

Teacher Education Programmes in India and Nepal

Dr. Amit Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department Of Education, B. M. A. College, Baheri, Darbhanga

ABSTRACT

Teachers are central to delivering education systems in any country, and therefore, the training and development of competent teachers is essential for the development of the country's socio-economic fabric. Teacher education as a concept and as a programme, however, has undergone a certain cyclic transformation in countries like Indian and Nepal due to the changing government reflections, the shift in education philosophies, and the implementation of effective government laws towards improved teacher education. Similar to most countries globally, both nations have a legacy of colonial and traditional education systems, and they have their achievements and constraints in developing teacher education for the 21st century. Due to the requirements of millions of children, India has started various institutes related to teacher education and training, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Particularly, due to the relatively smaller but more diverse population, Nepal has paid attention to the expansion, provision of access, equity, and the professional development of the teaching profession. Much attention is paid to the structure and development of the teacher education programmes and the problems faced today in India and Nepal, key policy measures, institutional setting, and best practices are introduced in this paper. It identifies the areas of improvement on quality assurance, professional development, and culturally sensitive education to support the learners of the 21st century.

Keywords: Teacher Education, India, Nepal, Teacher Training, NCTE, NCED, Educational Reforms, Inclusive Education, Quality Assurance.

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1. Introduction:

Pre-service teacher education plays a key role in the growth of an effective national system of education. This occurs because the preparation for the teaching profession aims not only to produce teachers who will teach content to learners but also those who will be able to nurture students' problem-solving skills, creativity, respect for diversity, and the habit of continuing education. India and Nepal have witnessed the process of change in the teacher education system, based on education reforms and demands of the society, including teachers, policy, and commitment towards SDG 4 on Quality Education. India has a large Territory and a diverse system of education, initially started to train teachers during the colonial period at large and has initiated a dynamic change since the initiative of independent India. The current regulations of teacher education in India are set by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) for distance education programmes, which include Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) to postgraduate degrees which including Master in Education (M.Ed.), in all Governments as well as

private teacher education institutions. Some reforms have encouraged the paradigm shift of training future health care professionals, for example, in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which has made a call for a shift towards the establishment of multidisciplinary training, a fusion of technology, and continued professional development. On the other hand, offers and challenges in Nepal include problems of access, quality, and management of teachers immigrants within the organisation, principal shortages, especially in rural areas, and in organisations serving marginalised communities. In this respect, the government has pointed to the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) to implement pre-service and in-service teacher training as well as competency-based and inclusive as the key approaches. In terms of size and capacity, both countries want to focus on teacher competencies and a quality education system where education is inclusive, free, and prepared for the future..

2. Objectives :

1. To trace the historical development and importance of the programmes of the education of the teachers in India and Nepal.

2. To analyze critical issues that have existed in improving the quality of teacher education and recognizing the gaps in access and equity to quality, infrastructure, and relevance of curriculum in faculty preparation.

3. To identify the current systems, buildings, and legislations that are currently in place for teacher education in the two countries.

4. To explore innovations, reforms, and future perspectives, commenting on the contemporary tendencies such as the use of technologies, the competency-based approach to training, and the new education policy in India, NEP 2020.

3. Evolution of Teacher Education in India and Nepal

Teacher education in the context of Indian and Nepalese states is therefore marked by history, social, and political reforms. The history of teacher education can be traced back to colonial India, which aimed to produce a class of teachers to serve the British administrative purpose. The institutions, such as the Presidency College, which was established in 1817, were offering education courses to train individuals to become teachers. After India's independence, the government realised the importance of teachers in the nation-building process and thus aimed at establishing appropriate professional and regulatory bodies for teacher training such as the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was established in 1995.

Like other countries, Nepal also has a historical background of teacher education systems, which are the Gurukul and the Buddhist monastic education system. Teacher professional development in Nepal, therefore, started in the middle of the twentieth century when Tribhuvan University and other training institutions were set up. The National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) was another development made in 1993 as an effort towards organisational and professional development in the field of teacher education in Nepal.

At first, both countries were more or less involved in only teaching and the transmission of basic literacy and subject matters. However, as the society changed and the complexities of teaching administration increased, there was a gradual call for teachers to receive professional education, knowledge, and skills in teaching methodologies, child development, education for all children regardless of

their ability or disability, and the effective use of ICT in learning and teaching. Integrated teacher education by which many countries have trended towards, is an aspect underscored in the NEP 2020 of India. However, Nepal, lately, has brought some measures to improve the training of teachers in rural and marginalised regions, stressing competency-based education as well as equal access to training opportunities for all. Hence, despite such progress in both nations, they still face some of the challenges as follows: Inconsistent quality standards, a lack of teaching and training infrastructure, and a shortage of competent trainers. Despite this, they have kept the spirit of fulfilling their call by enhancing teacher education programmes that aim at producing relevant, caring, and forward-looking trainers who can positively impact their respective nations.

4. Structure and Framework of Current Teacher Education Programmes:

Teacher education is one of the foundations of any country's education system since it prepares prospective teachers for duty with knowledge, skills, and the appropriate professional demeanour (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teacher education programmes as practised in the current society can be broadly classified into several categories, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. All the levels are focused on the developmental as well as cognitive development of different ages, calling for appropriate training strategies. At the pre-primary level of education, courses such as the Diploma in Early Childhood Education (DECE) equip teachers to facilitate young children's learning (UNESCO, 2020). There are training programmes which are being offered at the elementary level of education, the most common one being the Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed), which prepares trainees to teach students in elementary classes, from first to eighth. Secondary teacher education is typically offered through the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes that are aimed at preparing teachers of middle and high schools (NCTE, 2014, p. 4).

An important aspect of teacher education as a postgraduate degree is underpinned by several important bodies. In India, the postgraduate level courses in teaching are surveyed and standardised by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). They set standards, codes of practises, and

lay down the minimal qualifications of teachers as well as check on the quality of how these standards are implemented. Similarly, other institutions, such as the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) in Nepal, are also involved in the training of teachers, both pre- and in-service training to fit the educational needs in the country according to the goals set (NCED, 2019). The purpose of these institutions is to ensure that the competencies and quality of students in teacher education are well-regulated and progressing. Under the current programme, there are different extents of programming being provided for the learners. Pre-service programmes are also categorised as initial teaching, including the B.Ed., D.Ed., and integrated B.A/ B.Ed or B.Sc/ B.Ed courses are for prospective teachers. In-service programmes are for the existing teachers to be renewed professionally by providing them with short-term certificate courses and training workshops (MHRD, 2020). In recent years, there have been emerging trends in teacher certification and web-based teacher education programmes that can offer trainer education in flexible approaches. The role of regulatory bodies like NCTE and NCED, Challenges in Teacher Education Systems

The global vision for teacher education for the development of human capital is still hampered by several issues of quality, access, equity, infrastructure, and relevance of curriculum. These issues imply teacher preparation, hence the quality of education being provided to students. Quality remains a major concern. It is officially recorded that a large number of the existing teacher education programmes fail in upholding the high academic standards as well as the specific pedagogical training. Current research suggests the supposed post-desertion discrepancy between the theoretical training and what practice entails (para 15, Global Education Monitoring Report, 2023). These challenges include inadequate supply of qualified teacher educators, ineffective pedagogy and teacher training, and insufficient practice teaching for teacher education students.

All the same, there is as yet widespread inequity in access to teacher education for poor, rural, marginalised, and students writing for economically disadvantaged schools. Even though it is understood that in some areas, the traditional distance learning and the presentation of certifications have been used

advantageously, there are still some gaps. According to the World Bank report in 2023, the enrolment rate of the teachers' training facilities is still lower in rural regions compared to urban regions, which reduces the chance of pre-service teachers in rural contexts.

Equity is another pressing challenge. It is the case that currently, there are gender differences, socioeconomic inequalities, as well as regional disparities that remain barriers to entry and completion rates of teacher education programmes. Even gender, race, and or ethnicity requires considerate sensitivity since females and the groups with a minority status risk limited potential for engagement in teaching (UNESCO, 2024). There have been efforts to ensure that there is equity in the implementation of policies, but they have not been followed to the letter.

Deficiency in infrastructure also affects the existing teacher education laws. Several teacher training institutions still lack adequate infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning resources, dilapidated library facilities, and inadequate infrastructure in the use of technology (Education International, 2024). Lack of infrastructure weakens the formation of teaching ability among wannabe teachers, in essence, training them on modern techniques and skills in internet competency, which is very vital in the modern world today.

Curriculum relevance could already be categorised as one of the aspects that requires urgent changes. Usually, teacher education curricula are highly prescriptive, academically oriented, and to some extent not relevant to current educational demands, including, for instance, the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning; teaching for critical thinking; teaching for diversity and inclusion; and teaching for sustainable development. A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024) found that the lack of training readiness includes multicultural classrooms, learners' mental health, and the use of technology in learning. Namely, there are calls for more fluid and malleable curricula that are equipollent with the newest demands and requirements set by modern educational frameworks and the education of the talented generation of the twenty-first century.

5. Innovations and Future Directions in Teacher Education

Globalisation has greatly influenced teacher education to cater to the current learning needs in the 21st century. Some of the countries, for example, India and Nepal, are the following reforms for improving the quality, relevance, and buy of teacher preparation programmes, including technology, policy, and competency-based approaches.

6. India: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Reforms

With the implementation of its National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, India has signalled bright changes to rework the teacher education in the country. This paper also identified some of the significant changes, which include the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) – a four-year, multidisciplinary undergraduate degree that is said to ensconce subject and pedagogical content knowledge for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020). This will phase out the two-year B.ED courses by 2030 as the GOAL seeks to produce quality teachers in the future.

Another area of focus under the NEP 2020 is technology; among the key sectors to be impacted is the technological production. It supports AI, VR, and the use of online platforms in educating learners and increasing their performance and access to education (National Educational Technology Forum, 2022). Some of the current prominent and active platforms that offer educational content and educational technology teachers' training are DIKSHA, SWAYAM, etc (Mehta, 2023). Conversely, NEP 2020 has given an explicit call for multilingualism and local content production, where being a teacher involves leveraging technology to generate content in various Indian languages (Joshi, 2023). The National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) framework was developed to facilitate the integrated working of different digital learning systems (National Institution of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, 2022).

8. Nepal: Competency-Based Teacher Training:

Teacher education in Nepal has also recently started the process of reforms based on competency frameworks. The National Centre for Educational Development, or NCED, has set some competency standards for teachers that must meet certain qualifications that must be displayed depending on their phase of training (NCED, 2023).

This shift not only involves concern about content knowledge but also the classroom

management skills, basic computer operations, integration of all student differences in the classroom, and professionalism development (Adhikari, 2023). Teachers are being evaluated using certain criteria so that the results can be made accountable and compared to the national standards in education.

E-learning is also important: several MoUs with international organisations have ensured the introduction of E-Paath (interactivity with digital lessons) and E-Pustakalaya (digital libraries) with complementary formal teachers' training to empower them with knowledge on how to use the latter in classroom learning (OLE Nepal, 2023).

7. Technology Integration in Teacher Education

Both the countries of India and Nepal are highly focused on teaching professionalism and teacher knowledge, therefore contributing significant amounts of resources to the digitalization of teacher education. In India, the NETF is involved in the research and development of educational technologies so that teachers remain abreast with new technologies (National Educational Technology Forum, 2022). Other efforts in Nepal, specifically by OLE Nepal, have shown possibilities of integrating teaching aid with other conventional methods, especially in the hard-to-reach schools in rural areas (Sharma, 2023). Distance education, autonomous education, in addition to MOOCs and blended learning, are relatively growing popular in both countries, thereby increasing the outreach of education.

9. Conclusion:

Teachers and especially pre-service teachers themselves are considered as one of the most important determinants of the overall effectiveness of the national education systems and the quality of education. Drawing from the historical process of the two countries, teacher education programmes in both India and Nepal have gone through numerous changes, contingent on socio-economic development and educational requirements based on the four pillars of Millennium Development Goals. Large-scale policy interventions like India's NEP 2020 and competency-based training, and a focus on competency in the context of Nepal, also depict the significant moves made in terms of training the competent, equitable, and context-sensitive teachers of the 21st-century classrooms. However, some issues that require

attention now and in the future include: inequalities, quality variations, infrastructure, and outdated knowledge and skills in teaching and learning facilities, and a disconnect between what is taught in the classroom and what is practised. Still, innovations like the use of digital technologies, working under professional development and constructivism, and flexible learning offer significant opportunities whereby the mentioned gaps may be addressed. To create a preparation for the future education workforce, both countries have a task to focus on the following areas as a further step in development: advancement of teacher education institutions, curriculum reform with the focus on competencies for the 21st century, and development of teaching for cultural relevance. The views of government policymakers, teacher educators, and the communities shall play a major role in ensuring that teacher education becomes a means of transforming society as well as being a noble profession to emulate.

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