

NCTE and Teacher Education : A Concern View

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Introduction

The National Council for Teacher Education, in its previous status since 1973, was an advisory body for the Central and State Governments on all matters pertaining to teacher education, with its Secretariat in the Department of Teacher Education of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Despite its commendable work in the academic fields, it could not perform essential regulatory functions, to ensure maintenance of standards in teacher education and preventing proliferation of substandard teacher education institutions. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action thereunder, envisaged a National Council for Teacher Education with statutory status and necessary resources as a first step for overhauling the system of teacher education.

The National Council for Teacher Education as a statutory body came into existence in pursuance of the **National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 (No. 73 of 1993)** on the 17th August, 1995.

Objective

The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of Norms and Standards in the teacher education system and for matters connected therewith. The mandate given to the NCTE is very broad and covers the whole gamut of teacher education

programmes including research and training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in school, and non-formal education, part-time education, adult education and distance (correspondence) education courses.

Functions of Council

It shall be the duty of the Council to take all such steps as it may think fit for ensuring planned and co-ordinated development of teacher education and for the determination and maintenance of standards for teacher education and for the purposes of performing its functions under this Act, the Council may :

- a. undertake surveys and studies relating to various aspects of teacher education and publish the result thereof;
- b. make recommendations to the Central and State Government, Universities, University Grants Commission and recognised institutions in the matter of preparation of suitable plans and programmes in the field of teacher education;
- c. co-ordinate and monitor teacher education and its development in the country;
- d. lay down guidelines in respect of minimum qualifications for a person to be employed as a teacher in schools or in recognised institutions;
- e. lay down norms for any specified category of courses or trainings in teacher

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education, including the minimum eligibility criteria for admission thereof, and the method of selection of candidates, duration of the course, course contents and mode of curriculum;

- f. lay down guidelines for compliance by recognised institutions, for starting new courses or training, and for providing physical and instructional facilities, staffing pattern and staff qualification;
- g. lay down standards in respect of examinations leading to teacher education qualifications, criteria for admission to such examinations and schemes of courses or training;
- h. lay down guidelines regarding tuition fees and other fees chargeable by recognised institutions;
- i. promote and conduct innovation and research in various areas of teacher education and disseminate the results thereof;
- j. examine and review periodically the implementation of the norms, guidelines and standards laid down by the Council, and to suitably advise the recognised institution;
- k. evolve suitable performance appraisal system, norms and mechanism for enforcing accountability on recognised institutions;
- l. formulate schemes for various levels of teacher education and identify recognised institutions and set up new institutions for teacher development programmes;
- m. take all necessary steps to prevent commercialisation of teacher education; and
- n. perform such other functions as may be entrusted to it by the Central Government.

Programmes Recognised by NCTE

NCTE notified revised Regulations and Norms and Standards on November 28, 2014

for the following Teacher Education Programmes :

- a. Diploma in early childhood education programme leading to Diploma in Preschool Education (DPSE).
- b. Elementary teacher education programme leading to Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.).
- c. Bachelor of elementary teacher education programme leading to Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) degree.
- d. Bachelor of education programme leading to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree.
- e. Master of education programme leading to Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree.
- f. Diploma in physical education programme leading to Diploma in Physical Education (D.P.Ed.).
- g. Bachelor of physical education programme leading to Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed.) degree.
- h. Master of physical education programme leading to Master of Physical Education (M.P.Ed.) degree.
- i. Diploma in elementary education programme through Open and Distance Learning System leading to Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.).
- j. Bachelor of education programme through Open and Distance Learning System leading to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree.
- k. Diploma in arts education (Visual Arts) programme leading to Diploma in Arts Education (Visual Arts).
- l. Diploma in arts education (Performing Arts) programme leading to Diploma in Arts Education (Performing Arts).
- m. 4-year Integrated programme leading to B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. degree.
- n. Bachelor of education programme 3-year (Part Time) leading to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree.

- o. 3-year Integrated programme leading to B.Ed., M.Ed. (Integrated) degree.

NCTE Regulations 2014: Highlights

NCTE completed and notified the revised Regulations 2014, along with Norms and Standards for 15 programmes on November 28, 2014 under Government of India Gazette Notification No.346 (F.No. 51-1/2014/NCTE/N&S) by following the recommendations of the Justice Verma Commission (JVC) appointed by the Government at the instance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The JVC had suggested wide range reforms in Teacher Education which the new Regulations 2014 have addressed. The new Regulations are an outcome of wider consultations with stakeholders undertaken by NCTE.

The important highlights of Regulations 2014 are as under :

- a. A wide basket with 15 programmes is on offer, recognising for the first time three new programmes – 4-year B.A/B.Sc.B.Ed., 3-year B.Ed. (Part-time), and 3-year B.Ed.-M.Ed. programme.
- b. The duration of three programmes – B.Ed., B.P.Ed., M.Ed. – has been increased to two years, providing more professional rigour and at par with best international standards.
- c. Henceforth, in place of stand-alone institutions, teacher education shall be established in composite institutions (multi-disciplinary or multi-teacher education programmes).
- d. Each programme curriculum comprises three components – theory, practicum, internship; and at least 25% of the programme is developed to school-based activities and internship.
- e. ICT, Yoga Education, Gender and Disability/Inclusive Education are integral part of each programme curriculum.

- f. More integrated teacher education programmes are encouraged.
- g. The teacher educator M.Ed. Degree comes with specialization in either Elementary Education or in Secondary/ Senior Secondary Education.
- h. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become more rigorous with built-in quality assurance mechanisms.
- i. In-service teachers have more option to acquire higher TE qualifications— DEEd (ODL), B.Ed. (ODL), B.Ed. (Part-Time).
- j. NOC from affiliating university/body is mandatory while making an application.
- k. Provision of application, payment of fees, visiting team reports, etc. online. Centralized computerized visiting team for transparent use by both HQs and Regional Committees for inspection/ monitoring. (For this, E-Governance is in the process of finalization).
- l. Each teacher education institution to have compulsory accreditation in every 5 years from an accrediting agency recognized by NCTE. (An MoU has already been signed with NAAC in this regard).

In an effort to make the training of teachers more effective and to prepare better teachers, the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has made some big changes in the curriculum of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course.

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The supreme court had directed the NCTE to revamp the system of teacher education before the end of the year 2014 on which the regulatory body has released 'NCTE Regulations 2014'.

The B.Ed colleges all over the country would have to follow the new regulations from

next academic session. One of the most important guideline of the new regulation is to make one year B.Ed course to two years.

The teaching training for the B.Ed students would be now for duration of 20 weeks instead of prevalent 6 weeks only. Under the new plan a student would have to give school teaching of 16 weeks instead of 40 days only as under one year plan. Under the new guidelines, a B.Ed college would have to reapply for NCTE recognition after five years.

The NCTE would give recognition for B.Ed for only those colleges which offer other courses (like B.Sc. B.A) also. The management of B.Ed colleges would now have to appoint at least 16 teachers who should be have doctoral qualification (Ph.D).

The two-year course is devised by the NCERT and lays emphasis on practical activities like internal assessment, projects, internships in teaching, micro-teaching skills and other innovative ways to conduct practical activities related to health and physical education.

The decision however is not going down well with the students who want to become teachers. Anisha Sharma a college student felt that decision will keep students away from the B.Ed. course.

She said that now an engineering student, after class XII, will complete his studies in four and half years, while those opting a B.Ed course after graduation will have to study at least six years after class XII.

Santhosh Mathew has the unenviable task of fixing India's teacher-training system.

The 1985 Bihar Cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Service took charge as chairman of the National Council for Teacher Education, the apex regulator of teacher training institutions, in January 2017.

In mid-May, the human resource development ministry announced the council's

rather radical decision to put on hold recognition of new training institutions for 2017-18.

Instead, the "zero year" will be spent taking stock of the existing institutions and improving quality. Mathew estimates that there are about eight to nine lakh seats in teacher training institutions across the country, but there is no record of where the teachers who come out trained are being absorbed.

Educationists blame the poor quality of teacher training, widespread privatisation of the sector and lax monitoring for the failure of progressive measures such as the Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation for students, which was meant to replace the year-end examination. They also allege corruption in the council.

Their stand has been partly vindicated. The performance of training college graduates and diploma-holders in the central and state teacher eligibility tests has been abysmal. Further, the human resource development minister Prakash Javadekar has admitted to the existence of "fly by night" institutions while the secretary for school education, Anil Swarup, has reportedly warned that a large chunk of education colleges may lose affiliation.

Edited excerpts from the interview:

Stopping recognition of new teacher education institutions for a whole year is quite a step. Things must have been quite bad to make that necessary.

It is not that. Nationally, there is no shortage of teacher education institutions. [Now] we have the headroom to think. The question is: what are the criteria based on which you will sanction and maintain these? The approval to start a college cannot be for life and must be constantly reviewed. We have an accreditation process but the rule required us to accredit a college only once in its lifetime. Now, it will be every five years. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council [an

autonomous body under the higher education regulator, the University Grants Commission], has accredited around 1,300 colleges in the last 15-20 years. We have over 13,000 colleges. We should be doing 6,000-8,000 in a year. We needed time and energy to think over our plans.

You have sought affidavits from recognised institutions. What details have you asked for?

We are not particularly data-rich. That is one of the reasons why the council asked for affidavits last October. We also asked colleges that did not file the affidavits to show cause why we should not cancel their recognition. So far, 7,163 institutions have filed. Our records are maintained course-wise. There are over 18,000 instances of approval for courses. These will be matched with a unique institution number. We asked for basic information in the affidavits – recognition documents, land available, number of buildings, faculty number and qualifications, performance of students in the teacher eligibility tests. We also mandated annual submission of returns. We found that many colleges do not have enough teachers. We are trying to use Aadhaar [the twelve-digit biometric-based unique identification number] to find out how many teachers have been shown against multiple colleges. We are not stopping contract teachers from teaching but they cannot be shown against the required strength.

Were these not covered in the inspection process before recognition was granted?

Recognition may have been granted 15-20 years ago. They might have had land and faculty then that they do not now. They may have been given permission for a hundred students, but teach 200 now. We needed to know their present status. Some may have closed without filing closure reports. We were flying blind.

Was there no monitoring?

We do not have an effective monitoring

process. Neither do we have the wherewithal. Annual submission of returns was required but has fallen into disuse. We are also not equipped to deal with the flow of paper. There is a huge number of vacancies in the institution.

What about the institutions that lied in their declarations?

We are setting up the national teacher portal and in that, by requirement, every teacher educator and teacher will log everything they do – the material they use, tests, readings. We will use that to find out what is happening. We are also setting up our quick response teams of auditors.

Are the concerns about quality mainly for private institutions?

It is not about public or private. We are not producing teachers who have the attitude, skill and knowledge required for 21st-century India. They do not know how to teach. That is the worry. There is a threshold you have to cross before you can be considered qualified – the teacher eligibility test. The pass percentage for the central one is less than 20%.

And how will that problem be addressed?

Through accreditation and national ranking of institutions once every two years. We want the market to operate. If we do the ranking rigorously, prospective students will reward good colleges and punish the bad ones. With the help of Quality Council of India, we are developing a framework based on five pillars. There are the physical assets – land and buildings – and a new category of academic assets that covers the number of teachers, qualification of teachers, the kind of material they use, the readings they prescribe, the tests they set. There is teaching-learning quality. We are commissioning over a hundred video vans to record classes taken by faculty members. Earlier we sent the experts to colleges. Now

we will bring the material to them to review and score. We will also test a randomly-chosen sample of students and compare the results with tests the college itself is administering. Randomly chosen students will be asked to take sample classes too and those will be recorded, reviewed and scored. We are going to show a mirror to the colleges. Institutions will be classified into categories. The best will become resource institutions. The good ones, we will let be. Those not good enough will get a year to recalibrate. If they do not improve, we will shut them down. We are looking at reforming the eligibility test too. So monitoring and accreditation will be outsourced to the Quality Council of India?

It is not going to be outsourced. It is going to be done on our behalf under our very tight control and intellectual leadership.

Conclusion

The regulations changed in 2014. Did quality not improve after that? I doubt it. We have always looked at buildings, land, number and qualification of staff. What typically happens, especially in the private sector, [is that] one institution obtains approvals for different courses from different councils. When our inspection team visits, all other boards disappear, a set of contract teachers and some students are produced and they pass. Turn-key operations are destroying the entire climate of education but these are approved if the institutions have land, building and teachers.

But can this happen without the collusion of NCTE's officials?

Even if I went myself I would not be able to find out [irregularity at the college]. It is extremely well choreographed. And we announce the visit as we need to go when classes are on. Also, this should not be about cops and robbers. You have to set up a framework where there is every incentive for

doing right. I believe the market has a far more powerful role to play. Over the next 18-20 months we will have a huge amount of information.

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