



Teacher Education and Management: Policy, Practice and Alternatives

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The education domain is filled with debates, usually inconclusive because positions are taken based on myopic ideas and narrow goals which are then held on to strongly in spite of evidence that something contrary works better. However, one thing that most stakeholders agree as the foremost ingredient to improve education, is ‘the quality of teachers’.

Understanding the landscape

There are over 8.5 million teachers currently engaged in the task of education in about 1.5 million schools impacting the lives of more than 260 million children in classes 1 to 12. Of these over 5 million are in the elementary schools.

Table 1: Schools, Enrolment and Teachers in India

School Type	Schools	Enrolment	Teachers
Government (Aided included)	1196658	174765189	5808273
All Management (Government + Private)	1522346	260596960	8691922

(Source: U-DISE 2014-15)

A staggering number from any angle. These teachers have acquired a professional certificate or degree from any of the over 18,000 Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) that exist in the country. These figures also indicate that we have come a long way since Independence wherein there were only around 350 TEIs.

The National Council For Teacher Education (NCTE) is the apex body that manages the TEIs in the country. The key role of the NCTE is to ‘achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country’¹ which includes regulating and monitoring the Teacher Education (TE) system with a mandate that covers almost everything under the TE from issues such as granting permission to running courses to prescribing minimum qualification to become teachers.

This article attempts to capture the critical issues that the TE domain is facing at present – from the state of the TEIs and associated aspects of Teacher Development to the policies governing teachers and other aspects of Teacher Management. The key ideas of reform is presented at the end of each section: this is not to say there are no other ideas, but an attempt to identify the fundamental aspects under each section that has to change in order to better the TE system.

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs)

The number of TEIs is a staggering 18000 plus! The figures in Table 1 (above) indicate that 80% of the total are government schools and 65% of the total students and teachers are in this system. However, when we analyse the TEIs numbers, the space is occupied by private players; more than 90% of the TEIs across the country are privately managed. It indicates that the private seized the opportunity and the Government could not keep pace with the increasing demand from schooling – though, it did provide the schools, the focus on providing adequate teachers was left to the private and this is true for all regions across the country; but one should also note that there is an uneven distribution between the States within a region.

TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



¹NCTE at a Glance; Objectives http://ncte-india.org/ncte_new/?page_id=782

There are few good TEIs across the country, which though private do not operate commercially, however they are few and far between; a majority of them are no more than 'teaching shops' or agencies doling out degrees for a 'price'. Quality has clearly not been accompanied by quantity.

On the other hand, in the government space, there are 571 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), 106 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE), 32 Institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASE) & 33 State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) / State Institute of Education (SIE) in the country which originated in the 8th Plan period, post the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986). Some of the constructive work in the TE space has happened in these institutions, however, the quality of contribution is highly uneven across these institutions. Though they were set up under

the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Government of India, a large number of these institutions are plagued with – poor infrastructure, high levels of vacancies, dearth of high quality academic output, etc. that makes any kind of progress impossible (Azim Premji Foundation, 2010).

There are a large number of reports and studies that have highlighted the conditions of the TEIs that are spread across the country. The foremost of these studies has been the Justice Verma Commission (JVC) report². Appointed by the Supreme Court of India in 2012, the JVC report highlights the malaise at the core of TE, i.e. the TEIs and the abysmal state of affairs which is not only a scathing portrayal of NCTE's failure in regulating TE in Maharashtra, but a mirror of what exists in the name of TE across the country.

The key reform with regard to TEIs is to

- Review all existing private TEIs and prohibit those that do not comply to the norms as well as the spirit of what a TEI ought to be - in other words shut down TEI's which have become 'shops' that dole out teaching degrees; at the same time it is necessary to strengthen all the Government TEIs, upgrade them where required, so that those who want to study TE have the opportunity to do so in a good quality TEI.

Examples of different modes of professional development:

- Early tenure coaching – Experienced teachers, principals or specialists could be identified as coaches for observing classes of new teachers
- Peer learning – School leaders need to help plan schedules in way that teachers can spend enough time planning together, observing one another's classes and providing feedback
- Learning communities outside the school – voluntary professional teacher networks (e.g. Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Karnataka) and ICT enabled online subject teacher groups (e.g. RMSA Karnataka)
- Resource centres – The district, block and cluster centres to be a repository of curricular material with abundant resources (print and digital) to help teachers in preparing for their classes and working on self-guided study
- Demonstration classes – Teachers who are good at their subject and pedagogy to conduct demonstration classes for other teachers to observe and learn. ICT could be used to develop such a repository of demonstration classes and be shared with all the teacher
- Sabbaticals for research/ advanced studies; Seminars, exposure visits, access to professional journals and e- learning communities etc.

Teacher Education and Professional Development of Teachers / Teacher Educators

Teaching is a profession and teachers are professionals. Therefore there is a need for maintaining a certain standard in this profession; but, our teacher qualification criteria does not

indicate that. The basic certification one requires to teach in an elementary school in our country is a diploma, which is acquired after class XII, by studying for two years – known by many names, but most commonly known as the D.Ed. (Diploma in Education). And, in order to be a teacher in

²JVC Report mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/JVC%20Vol%201.pdf

any of our secondary schools, you require a B.Ed. (Bachelor in Education), which till recently could be acquired in nine months after graduation! The NCTE amendments in 2014³, increased the duration to two years (NCTE, 2014). Unfortunately, you need no qualification to be a 'teacher' in most of our pre-primary set ups!

Without getting into the content of the TE programmes in the country, one can see the inadequacy of the programmes from their duration – till recently, a professional qualification acquired by a nine months course was required to teach 15 year olds! It took NCTE as long as it did to increase the duration of both the B.Ed. and the M.Ed., (the latter mandatory to become teacher educators), to two years. Not only is the increase of the duration of the B.Ed. programme inadequate with such little curriculum reform, it is completely ineffective to bring about any desirable change.

No long term change will happen in teacher education unless there is a fundamental shift in the quality of teacher preparation - this includes issues of curriculum, duration and institutional quality. The key reform required in this area is to streamline the required qualification and the TE duration:

- *Provide only one option to become a teacher across the country – and that option should be a 4-year integrated teacher education programme with subject (language, mathematics, etc.) and grade-level (elementary teaching, secondary teaching, and early childhood education) specialisation options.*

The current in-service teacher education, too, does not meet the requirements of practising teachers. The quality of academic support provided to teachers leaves much to be desired due to poor inputs, lack of resources and a series of professional constraints.

The key reform idea in this regard is to:

- *Shift the focus of in-service programs to give teacher's the choice of training programmes. The concerned TEIs must offer a calendar of courses in a year for teachers to choose from; on the same lines, teachers should be offered sabbaticals, fellowships, support for research, faculty exchange and exposure visits based on rigorous selection criteria at identified institutions as part of their professional development.*

Teacher educator quality

To bring about a substantial and sustainable improvement in the quality of teachers it is critical that the quality of teacher educators is improved and sustained. Some ideas for the improvement of the quality of teacher educators include- revamping the curriculum, duration and structure of the M.Ed. programme based on National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) and establishment of voluntary professional networks of teacher educators including physical and ICT-enabled virtual forums for professional interaction and development.

The first step towards improving teacher educator preparation has been initiated by increasing the duration of the M.Ed. programme to two years. At least a hundred institutions across the country spread over all states that could be capable of running such a revamped programme should be identified and prepared to deliver such programmes.

The key reform idea with regard to teacher educators is to:

- *Develop a group of at least 500 outstanding teacher educators in every state and a separate cadre for teacher educators in each state as recommended by the 12th five-year plan.*

Teacher Management: Practices and Policies

Almost all key reports since 1950s emphasise the importance of focusing on teacher management related indicators in the system. This has been a running theme in policy documents such as the National Education Commission of 1964, National Policy on Education 1968, 1986 and 1992. The NPE 1986 devotes a section on 'The Teacher'.

The need for teacher autonomy

It is the teacher who experiences first-hand the difficulties children encounter while negotiating social, cultural and linguistic barriers. Every single child out of school must be transformed into a student. Instead of the targets set at the Centre, State, or district levels, each school and each teacher should be allowed to think of its own vision, and plan the educational activities. However, even the teacher training continues to be driven centrally by SSA. Autonomy to schools and teachers will not and cannot happen in isolation. It will have to be accompanied by various levels and

³NCTE Act 2014 ncte-india.org/ncte_new/?page_id=910

kinds of autonomy across the system beginning with autonomy to the State level institutions and that extending to district level institutions such as DIETs. It is only these paradigm shifts that will allow for the required changes on ground at the level of schools and teachers.

Teacher recruitment, promotions and transfers

Currently the country is facing an acute shortage of trained teachers and absence of appropriate qualities in those teachers who are in place.

Though the average Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) for the entire nation is an envious 24:1 at primary and a flattering 17:1 at upper primary (U-DISE 2014-15); Uttar Pradesh with an acceptable 39:1 has the largest PTR in the country! However, all know that these averages do not reveal the actual picture. There are schools with a disproportionately large number of students compared to the number of teachers and vice versa. More than a lakh schools across the country continue to remain single-teacher establishments (MHRD, Annual Report, 2014-15). Given the non-school work teachers are invariably involved in, the contact time with students in these single-teacher schools are grossly inadequate.

The percentage of single teacher schools at the Primary level have large variations across States: Arunachal Pradesh (48.8%), Goa (39.5%), Rajasthan (25%), Andhra Pradesh (24%), Karnataka (14.9%), Himachal Pradesh (11.2%), Bihar (12.3%) and Odisha (9.2%).

Source: DISE 2013-14

Furthermore, a severe teacher shortage exists for specialised subjects, especially in remote and tribal areas. Added to this, at the secondary level, there is a shortage, which is going to be acute in the near future, of teachers of science, mathematics & geography across the country. Several Bachelors in Science programmes across the country have been closing down for want of students – this is the route through which we develop teachers for science and mathematics at the secondary level. If this ‘pipeline’ closes, the crisis of availability of qualified science and mathematics teachers at the secondary level will significantly deepen.

On one hand there is serious dearth of new teachers and on the other there is a lack of quality in large percentage of existing teachers and added to this is

the huge issue of nepotism that has driven teacher recruitment and management processes such as promotions and transfers across the country. One often hears the ‘rates’ for the job of a Government teacher depending upon the school level and the location and this despite the educational qualification already acquired.

Studies (Ramachandran et al, NUEPA, 2015) have also shown that huge variations exist in the current practices across the country and the states continue to have in place ad hoc measures. However, for about a decade some of the State Governments have taken initiatives which have streamlined the teacher management process to a large extent to get rid of corruption of all sorts, including nepotism. The southern States have led the way in this regard and have made the teacher recruitment and management processes very transparent (see box for the Karnataka example). However, these best practices have not been emulated by all the States in the country and till such time they are, issues that have plagued this domain with a direct bearing on teacher motivation will continue to have a negative effect and, as a result, will impact the quality of education delivered at our schools.

Even before the RTE Act recommended Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET) for all new recruitment of teachers, States such as Karnataka had systems in place to implement a centralised exam (Common Entrance Test; CET) as part of the recruitment process; for e.g., to enable these a Centralised Admission Cell (CAC) was created which not only looked at admissions for teacher education programs, but also executed teacher recruitment tests. These eligibility tests were followed by ‘counselling’ based on the rank in the CET which determined the location / school a teacher would get as his or her first posting within the established criteria.

Laying down of clear norms such as in Karnataka teacher transfer process, presented in table 2 below, is the first step towards clearing the mess in the area of teacher management. Once, the confidence of the teachers is gained and the teacher community feels that there is no unfair means adopted in the process, the transition will begin and the positive feeling can be channelized to bring out tougher reforms.

Table 2: Norms for Teacher Transfer in Karnataka

Norm	Elementary School Teachers	Secondary School Teachers
Unit of Seniority	District Level	Division Level
Competent Authority	Block Education Officer (BEO) (Appointing Authority)	Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI); District level (Appointing Authority)
	Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) (Selection Authority)	Joint Director of Public Instruction (JDPI); Division level (Selection Authority)
Calculation of Vacant Posts to be filled by transfers	PTR = 40	Subject-wise Staffing
Computerized Counselling	Yes	
Upper Limit for Transfer	8 per cent of cadre strength within the unit of seniority*; 1 per cent of cadre strength outside the unit of seniority	

*This was 5% till 2015 when it was increased to 8% through an amendment to the Act.

Source: Reproduced from CBPS, 2015

Teacher salaries

The popular perception is that teachers of the public school system are one of the lowest paid Government employees. Data indicates otherwise! The current salaries as claimed by the State Governments are determined on the basis of the 6th Pay Commission and in some cases the respective State Commissions. On an average, at entry level the Government primary school teachers in the country are paid around Rs 20000 per month and after about 10 years of experience the teachers are

paid around Rs 32000 per month. The band in which teachers are paid is higher than that of the police constabulary, electricity company linesmen, village accountants, bank employees and railway station masters and by the end of their respective careers, doctors and nurses, police inspectors and bank managers are the only professionals in the rural economy who are paid more than an experienced teacher / head teacher. The table below throws further light.

Minimum and maximum 'take home' salaries (select States) before and after 6th pay commission

	Before 6th pay commission		After 6th pay commission	
	(min)	(max)	(min)	(max)
Govt. Primary school teacher	8697	9630	13762	21045
PST 10 yrs exp/ Head Teacher	11775	15635	20270	39831
DIET lecturer / MEO / BEO	11722	14762	22762	55082
DIET Principal / DEO	15635	35034	27547	60802
Post woman/man	2750		4700	18000
PHC Nurse	8427	19568	16298	46333
Police constable	6091	13691	10655	31499
Line man (electricity dept)		11228		16983
Village accountant			5200	20200

	Before 6th pay commission		After 6th pay commission	
	(min)	(max)	(min)	(max)
Village accountant			5200	20200
SM -Railways (@ village level)			14350	33000
Bank employee	8118		11495	28000
Post master				26076
PHC doctor	9809	33203	26108	59287
Police inspector	9090	21637	18760	49919
Bank manager	18450		20359	35100

*The range is based on the lowest and highest points of primary data collected by Azim Premji Foundation across its' field locations

Figures represent total salaries (Basic + DA + HRA)

^ There are States with current starting salaries lower than min. mentioned above (E.g. TN: 15 K) and higher than max. mentioned above (Punjab. 36k) Source: State reports – Working conditions of teachers in India

Teacher salaries therefore, is one component, which requires little attention. The Government has also announced the 7th Pay Commission which enhances the salaries further, also it is likely that some of the States that are yet to implement the 6th Pay Commission, will set up their own pay commissions at par or better than the 7th pay benchmark.

The key reform idea in the entire domain of teacher management is to:

- *Make teacher management highly transparent and provide teachers large amount of autonomy, at least within the classroom and to transact the syllabus. A transparent recruitment policy and clear and fair norms for promotions and transfers is the key to turn around the situation. It has happened in some States, and only needs to be emulated in the other States.*

Need to re-visualise The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)

Over the last decade, unlike critical institutions at the state level and below, most of the national level institutions have played their role to a large extent, but unfortunately, this cannot be said of the regulatory body that was established to focus on TE, i.e. the NCTE.

NCTE is currently seen as an inspectorial regulatory body focused mostly on infrastructure requirements and not as a body that leads thinking on professional standards, academic rigour and curricular innovation in teacher education. As already mentioned, improving teacher education is at the core of improving education in India and

that needs a full scale, grounds-up redesigning of the system, curriculum and operations. Such a full-scale revamp needs a 'champion' and not an 'inspector'!

In fact, it has failed even as an inspector in that one of NCTE's functions is to 'take all necessary steps to stop commercialisation of TE'⁴, given the rampant privatisation of the TE space from a little over a decade indicates the complete failure of NCTE not only in its inability to stop commercialisation, but also in its failure to regulate and monitor the quality of education delivered in the name of TE across the country.

Hence, the NCTE should look again at the monitoring role it has been playing for Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) and instead align itself to the new thinking on TE wherein it is proposed that all TEIs become multi-disciplinary learning environments and be brought under Universities. Once this happens the TEIs can be regulated through the University Grants Commission (UGC) which regulates the functioning of the Universities, and in the light of this it is important for NCTE to not duplicate UGC efforts and should instead focus on other constructive exercises.

The key reform agenda with regard to NCTE is:

- *NCTE should either be the enthusiastic champion of this or should be disbanded. There are two options before NCTE in this context: (a) It plays the role of a facilitator and enabler of quality by developing broad academic norms e.g. guidelines (not rules) for faculty mix, curricular frameworks for teacher education to support Universities*

⁴NCTE at a Glance; Functions of the Council http://ncte-india.org/ncte_new/?page_id=782

and/or it becomes an accreditation body for teacher education under NAAC; (b) If above is not possible, it should end its existence and transfer complete ownership of teacher education to the Universities and basic regulatory mechanisms to the UGC.

Financing Teacher Education

The Kothari Commission and all other educationally concerned commissions and individuals since then have clearly stated that if we are to meet stated educational objectives the State has to make investments in education that are commensurate with the goals to be achieved. The insufficient funding for education has effected TE as it received a very a small percentage of the overall education budget.

Kothari Commission recommended allocating 6% of our GDP to education, but as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Kothari Commission's submission of its monumental report, we have barely crossed the 4% mark on a regular basis. We have indeed made progress from a below 1% (MHRD trend data) of the GDP expenditure on Education in 1952 to a little over 4% (ABE; MHRD 2015) of the GDP in recent times. However, this continues to fluctuate every year and grossly inadequate even at its' best allocation so far.

TE in the Twelfth Plan

In March, 2012, the Central Government approved revision of the Teacher Education Scheme for the 12th Plan. The plan has recommended a huge change in the teacher education scheme with an increased budget from 350 crores per year in the 11th plan to 1400 crores per year. The scheme is an institutional one – allocations for SCERTs, DIETs, CTEs, IASEs & a new institution called BITEs (Block Institutes of Teacher Education) with focus on access, quality and an expanded role for all these institutions (e.g. DIETs will also start working in the secondary area), creating a cadre of teacher educators, preparation & professional development of teachers/teacher educators, integration of technology & synergies/linkages across these institutions.

It is important that this is further considerably enhanced, given the demands that currently exist in the domain of TE. The demand on TE is not only with regard to producing the required number of teachers to meet the RTE norms on PTR at the elementary level and to fill the gap in the secondary school level, but it is also about enhancing the

quality of teachers and teacher educators. These not only require an expansion of capacity (both infrastructure as well as human resource) in existing TEIs, but also require establishment of Schools of Education across the country and move TE into the realm of Higher Education and bring it under Universities. This would entail substantial increase in the expenditure on Higher Education (HE) as well.

TE funding in recent years (MHRD, 2012)

(i) The annual TE budget since the last few years of the XI Five Year Plan (2010-11) has been Rs. 500 crores (Rs. 146.07 crores of the Rs. 500 crores was released up to 8 January 2012; and an outlay of Rs.500 crores has been proposed for the year 2013-14) (ii) In the earlier scheme the SCERT received Rupees 2 Cr for an entire plan period covering all components of expenditure, which in the proposed scheme is the amount currently provided only for infrastructure improvement (iii) Similarly, allocations have been well thought out for the other institutions as well

Importance of setting up Schools of Education

Setting up Schools of Education in Universities is a key solution that the Central Government will have to plan and execute to help create professionals who will be available to the education domain. Given the scale of requirement, there is a need to establish at-least one School of Education per state – and more than one for larger states. The goal must be to increase the number of graduating specialists to anywhere between 5000-10000 professionals. This is a long term project, with the requirement of certain serious financial commitment.

However, if we are serious about our systemic reforms, there is no more dithering that can continue in this matter. The key reform idea is:

- *Concomitant with the enhancement of budgets, it is also critical to ensure that these additional funds are meaningfully utilised and leakages are plugged at the source.*

The need for re-building TE system from scratch

To tackle the dire situation we are in, there is a need to improve urgently and drastically all aspects of teacher development and management that are currently in place. JVC recommendations and the NCFTE, 2009 guidelines are crucial to this improvement plan that needs to be implemented

at the earliest in their entirety. These guidelines largely advocate for a long duration pre-service teacher education program, reorganisation of curriculum to develop true professionals, integration with other disciplines/departments of the academic institutions, and an increased use of ICT. To strengthen it further, linking teacher education institutions with one-another, their grading on regular basis, and arrangement of a strong regulatory mechanism for these institutions are also suggested.

And finally, there is an urgent need to create a National Vision for Teacher Education in alignment with RtE, NCFTE 2009 and the 12th Plan Guidelines. The crucial aspect is that whatever is done should be an integrated plan for all sections of the education system. Such an integrated approach should fix the problems of the past — the gap between policies and their implementation. Last but not least, professionalizing teacher education and teacher management require deep cultural changes in the system, which are built on a foundation of integrity, of enablement and decentralisation, moving away from the decades old culture of rigidity, control and lip-service to good education.

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