

2.4

POSITION PAPER

NATIONAL FOCUS GROUP

ON

TEACHER EDUCATION  
FOR CURRICULUM  
RENEWAL



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The professional preparation of teachers has been recognised to be crucial for the qualitative improvement of education since the 1960s (Kothari Commission, 1964-66), but very few concrete steps have been taken in the last three decades to operationalise this.

The Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983-85) observed that "...what obtains in the majority of our Teaching Colleges and Training Institutes is woefully inadequate..." "If teacher education is to be made relevant to the roles and responsibilities of the New Teacher, the minimum length of training for a secondary teacher,... should be five years following the completion of Class XII." Reiterating the need "...to enable general and professional education to be pursued concurrently", the Commission recommends that "...to begin with we may have an integrated four year programme..."

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on Learning without Burden noted "...inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking."

Therefore, the hope of revitalising school education in India, via an idealistic or ideologically driven attempt at revising curriculum will probably meet with little success, if the central agency of the teacher remains unrecognised.

Teacher Education programmes continue to train teachers to adjust to the needs of an education system in which education is seen as the transmission of information and learning reproduced from textbooks.

Large scale recruitment of para-teachers within the formal school system and an attitude of resignation towards pre-service programmes have become an integral part of state provisioning for elementary education. This trend has diluted the identity of the teacher as a professional and has led to a considerable erosion of faith in the agency of the teacher in bringing about change within the government school system and communities.

With little effort to link pre-service and in-service teacher education, the real needs of school teachers remain unaddressed to this date. School teachers, in particular, those in elementary schools continue to remain severed from centers of higher learning and are intellectually isolated.

The design and practice of current teacher education programmes is based on certain assumptions, which impede the progress of ideas and the professional and personal growth of the teacher. It is assumed for instance, that disciplinary knowledge is 'given', which the trainees 'acquire' through general education and which is independent of professional training in pedagogy.

Conventional teacher education programmes, train teachers to adjust to the needs of the existing system through (a) the meticulous planning of lessons in standardised formats, (b) the ritual of fulfilling the required number of lessons delivered and supervised, (c) the ritual of organising school assemblies and other routine activities and (d) the ritual of completing the required number of written assignment and projects. “Lesson planning, as it is taught during teacher training, is merely a formal routine which masks the acculturation of the young trainee into the profession without disturbing its underlying assumptions about knowledge and curriculum and also without making the new entrant aware of these assumptions and the consequences of the practices based on them.”

Attempts have been made in Pre-Independence era by (1) Gijubhai Badheka (1920), (2) Ravindranath Tagore and by (3) Mahatma Gandhi. Their innovations address the education of a particular stage as a whole. All of them were successfully carried out and have left rich legacy to learn from.

After independence, NCERT itself took initiative to implement some innovations in TEPs its own four regional colleges of education in 1960s. But such innovations could not go beyond those institutes. In 1968, an innovation was started in Gandhi Vidyapith at Vedchchi by an individual till retirement, which was considered to be individuals’ capacity based programme and others can not do it. In 1981 a wellknown NGO made an attempt aiming at spiritual development of human being thought fit to educate teachers of primary level through participative mode of self-learning for school children as well as student teachers. It again remain limited to the institute. In 1994 a group of people after consulting experts in the field, field workers and wellknown educationists evolved an innovative programme of educating elementary teachers at Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education, New Delhi. It is going on for the last ten years, still has not been adopted by anyone. From 1997 onwards strong innovative practice based on participatory self-learning process is in practice to educate secondary level teachers at Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan. Again it is confined to that institute only.

The study of all these innovations convinced the group to recommend this participative self-learning TE Programme to be adopted for all levels of teacher’s education programmes.

### **Vision**

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this, it has to prepare teachers for a dual role of

- encouraging, supportive and humane facilitator in teaching-learning situations who enables learners (students) to discover their talents, to realise their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens; and,

- an active member of the group of persons who make conscious effort to contribute towards the process of renewal of school curriculum to maintain its relevance to the changing societal needs and personal needs of learners, keeping in view the experience gained in the past and the concerns and imperatives that have emerged in the light of changing national development goals and educational priorities.

These expectations suggest that teacher operates in a larger context and its dynamics as well as concerns impinge upon her functioning. That is to say, teacher has to be responsive and sensitive to the social context of education, the various disparities in background of learners as well as in the macro national and global contexts, national concerns for achieving the goals of equity, parity, social justice as also excellence.

To be able to realise such expectations, TE has to comprise such features as would enable each of its learners. i.e., student teachers to

- care for children/learner's and who love to be with them;
- understand children within social, cultural and political contexts;
- view learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience;
- understand the way learning occurs, possible ways of creating conducive conditions for learning, differences among students in respect of the kind, pace and styles of learning.
- view knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning;
- view knowledge not necessarily as an external reality embedded in textbooks but as constructed in the shared context of teaching learning and personal experiences;
- be sensitive to the social, professional and administrative contexts in which they have to operate,
- be receptive and constantly learning; own responsibility towards society and work to build a better world.
- develop appropriate competencies to be able to not only seek the above understandings in actual situations, but also be able to create them.
- have a sound knowledge-base and basic proficiency in language.
- identify their own personal expectations, perceptions of self, capacities and inclinations,
- consciously attempt to formulate one's own professional orientation this will determine his role as a teacher in situation specific context.

The process to prepare such teachers in new TE would therefore include :

- Providing opportunities to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children.
- Providing opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas; developing capacities for self-directed learning and the ability to think, be self-critical and to work in groups.

- Providing opportunities for understanding self and others (including one's beliefs, assumptions and emotions); developing the ability for self-analysis, self-evaluation, adaptability, flexibility, creativity and innovation.
- Providing opportunities to enhance understanding, knowledge and examine disciplinary knowledge and social realities, relate subject matter with the social milieu and develop critical thinking.
- Providing opportunities to develop professional skills in pedagogy, observation, documentation, analysis, drama, craft, story-telling and reflective inquiry.

Newly visualised TEP -

- emphasises learning as a self-learning participatory process taking place in social context of learner's as well as wider social context of the community to nation as a whole.
- puts full faith in self learning capacity of school children and student teacher and evolving proper educative programme for education.
- views the learner as an active participative person in learning. His/her capabilities or potentials are seen not as fixed but capable of development through experiences.
- views the teacher as a facilitator, supporting, encouraging learner's learning.
- does not treat knowledge as fixed, static or confined in books but as something being constructed through various types of experiences. It is created through discussion, evaluate, explain, compare and contrasts i.e., through interaction.
- emphasises that appraisal in such an educative process will be continuous, will be self-appraisal, will be peer appraisal, will be done by teacher educators, and formal type too.

One can visualise from foregoing very brief presentation that -

- New TEP can not be a fixed programme (curriculum), i.e., it is not predetermined.
- Methods are not fixed.
- The learner's will decide about all the aspects of learning.
- There will be different learning modes and routes depending on learner's nature.

Still however, some basic broad outline of –

- What types of individual or group field experiences need to be provided will be thought of.
- What types of guidance, encouragement, support will be needed (may take another form) and how they can be provided can be thought of.
- Which types of resource facilities will be needed in self-learning process like library, ET Tools, ICT Services etc. may be articulated.
- Forming the group of motivated people who are interested to experiment with and who are ready to take trouble to implement such TEP will be considered.

We can make a long list of such predetermined, but not prescriptive aspects of new TEP.

Details can be worked out at the time of implementation.

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## THE ANIMAL SCHOOL

*Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something decisive to meet the increasing complexity of their society. They held a meeting and finally decided to organise a school.*

*The curriculum consisted of running, climbing, swimming and flying. Since these were the basic behaviours of most animals, they decided that all the students should take all the subjects.*

*The duck proved to be an excellent swimmer, better in fact, than his teacher. He also did well in flying. But he proved to be very poor in running. Since he was poor in this subject, he was made to stay after school to practice it and even had to drop swimming in order to get more time in which to practice running. He was kept at this poorest subject until his webbed feet were so badly damaged that he became only average at swimming. But average was acceptable in the school, so nobody worried about that-except the duck.*

*The rabbit started at the top of her class in running, but finally had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up time in swimming - a subject she hated.*

*The squirrel was excellent at climbing until he developed a psychological block in flying class, when the teacher insisted he started from the ground instead of from the tops of trees. He was kept at attempting to fly until he became muscle-bound-and received a C in climbing and a D in running.*

*The eagle was the school's worst discipline problem; in climbing class, she beat all of the others to the top of the tree used for examination purposes in this subject, but she insisted on using her own method of getting there.*

*The gophers, of course, stayed out of school and fought the tax levied for education because digging was not included in the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to the badger and later joined the groundhogs and eventually started a private school offering alternative education.*

## 1. PREAMBLE

The exercise of school curriculum renewal needs to be located and viewed in the policy context of establishing a system of education characterised by certain core values and transformative goals which are consistent with the Constitutional vision of Indian society. Education has acted for many as an instrument of social exclusion, distancing further the constitutional goal of creating an egalitarian and just society. The concern for curriculum renewal emerges from the tenacious character of an education system that continues to view teachers as ‘dispensers of information’ and children as ‘passive recipients’ of an ‘education’ that is sought to be ‘delivered’ in four-walled classrooms.

One of the key problems in the present crises of education is the burden that it imposes on our children. This burden arises as much from an incoherent curriculum structure that is dissociated from the life and culture of children as from the inadequate preparation of teachers who are unable to make connections with children and respond to their needs in imaginative and dynamic ways. While the articulated need to respect the nature of the child and her pace of learning has carved a legitimate space for the ‘agency’ of the child, the educational reform process too, continues to deny teachers their rightful place in the education process. Teachers need to be seen as creators of knowledge and thinking professionals. They need to be empowered to recognise and value what children learn from their home, social and cultural environment and to create opportunities for children to discover, learn and develop.

Therefore, the present exercise of curriculum renewal, seeks to prepare teachers differently to address

questions of equity and social transformation. Identifying the need to view the teacher as central to the process of change in school education, the Chattopadhyaya Commission notes, “if school teachers are expected to bring about a revolution in their approach to teaching...that same revolution must precede and find a place in the Colleges of education.”<sup>1</sup>

This position paper begins with a brief overview of perspective and programmatic directions of teacher preparation as articulated in policy documents and commission reports. This is followed by an examination of current concerns in the field of teacher education based on secondary sources as well as ideas articulated by members during discussions in the Focus Group and by invited stakeholders. These concerns have been articulated in terms of systemic gaps and needs as well as the academic nature and design of teacher education programmes and mechanisms. The paper then moves on to a brief collation of some of the innovative practices in the education and professional development of teachers and the lessons that can be drawn from these. Based on these, a vision statement is presented which highlights some of the key points of departure from existing models and practices of teacher preparation. The vision presents a general framework within which the preparation of all teachers can be designed, may it be pre-service or in-service. The last section presents a set of key issues for consideration and recommendations of the Focus Group.

## 2. PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Teacher education programmes have existed in the country for over a century. In the 1850’s teacher training existed as an undifferentiated course of study meant

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<sup>1</sup> *The Teacher and Society, Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983-95), MHRD, GOI. pp.48*

for school teachers. Later, on the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission (1884), the teacher training programmes were made more differentiated and for graduates the course was designed to be of shorter duration<sup>2</sup>. During the twentieth century, greater differentiation was sought and practiced with respect to the stages at which teachers were expected to teach. Along side, different training modes were introduced, such as regular campus cum practicing school experience, correspondence cum contact programmes and the, more recent, distance learning programmes of teacher education. Despite such diversification, the basic features of these programmes as well as the theoretical premises have not altered significantly. Although newer concerns, surfacing from time to time have been taken cognisance of, these have not influenced in any major way the main-stream system of teacher education. Teacher education has attracted severe criticism from different sources as documented in policy documents and commission reports on education. A quick glance through surveys of educational research in India conducted periodically over the years 1974-1998 substantiates the point that teacher education programmes have remained unchanged in terms of their substance, experiences offered and modalities adopted.

The professional preparation of teachers has been recognised to be crucial for the qualitative improvement of education since the 1960s (Kothari Commission, 1964-66), but very few concrete steps have been taken in the last three decades to operationalise this. This

may be one of the more important factors leading to the current poor state of education in the country. The Commission, in particular, notes the need for teacher education to be "...brought into the mainstream of the academic life of the Universities on the one hand and of school life and educational developments on the other."<sup>3</sup> It is indeed a matter of concern that teacher education institutes continue to exist as insular organisations even within the University system where they are located. Recognising 'quality' as the essence of a programme of teacher education, the Commission recommended the introduction of "integrated courses of general and professional education in Universities...with greater scope for self-study and discussion...and...a comprehensive programme of internship."<sup>4</sup>

Subsequently (1983-85), the Chattopadhyaya Committee Report of the National Commission on Teachers envisioned the New Teacher as one who communicates to pupils "...the importance of and the feeling for national integrity and unity; the need for a scientific attitude; a commitment to excellence in standards of work and action and a concern for society."<sup>5</sup> The Commission observed that "...what obtains in the majority of our Teaching Colleges and Training Institutes is woefully inadequate..." "If teacher education is to be made relevant to the roles and responsibilities of the New Teacher, the minimum length of training for a Secondary teacher should be five years following the completion of Class XII."<sup>6</sup> Reiterating the need "...to enable general and

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<sup>2</sup> *Hunter Education Commission (1881-1884)*.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) Education and National Development. Ministry of Education. GOI. pp. 622.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid. pp.623*

<sup>5</sup> *The Teacher and Society, Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983-95), MHRD, GOI. pp.48*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid pp. 49*

professional education to be pursued concurrently”, the Commission recommends that “...to begin with we may have an integrated four year programme which should be developed carefully...it may also be possible for some of the existing colleges of Science and Arts to introduce an Education Department along with their other programmes allowing for a section of their students to opt for teacher education.”<sup>7</sup> The Chattopadhyaya Commission recommends a four-year integrated course for the secondary as well as the elementary teacher.

The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986-92) recognised that “...teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs of and capabilities of and the concerns of the community.”<sup>8</sup> The policy further states that “...teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled.”<sup>9</sup> The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) in its review of the NPE 1986, observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because “...the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time.”<sup>10</sup>

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on Learning without Burden noted “...inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. ...The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school

education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking.”<sup>11</sup>

### 3. IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Similar developments have taken place in respect of in-service programmes of teacher education. However, it may be noted that the in-service programmes have drawn their substance from the emerging needs and concerns of education as faced from time to time. As a result these programmes have, at best, been awareness programmes in respect of specific concerns and not teacher development programmes, as visualised.

As a sequel to the National Policy on Education (1986), orientation of school teachers gained momentum on a mass scale. Efforts have been initiated over the past few years to gradually develop a network of institutions like DIETs, IASEs and CTEs with the mandate of providing in-service education to primary and secondary school teachers respectively. So far 500 DIETs, 87 CTEs and 38 IASEs and 30 SCERTs have been set up as teacher education resource institutions in the country. In case of IASEs and CTEs, only a handful of institutions have started in-service education programme for secondary school teachers. During the last decade the use of satellite interactive television based activities have been provided for teacher up-gradation as part of the SOPT and DPEP projects. The majority of them however continue to perform their legacy functions (NCERT, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid pp. 49*

<sup>8</sup> *National Policy of Education (1992) Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI. pp.43*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid pp.44*

<sup>10</sup> *Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society, Acharya Ramamurthi Review Committee Report (1990) MHRD, GOI. pp.*

<sup>11</sup> *Learning Without Burden. Yashpal Committee Report (1993), MHRD, GOI. pp 26*

The major indicator of quality of training is its relevance to the needs of teachers. However, most of the training programmes are not organised according to the needs of the teachers and the resources are not utilised properly.<sup>12</sup> The transactional approach adopted in majority of INSET programmes has so far remained confined to the lecture method with little scope and opportunity for trainees to actively participate in the training process<sup>13</sup>. Ironically concepts like activity-based teaching, joyful learning, classroom management for large size classes and multigrade situations, team teaching, cooperative and collaborative learning which require demonstration and participatory training are also often taught through the lecture method.

The potential for radical shifts in the school practices and programmes via effective in-service education programmes has been acknowledged by most education committees and commissions. They have articulated their concern regarding the neglect and inadequacies of current in-service education practice. The Education Commission (1964-66) strongly recommended that: (i) large scale programmes of in-service education of teachers should be organised by Universities and Teacher organisations at all levels to enable every teacher to receive at least two or three months of in-service education in every five years of service (ii) continuing in-service education should be based on research inputs (iii) training institutions should work on 12-month basis and organise in-service training programmes, such as refresher courses, seminars, workshops and summer institutes.<sup>14</sup>

The Report of the National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) highlighted the absence of clear-cut policies and priorities for in-service education and lack of systematic identification of needs. It recommended 'planning ahead of time' and 'closer scrutiny of methodologies' adopted for in-service education of teachers. It also recommended that strategies used for in-service education must be 'imaginative, bold and varied'. It further states that "the most effective among them are the services organised through the school complex. The idea of school complex...put forward by the Kothari Commission...intends to link primary and secondary schools with a view to pulling resources and including the educational process." The Commission mooted the idea of Teachers' Centres that could function as "...a meeting place for teachers located in a school that has resources that it would like to share with others...it is a forum where workshops of very practical nature are organised for teachers of all faculties and of all levels; it pools in the talent of all teachers of various schools who act as resource personnel for centers' workshops and it arranges book fairs." What teachers need most "...is a change in the climate of schools, an atmosphere conducive to educational research and enquiry...(select) teachers could be given study leave and sent to advanced centers of learning for furthering their professional competence...through visiting fellowships."<sup>15</sup>

The landmark National Policy on Education (1986) linked in-service teacher education as a continuum with pre-service education.<sup>16</sup> A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

<sup>12</sup>Srivastava, ABL. (1999). *Study of the support system and process which underpins DPEP's pedagogical strategy in six states: A synthesis report*, Ed.Cil: New Delhi.

<sup>13</sup>Sethi, Mabindernath. (2001). *A study of Management of Multigrade Teaching Practice in Primary Schools of Keonjhar District and the Impact of Teachers Training on Multigrade*, Orissa, DPEP, DIEP, Keonjhar.

<sup>14</sup>Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) *Education and National Development*. Ministry of Education. GOI. pp. 622.

<sup>15</sup> *The Teacher and Society*, Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983-95), MHRD, GOI. pp.48

<sup>16</sup>*National Policy on Education*, MHRD. (1986). GOI, New Delhi.

of restructuring and strengthening of teacher education was evolved and implemented. The scheme visualised the establishment of DIETs in each district, up-gradation of 250 Colleges of education as Colleges of Teacher Education, establishment of 50 Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) and strengthening of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs).

The Acharya Ramamurthi Review Committee (1990) explicitly stated that “in-service and refresher courses should be related to the specific needs of the teachers. In-service education should take due care of the future needs of teacher growth; evaluation and follow up should be part of the scheme.”<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. TEACHER EDUCATION: SYSTEMIC CONCERNS AND NEEDS**

Despite repeated reiterations on the need to strengthen the active ‘agency’ of the teacher in policy documents and Commission reports, over the last 30 years, Teacher Education programmes continue to train teachers to adjust to the needs of an education system in which education is seen as the transmission of information and learning reproduced from textbooks. This continues to be reflected in periodic revisions of curricula framework with little emphasis on revitalising a largely stagnant teacher education sector.

##### **4.1 Need to Enhance the Professional Identity of School Teachers**

The poor historical performance of conventional teacher education programs coupled with the dilution

of the emphasis on public investment has, since the early 1990s, led to the promotion of several alternative measures of teacher recruitment and training – which have been justified on pragmatic economic and bureaucratic grounds, with little reference to the reality of the Indian classroom. Large scale recruitment of para-teachers within the formal school system<sup>18</sup> and an attitude of resignation towards pre-service programmes have become an integral part of state provisioning for elementary education. Such measures threaten to ensure that inequity of access and quality is institutionalised. In many cases, even the minimum qualification stipulated for the recruitment of school teachers has been lowered to induct para-teachers. This trend has diluted the identity of the teacher as a professional and has led to a considerable erosion of faith in the agency of the teacher in bringing about change within the government school system and communities. A strong focussed set of interventions will be necessary to reverse this.

##### **4.2 Need to Establish Meaningful Links Between Pre-service and In-service Teacher Education**

Most initiatives of the 1990s’ have focused on ‘in-service’ training of teachers at the elementary stage. In-service training of teachers in the DPEP for example, ranged from three to a maximum of twenty days and included a range of topics, with little focus on the teaching-learning process. “Information on the education of teacher training in the eleven DPEP I and II States is fragmented and imprecise.”<sup>19</sup> The impact of these trainings still remains to be understood inspite of a massive infrastructure and investment that went into creating them.

<sup>17</sup> *Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society, Acharya Ramamurthi Review Committee Report (1990) MHRD, GOI.*

<sup>18</sup> *Daya Ram (2000) Para Teachers in Primary Education: A Status Report. Ed.Cil, New Delhi.*

<sup>19</sup> *A Review of Educational Progress and Reform in the District Primary Education Program (phase I and II) South Asian Human Development Sector. Discussion Paper Series. 2003. The World Bank pp 35*

One of the key fallouts of the undue emphasis on sporadic, short-term training of in-service teachers has been the accentuation of the divide that already exists between pre-service and in-service teacher education. These continue to function as insular mechanisms, despite the fact that both coexist in University departments for Secondary Education (IASEs) and are also the joint responsibility of District Institutes of Elementary Education in the country (DIETs).

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme to establish Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) and upgrade University Departments of Education (offering B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes) was established post-NPE 1986 to initiate the in-service training of secondary school teachers. IASEs were mandated to work concertedly on elementary education as well.<sup>20</sup> This objective however, is yet to be realised as reiterated in the Tenth Five year Plan for Teacher Education. One pioneering effort in this regard came into effect with the establishment of the Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education (MACESE) in the Department of Education of the University of Delhi, as a modified IASE. MACESE is the only IASE that initiated concerted work in Elementary Education, leading to the creation of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) Programme in 1994.<sup>21</sup> Under the Centrally sponsored scheme DIETs were established as premier institutions to work in elementary education. Evaluation studies reveal that the pre-service and in-service education programmes organised by DIETs

remain insular with little scope to work at tandem to create the synergy required to revitalise the professional development of teachers.

With little effort to link pre-service and in-service teacher education, the real needs of school teachers remain unaddressed to this date. School teachers, in particular, those in elementary schools continue to remain severed from centres of higher learning and are intellectually isolated. As a result, mechanisms to counter the ideological capture of curriculum development from the teacher community do not exist. This is largely the result of the virtual absence of research and academic support to school teachers. Established mechanisms starting from the SCERTs and DIETs and reaching to the Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs), need to be strengthened to facilitate the exchange of ideas, sharing of classroom practices and the enhancement of knowledge base in terms of content and pedagogical theory.<sup>22</sup>

### 4.3 Need for Professionally Qualified Teacher Educators

There are also no established mechanisms to create a professional cadre of teacher educators, especially at pre-primary and the elementary stage. Most teacher educators, training pre-primary and elementary school teachers for example, are themselves trained in secondary education.<sup>23</sup> Existing programmes of Teacher Education, such as the M.Ed. have become,

<sup>20</sup>Programme For Improvement of Secondary Teacher Education Institutes: Salient Features and Guidelines for Project Formulation. 1987, EdCIL, New Delhi.

<sup>21</sup> Working Group Report on Elementary and Adult Education: X Five Year Plan 2002-2007. Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, MHRD, New Delhi.

<sup>22</sup> A Review of Educational Progress and Reform in the District Primary Education Programme (Phase I and II) South Asian Human Development Sector. Discussion Paper Series. 2003. The World Bank pp 35.

<sup>23</sup>Feasibility Study for a Professional Degree Programme in Elementary Teacher Education at Delhi University. MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi, February 1993. pp 26.

in many Universities, programmes of liberal studies in education and are woefully inadequate in facilitating a deeper discourse in education and an opportunity for inter-disciplinary enquiry. These offer little scope for professional development and research in key areas of school education such as curriculum enquiry and design, pedagogic studies, epistemological concerns and issues related to school and society. As a consequence, the dominant ethos of teacher education remains confined to a positivist approach drawn from classical schools of thought in educational psychology and having little contact with a large number of innovative experiments that have mushroomed across India since the 1980s.

#### **4.4 The Design and Practice of Teacher Education: Underlying Assumptions**

The design and practice of current teacher education programmes is based on certain assumptions, which impede the progress of ideas and the professional and personal growth of the teacher. These are as follows:

- It is assumed for instance, that disciplinary knowledge is 'given', which the trainees 'acquire' through general education and which is independent of professional training in pedagogy. This divide is reflected in the common beliefs (even among teacher educators) that a Class V teacher of mathematics need not engage with the discipline of mathematics beyond the 'levels' required for the elementary school. The need to integrate general and professional education, recommended by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) and reiterated by the Chattopadhyaya Commission (1983-85) is yet unaddressed to the great detriment of at least one generation of over hundred million learners.
- Programmes of teacher education often assume that the language proficiency (in the language of the medium of instruction) of the student teacher is adequate and therefore need not be the concern of those who train the teacher. Experience indicates that the need to enhance the proficiency of the language spoken by the teacher (may it be English or a regional language) is indeed very real. Courses of language proficiency should form an integral part of pre-service programmes, followed by an on-the-job support programme.
- It is assumed that repeated 'practice' in the 'teaching of isolated lessons' (of a required number) is a sufficient condition for professional training to be a teacher. It is also assumed that links between theories of child development and learning, instructional models and methods of teaching specific subjects are automatically formed in the understanding developed by teacher-trainees. Both national and international experience challenges these contentions. Teacher education programmes therefore must make a conscious effort to design courses to provide greater 'space' to generate a deeper understanding of such linkages.
- Existing programmes of teacher education treat the concept of knowledge embedded in the prescribed school curriculum as a 'given'. Student teachers are not expected to examine critically the curriculum framework, syllabi and textbooks because it is assumed that "...there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the school curriculum as a whole or with the syllabi of different subjects. It is also assumed that if there are certain problems in the syllabi and

textbooks, nothing can be done about these problems in teacher training. Therefore teachers must learn to adjust to existing realities.<sup>24</sup>

- It is also assumed that teachers can easily set aside their own biases, beliefs and assumptions about children/learners, knowledge and learning and follow meticulously what they have been ‘taught’ through methodology courses. Most teacher education programmes fail to empower the teacher as an agent of change as they do not provide spaces for student teachers to reflect on their own experiences and assumptions as part of classroom discourse and enquiry. This is a fundamental change in direction that can be facilitated through the NCERT curriculum renewal exercise.
- Conventional teacher education programmes, train teachers to adjust to the needs of the existing system through (a) the meticulous planning of lessons in standardised formats, (b) the ritual of fulfilling the required number of lessons delivered and supervised (c) the ritual of organising school assemblies and other routine activities and (d) the rituals of completing the required number of written assignments and projects. “Lesson planning, as it is taught during teacher training is merely a formal routine which masks the acculturation of the young trainee into the profession without disturbing its underlying assumptions

about knowledge and curriculum and also without making the new entrant aware of these assumptions and the consequences of the practices based on them.”<sup>25</sup>

## 5. EXEMPLARS OF INNOVATIONS IN THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS: THE BASIS FOR A NEW VISION

Innovative practices carried out in India can be divided in two broad time periods: the pre-independence era and the post-independence era. Innovations carried out in the pre-independence era address the education of a particular stage as a whole. All of them were successfully carried out and have left a rich legacy to learn from.

### 5.1 Innovations in Pre-Independence Era

- In 1920 Gijubhai Bhadega established a set of innovative pre-primary schools at Bhavnagar in Gujarat, under the auspicious of Daxinamurti Institute. This movement had a radical impact on the stage of pre-primary education as a whole.
- In 1921 Rabindranath Tagore established Shantiniketan in West Bengal.
- In 1937 Mahatama Gandhi launched the scheme of Basic Education for the primary stage of education, in Wardha, Maharashtra.
- All the three are not particularly addressing Teacher Education alone. For details of all the three please see Appendix I.

<sup>24</sup> Krishna Kumar, *The Vision (2001) The Bachelor of Elementary Education: Programme of Study, MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi.*

<sup>25</sup> Krishna Kumar (2002) *Planned Lessons and other problems of teacher training in Reflections on Lesson Planning, LASE, Department of Education, University of Delhi. pp.10.*

Some of the key innovations practiced in teacher education across the country during the post-independence era have been studied to call out points of departure from conventional teacher education programmes. These have been presented in separate boxes. The proposed new vision for the education of teachers provides a framework within which pre-service teacher education and ongoing teacher development programmes can be redesigned to create reflective practitioners who would have the promise of bringing about radical changes in the process of schooling for hundreds of millions of our children.

## 5.2 Innovations in Post-Independence Era

They are six such innovations and they are presented in historical order.

- Four year integrated programme of Secondary Teacher Education, Regional Colleges of Education, NCERT (1960s) (See Box – 1)
- One year programme of Secondary Teacher Education at Vedchchi, Gujarat (1968 onwards) (See Box – 2)
- Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme; Eklavya, Madhya Pradesh (1972 to 2002) (See Box – 3)
- Mirambika Elementary Teacher Education Programme, Shri Aurobindo Educational Society – New Delhi (1981) (See Box – 4)
- Four year integrated programme of Elementary Teacher Education (B.El. Ed.), Faculty of Education, University of Delhi (1994 onwards) (See Box – 5)
- The “Anveshna Experience” – a participating Teacher Education Programme, Department of Education, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan. (See Box – 6) Some details about them are put into boxes one by one.

**Box 1****Four Year Integrated Programme of Secondary Teacher Education  
Regional Colleges of Education, NCERT (1960)**

The four year integrated programme was introduced during the 1960s in NCERT's four Regional Colleges of Education in Ajmer, Bhubneshwar, Mysore and Bhopal. This programme was designed to prepare secondary school teachers in the Sciences and Humanities.

Over the thirty-five years of its existence, the scheme of studies of the programme has been modified several times which is its most significant innovation. The curriculum was initially designed to develop subject-based competency of the level of graduation along with professional competencies related to methodology of teaching. To begin with, a composite degree of B.Sc. B.Ed. was awarded to the candidates on the successful completion of the course. Subsequently a modification was introduced to award the degree of B.Sc. on the completion of three years to enable students to join postgraduate programmes of study in various science disciplines. This provision however led to the exodus of several students at the end of three years. As a consequence the original system of awarding one composite degree at the end of the entire four year programme was reintroduced. Subsequently in 1996, the B.A. B.Ed. Arts programme was withdrawn on the recommendations of the Abbreviated Review of NCERT. The B.Sc. B.Ed. integrated programme in the Sciences is still continuing.

The minimum qualification for admission into this programme is senior secondary (i.e., 12 years of schooling). The content of this integrated programme includes courses on subject knowledge (60%), professional education (20%) and general education (20%), leading to the B.Sc. B.Ed. degree.

*A number of studies were conducted to examine the effectiveness of these four year integrated programme. The key finding is that teachers that emerge from this programme are much better than the products of the traditional one-year B.Ed programme. The difference in effectiveness is attributed to 'selection of meritorious students, greater length, integrated curriculum along with simultaneous teaching of content and methods of teaching.' In spite of a sound conceptual base, the availability of evidence with regard to its effectiveness and experiences of developed countries and recommendation of several expert bodies, the innovation has not been mainstreamed beyond the confines of the four NCERT Regional Colleges of Education.*

**Box 2****Secondary Teacher Education Programme, Gandhi Vidyapeeth: Vedchichi, Gujarat (1968)**

The Vedchichi programme of Teacher Education started in 1968 at Gandhi Vidyapeeth, Vedchichi in the Surat district of Gujarat. It is a programme of one-year duration and admits 40-50 students each year. Based on Gandhian philosophy, student life on the campus is based on principles of self-help and self-reliance. Students engage in cooking, cleaning utensils, washing clothes and in the maintenance of the entire campus as part of their learning activities to be self-reliant.

Subjects are not taught as independent disciplines, but are woven into specifically designed activities or projects of 5 to 15 days duration. These projects are located in the surrounding rural areas, thus enabling direct contact with the community. Student teachers assess the basic need of various rural communities residing in different geographical areas. These may range from the problem of drinking water, teacher absentee-ism, problems of health, problems of landless labourers to issues related to developmental projects.

The community benefits from their interaction with student teachers and is able to engage in evolving strategies towards resolution of problems. They engage with new ways and means of maintaining personal and community health and the cleanliness of the village. Specific problems of schools and teachers are also identified and community members engage with the process of finding possible solutions. Often, pertinent issues are taken up for discussion, including ideas of Rabindranath Tagore or any natural or man made event of calamity.

The main features of this programme are: learning through participation in activities; self-directed learning followed by group work and group discussion; independent analysis of a problem by student teachers and the practice of self-motivated learning based on experiences.

*Vedchichi programme has focused completely on participative process oriented Teacher Education programme in Gandhi Vidyapeeth at Vedchichi.*

**Box 3****Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme (HSTP): Training Teachers****Eklavya, Madhya Pradesh (1982)**

Teacher training has always been a very important part of the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme (HSTP). Every teacher was required to undergo residential training for three weeks every summer for three years. These yearly sessions were interspersed with monthly meetings and follow-up programmes in individual schools. The basic philosophy was that every teacher should have done every experiment that children were required to do so that they could have first hand experience of the skills and difficulties every experiment involved; to have engaged in discussions with their peers on the outcome of the experiments so that they could guide similar discussions with their students; and also had a chance to provide feedback on the feasibility of what was being attempted so that the curriculum could be modified accordingly, if necessary. This meant that the teachers worked in groups of four as would their students in the classroom, that they were provided the same kit of materials as their students would use and go through the same processes as their students would undergo. Particularly in the early years of the programme this meant that curriculum development was not only the domain of the subject experts but that teachers through the training programmes, and later through experiences with students, played a significant role in determining the final shape of the curriculum. This whole process of trial and feedback was important in developing a sense of ownership of the programme amongst teachers, which was an important characteristic of the programme.

In addition to these activities, which formed the core of the training programmes, there were early morning sessions on “*laghu prashna*” in which participants were asked to respond to questions involving simple scientific investigation or observation that they carried out on the spot. Even during the training sessions, teachers were free to raise any question that agitated their minds. This often led to many animated discussions on various topics such as what is living or non-living, whether life can be created spontaneously, and the accuracy of scientific observations and the errors inherent in them. There were also evening lectures on general scientific matters. These were not directly related to the curriculum but more in the nature of enrichment material intended to arouse interest in scientific matters.

It may be a matter of debate whether or not HSTP succeeded in its goal of improving the teaching of science in government schools, but what was clear to almost all was that there was no chance of the programme succeeding in a school unless the teacher bought into the philosophy of HSTP and implemented it in the class room - and the teacher training programmes were the single most important determinant in this.

HSTP Programme is a unique example of collaboration between the state government and an NGO, in instituting innovative practices in the state school system.

*Hoshangabad Experiment is the unique example of collaboration of Government and NGO and achieving high success in Science teaching and Teachers training programme which shows the right direction by the Madhya Pradesh Government.*

#### Box 4

### Elementary Teacher Education: An Integral Approach

Mirambika, Sri Aurobindo Educational Society, New Delhi (1983)

Integral education is 'education for the whole human being,' in which learning through experience, as a wide, high and a deep process is the basis for development of the potential of each student.

**Content:** The programme aims, through a process of increasing self-awareness, the maximum development of capacities and qualities of the physical, affective and cognitive domains and self-discovery of deeper and subtler layers of one's soul and spirit. Education is seen as a process of becoming, yet it is the respect for the uniqueness of learner that will allow him/her to find his/her own progressive balance in the development of outer life and innermost being.

**Student-teachers: Processes** *include self-directed learning and self-observation leading the learner to conscious choices regarding study material; self-reflection and self-evaluation.*

**Teacher-educators: Processes** to ensure self-motivated learning each one of the student-teachers is encouraged to discover personal strengths and weaknesses, a teacher needs to go through a change in attitude related to her/his own professional functioning. *What is required is a shift from being a task master to helper, from instructing to evoking.*

Some of self-directed learning strategies are: *find answers to deep reflective questions; find ways to apply these in daily life; reflective reading; reflection on observations in the classroom followed by group discussion. This can be followed by personal reflection and identification of issues for further self-study; presentations that demonstrate assimilation and application; keeping a diary with the aim to look within, identify weaknesses and strengths and work on perfecting these.*

**Evaluation:** Integral education aims at an assessment that avoids judgment but *gives positive feedback, is diagnostic and helps students to understand what has to be strengthened and identify the next goals in the learning process.*

Experience has shown that when students are given true respect they are remarkably honest about their capacities and limitations. Moreover, self-evaluation is one of the best tools for fostering self-awareness, which is so essential for becoming a good educator.

When a student-teacher learns to take ownership for self development, to find answers and ways that will increase her strengths, deepen her potential qualities and overcome weaknesses; when she has experienced this process everyday she will naturally evoke a similar process in the children in the class and will be able to create a truly child centered learning environment. If true learning could become the guiding principle in the education process, a decisive shift could take place that would make students, educators and the nation blossom.

*Innovations carried at Mirambika, Aurobindo Educational Society, a well known NGO, emphasise mainly on participative processes but with some lectures and prescriptive type of exercises.*

**Box 5**

**Four year Integrated Programme of Elementary Teacher Education  
The B.El.Ed., Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education (MACESE), Faculty of  
Education, University of Delhi (1994)**

The Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) is a four year integrated professional degree programme of Elementary Teacher Education offered after the senior secondary (Class XII or equivalent) stage of school. It is currently offered in six colleges of the University of Delhi. Over seven hundred students have graduated from this programme and are widely sought in both government and private school systems. Some of them are now teacher educators after completing post graduation in liberal arts, humanities and social sciences.

The (B.El.Ed.) programme is designed to integrate the study of subject knowledge, human development, pedagogic knowledge and self-knowledge. The main aim of the B.El.Ed. is to prepare reflective practitioners who are socially sensitive. It is an attempt to replace an unquestioning and meek teacher with one who can critically reflect on the 'received' curriculum and 'prescribed' knowledge. It prepares students to move beyond mere textbook knowledge. The B.El.Ed. students attempt to initiate their own inquiry, examine ideas in all their complexity and deal with ambiguity. The aim is to develop in students a mental flexibility needed to critically examine and synthesise knowledge from various sources and deal with the complex challenges of classroom teaching. The students learn to engage with issues of subject content, reflect on appropriate methods of assessment and attempt to evolve pedagogy in consonance with the needs of the learner.

The B.El.Ed. course attempts to develop the individuality of the student based on the assumption that it is the individual transformation that leads to social transformation. The course structure gives students the space to engage intensely with issues of understanding themselves and others. There is a special emphasis on understanding the nature of the child, the adult-child relationship and its dynamics within the classroom. The students engage with issues of politics of education within the classroom as they reflect on the best way of facilitating children's learning. This course is also designed to develop an understanding of contemporary Indian realities through a study of key historical, political, social cultural and economic issues. Students observe and analyse gender inequities in the process of schooling and develop intervention strategies. The B.El.Ed. curriculum is cyclic in nature whereby the same issues are dealt with at different levels of complexity and within different contexts over the four years.

The longer duration of the programme offers students critical psychological space to explore and define their own approaches to educational issues as they are in regular contact with the school setting over the four years. There is a sustained 17 weeks school internship programme in the fourth year where students attempt to translate their thoughts into action and critically reflect on this process. Students also visit institutions engaged in innovative practice in elementary education, in order to broaden their horizons. Students undertake research projects with an aim to further develop the process of reflective enquiry through classroom-based research. Through specially designed colloquia students learn specific professional skills like using theatre, art, crafts, story telling and music in education and creating a resource centre in schools.

*B. El. Ed. Programme of Delhi University mainly emphasises participative processes along with some lectures and prescriptive exercises since last 10 years. It is a four year integrated course.*

### Box 6

#### **The 'Anweshana Experience': A Participative Teacher Education programme: B.Ed. (Enriched), Department of Education, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan (1997)**

A Teacher Education Programme (TEP) is different from any other 'academic' programme. The concerns, expectations as well as pressures placed on it as a professional education programme are far denser in comparison to those related to academic programmes. In operation, however, any TEP is very similar to an academic programme in that its curriculum is framed based on a set of assumptions, replete with several instructional experiences, each well chosen, and justified. Within such a structure, students remain merely recipients of knowledge given by teacher educators. The actual quality depends upon the quality of the 'providers' as well as that of the 'receivers'. Experience has it that the school system is but little impacted by such TEPs. It is with such a line of argument that an attempt was made at the Faculty of Education, Banasthali Vidyapith, during the year 1997-98 to create a differently designed TEP. The main aim was to explore the possibility of evolving such a flexible programme within the available resource-time frame and of finding out the extent to which the experience becomes 'participative'.

#### **Assumptions**

The Anweshana experience believes that there is need for and possibility of providing opportunities during TEP to all student teachers to truly *participate and learn* in one's own way. They should participate not as mere 'recipients' but as learners to evolve *curriculum and its transaction* modes. The nature and number of learning experiences could emerge according to learner needs. Such a programme would be *meaningful and enriched* for each student teacher individually. Each would find her own potential and be capable of using it effectively. Organisationally, such an integrative, experiential approach would induce into the TEP with greater rigour, avoid redundancy in substantive inputting, enhance assimilation and optimise resource utilisation without overstretching resource-time frame.

The Programme which has been named by the students as "Anweshana" and approved by the NCTE as B.Ed. (enriched), essentially comprises the following:

- *Initiation* involves making decisions as to how to go about independently; gaming, ice breaking; *Sensitisation* comprises several inputs which lead to perceiving one's own strengths and weaknesses, acceptance of others, significance of teacher roles and their demands and field conditions. Such sessions are more frequent in initial phase.
- All other learning experiences comprise the *substantive inputting*. These pertain to the kinds of things – conceptual as well as practical, that student teachers identify as relevant for them to become effective teachers. The modes of interaction are also as perceived as relevant – both collectively and sometimes individually. The teacher educators are there to support, supplement, participate in the group processes and facilitate group's functioning.
- *Appraisal and feedback* comprise several kinds of appraisal acts in the form of self appraisal, peer appraisal, teacher feedback and also formal testing, as and when felt necessary. The university examination is held at the end of the year,

#### **Points of Departure**

Evolving curriculum; learner centered; participative; high relevance perception; individual and group decided pace and learning routes; continuous appraisal and feedback; personally satisfying to students; enhanced self-development.

*This 'Anweshana' innovation is focusing on completely participative process oriented Teacher Education programme for last Eight years.*

**Box 7****Comprehensive Teacher Education Programme: Gandhi Shikshan Bhawan, College of Education  
Mumbai University, Mumbai (2000)**

Gandhi Shikshan Bhawan, an affiliated College of Education of Bombay University offers an integrated B.Ed. degree programme for secondary school teachers since 2000. It provides first hand experiences of a slum community. The aim is to make student teachers aware of the socio-economic, cultural traditions of the poor and backward and its impact on the education and development of children. Teachers are educated to develop the conviction and the professional skills to help children come out of such adverse conditions. Such an approach has now become a part of the B.Ed. degree programmes of all the Colleges of Education of Bombay University.

On the same line department of education of Jamia Millia has proposed to incorporate the social context elements into teachers training programme.

All these innovations compels one to be convinced that drastic and revolutionary changes are possible and the Gandhi Shikshan Bhawan of Bombay and proposed programme of Department of Education of Jamia Millia shows the readiness to change the Teacher Education programme. But only the fully participative process oriented programme should be adapted and that is the need of the day. That can only change education scenario of Indian education.

## 6. TEACHER EDUCATION (TE) : NEW VISION

An overhauling of TE has become imminent for ascertaining effective and immediate measures to enhance its impact potential. The previous sections of this Position Paper have brought to focus the need for a fundamental change in the ‘approach’ to teacher education. An attempt is made here to detail the main features of the new approach that the Focus Group visualises.

The visualisation of Teacher Education is titled ‘**New Vision**’ not so much because all its dimensions are totally created a new. But, it is named so because it proposes a definite ‘shift’ in our view of a TE Programme. It is true that there have been earlier attempts, in fact several of them, to ‘review’, ‘revitalise’, ‘restructure’ TE. However, these efforts could not percolate into actual practice and show the expected enhancement in its field relevance.

The Group, therefore, is of the opinion that, in order to make TE vibrant and also responsive to the emerging demands from the field, it is necessary to change (not only the operational or the implementation modes but, more importantly), to make a definite, recognisable shift in the direction to be held, the basic premises or the ‘beliefs’ that must underlie TE Programmes. With this in view, there is a need for change in the ‘approach’ to TE as suggested hereunder. This suggests a *paradigm shift* in TE.

### 6.1 Vision

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this it has to prepare teachers for a dual role of

- encouraging, supportive and humane facilitator in teaching-learning situations who enables

learners (students) to discover their talents, to realise their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens; and,

- an active member of the group of persons who make conscious effort to contribute towards the process of renewal of school curriculum to maintain its relevance to the changing societal needs and personal needs of learners, keeping in view the experience gained in the past and the concerns and imperatives that have emerged in the light of changing national development goals and educational priorities.

These expectations suggest that teacher operates in a larger context and its dynamics as well as concerns impinge upon her functioning. That is to say, teacher has to be responsive and sensitive to the social context of education, the various disparities in background of learners as well as in the macro national and global contexts, national concerns for achieving the goals of equity, parity, social justice as also excellence.

To be able to realise such expectations, TE has to comprise such features as would enable each of its learners, i.e., student teachers, to

- care for children/learners and who love to be with them;
- understand children within social, cultural and political contexts;
- view learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience;
- understand the way learning occurs, possible ways of creating conducive conditions for learning, differences among students in respect of the kind, pace and styles of learning,
- view knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning;

- necessarily view knowledge as an external reality embedded in textbooks but as constructed in the shared context of teaching learning and personal experiences;
- be sensitive to the social, professional and administrative contexts in which they have to operate,
- be receptive and constantly learning; own responsibility towards society and work to build a better world.
- develop appropriate competencies to be able to not only seek the above understandings in actual situations, but also be able to create them.
- have a sound knowledge-base and basic proficiency in language.
- identify their own personal expectations, perceptions of self, capacities and inclinations,
- consciously attempt to formulate one's own professional orientation this will determine his role as a teacher in situation specific context.

## 6.2 Needed Focus in the Newly Visualised Teacher Education Programme

It has become imminent that the TE Programmes become responsive to such expectations. This is possible through a basic shift in focus to be brought about in TE. This would mean an entirely new direction to be taken for which we should be able to develop necessary conceptual and operational details. Having done so, the existing knowledge and practices could be examined for their suitable inclusion, alteration, or even discard. Significantly, such a new approach to TE needs to have some distinct conceptual and operational focus on several aspects. Major ones are dealt with one by one.

### 6.2.1 Learning

- Learners experience learning through active involvement and participation. By doing these they 'construct' their meanings and ideas, or, in short, knowledge, in their own ways. Therefore, learning is a process of source searching, collation of ideas, reflection and analysis and internalisation. This is greatly influenced by the social context from which learners come.
- Learning is a *divergent process* that occurs through various exposures and not necessarily through a common, singular exposure predecided by teacher. It is essentially a participative- process in which learner constructs his/her knowledge in one's own ways, through absorption, interaction, observation and reflection. In the process learner goes back and forth. The process, therefore, is *not linear*; it is rather spiral and complex in nature.
- Learning is not easy and straight forward process. It is a complex multidimensional and also dynamic process.

### 6.2.2 Learner

- As the teacher's role is essentially in relation to learner and learning, the central focus of TE has to be on *learner and learning*. Learner has to be seen as an individual with unique potential and living in a socio-cultural context. In this sense, learner is more than a psychological entity, is a vibrant participant in a context. He or she wishes to be an effective participant in the context and also to contribute towards its improvements. Learners recognise meanings from their social cultural

contexts, develop attitudes, begin to understand and interpret phenomena in their own ways, based on personal experiences.

- Learners vary in respect of the kinds of learning, style and speed of learning. Given the same conditions, they learn differently. This process is much more than psychological. Teachers need to be able to discern the actual learning in learners, find ways of facilitating it without being prescriptive or without restricting learners' *'learning routes'*. Teacher education must enable teachers to appreciate the learning variations among learners and also that it is a dynamic process.
- Thus learners will be active, collaborative, and aware of their purposes, strategies and context and will be also responsive. Here learner's ability is not seen as a fixed but capable of development through experiences.

### 6.2.3 Teacher

- The key role of teacher is as facilitator and supportive to learning. Teacher is the one who facilitates learners to realise their potentials, articulate their personal and context specific experiences in ways that are acceptable in the wider context of our nation.
- Teacher has to recognise that in learner centered learning situation, curriculum 'evolves' and is not 'pre designed'; teacher is merely 'prepared' for providing possible supports in the process of learning by learners. Every subsequent learning situation cumulatively provides better insight to teacher in discerning learner needs and, creates pool and identifies varied learning supports. In this sense, teacher is a participant in the learner's efforts at evolving learning experiences and helping to develop programme for learning.
- There is no one 'method' that is effective in causing all learners to learn in similar ways. Each teacher has to find one's own 'style' of learning through perceptive practice but recognise the fact that *all learners learn in their own ways*. 'Teaching method' therefore, has two aspects for assessing its effectiveness or appropriateness. One pertains to teacher's style with which she uses method or methods. It relates to one's own rationale. The second is the learner's (school students) way of learning. The participation in unique ways speaks of the role of teacher and learner in the pursuit of knowing or learning. While both Teacher and learner participate in learning situation, they are beneficiaries. Acquisition of learning on the part of the student has been a major concern in educational situations. In this sense, technically, they both are learners.
- Teacher needs to recognise him or herself as a 'professional' endowed with the necessary knowledge, attitude, competence, commitment, enthusiasm, spirit of seeking new ways and means, capable of reflection, sensitive and perceptive to not only the learners and the institution but also the emergent concerns in the larger social perspective within which one functions.
- Teacher has to recognise that learners in schools no more need teacher as a source of knowledge. The media explosion challenges their minds with the immense learning choices and possibilities. Facilitating meaningful and positive learning in the face of unprocessed information is unavoidable to a teacher.

Disparities in access to such a powerful medium are bound to persist for some more time in this country. Teacher needs not only competence to be effective in situations with and without access to ICT, but also the sensibility in leading young learners to understand and accept the situation in a proper context.

- Teacher must develop an understanding of the nature and dynamics of ‘action’ comprising education. Such an understanding would not be a cognitive acceptance of things that occur but will prompt attempt to ‘do’ things, contemplate on ‘what works and does not work’, and critically analyse the pros and cons of the action, reflection and internalisation. That is why learning in TE ‘readies’ one for action independently.
- Terms like teaching and teacher in their earlier meanings need to be altered, if learning has to take the centre stage in TE. That is, teaching has an underlying tone of ‘what a teacher does’. This is suggestive of the learning being an outcome of teaching which is central. Change in visualising teacher, teacher actions and teacher preparedness in a situation whereas learning goes on in learner specific ways, in various levels, speeds and styles but simultaneously, has to be developed.
- It is visualised that providing for learner autonomy will ensure the stage appropriateness of every learning experience. No doubt, the teacher educators need to be oriented to participate in such a learning situation. Also they need good ways of organising the daily routine during TEPs.
- Teacher educators must not only understand the paradigm shift but also “Own” it. This requires well thought out orientation

programmes where they get opportunity to discuss and understand their role alterations as well as become equipped to deal with learner dominant situations.

- There are a variety of school systems in our country with distinct features and purposes. Yet, they share the broader goals of different stages of school education at the national level. Teacher has to be familiar with these variations and the corresponding expectations they set for her or him. This ensures readiness in a teacher to adjust him or herself effectively in any of these school systems one enters and function relevantly.

#### 6.2.4 Knowledge

- Knowledge component in TE is derived from the broader area of the discipline of education and it needs to be represented so. It is thus multi-disciplinary in nature within the context of education. In other words, conceptual inputs in TE need to be articulated in such a manner that they describe and explain educational phenomena-actions, tasks, efforts, processes, concepts, events and so on. In doing so, concepts from cognate disciplines may be used but need to be integrated for arriving at composite understanding of educational components. For instance, different theoretical viewpoints of learning which are essentially drawn from psychology, need to be seen as providing a conceptual basis to teacher in understanding how learning can be understood, discerned, recognised and, more importantly, how it can be caused. That is, understanding of how a given conceptual position a teacher takes influences teacher

decisions about creating learning situations is helped by these theoretical explanations. Similarly, ever changing socio-economic-political perspective in the society influences not only teacher perceptions and convictions but also the views and reactions of learners. Such interactive forces may be understood better with the help of sociological and political perspectives. The point of significance is that while formulating knowledge components for teacher education, conscious effort needs to be made to represent explanations from the perspective of education rather than of other disciplines with 'implications to education'. Instead, attempt must be made to shift from the usual 'theory to practice' to 'practice to theorisation'.

- Knowledge in TE comprises of various kinds e.g., conceptual, technical, professional etc.
- Differentiating knowledge components in TE would clarify for the beginner, i.e., the student teacher, the educational perspective in which to understand one's working as well as make learning during TE more meaningful and feasible.
- Such a scheme would provide for adequate scope for viewing theoretical understanding and its practical aspects in more integrated manner rather than as two separate components. This enables teacher to develop a critical sensitivity to the field practices, the ones which are tried out and leads to evolving one's own vision of an ideal learning setting and put forth effort to create it, confidence. Teacher, thus equipped, would be an asset in creating better learning climate as she would not mechanically accommodate and adjust to

existing conditions but would try to improve upon them and also possess the necessary technical know-how and confidence.

### 6.2.5 *Social Context*

- Learning is greatly influenced by the social environment/context from which learners and teachers come. The social climate of the school and the classroom exert a deep impact on the process of learning. Given this, there is need to provide a major shift from an overwhelming emphasis on the psychological characteristics of the individual learner to her social, cultural, economic and political context.
- Different Contexts invite differences in learning. Learning in school is influenced and enhanced by the wider social context outside the school.
- Learning does not take place only inside single institute designed for that purpose. When learning outside is connected with learning inside school, it can be hugely valueable.
- Learning is to be appreciated as occurring in shared social and everyday contexts. Ordinarily, many of the ideas expressed by educational thinkers such as Gandhi, Tagore, Gijubhai, Dewey and others are studied with virtually no reference to the socio-historical contexts in which they developed.
- Teacher education programmes need to provide the space for engagement with issues and concerns of contemporary Indian society, its pluralistic nature and issues of identity, gender, equity and poverty. This can help teachers to contextualise education and evolve a deeper understanding of the purpose of education and its relationship with society.

### 6.2.6 Appraisal

- It is necessary to understand that appraisal of learning is equally a dynamic process with adequate sensitivity and flexibility to gain appropriate estimation of ‘actual learning’ by individuals.
- Appraisal in New TEP is continuous. Teacher educator evaluates student – teachers’ ability to cooperate and collaborate, investigate and integrate, also appraises written and oral skills and originality in approach, presentation, so on and so forth.
- Several kinds of appraisals take place in the form of self appraisal, peer appraisal, teachers’ positive feedback and formal evaluation at the end of the year. All appraisals aim at improvement, understanding ones own strength and weaknesses, to understand what has to be strengthened and identify the next goals in the learning process.
- The appraisal mostly will not be in marks (Quantitative) but on a scale (Qualitative) where in students achievement are evaluated on a continuum and he/she is placed according to his/her performance in various activities.

## 7. THE NEW TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (TEP) NEEDED ACTION

The TE Programme such as the one described above needs a few tasks to be undertaken. This requires not a mere rearrangement of existing curricular inputs in TE. In fact, it requires a clear articulation on the substance or the conceptual contours of TE. This needs to be derived from education perspective. Further, it should be recognised that teaching-learning is central in education. No doubt, its operational

details emerge from such conceptual framework arrived at. In doing so some significant points of departure are indicated below.

1. The learning inputs in such a TEP will be predominantly learner oriented as it would provide for variety in learning exposures, accommodate differential learning, encourage divergence, reflection and insightful treatment of a learning situation, and also provide for critical examination of disturbing social conditions of learners, larger issues of social disparity, inequity, gender divide and field specific administrative and organisational anomalies – all of which contribute to each teacher evolving one’s own conviction about teaching as a profession and a professional commitment.
2. The TE Programme has to include teacher competencies beyond the usual oral, verbal ones which are required in the participative learning process. Some of them are —
  - Identifying ‘sources’ of information needed by students to generate learning activities and make them available to learners with differential learning needs:
    - Variety of activities for different learners
    - Reading material for the stage of learners
    - Group and individual problem solving targets
    - Use of study and hands on experience
    - Respond to learners in order to lead them on without providing answers or solutions
    - Discern learner’s logic in the way he/she goes about discovering and support it and
    - Accept divergent responses without judging their ‘correctness’

3. Such tendencies mentioned above develop gradually in student teachers more by experiencing them than by mere reading about them or listening to lectures on them. For this varied exposures which not only enable them to recognise and discern from the field, but also those which provide them with 'Better imaginary' of learning contexts. This is stated because the school experience in most places in the country barely familiarises student teachers to not very inspiring conditions. That is 'better' schools are more organised than others, but function in an examination oriented way. Therefore, during the TEP it is visualised that through the use of multiple exposures ample opportunities could be provided to student teachers to observe, discern, discuss, try out, understand and learn to make decisions on the 'what and how' of creating learning situations. For this, some very positive, feasible situations will have to be created through virtual imaging, exemplar situations from the field or the descriptions along with adequate discussions on the conceptual explanations for these as well as reference work and, of course, actual practice.
4. Organisationally, the new vision TE needs changed arrangements. In the sense, the kinds of curricular details necessary for its implementation may have to be worked out. Greater liaison with schools of relevant stages will be necessary. Transactional emphasis needs to be on divergence not only in the nature, speed and styles of learning by learners, but also in the kinds of expectations as well as facilities provided. The role of teacher educator has to be defined as a facilitator of learning instead of a teacher dealing with a specific course of study. Even for assessment the emphasis has to be on participation quality in the process more than the outcome. The overall learning setting or climate of the TE Program has to provide an experiential scope to student teachers to explore, reflect, critically appraise, experiment, and own responsibility for one's decision. All these enable them to seek to find these in their schools. Meaningful insights can be drawn from some of the divergent practices in the field as also the insights from other past experience.
5. The feasibility of such a learner oriented, divergent Programme is far greater at present in the wake of the easy access to a vibrant and potent mechanism available – the ICT. Use of ICT in meaningful ways makes it easy for teacher to create interesting projects, problem solving situations and virtual exposures to effective learning conditions. In fact, possibility of exposing teachers to effective learning settings created by teachers under varying social, cultural contexts, and texts on success stories can be explored. In places where meaningful school experience to student teachers is difficult, this would be a very meaningful exposure.
6. The entry of ICT, mass media and the satellite television into the field of education has added to the roles of the teacher. Participation of several people in creating learning settings demands newer competencies in teacher to take their help meaningfully. The TE Programmes need to provide for diversification in getting specialised for different kinds of learning settings.
7. If the TE programme undergoes changes as visualised then changed practices will lead to

substantive and methodological changes which will break new ground. This will also lead to procedural overhauling of the in-service program as the need of the entrant teachers would be different. In such a situation the issue of “Links between pre-service and in- service TE” will automatically be resolved. It will become a known issue. This will lead to making the in-service programmes truly teacher development programmes and in that sense, they will be life long education for teachers.

In brief, the new vision TE will be more responsive to changes in school system as it envisages significant paradigm shift. Major shifts can be stated as follows:

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

While reiterating the need to redesign teacher education curriculum and process, as recommended by various Education Commissions, this Position Paper makes a strong case for recognising the active ‘agency’ of the teacher in institutionalising the process of school curriculum renewal. It is argued that the exercise of revising school curriculum with the aim to revitalise school education cannot be achieved without

addressing the need for creating reflective teacher practitioners. The following section presents some of the key recommendations with regard to structural and operational mechanisms that will need to be initiated to address issues of teacher education for school curriculum renewal.

1. All types of Teacher Education Programme form Pre Primary, Primary, Secondary and Post Graduate should rest with the university.
2. Full freedom to be given to teacher educators and student teachers and teachers at school level to do whatever they think fit while implementing new TEP.
3. Teacher Education Programmes should be ideally of Five years duration after the completion of 10+2 level of school education.
4. An integrated model for teacher education could comprise of core components that would be common to all teacher education programmes (pre primary, elementary and secondary) followed by specialisation of professional development specific to the stage of education.

<b>The Shift</b>	
<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Teacher centric, stable designs	Learner centric, flexible processes
Teacher directions and decisions	Learner autonomy
Teacher guidance and monitoring	Facilitation of learning
Learning in group	Cooperative learning
Learner receptivity	Learner participation in learning
Knowledge as “given” fixed	Knowledge evolves
Linear exposure	Multiple exposures
Common learning tasks	Individualised learning routes
Disciplinary focus	Multidisciplinary, educational focus

5. The role of national agencies such as NCTE, NCERT and their state level counterparts is of crucial significance in the above stated task. They need to provide well coordinated support and take initiative in carrying out such processes they need to encourage individuals and institutions who are willing to take initiative and carry through one or more of these tasks. The main focus has to be on creating a conducive climate in the field for the paradigm shift and generate adequate supportive resources for successful implementation of the new system.
6. Teacher education programmes should be redesigned to respond to the school curriculum renewal process and in accordance with the state and regional context in which they are situated.
7. The proposed process model for teacher education presented in this paper should form the basic framework for redesigning teacher education programmes at the pre-primary, elementary and secondary stages of education across states and districts in a linkage between SCERT/DIETs with University-based institutions.
8. High-level consultative arrangements between NCERT and NCTE on building linkages between teacher education and school curriculum design and its processes of renewal would need to be developed.
9. A nation-wide review of teacher education curriculum in the light of the school curriculum renewal exercise would need to be undertaken.
10. Nation- wide seminars and workshops could be held to initiate discussion and devise possible strategies to operationalise the redesigned teacher education and development.

## 9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Education in post-Independence India has acted for many as an instrument of social exclusion, further distancing them from the Constitutional goal of an egalitarian and just society. Hence, this attempt at school curriculum renewal needs to be located in the context of establishing a system of education characterised by the core values and transformative goals consistent with the Constitutional vision of Indian society.

The focus of many innovations and educational reform of the 1990s was on the need to respect the nature of the child, her pace of learning and carving a legitimate space for the 'agency' of the child. However, the hope of revitalising school education in India, via an idealistic or an ideologically driven attempt at revising the school curriculum will probably meet with little success, if the central 'agency of the teacher' remains unrecognised.

With this, must come the recognition of the multiple constraints that the average teacher has to cope with: social, cultural, skill and gender-based. The transformation of the capacities, skills, knowledge and attitudes of the teacher and the school environment are pre-requisites for the transaction of an enlightened curriculum and not vice-versa, as currently believed. Enabling this in practice will not be easy, as the unfulfilled promise of revitalising teacher education into a transformative profession has shown. This will require considerable structural and process changes that this discussion paper has sought to outline.

## APPENDIX I

### PRE-INDEPENDENCE EXEMPLAR OF INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

#### 1. Gijubhai Badheka Pre-primary Education Programme Daxinamurti, Bhavnagar, Gujarat – 1920

Shri Gijubhai Bhadheka (1885-1939) evolved system of education wherein freedom and love for children were core ingredients. He brought the child in the centre of education. He gave the child prime position vis-à-vis the other components – the teacher and the subject. He raised his voice for the freedom of the child and cried out against the use of fear and corporal punishment in schools about eighty five years ago. He started pre-school called Bal Mandir in 1920 where in he introduced an environment for learning that is friendly and full of love. It was a major break through from the conventional environment.

The very essence of his process of educating the child is to help him to become independent, to have self control and become self radiant. Gijubhai gave full respect to the child, his/her thought and also his/her feelings. He employed stories, music, play an educational tools. Children with full attention and interest, learnt the lessons of cleanliness, order, peace to behave with others with good manners, and have love for fellow co-students. He gave full freedom to each child to do whatever he/she likes to do. By establishing Bal Mandir and carrying lots of experiments he evolved knowledge, methodology, tools, literature and what not. By this he virtually revolutionalised the whole gamut of child education. Actually he learnt by observing children and by experiments.

His book 'Diva Swapna' (Daydream) is the road map for revolutionalising elementary education. Where in, how a teacher can revolutionalise the teaching of school subjects like Language, History, Geography, Science etc. and also "teach" cleanliness, manners, learn in group, play for not competition but for joy, to read, to do activities without noise and in order.

He was inspired by Madam Montessori's work. He adopted her thoughts and methods rendering them suitable to Indian culture. He made a departure from her view about story telling and wrote about books of stories for children.

#### 2. Rabindranath Tagore Established Shantiniketan, West Bengal – 1921

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a genius and his contribution was not only confined to arts but overflowed in many constructive channels of nation – building activities. He considered education is most important tool for nation – building. As a pioneer he devoted the best part of this life in conducting valuable educational experiments at Shantiniketan (1921). He weathered all sorts of material hardship and made all kinds of personal sacrifice to enable Shantiniketan make full contribution in reconstruction of India.

Shantiniketan aimed at creating union of best of cultures of East and West, where all creation of God finds one nest. (*Yatra Vishavam Bhavati Eka Nidam*)

He was a great patriot and had acute desire for emancipation of villages and to rouse the villages with *Atmashakti* to achieve prosperity. He gave much importance to constructive work and village welfare and emphasised self-confidence and self-sufficiency in the village. For that, many experiments were carried out at Sriniketan.

He was highly dissatisfied with current Western Education which he considered education with feeble curriculum (of USA or UK) and examination oriented bookish education encouraging rote learning and copying from the books.

He regarded freedom and play were basic to all learning.

For him the place of mother tongue in education is like mother's breast milk and so medium of instruction should be mother tongue upto higher level. Because he believed that for the purpose of instruction and self-expression the mother tongue has advantages which no other language can have.

Method of teaching was not to use compulsion and there was a minimum of curriculum in the institute.

Co-education was introduced in those days at Shantiniketan. It was a radical step in those days.

Art had a definite place in Shantiniketan.

His educational ideas were basically molded by his philosophic ideas particularly of *Upanishad*. The whole universe is a manifestation of one all powerful being, which pervades all time and space. That is why he saw unity in diversity.

He also believed that there is a divine spark in each and every thing, which lead Rabindranath Tagore to love every creature and every creation of God. The kernel of his educational concept is the spiritual union between man and nature. He envisaged that children should be allowed to grow in an atmosphere of freedom in the lap of uncorrupted nature.

### **3. Mahatma Gandhi Launched Scheme of Basic Education for Primary Stage – Wardha, Maharashtra – 1937**

Mahatma Gandhi envisaged a classless, peaceful and exploitation less society. A society full of love, non violence, truth and justice. Only in such society one can completely develop his/her potential and spiritual development.

To him education means drawing out of the best in child's body, mind and spirit. He believed sound education should produce useful citizen – whole man and women with harmonious development of all the four aspect of human life – hand, head, heart and spirit. He had full faith in education through which such society can be created.

He firmly believed that western education (of his time) not related to indigenous culture of India, not only that western education is not related to life and believed that western education is not only wasteful but harmful.

He was convinced that social, moral, political and economic regeneration of India is dependent on right type of education. It is only education, which can help in achieving peaceful, non violent, society which is also based on truth and justice.

The chief tenets of his educational philosophy were:

1. Education will be craft centered.
2. It should be self supporting
3. The medium of instruction will be mother tongue
4. Education should be free and compulsory (primary education) up to the age of fourteen years of every child.

His plea for craft centred education was widely criticised. He strongly hold that the work will train the body, will stimulate intellect, train the mind, will make children self reliant and independent. It will generate dignity of labour in the minds of children and will decrease discrimination between working poor and non working people. Thus his scheme of education round work aim at silent social revolution with far reaching consequences.

The instrumentation given through mother tongue will be children's familiar environment and will imbibe Indian culture easily. English should be taught only when the child is proficient in mother tongue. i.e., at the age of fourteen.

In the curriculum for the seven years (7 to 14 years of age group) he advocated inclusion of educational subjects like

1. Mother tongue
2. Basic Craft
3. Mathematics
4. Sciences – Nature Study, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene, Physical Culture, Chemistry, some relevant knowledge about stars
5. Social Studies – History, Geography and Civics
6. Study of Hindi

He also gave details of training of teachers where in

1. One Basic Craft
2. Principles of Education
3. Mathematics
4. An out line course in Physiology, Hygiene, Sanitation etc.
5. Social Studies- A course in History, Geography and Civics
6. To orient would be teachers to general, cultural background through master pieces of literature in mother tongue
7. Hindi
8. Proper orientation to be given to the many fold problems of his social environment.
9. Physical, culture, drill, deshi games, supervised practice- teaching

The vision of Mahatma Gandhi was accomplished by Dr. Zakir Hussain at Jamia Millia Islamia.

