# **Historical Perspective of Teacher Education in India**

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## **Abstract**

India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Teacher and teacher educators are always curious to know about the history of teacher education in India. Teacher education in India has a strong historical perspective and a result of different outside invaders, social reformers and dominant educationist. It starts molding from the ancient education system and till the present system of education taking shape according to the global and local needs of the Indian society. History of teacher education in India can be classified into two parts, one part was teacher education during pre independent India which starts from ancient education system of education till India got independent and other part was teacher education during post independent India that is after independent till present year. Paper also highlights the major milestones in the history of teacher education and provides a better and broader perspective about teacher education in India.

**KEYWORDS**: Teacher Education, Ancient Education, Buddhist Education, Muslim Education, British Education and Knowledge commission

## TEACHER EDUCATION DURING PRE INDEPENDENT INDIA

The Ancient system of Education, Buddhist system of Education, Muslim system of Education and British system of Education plays a vital role in the development of teacher education during pre independent India is discussed as follows.

## **Ancient Education System**

In the ancient system of education pre Vedic education had a very prominent place in society. It was being considered as pious and important for society. In the eyes of Aryans, education was the only means to acquire, prosperity in the field of physical, mental, spiritual and social developments. In the words of Dr. P. N. Prabhu, —Education in ancient India was free from any external control like that of the state and government or any party politics. It was the kings duties to see that learned Pundits, pursued their studies and performed their duty of imparting knowledge without interference from any source what so ever'.

In the post Vedic period Varna came to be determined by birth. Consequently the whole society was divided in to four varnas – Brahman, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, & Shudra. And mainly the education part was taken care by brahmans. In this connection Professor R.P.Singh (1970) writes that 'One thing is however evident that there were certain Brahmin families where teaching was a hereditary profession.... There is no evidence to hold the view that teacher training existed in the formal sense, known to us.' In post Vedic period caste system began to be established on ancestral

basis and so naturally various social groups sprang up. Education was largely religious and Brahmins were responsible for imparting education. This period was known as Bhramanic age or Upanishadic period. It was believed that no knowledge could come without the assistance from the Guru. In other words, it was believed that attainment of salvation was not possible without the help of Guru. While on the one hand the domination of Bhramans was on the increase on the other hand 'Vaishyas' and 'Shudras' were falling down in social status. The system affected the education system in general.

It was pupil centered education. No single method of instruction was adopted, though recitation by the pupil followed by explanation by the teacher was generally followed. Besides question – Answer, Debate and Discussion, Storytelling was also adopted according to need. There was no classroom teaching. However monitorial system was prevalent and senior pupils were appointed to teach juniors. The methods of teaching generally practiced during Vedic period were mainly Maukhik (oral and other method was based on Chintan (thinking or reflection). This whole system of education used to be oral and banned the individual method of its transmission through writing. This system continued in later Vedic age when the rest of the three Vedas - Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda-and other Vedic literature also came into existence.

The method of receiving education was generally in the form of recitation. The education was individualised and it has always upheld an intimate relationship between teacher and the taught. A well-educated teacher educate his pupil and according to Shatpat Brahmana, held his student "within him as in a womb, impregnates him with his spirit, and delivers him in a new birth". Such a pupil then became a 'dvija' or 'twice born' in a new existence. Such teachers were expected to possess piety, religiousness, illuminated vision, high character, self-confidence, and sound judgment, awareness of his social duties, efficiency and self-restraint. Aitareya (1695), a teacher in Rig Vedic age was the one who was first instructed by his own master, became an excellent and successful student, further enhanced his bank of knowledge and was finally acknowledged by the learned society around him as fit to become a teacher.

Gradually several types of institutions known as 'Śākhās', 'Charaṇas ','Parishads', 'Kulas', 'gotras' and the like developed to enhance learners education. To conserve knowledge they have assemblies, academies, literary or religious guilds, serving as schools of Vedic learning. In later Vedic period teachers were better equipped to enhanced and develop their education. In Sutra age also, institutions like Teachers' Training College of the modern time were unheard of but in 'Āpastamba Grihya Sutra', it is mentioned that there were persons teaching each other mutually different redactions of the Vedas. No formal or further training was deemed necessary for them in order to qualify for the teaching profession. Dr A.S Altekar (1695) believes that the reason for this was not far to seek. Also evidence of Womens' education was Traced in this period as the prominence of spiritual knowledge of King Ajatashetru of Kashi was recognized and honored by Gargeya and Balaki Brahmins Acharyas.

The ultimate aim of education in ancient Indian was not knowledge as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond, but for complete realization of self for liberation of the soul from the chains of life both present and future. The status of teacher was very high. They commanded full respect and honoured even by kings. Teachers were

regarded as Brahma Vishnu and Mahesha. Teachers on their part, behaved like true parents and treated their pupils will full compassion. The teacher - taught relationship was cordial and conducive. Every student while residing in the Gurukul serves his teacher compulsorily. Mohanty (2003) remarks in this period the teacher was an embodiment of good qualities, a fountain of knowledge and an abode of spirituality. The selection and preparation of a teacher was done much rigour.

### **Buddhist Education System**

In the 5th B.C. by Lord Buddha education system came into the existence known as Buddhist education system. It was most important system of education in medieval period. In this period Brahman teachers deprived the common people of their right to education. The emergence of Buddhism rented the people the freedom to obtain education and to practice their religion themselves. This system of education was monastic. In monasteries and Vihara teaching is taken care by monk or 'Bhikkhu'. They were placed under the in charge ship of two superiors, qualified by learning, character and standing, who were called the 'Upadhyaya' and 'Āchārya'. 'Upādhāya' was entrusted with the duty of instructing the young Bhikkhu in the sacred texts and doctrines, while the 'Āchārya' assumed the responsibility for his conduct and discipline. The teacher himself must spend at least ten years as a monk and necessarily must have the purity of character, purity of thoughts and generosity. Both the teacher and student were responsible to the monastery. Both were following the \_simple living and high thinking principle. Their lives were full of purity, nobleness, dutifulness and humanity. They follow Four Nobel Truths- 1. All life knows suffering. 2. The cause of suffering is ignorance and clinging. 3. There is a way to end suffering. 4. This is the way to end suffering. Preceptor

The students have to be leaving his home and reside with the teacher known as 'Pabbajja'. According to this ceremony the student after being admitted to a monastery had to renounce all his worldly and family relationship. An individual belonging to any caste could be admitted to a monastery and after being admitted he did not belong to any caste.

The study of religious books was most important. Sutta, Vinaya and Dhamma Pitak were the main subjects prescribed for study. Attendance of every monk was compulsory. The medium of Buddhist education was the common language of the people.

Women education during Buddhist period negligible, as the women folk was despised in the sense that Lord Buddha had regarded them as the source of all evils. So he had advised during his life time not to admit women in monasteries, but after some time due to the insistence of his dear pupil Anand, Buddha had permitted in the Vihars with many restriction and reservations.

#### **Muslim Education System**

After the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, Mohammad Gori laid the foundation of Muslim rule in Northern India. Many kings ruled over India during the Muslim period. Mohammad Saheb and his trained four of his disciples took the responsibility of the propagation of Islam. They were known as 'Sahabas' and can be considered as the first teachers of Islam whose teachings were mainly religious. The aim of education was to produce religious men and to bring out the latent faculties of the students, to discipline the forces of their intellect and to equip them with all that was essential for

their moral and material development. Education was regard as a preparation for life. And the teacher who helped his pupils to achieve this end, he held a very respected position in the society. Like ancient India, medieval India also presents no example of any formal college for teachers' training. But as learning resources, Tiwari, S. (2007) remarks that they have libraries as a rich source of teacher education. The Imperial Library of Bijapur, a small amount of which still exists in Asari Mahal, had a rich collection of such books which could be highly interesting for the scholars of Arabic and Persian literature.

In this period to spread education emperor Akbar helped a great number of scholars and teachers to earn renown. Also several books of repute were also written during Akbar's time which served the purpose of teacher education. Books like 'Akbar Namah' and 'Ain-i-Akbari' by Abul Fazl etc. are some of the most marvellous masterpieces of Persian literature produced in Muslim India during the reign of Akbar. Those scholars further enhanced their knowledge by a large number of Sanskrit and Hindi books which were translated into Persian under the imperial sponsorship. According to Krishnalal Ray (1984) the Imperial Library of Akbar and his successors flowed richly with the books on history, philosophy, science and religion. Any scholar who had access to this library must have had the rare opportunity of broadening his insights. So the teachers in medieval India although did not have any full-fledged college to educate themselves, still had several other means to amass the wealth of knowledge. One system which continued from ancient period till the medieval times was the 'Monitorial System'. During this period the students was given severe corporal punishment on the charge of indiscipline. Again proper importance was not given to woman education.

Before the in the pre British period of education in India, there were four methods of education at work: viz., the instruction given by the Brahmins to their disciples; the tols, or seats of Sanskrit learning; the maktabs and madrassas for mohamedans; and schools in almost every village of note. And indigenous system of education like ashram schools, tols, maktabs, madarssas were running education institutions with full responsibilities. Those who earned repute and were acknowledged by the society around them as the masters of their subject turned into teachers. But so long as the education flourished in the country, no need of any change was felt, till the arrival of East India Company and subsequently the British Government. Till his period no teacher education program was exist. The teachers had a clear idea of their role and responsibilities and the methods to be pursued in teaching.

### BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM BEFORE INDEPENDENT INDIA

The history of teacher education in India started with the arrival of European missionaries in the Indian sub continent. Before the arrival of the Britishers in India, the European Missionaries first start scholars and later initiated teacher education institutions. First institution for training teachers was started by Danish Missionaries under the inspiring leadership of Ziegenbalg and his colleagues at Tranquebar in 1716. A normal training school generally for the primary or elementary grades was established by William Carey at Serampur (West Bengal) in 1802.

It is evident from the letter published in 1832 in Affairs of the East India Company, Vol. 1. India possessed educational institutions of a nature which did not exist in the countries of the west. That even in the beginning of the nineteenth Century, India in

the matter of education was in advance of the European Countries is proved by the fact of her teaching those countries a new system of tuition, to which attention was drawn by the court of Directors in their letter to the Governor General in council in Bengal Dated 3rd June 1814, very few in India Know that the system of mutual tuition:- which has been practiced by Indian school masters since time immemorial-has been borrowed by the Christian countries of the west from India. The man who first introduced it into Great Britain was a native of Scotland by the name of Dr. Andrew Bell. For some time this monitorial system was the basis of teacher education program and in England it was known as Bell-Lankaster system.

The first normal school was started under the management and with the finances of the British government in Madras in June 1826. In the starting it was prepared teachers for district schools. Later, this normal school developed into the Presidency College. Bombay started a normal school in the year 1847 in the Elphinstone Institution and Calcutta also started a normal school in the year 1849.

In the 1834 Lord Macaulay's came in India as a Law member of the council of government –General on June 13, 1834 during the violent Oriental and accidental controversy. In the Minutes of India Education his major highlights were as, 'Literature' means English literature and not Sanskrit or Arabic or Persian literature, emphasis that medium of instruction should be English and proposed for preparing Code in English. In this to improve Indian educational life British conducted a survey to know the real positions of education in India. A survey was conducted in madras, Bombay and Bengal only. And the conclusion was that each village had a primary school, corporal punishment was observed, students follow time table, condition of teachers was bad and teachers were ill-educated and ill-paid.

Woods Despatch (1854) was the first Milestone of Indian education because it had suggested the various ways and means for the development of Indian education. It was commonly known 'the intellectual Charter of India or as Wood Despatch for Sir Charles Wood was then president of the Board of control of the East India Company. Wood's Despatch 1854, on education brought out the need for teachers' training, as it desired" to see the establishment of training schools and classes for masters in each presidency in India." The grant- in-aid rules framed made a provision of salary grant to those schools only having teachers who had obtained a certificate of teacher training. These steps ensured a great impetus to the training of the teachers. The establishment of the presidency Universities Mr. Charles Hay Cameron plan was to establish the university in Bengal on the model of that of London. This was become the model university for providing Higher education throughout the country. Later in the year 1857, the year of the outbreak of the Indian revolution and the last year of the existence of the East India Company that the Legistrative Act was passed sanctioning the established of the universities at Calcutta, Bombay and madras and the legacy of the British was established in Indian education system.

Indian Education Commission (1882) was considered as second milestone of Indian education. It gave its valuable suggestions in the field of education at various stages. The objective of the Indian University Commission (1892) was to reorganize and strengthen the then existing system. Almost all the aspects of education were covered by it. The Commission laid emphasis on the establishment of a number of normal schools for secondary teachers' training throughout the country. It also recommended

that an examination in the principle and practice of teaching be instituted and only successful candidates should be employed as teachers in any secondary school government or aided. In the field of secondary teachers' training, the first institution was established in 1886 in Madras and was known as Government Normal School, Madras.

In 1889 Lord Curzon was Appointed Governer General of India. At this time the wave of nationalism was flowing fast. Some able and sacrificing social reformers were demanding National Education. They thought that only national Education could safeguard the culture, civilization, literature and language. A further step in Teachers' training was taken in 1904 with the passage of Government of India Resolution. The following principles were laid down to improve the teacher training in the country.

- 1. Men of ability and experience should be enlisted to provide adequate staff of well-trained members of the education service.
- 2. Importance to be given to the equipment of training colleges for secondary teachers.
- 3. Need was felt of practicing school to the attached to each college to correlate theory with practice of teaching.
- 4. There should be one-year course leading to a university degree or diploma for graduates. These courses should include both theoretical background along with practical bias. For other, there should be two-year course.
- 5. Training colleges should be linked with the schools, so that a teacher may not neglect the methods learnt in the college, when he or she accepts teaching as a profession.

The above policy was further supported in 1912 by the Government declaration stating that "Eventually under modern system of education no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that he was qualified to do so." Such principles had direct impact upon teacher training in India. The number of training institutions increased.

Calcutta University Commission (1917) this commission is also known as Sadler Commission. In 1919 the Sadler Commission presented its report and emphasized the role of university in the professional training of secondary school teachers and educational researches. It suggested that the training programme should not only make the trainee a component class-room teacher but also a good administrator.

Hartog Committee in 1929 extended the work initiated by Sadler Commission and gave valuable recommendations and suggested conferences and refresher courses for those teachers who were already in service in order to raise standard of school teachers. As a result, refreshes courses for teachers began to be organized, education departments were established in some universities and research degree in Education was started. Teachers' training institutions also started equipping and improving their laboratories and libraries. By all these measures teachers' training went on to being benefitted by many improvements. Working on the recommendations of the Sadler Commission thirteen out of eighteen universities set-up faculties of education. The lady Irwin College set-up in New Delhi. Andhra University stated a new degree The B.Ed in 1932. Bombay launched a post Graduate degree in M.Ed in 1936.

In 1937, M.K. Gandhi convened Wardha Educational Conference and propounded a new system of education popularly known as 'Basic Education'. Gandhiji felt the need of making teacher-training more practical and functional. He offered craft-centred education for child, correlated with life situations. With this, the emphasis in teacher-training now shifted to the type of education which was practical and based on the needs of the pupils and the community. This basic Education stated by Mahatma Gandhi leading to the training of teachers for basic schools. In 1938, a Basic Training College was set-up at Allahabad and the Vidyamandir Training school was started at Wardha in 1938.

The Abbott –Wood Report in 1937 came with very valuable suggestions about teacher education. It said, "The normal school should concern itself with the social way of education as well as with the technical how to teach." It was further suggested a refresher course for the teacher so theta he could get a wider experience. In 1941, there were 612 normal schools out of which 376 were for men and 236 for women. These schools provided one or two years' training. There were 25 training colleges for graduates.

In 1944 came the Sargent Report which also laid emphasis on teacher training programmes. It also stressed the need of refresher course for trained teachers to be organized at different intervals. It further suggested that the scale of salary of teachers should be increased in order to have able and efficient teachers. While in1906, hardly 29% teachers for High Schools, 37% for Middle Schools and 25% for Primary Schools were trained, in 1947 approximately 61.5% of Secondary and Primary Teachers were trained. After 1945, a separate Education Department was established under the Central Government. During 1937 to1947, the number of training schools and colleges and the expenditure on them increased considerably. In 1937 out of about one lakh secondary men teachers 43,000 were untrained. So, by 1947, teachertraining programme was quite comprehensive in India. At the secondary level, out of total 88,000 teachers, hardly 51% were trained. There were about 649 training colleges. Number of secondary level training colleges was 42 only with an intake capacity of 3000 teacher. These figure show that some growth had already taken place till 1947 but over all conditions still needed improvement as the needs of the country were fast expanding. P.L. Rawat (1970) has rightly remarked that on the whole we can conclude that during this period, the increase in training facilities was not adequate.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century an attempt was made to infuse education with a national spirit. Major highlights were, education under Indian control, banishing the feeling of Inferiority, education in Western knowledge and science, English language to be regarded as general subject and meeting inadequacy of vocational education.

#### TEACHER EDUCATION DURING POST INDEPENDENT INDIA

The problem of training of secondary school teachers was considered by University Education Commission, (1948) which observed that there was no difference in the theory courses offered in various teacher training colleges but there were differences in the practices followed. In 1950, the First Conference of Training Colleges in India was held at Baroda to discuss programmes and functions of training colleges. In this teacher training was given a new nomenclature and it became 'teacher education'.

After this conference on teacher education sudden increase in workshop, seminars and conferences was observed. Teacher education syllabi was revised, new areas of specialization was added and laid stress on enhancing practical work.

Another important event in the history of education during the first decade of independence was the report of the Secondary Education Commission, (1952-53) which grieved for the poor quality of teaching in schools. The commission made recommendations that graduation teacher training institution should be recognised and affiliated to the universities which should grand degree. The trainees must receive training in one or more extracurricular activities, short intensive courses in special subjects, workshop and professional conferences. Therefore in the First Five- Year Plan (1951-56) emphasis remained on expansion of teacher training programmes. According many extension services centres were opened. Need for improvement was felt in secondary schools teachers and All India Council for Secondary Education was established in 1955. As result of this twenty four (24) extension centres were started. Similarly, Second Five- Year Plan (1956-61) and Third Five- Year Plan (1956-61) also emphasis on increasing the number and qualitative improvement of teacher training institutions.

The Review Committee on Education (1960) made major recommendations about post-graduate studies in education and research, education of administrators and qualifications of teacher educators. Most of these recommendations were accepted and implemented. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) established in 1961 to improve quality of school education. NCERT also established four Regional Colleges of Education, one each at Ajmer, Bhubaneswar, Bhopal and Mysore. A centre of Advanced Studies in Education was set up by the University Grant Commission (UGC) in the Faculty of Education and Psychology in the M.S. University of Baroda. The Seventh Conference of All India Association of Teacher's Colleges' was held in 1964 and recommended the setting –up of a state Council of Teacher Education.

Another report of the Education Commission (1964-66) also known as Kothari Commission (1964-66) observed that a sound programme of professional education for teachers was essential for the qualitative improvement in education..... at all levels of teacher education to meet the requirements of the national system of education. After receiving the report this commission the government of India set up The National Policy Statement on Education (1968) as regards status, emoluments and education to teachers visualized as follows: (a) Of all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, teacher is undoubtedly the most important. It is on his personal qualities and character, his educational qualifications and professional competence that the success of all educational endeavours must ultimately depend. Teacher, must therefore, be accorded an honoured place in society. Their emoluments and other service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory having regards to their qualifications and responsibilities. (b) Academic freedom of teachers to pursue and publish independent studies and research and to speak and write about significant national and international issues. (c) Teacher education, particularly in- service education, should receive due emphasis. Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education was taken up in 1987 to create a strong institutional infrastructure and academic and technical resource base

for orientation, training and continuous up gradation of knowledge, competence and pedagogical skills of elementary school teachers in the country.

In seventies new pattern of education, i.e, 10+2+3 was implement. National Council of teacher Education (NCTE) was set-up in 1973 as advisory body for teacher education. It brought out its curriculum framework in 1978. During this period, the National Commission on Teachers (1983) studied in depth the problems of teacher education and the status of teachers in society. Its main recommendations were directed at enhancing the period of training, change in selection procedure of teachers, making the pedagogy of teacher education meaningful leading to enrichment of the theory courses and practical work.

The National Policy of Education (NPE), in 1986 and its Programme of Action made a strong case for improving the quality of teacher education because it was the prerequisite to improve the quality of school education. Some training schools were upgraded to District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS) and some training colleges were upgraded to Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASES).

After an in-depth study of the question of unsatisfactory quality of learning, Yashpal Committee, (1993) noted that inadequate programme of teacher preparation leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in school. Therefore, the B.Ed. programme should offer the possibility of specialization in secondary or elementary or nursery education. The duration of the programme should either be one year after graduation or four years after higher secondary. The contents of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing need of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self learning and independent thinking. The teacher education programme, being a professional course has to be rigorous, thorough and intensive programme. By the year 1998-99 there were 45 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS), 76 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and 34 Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASES). The statutory NCTE further came out with a Curriculum Framework (1998) to provide guidelines in respect of the content and methodology of teacher education. As a result of this, many universities and state governments revised the courses of teacher education. This is a comprehensive document that deals with almost all aspects of teacher education including its context, concerns and also the social philosophy of teacher education in Indian society which contemplates a synthesis between unity and diversity, freedom and compulsion, social planning and individual initiative.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 for school education places different demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education. Teacher quality is a function of several factors: teacher's status, remuneration and conditions of work, teacher's academic and professional education. National Curriculum Framework for teacher education (NCFTE): Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher, 2010 highlighted that it is obvious that the education and training of a prospective teacher will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by teacher educators who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. Not only that to improve the quality of teacher education program the National Council for Teacher Education

(NCTE) took up a number of initiatives during the last decade. It joined hands with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to foster quality assurance and sustenance.

National Knowledge Commission, 2007 has made considerable progress in school education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure and universal access and enrolment in schools. The Commission has observed that teachers are the single most important element of the school system, and the country is already facing a severe shortage of qualified and motivated school teachers at different levels. It is urgent to restore the dignity of school teaching as a profession and provide more incentives for qualified and committed teachers. The training of teachers is a major area of concern at present, since both pre-service and in-service training of school teachers is extremely inadequate and also poorly managed in most states. Pre-service training needs to be improved and differently regulated in both public and private institutions, while systems for in-service training require expansion and major reform that allows for greater flexibility. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country. To enhance quality of school education Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) for Teachers and Principal Eligibility Test (PET) are conducted at both level at state and at centre level. For teacher education UGC already conducted National Eligibility Test (NET), at state level State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) was already there.

#### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude the expansion of teacher education was observed in terms of quantity and quality aspects. All the above described commissions and report emphasis on the quality of teachers in general and teacher educator in specific. It was always a challenging task to make it more practical and relevant in the present context.

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