be, among other things, a change-agent. It does not matter whether one is addressing the situation in a developing country or an industrialized nation, the problem remains the same. What are the new dimensions of his or her role, and how is the teacher to be trained to fulfill that role. In examining the changing role of the teacher we need to see the changes as being a response to, and an attempt to confront, the pressures of a society undergoing constant transition.' (Goble and Porter,1977). The University Education Commission(1953), Education Commission(1964-1966), International Secondary Education Project Team(1954), The Committee on Plan Projects(1963), The Study Group of the Secondary Teachers in India(1964), Indian Association Teacher Educators(1973), National Policy of Education(1986) and National Council for Teacher Education(1998) have all recommended innovations in India in order to meet the present day requirements and to strengthen all aspects of teacher education system.

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

The word “Innovation”, is derived from the Latin word “Innovare” which means to change something into something new. It is a promotion of new ideas and practices in education and training. Innovations play an important role in improving the quality of teachers and the education imparted to them for all levels of teaching. They demand to introduce new ideas and practices in classroom transaction and other curricular and co-curricular activities. The teacher's effectiveness can be enhanced with good leadership and appropriate teaching methodologies. No teacher education programme can prepare teachers for all situations that will situation that they will encounter. Teacher themselves will have to make the final choices from among many alternatives. The purpose of teacher education is to prepare teachers who have professional competencies to lead the nation forward through their manifold roles. There may be wide variation in using innovative practices in teaching and learning. For an instance, the use of colored chalk, basic audio-visual materials, electronic technology use of sophisticated technologies and methods, practices etc. are some of the innovative practices use in teaching and learning.

SOME INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

Following can be some of the innovative ideas that need to be focused in teacher education.

Team Teaching, Cooperative or Collaborative Learning Process:

When teacher and students have to work under so many constraints, then the practice of “Team teaching or cooperative or collaborative teaching” is always a good option. Team teaching or cooperative learning process is a team work where members support and rely on each other to achieve an agreed-upon goal. Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement

Reflecting Teaching and Reflective Teacher Education:

Reflection is a natural process that facilitates the development of future action from the

contemplation of past and current behavior. Reflection refers to the ongoing process of critically examining and refining practice, taking into careful consideration the personal, pedagogical, societal and ethical contexts associated with schools, classrooms and the multiple roles of teachers.

Constructivism:

Constructivist paradigm evolved from cognitive psychology is based on the contributions of Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Dewey, Tolman and many other educationists. Constructivist learning is based on student's active participation in problem solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity. Students construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying them to new situations and integrating new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs.

Blended-Learning and Teacher Education:

Blended learning describes an approach to learning where teachers use technology, usually in the form of Web-Based instruction, in concert with and as a supplement to live instruction, or perhaps utilize components of a learner-centered Web course with components that require significant instructor presence and guidance. The strength of a blended-learning approach is that it provides a means to ensure learners are supported and guided as they undertake independent learning tasks. Use of the Web in such settings provides many affordances for the teacher and students in the form of communication channels, information sources and management tools. These aspects appear to make blended-learning particularly well suited to teacher training students, especially those in large groups where direct instructor support may be difficult to deliver. Blended-learning commonly describes learning that combines traditional teaching and learning approaches with information and communication technologies. It is anticipated that blended learning will enhance the student learning experience, at the same time it also demands that the teachers should be trained as online facilitator.

Soft Skills and Teacher Education

Soft skills refer to personality traits, social gracefulness, and fluency in language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance, career prospects and hard skills which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or

activity. Soft skills are broadly applicable in teacher education programme that the curriculum of teacher education could contribute to the development of a holistic human capital that can foster economic, social and personal development. Infusing the soft skill in the curriculum of teacher education is the need of the profession for it to be successful.

Information Communication Technology (ICT):

ICT presents a major opportunity to rapidly spread information and knowledge cost-effectively even to the most remote rural areas of the country. Cradler (2002) gave seven requirements for effective use of Information and communication technology (ICT) in education as given below:

- Suiting technology to education goals and standards
- Having a vision for the use of technology to support curriculum
- Providing for both in-service and pre-service training
- Ensuring access to appropriate technology
- Providing for administrative support for technology use
- Providing time for teachers to plan and learn how to integrate technology
- Providing for ongoing technical support for technology use

Hence the students are encouraged to use internet resources for collecting information, creating a learning community through groups, use LCD or projector for presentations, and participate in synchronous meetings through chat, video conference etc.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Exploratory research methodology is used here to analyze the data. Data was collected from multiple sources such as journals, books and blogs to understand the teaching learning paradigm. In this paper, we have referred previous research articles. Apart from this, we have referred different websites and professional magazines.

Initiative steps of Innovation in Teacher Education System:

NPE (1986) stated “The existing system of teacher education needs to be overhauled or revamped.” This has resulted in a number of initiatives being launched and they are

- Establishment of NCTE by the government of India on August 17, 1995 as a statutory body responsible for the regulatory as well as professional aspects of teacher education.

- Programme of Mass Orientation of School teachers (PMOST) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in all the states and Union Territories during 1986-1990.

- Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT) was taken up in 1993-94 to provide orientation to primary school teachers.

- In the light of recommendations of NPE 1986, Block and Cluster Resource Centers were established for professional growth of elementary school teachers and heads.

- To acquire ICT literacy, the NCTE has produced a CD-ROM entitled 'IT Literacy'

- NCTE has developed self learning modules on 'Human Rights and National Values' with a view to familiarize entrant teachers with values enshrined in our constitution

PROBLEM OR RESISTING FACTORS IN INNOVATION:

Although there are so many innovative practices existing in Teacher Education Programme in India, NCTE has been taken so many strategy for creating innovative teacher education programme, but still there are some resisting factors in our education system which prevents the teacher education institution from being innovative.

1) Lack of physical facilities and fund:

Most of colleges are suffering from lack of facilities in terms of space, equipment and personnel. Consequently, they have not been able to adopt innovations.

2) Lack of Diffusion of Innovations among teacher educators:

Most of the teacher education institutions are poor and indifferent towards the professional growth of their teacher educators. Many of the teacher educators are ignorant of the new trends in their area of studies due to lack of diffusion of new ideas among them.

3) Lack of Service and Support : Due to administrative difficulties, teacher educators are not able to adopt and maintain the innovations in teacher education institution. Usually new experimentation, facilities are not be provided by the administrators.

4) Lack of Expertise of the staff:

The secondary teacher education institutions are manned by teacher educators who have not been exposed to the functioning of institutions; it is found that due to lack of expertise of the staff members, innovations have not been diffused in the training institution.

5) Interpersonal Relationship Crisis:

Teacher educators feel that there is a lack of cooperation among members of the staff. There are professional rivalries among co workers and there is no initiative from teacher educators for creative works. It appears that lack of interpersonal relationship is yet another factor preventing the spread of innovation in the training institutions.

6) Decision making by external agencies

Teacher educators simply follow the decisions taken outside by the university and government authorities for the adoption of innovations in their teacher training institutions. Teacher educators lose initiative and desire to venture innovation even in the areas which fall within their purview such as methods of teaching, supervision and guidance to student teachers.

SUGGESTION:

The above observations clearly indicate that teacher education programme at secondary level needs to be examined critically in terms of its innovations. Here are some suggestions which can be used to overcome those problems

- Physical facilities and funds should be adequately provided to the institutions by the government, local bodies and organizations.
- The conventional system of a few demonstration lessons given by a few teacher educators at the beginning of the practice teaching may be replaced by display of some video recorded good lessons in each subject delivered by expert teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees.
- Relevant methods of instruction such as tutorial, discussion seminar, team teaching and interactive teaching learning should be adopted.
- More co-curricular activities such as physical education, social services, tree plantation, and formation of eco club should be organized
- Modern technological gadgets like computer, video, mass media, OHP should be used at the time of instruction.
- Teaching staff should be given adequate representation in the management.
- Publication and subscription to professional journals by the institutions should be encouraged.
- Research wings in the university departments and selected government colleges should be started.
- The management and administrators should be

watchful in maintaining the health of the institutions so as to make them innovative and progressive

CONCLUSION :

To meet the challenges of the new millennium, teacher education in India needs a tremendous change. The teacher educators need intensive training in various aspects related to new innovations. Teacher education in India is at a new stake in view of the new policies laid down and the globalization processes. The pupil who are pursuing teacher education are required to place community and future citizens at a higher place by possessing new skills and attitudes as well as competitive knowledge in the stream of education concerned. All these can be possible through practice of innovative teaching practices in Teacher Education. If the innovative teaching practices being promoted by different institutions working in the arena of teacher education, there is every possibility that these practices would certainly attract the attention from the academic fraternity. Therefore NCTE, SCERT/SIE and university department of education should take immediate action for making education system innovative.

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