

Teacher Education for Social and Educational Equity

¹Gunjan ✉ ²Prof (Dr.) Rakesh Kumar Azad ✉

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Swami Shukdevanand College, Shahjahanpur, U.P., India.

²Principal, Swami Shukdevanand College, Shahjahanpur, U.P., India.

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Teacher Education plays important role in promoting social and educational equity in Indian society. Teacher Education is a range of programs which are related to the development of teachers' proficiency and competence to enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements and challenges of the profession. Teacher Education for social and educational equity includes tools for creating highly effective classrooms that promote a respectful climate for all, knowledge of diverse needs, and how to implement strategies, such as differentiated instruction and collaborative learning, in those classrooms. This training will be instrumental in securing equity in education, among all the pupils to which learning is provided, but especially among marginalized and vulnerable pupils. Teachers are adequately trained to facilitate cooperation, interdependence and interculturalism among students to improve social integration and eliminate stigma. Teacher Education promotes the realization of educational equity, justice and the universal right to education, as a liaison between inclusive policy making and its implementation in the classroom. It helps teachers to support those pupils who have typically not been supported by the teacher because of disabilities, ethnicity or socio-economic issues and the like. Through training teachers can identify and value the variety of classroom skills, background and learning styles. They know how to recognize the social, emotional, behaviour, physical and learning needs and strengths of all children and can offer support to children accordingly. Emphasis is placed on the creation of a safe and supportive learning environment that helps all students feel that they belong. This includes fostering favourable interactions among students and teachers, and good group dynamics.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Social and Educational Equity, Marginalized Societies.

Introduction

Education is the formal, systematic process of imparting knowledge, values and skills, typically in institutions like schools and colleges. To provide deliberate and structured learning in specific subject areas. It includes formal schooling, informal experience and personal development with the goals of fostering personal growth, critical thinking and preparation for societal participation. It is a continuous process from birth to death, encompassing all of life's experiences and shapes a person's character, behaviour and attitudes through the influence of the environment. Its goal is the fullest possible growth of human abilities and the development of a harmonious personality. It is not confined to school or college, but education is addition in the skill and knowledge through any sources. It is the

process of receiving or acquiring systematized knowledge.

Education is very significant as it forms our perspectives and ideas. One of the most important purposes of education is to enable individuals to think critically (think carefully about information; pose questions, generalize, and interpret information), and not take on opinions or beliefs without first considering them. India is blessed with outstanding educationists, both before and after independence. Teacher is an important figure in the shaping of young minds in the country. Education has an important function in the promotion of national integration which helps people in a country to develop into one united society. Education plays several important roles in national integration, these include, national unity/due to its role in social

cohesion, the development of national identity, reducing socioeconomic inequalities, national language, critical thinking and problem solving, ethics and moral education and cultural exchange and understanding in general and formation of the common direction.

A teacher is a professional who helps students acquire knowledge, skills, and values through the practice of teaching. They also provide guidance on decisions and help develop personal qualities like self-discipline. They serve as role models for their students, guiding them to become good human beings and upholding integrity. Teachers are the cornerstones for the development of a nation built for the future because they transfer knowledge and values and develop the skills of critical thinking for citizens of tomorrow. They permeate academics and contribute to molding the character of the students in order that they become useful citizens in the society at large and be contributing members of the national unity. Teachers foster innovative ideas and critical thinking, fueling the development and growth of a successful and knowledgeable country.

Nation building is a cultural projection and focus of the national culture and the collective identity which is made an intentional effort with high intensity and with direction. The true building block of a nation is its citizens and teachers are the ones who are building the nation while the committed teacher teachers are building the teachers. As Chanakya aptly remarked, "Teachers are the architects of the nation." Thus, the success and progress of any country depends on the

availability of competent citizens who are teachers and the teachers should come from a well-developed teacher education system and committed trainer/educators. Finally, teachers are critical to nation building. It can be seen from a different perspective that education contributes to the harmony of society by providing value-based education. Social harmony is the mutual coexistence of persons and neighborhoods in society without any conflict, even in cases of different religious, caste, class, language, gender or geographical background etc. Education is a vital tool for building tolerance, mutual respect and inclusiveness in a nation like India, where social differences have frequently been a source of conflict and discrimination. It helps the younger generation grasp and value the dignity of the other, the common values of humankind and to be included in the rule of law framework of a pluralistic society. Social inclusion and diversity in the education have been a major concern in Indian context and the policies like the National Education Policy 2020 have been the support.

Curriculum For Teacher Education and Inclusive Practices

As per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the overall vision of curriculum in teacher education in India shares a foundational stage while providing a holistic and integrated approach towards it, inclusive practice is included in the curriculum. It includes a four-year integrated B.Ed. program that covers pedagogical skills, understanding of diversity, and practical strategies for generating inclusive learning environments.

Inclusive practices are no longer an optional add-on but are integrated into the core curriculum, preparing teachers to handle diverse needs in a single classroom. It includes foundations in Sociology, Psychology and Indian values alongside modern pedagogy, to create well rounded teachers who can address the Social and Psychological needs of learners. It encourages teachers to critically engage with their own practices, textbooks and syllabi viewing them as co-creators of knowledge alongside their students. It includes modules to help teachers identify the specific learning needs of students with different disabilities and apply appropriate inclusive strategies.

Teachers are trained to recognize and appreciate the diversity of learners, including differences in physical abilities, mental capacity and learning styles. They are taught to promote the social inclusion of children with diverse needs and create a safe and supportive learning environment for all. The Curriculum emphasizes collaboration with families and other stakeholders, as well as leadership and advocacy for inclusion within the school and community. National council for Teacher Education (NCTE): Responsible for setting standards and regulations for teacher education programs, including the new integrated B.Ed. curriculum. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023: Provides the foundational framework that guides curriculum and pedagogical changes across all stages of education, supporting the move towards a more inclusive and holistic system.

Inclusive education is the “accessibility of education” for children with SEN, depending on the concept of accepting

the individuality of every student, inclusive education is such an organization of the learning process, through which all children, regardless of their physical, mental, intellectual and other features, access education within the general education system and study together with their peers without disability in the same educational institution. Inclusion is, first of all, a social and pedagogical value as a new paradigm of education organization and not about changing and correcting a particular child but adapting the pedagogical and social context to the capabilities and needs of this child. Work to create conditions for inclusive education is more likely to consider differences rather than inclusive equal rights and opportunities; a large proportion of citizens and state structures are focussed on this.

Teacher Education for the Population Living in Backwards and Rural Areas

Teacher education for rural and backward areas requires specialized training that addresses the unique challenges of these contexts, focusing on pedagogical skills, community-based learning and digital literacy. Teacher education for backward and rural areas should focus on inclusive, place-based, and technology-enabled models that address local needs and challenges like limited resources and infrastructure. Teacher education for rural and backward areas should focus on preparing educators with context-specific skills, such as using local resources, updating the curriculum to include relevant subjects like agriculture, and implementing inclusive teaching methodologies. Education

must shift from generic approaches to training that is specified to the rural context. This includes preparing teachers to work with students impacted by poverty, geographical isolation, and social pressures.

Place-Based and Land-Based Education:

Programs are increasingly focused on teaching within the local context, using local knowledge, culture and environment as educational resources. This approach helps teachers connect with their communities and tailor their lessons to the students' lives. Digital literacy and technology integration: Given the need to overcome resource limitations, training in digital learning and technology is crucial to expand access to quality education content and overcome challenges like limited infrastructure. Partnership models: The partnership between higher education institutions and rural schools is particularly important in such situations for experiential learning and mentoring skills. This helps to immerse the teacher candidate into the rural context and learn practical skills even during the training program. Pragmatic financial and logistical support: If pragmatic financial and logistical support is provided to facilitate recruitment and retention of teachers in rural areas, this will increase supply and encourage it more to participate in the program. Financial and logistical support: increased supply and increased participation in rural areas will be realized if action can be taken to reduce the financial and logistic burden on teachers who decide to sign up or reduce their burden when in the rural area to support them. This will enable student teachers

to concentrate on their work and not be plagued by financial difficulties. Community engagement: Teachers are prepared who are already part of the community, ensuring the schools' graduates can take the expertise they've developed to their communities, where they are more likely to teach longer and help resolve teacher shortages.

Flexible Learning Formats:

Learning takes place in a blended and online fashion to address geographical isolation and to reduce teacher isolation and population movement. An example of this is the Rural and Remote Teacher Education Program (RRED) in BC, which involves online course work and intensive summer sessions where teachers can also spend summers working and living in their home communities. Recruitment of and retention of qualified teachers in rural areas is a major challenge. This can mean providing competitive wages, comprehensive benefits, and constant education and development opportunities. Shortage of teachers: Teachers are not available in many cases in rural areas. To help meet this need, specially designed courses can be developed to train those who might not otherwise have been able to get out of the community before and introduce them to a way of serving their area's schools.

Role of Education for the Improving in Status of SCS, STS, OBCS and Other Marginals Societies

India implements several government schemes and policies to promote teacher education among candidates from Scheduled

Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and rural areas, primarily through financial assistance and relaxed eligibility criteria. Educational institutions, especially for courses like the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) and Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed), often provide a relaxation of 5% in the minimum required marks for admission for SC/ST/OBC/PWD candidates. The government's free coaching for SCs, OBCs scheme aims to provide quality coaching for competitive examinations, including those for teaching jobs (like TET, central/state recruitment exams) and admission to reputed educational institutions. Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes (PMS-SC/ST): These are the single largest interventions by the government, providing financial assistance to SC and ST students studying at the post-secondary stage (beyond class 10th), including teacher education programs, to help them complete their education. These schemes offer full financial support for SC/ST students pursuing studies in notified institutions of excellence, which can include premier teacher education colleges.

Schemes like the National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste Students (NFSC) provide financial assistance for pursuing research studies (M.Phil/Ph.D.) in various subjects, including education, at Indian Universities. Individual States also have their own scholarship programs. For example, Meghalaya offers a scholarship of Rs. 5000 per month for selected candidates undergoing the 2-year D.El.Ed course at specific district institutes. Government policies often emphasize reservations in teaching positions

for SC/ST/OBC and other categories in government/aided institutions. Specific initiatives aim to ensure at least 50 % of recruited teachers are women, which can indirectly benefit areas. Teacher education for marginalized societies in India focuses on culturally sensitive training, community engagement, and specialized support to address the unique needs of disadvantaged students. Encouraging the recruitment of teachers from minority and marginalized communities is crucial for representation and cultural relevance. Offering financial rewards, housing, and professional development opportunities can encourage teachers to work in challenging, remote areas and help to improve the quality of education in these schools.

Teacher education is crucial for improving marginalized societies by equipping teachers to create inclusive environments, challenge their own biases, and build culturally responsive classrooms. It can train teachers to identify potential barriers, such as financial struggles or scheduling conflicts, that may prevent marginalized students from accessing education. It can help students and the community to be aware of various social problems and suggest policies related to fairness and equality. Quality education, which equips people with strategies for motivating and improving their learning, is a tool that can help to end poverty and social exclusion cycles and unlock opportunities for better quality of life and employment for marginalized populations.

Conclusion

The strategies of teacher education hold great power in achieving National Integration given the concept of Social Inclusion. Teachers are given training on how to identify the social, emotional, behavioural and academic strengths and needs of every pupil and support this. The key findings presented in this paper stress the need to establish and sustain high-quality instruction by ensuring that supportive policies are created and implemented and that adequate PD is delivered in adequate quantities. It supports citizen informalization, empathy and unity; contributing to the healthy development of their country. The investment in inclusive and comprehensive education systems is crucial for a knowledgeable, empathetic and socialized society. National integration has emerged as one of the prominent Salient features in the development of countries. It is not unusual for a nation to display strong national integration in any developed country. The necessity of developing our country from the status of a developing country to a developed one is national integration (unity) now a days. The study concludes by discussing the challenges and implications that promoting social inclusion and diversity in schools brings. Community is very important to inclusive education. However, there are several difficulties in implementing inclusive education.

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