



## Technical developments in teacher education

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### Abstract

Owners of Self-financing Institutions invest huge amount of money on building and other infrastructural facilities. Recovery of the investment is slow as per the revenues. Long term recognition by NCTE and affiliation by university are uncertain in many cases. This prompts the owners to recover the investment, as early as possible. Some of the owners resort to commercialisation at the cost of institutional reputation and training effectiveness. These dramatic challenges pose serious questions for higher education, and particularly professional education, urging educational planners to rethink the way education is to be perceived and managed.

**Keywords:** teacher education, technical development, NCTE, MHRD, UGC, NCERT, NAAC, MEA

### Introduction

The focus on the quality of higher education has necessitated the need for educational institutions to become a knowledge enterprise that has to operate in a rapidly changing environment of globalisation of trade, global revolution in information and technology, and conflicting demands of industry and institutions growing unemployment rates, need for well trained professionals, high running cost of universities and professional colleges and a new global market for higher education. The changes in global environment thus open up challenges of globalisation of economy, knowledge, society and demand for higher education both in terms of quality and quantity. This is going to further escalate because of higher ambitions of parents, young boys and girls and also more sophisticated manpower requirements of the changing market trends.

### Abstraction: A natural evolution

In view of the tremendous pressure on total educational knowledge enterprise for higher and professional education in particular, privatisation is not an option but a natural evolution. The earlier system, where the state and charitable institutions came forward to open new professional colleges, is obviously unable to cope with the rising demands of a high profile professional education. The infrastructural, managerial and financial requirements coupled with a high yielding entrepreneurship has made the private sector to take a direct plunge into the educational enterprise, may be the process is still in its infancy. However, a tremendous beginning has already been made and the forces of demand and supply will sooner or later bring the required semblance to the system.

A look at the possible contribution, that privatization can make to higher education enterprise as a whole, may generate a lot of hope for the future of higher and professional education. However, a closer look at 'what is' as different from 'what should be', spells doom -the future of higher education seems bleak. Some of the major concerns of defective and/or ineffective privatisation in higher education, Teacher Education and other professional courses such as adverse effects on quality of education, withdrawal of government and increasing commercialisation in higher education may be discussed.

### Forces to push development

Liberalisation at the global level implies entry of private enterprise into the public sector economy. It subsumes commercialisation as a legitimate component to earn profit, though seemingly limited. Unfortunately, however, in our country there is a fast diversion towards commercialisation in higher education as a result of several forces working for it. Some of these are:

**Economic value:** Among all the human values in the materialistic world of today, the economic value is becoming predominant in one's life. This drives an individual or a group of individuals into entrepreneurship and activities that would excel others in pursuit of economic achievements. It is not limited to trade business sector; it has also entered into other social welfare sectors such as health, education, etc. The economic value naturally leads to commercialisation.

**Social obsessions:** Individuals wish to get name and fame in the society. Some persons contribute to the social cause human welfare including education and health. Philanthropists have set up education institutions, may be without any commercial motive. But this is also now getting vitiated by financial gains even through social welfare ventures. Commercialisation has taken over the earlier social service motivation to money making motive.

**Political abstraction:** Some of our law makers are also motivated to enter in this area which they feel would not only lead to more financial gains but also stability in their own careers

**Psychological manner:** Some individuals develop strong positive attitude towards gainful economic activities. They have urged to earn huge wealth and assets. This money oriented life style drives people to engage in commercialisation in their respective field of work.

**Culture of corruption:** In the very recent years, there have been several quick changes in our cultural outlook. Social responsibility towards society has deteriorated and surrendered itself to profit earning only. The other cultural changes include trends such as sacrifice to selfishness, social welfare to personal gains, fair means to any means, ethical behaviour to apathy and moral values to no morality.

#### **Development in teacher education**

There has been a phenomenal expansion of higher education in general and Teacher Education in particular during the post-independence period, so much so that during the last decade, government found it difficult to finance the setting up of new colleges. Therefore, universities and colleges are being encouraged to start new courses generating their own resources, thus ushering in an era of self-financing schemes for starting useful and professional courses in Teacher Education which have gained special momentum today. Most of the operating revenues for self-financing courses and institutions come mainly from tuition and other types of fee. Some educational thinkers oppose the self-financing aspect of Teacher Education because of the chances of ills of commercialisation and corruption creeping into this system. There are reports about the deteriorating quality of education in some of the privately run institutions, which is alarming

#### **Who comes forward?**

It is intriguing to note the type of people who come forward to start Teacher Education courses or institutions. A short survey, done in July 2002, of forty Self-financing Institutions, which set up their colleges of Teacher Education and got NCTE's recognition during 2001-2002 and are located in NCT of Delhi (13) or its neighbouring districts (27) of Uttar Pradesh, reveals that the owners of Self-financing Institutions come from the occupational groups such as advocates, teachers, politicians, businessmen (timber merchant, scrap and hardware dealers), industrialists (steel, brick kiln), builders/colonizers, etc. Some of the owners of the existing institutions who have started B Ed courses include those who are already in the trade and are running degree courses in subjects like the computer science,

management and technology. There is yet another group of owners who had been running public schools for the last 15 years who are also now running the B.Ed./ETE programmes in their schools for the last three years.

#### **Spectrum of development**

Information based on personal communication in confidence with the stakeholders-parents, teachers and students reveal that the malpractices of commercialisation cover a wide spectrum. These include the following:

- Auctioning of NRI seats
- Selling of payment seats
- Charging hostel and mess fee higher than market rates
- Charging penalty fee for absenteeism
- Overpricing the publications--prospectus, magazines
- Charging registration and admission fee extra
- Getting donations on an 'as you please' basis

#### **The stakeholders**

The stakeholders who are victims of commercialisation in Teacher Education need to change their attitude and outlook. This would go a long way in curbing the commercialisation.

Teachers: In years to come, the prospective employers will substantially increase in the private sector because the government is suffering from financial crunch. The employers' worry is about the quality of training and the competency of the teachers coming out of these institutions. They would employ those teachers who have the skill and competency to perform well in the school system. Non-performers will not be allowed to continue unlike government schools only on the basis of degree in education

Students are the main stakeholders. Those who are desperately seeking admission to B Ed, ETENTT are ready to bear the brunt of commercialisation and even corruption. The students will have to stand against the malpractices of institutions, if they find that they are not getting the worth of the money being paid. This would be self-forcing the curb on commercialisation.

Mostly the guardians/parents of the girls are found willing to pay premium to seek a seat in an institution even without bothering much about the quality They want their wards to get the B Ed degree for better matrimonial prospects and future security against bad times. They have to overcome such compulsions for the sake of better quality training in reputed institutions and ensure better placement chances. Teachers working in many Self-financing Institutions are underpaid. Some are terminated at the end of the session. Thus there is always uncertainty in their career.

#### **Strong measures to curb commercialisation**

Commercialization of Teacher Education is malice. Being an ingredient of self-financing education in developing countries, it cannot be totally eliminated, though it can be minimised and curbed to some extent. Therefore, some suitable bold measures will have to be taken to curb the commercialisation in Teacher Education. Hence the cruciality of roles of NCTE, NAAC, affiliating universities and the concerned state governments, and the need for immediate implementation of the measures.

#### **State level manpower planning in teacher education**

Regular surveys have to be undertaken by the state planning

department to ascertain the manpower requirements of teachers in various subjects at different levels in the state. Based on this data, the need for opening new Teacher Education institutions or offering new courses in the existing institutions should be the decisive criteria for issuing 'No Objection Certificate' to an individual or a society/trust.

#### **NCTE with watchdog panel**

MHRD may set up a panel of eminent teachers and education experts to monitor the appointment of inspectors who would inspect the colleges of Teacher Education for recognition. Since complaints have been received against some of the inspecting teams giving a clear picture about the institutions visited, the panel would also examine the process to the grant of recognition to private self-financing colleges of education by NCTE. It is somewhat like the PIL based action.

#### **Stakeholders to come forward**

Stakeholders-students, parents, teachers and owners of the colleges of education have to come forward and give information, if any, about institutions which have been granted approval by NCTE where norms and standards as prescribed by the Council have not been followed. Any kind of commercialisation being done anywhere in such institutions should be reported in specific terms so that the Council can get the matter enquired and take appropriate action.

#### **Grading institutions for their quality**

Desirous students are keen to join in any institution wherever admission is offered by the university irrespective of the quality (about which students are not aware). Some of the institutions often turn out to be worthless. As a result, students investing between Rupees fifty thousand to more than a lakh might end up with a degree/diploma that has purely matrimonial advantage with marginal or no market value. There is need to carry out extensive assessment and grading all the institutions across the country. This would ensure that institutions big or small, old or new do not take undue advantage of the students who are in desperate need of getting teacher training, particularly girls/women.

In fact, approval of NCTE for giving recognized status to an institution for starting a Teacher Education programme is like an ISI mark ensuring the quality of both the institution and its products-trained teachers.

#### **Role of affiliating universities**

The reputation of an affiliating university is on stake if the Self-financing Institutions of Teacher Education do not perform well, rather engage in malpractices. Merely framing of regulations will not ensure quality. The university has to introduce some mechanism to monitor and ensure that the curriculum transaction is done effectively, students attendance and achievement are ensured, evaluation system is enforced rigorously. The reputation of a university goes a long way in getting placement of the B Ed students specially in the private sector schools.

I suggest certain specific role of affiliating universities for their consideration.

- The affiliating university may constitute a management committee of Self-financing Institutions to represent

community leaders, experts, parents, social workers and prospective employers for transparency and accountability.

- It should be the joint responsibility of the university and the management to assure quality of training.
- Alumni involvement in educational management and instructional programmes will ensure better quality and will reduce commercialisation.
- Individuals may find it difficult to invest for the entire cost of setting up a new college. Therefore, external financial support mobilisation has to be tried by the institution. In this context, community welfare societies, NGOs, voluntary organisations, religious trusts can be encouraged to come forward to successfully run Teacher Education institutions without indulging in commercialisation.
- University should fill all the payment seats from their entrance test merit list. The practice of allowing institutions to fill the vacant seats directly at the last moment promotes commercialisation.
- The NRI seats are being filled purely on commercial basis. Stringent measures should be taken by the government and the universities to check this practice. Rules to fill NRI seats should be framed by MHRD/MEA and strictly followed. In fact, MEA should fill these seats to eliminate commercialisation in Teacher Education.

#### **Corporate sector involvement**

Involvement of corporate houses in running Teacher Education institution may prove better. In fact the corporate sector has taken enough from society and should give it back something in return. Being much more organised, they can be quite effective in implementing the schemes with a positive outlook.

#### **Conclusion**

Since these are going to be assessed on a number of criteria such as self-appraisal report which is validated by peers visiting the institutions and finally graded by NAAC, the students seeking admission to teacher training courses would have a clear idea of the quality of the institution that they are getting into. In order to curb development, the Teacher Education institutions will have to be graded for their quality performance and product. In this direction, the NCTE and the NAAC have recently entered into MOU for executing the process of assessment and accreditation of all Teacher Education institutions coming under the provision of the NCTE Act. This is a welcome decision. Now-a-days these institutions are coming up in large numbers and B Ed course is becoming more popular because of the focus on universalization of elementary education, education for all, and right to education which will promote job opportunities for teachers. There is a danger that the self-financing colleges may attract students having le ability but more pay ability.

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