



OFFICIAL VIEWS ON SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION IN PRE- INDEPENDENT INDIA

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Abstract

Teacher education means professional preparation of teachers. The teacher education system as exists today in India has a long historical background. There was a close link between English education and teacher education. The development of teacher education had been a continuous process since the beginning of the nineteenth century in British India. It was the introduction of western education which paved the way for beginning of teacher education also. Official policies on education had played a crucial role in this process of development of teacher education in the pre-independence period. Growing concern and awareness on the part of the British Government regarding training of teachers had been reflected in various landmark documents of education. The present paper tries to highlight the recommendations of some important educational documents and their relevance from present perspective. An attempt is made here to discuss the British Official documents which influenced the development of teacher training both directly and indirectly in the pre-independence era.

Key Words: *Teacher Education, Policies on Education, Pre-independence period.*

Introduction

The teacher education system as exists today in India has a long historical background. The formal teacher education programme in India started its' journey with the hands of the Christian missionaries at the end of the eighteenth century. The development of teacher education had been a continuous process since the beginning of the nineteenth century in British India. The British East India Company officially for the first time took the responsibility of educating the Indians through the renewal of the Charter Act in 1813. It was stated in section 43, of East India Company Act of 1813 that, "a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India;.....". (Bureau Of Education, India: Selection From Educational Records, Part I: 1781-1839, Page: 22) The Oriental-Occidental controversy regarding clause 43 of Charter Act of 1813 came to an end with the Official declaration dated 7th March, 1835 of Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck. The declaration was that, "His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone. (Bureau Of Education, India: Selection From Educational Records, Part I: 1781-1839, Page: 130 & 131). It was the introduction of western education which paved the way for beginning of teacher education also. Official policies on education had played a major role in this process of development of teacher education in the pre-independence period.

Recommendations of Various Education Committees and Commissions on Teacher Education (at that time 'teacher training') and Government Policies Related to Teacher Education

The Educational Despatch of 1854

The famous educational despatch of 1854 is said to be the 'Magnacharta' in the history of English education in India.. Lord Dalhousie declared in his minute that it contained "a scheme of education for all India, for wider and more comprehensive than the Local or Supreme Government could ever have ventured to suggest."(Bureau of Education, India: Selections from Educational Records Part II, 1840-1859, Page 384). The importance of teacher training was rightly observed by Charles Wood.

- Observation of the despatch was based on the English system of teachers' training prevalent in England. Insufficient number of qualified school-masters and the imperfect method of teaching had drawn the attention of Charles Wood and therefore the desire was "to see the establishment with as little delay as possible, of training school and classes for masters in each presidency in India." (Bureau of Education, India: Selections from Educational Records Part II, 1840-1859, Pages 383 & 384)

The Despatch of 1859 or the Stanley's Despatch

The educational despatch of 1859 expressed its' views on teacher training in paragraph numbers 23 & 24 where it had been mentioned, "From the time that measures have been taken for promoting the progress of Education in India great difficulty has been experienced from the want of efficient masters for the various classes of schools:."(Bureau of Education, India: Selections from Educational Records Part II, 1840-1859, Paragraph Number 23, Pages 434& 435).



Report of the Education Commission or Hunter Commission (1882)

One of the important landmarks in the history of education was the report submitted by the Indian Education Commission, popularly known as the Hunter Commission (1881-82). The recommendations of the Commission regarding the training of teachers in secondary schools were:

- An examination in the principles and practice of teaching should be instituted, success in which should be a condition of permanent employment as a teacher in any secondary school.
- The Commission set a high value, for all would be teachers, on a preliminary training in practical work with a class. Thus the future schoolmaster would learn how to engage and keep the attention of a whole class, how to arouse interest among learners and how to motivate the learners.
- That graduates wishing to attend a course of instruction in a normal school in the principles and practice of teaching should go through a shorter period of training than others.

Indian Educational Policy 11th March, 1904: Extracts taken from the Indian Educational Policy, Being a resolution issued by the Governor General in Council on the 11th March

- The Indian Education Policy was framed during the Governor Generalship of Lord Curzon. The policy framers thought it essential that a substantial reform was required in the existing method of instruction. Therefore, the whole subject of education in its various aspects was reviewed, defects were pointed out and the remedies were indicated in the policy.
- Paragraph 38 of the policy deals with training colleges and it had been clearly mentioned that: "If the teaching in secondary schools is raised to be a higher level,---if the pupils are to be cured of their tendency to rely upon learning notes and text-books by heart, if, in a word, European knowledge is to be diffused by the methods proper to it,---then it is most necessary that the teachers should themselves be trained in the art of teaching.....The Indian Education Commission referred to the conflict of opinion upon this fundamental principle, and to the diversity of practice which prevailed; and while hesitating to lay down a general rule requiring secondary teachers to be trained, recommended as an inadequate, but the only practicable alternative that an examination in the principles and practice of teaching should be instituted, success in which should hereafter be made a condition of permanent employment as a teacher in any secondary school.....There already exist at Madras, Kurseong, Allahabad, Lahore and Jubbulpore, institutions in which students are trained for service as teachers in the highest classes of secondary schools. Such students have either passed the Entrance or the Intermediate Examination of the University or are the graduates. These institutions have done good work, and the time has come to extend the system to the provinces where it does not exist, notably Bombay, and to endeavour to create a supply of trained teachers which shall be adequate to the needs of the secondary schools throughout the country. Not only must the supply be increased, but the quality of the training given must be improved."

The general principles upon which the Government of India desired to see the training institutions be developed were indicated in paragraph 39 of the policy. These were:

- An adequate staff of well-trained members of the Indian Educational Service was required
- More men of ability and experience in the work of higher training should be enlisted.
- The equipment of Training College for secondary teachers was at least as important as that of an Arts College.
- The period of training for graduate students would be one year.
- Knowledge of the principles including the art of teaching, and some degree of technical skill in the practice of the art- should be imparted to the graduates as course of instruction.
- It should be a university course, culminating in a university degree or diploma.
- The scheme of instruction should be determined by the authorities of the Training College and by the Education Department
- The examination at the end of it should be controlled by the same authorities.
- The training in the theory of teaching should closely be associated with its practice.
- Good practicing schools should be attached to each college which should be under the control of the same authority. The practicing school should be fully equipped with well trained teachers, and the students should see examples of the best teaching, and should teach under capable supervision.
- It is desirable that the Training College should be furnished with a good library, and with a museum in which samples, models, illustrations, or records of the school work of the province should be exhibited
- Care should be taken for maintaining a connection between the Training College and the school, "so that the students on leaving the college and entering upon his career as a teacher may not neglect to practice the methods



which he has been taught, and may not (as sometimes happens) be prevented from doing so and forced to fall into line with the more mechanical methods of his untrained colleagues.”

- The trained students whom the college has sent out should be occasionally brought together again.
- The inspecting staff should co-operate with the Training College authorities.

Relevant Extracts taken from the Indian Educational Policy 1913: Being a Resolution issued by the Governor General in Council on the 21st February, 1913

- Secondary English School, General principles of Government of India regarding secondary school was to employ only graduates or trained teachers. Hence the policy was “to multiply and improve training colleges so that trained teachers may be available for public and private institutions.” (Page 19-20, Paragraph 22).
- Regarding training of teachers it had been mentioned that “Few reforms are more urgently needed than the extension and improvement of the training of teachers, for both primary and secondary schools in all subjects including, in case of the latter schools, science and oriental studies. The object must steadily be kept in view that eventually under modern systems of education no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that he is qualified to do so.” (Page 37-38)
- “As regards training colleges for secondary schools some experience has been gained. But the Government of India are conscious that the subject is one in which a free interchange of ideas based on the success or failure of experiment is desirable. The best size for a practising school and relations between it and the college; the number of students in the college for which the practising school can afford facilities of demonstration without losing its character as a model institution; the nature of, and the most suitable methods of procedure in, practical work; the relative importance of methodology and of psychological study; the best treatment of educational history; the extent to which it is desirable and practicable to include courses in subject matter in the scheme of training, especially courses in new subjects such as manual training and experimental science; the points in which a course of training for graduates should differ from one for non-graduates; the degree to which the body awarding a diploma in teaching should base its award on the college records of the student’s work---these and other unsolved questions indicate that the instructors in training colleges in different parts of India should keep in touch with each other and constantly scrutinize the most modern developments in the west. Visits made by selected numbers of the staff of one college to other institutions and pursuit of furlough studies would seem especially likely to lead to useful results in this branch of education.” (page 38-39)

Report of the Conference of Directors of Public Instruction, Delhi, January 1917

- Speech delivered by His Excellency the Viceroy at the opening of the Conference deserves special mention. He said, “But schools depend for their efficiency on the quality of their teachers..... For this we must raise the pay of the teachers. Having got your teacher, your next task will be to train him, and it is impossible, I think, to over-estimate the value of training.” (Report of the Conference of Directors of Public Instruction, Delhi, January 1917, Page B)

Report of the Calcutta University Commission or Sadler Commission (1917-1919)

- The Calcutta University Commission or the Sadler Commission, appointed in 1917, presented a comprehensive and voluminous report in 1919. Though its observation on teacher training was based on the working and teaching of the Calcutta University, but the recommendation of the commission was “really a comment on the whole of India and affected the future growth and development of all.” (Education of Teacher in India Vol I page25)
- The commission observed the inadequacy in the number of training institutions and the quality of training, similarity between the courses of L.T. and B.T., though the students were of different caliber in them.
- It also criticized the syllabus for being over-burdened and the irrelevant content in the syllabus. According to the commission “the aim of the higher course should be not only to secure that the degree-holder is equipped with as a competent class teacher, but also to secure that he understands the principles of teaching, classification of discipline and school children, organization and purpose of games and other kinds of physical exercise, the control of a small office and that he has a sound conception of the purpose and organization of the educational machinery of a modern state.” (Education of Teacher in India Vol I page25)
- The L.T. would be a training to “obey instruction with intelligence” and L.T. students of above average might be allowed to study a further course for B.T. degree in a training college. The trained graduates should be trained for administration also. The following recommendations of the commission deserve special mention:
- A Department of Education should be established in the Universities, to promote systematic and practical study of the Science and Art of Education; to provide increased opportunities for professional training of teachers; and to arouse among the students a deeper interest in the work of the teaching profession and opportunities it offers for public service.



- Each Department should have at least a Professor and a Reader, with a number of assistants. It should work in close collaboration with those engaged in the study of Vernacular, English, Phonetics, Science, Physical Training and Technology (to help with Manual Training).
- The demonstration school should be under the direction of the University, for practical trial of new methods of teaching, new combinations of school subjects and new plans of school organization. These were carefully differentiated from practicing schools. The former were to serve as a laboratory for educational experiments, whereas the latter were to follow the lines of organization normally found in schools.
- The importance of a good library, which should include all important works on Education, chief official reports issued in India, U.K., U.S., Japan and other countries, principal educational journals of the world, etc., was stressed.
- The Department was expected to issue periodicals on work done and monographs on education. Thus, it was to offer opportunities for research in Indian Education.
- The Department was to form a link between Boards of Education on one hand and Intermediate Colleges and Committees of High School, on the other.
- Three essential requirements should be emphasized in teacher training: knowledge of the subject matter, practical training and theoretical training which should not be hurried or superficial. "But under the existing conditions, the first is often unfulfilled; second rarely possible and third too little regarded by the University in framing its regulations.
- A course specially designed for intending teachers be provided at the Intermediate level, at least half the aggregate marks should be awarded for sessional-practical work.
- A post-graduate degree in Education should be instituted.

Indian Statutory Commission, Interim Report 1929

An Auxiliary Committee was appointed by Indian Statutory Commission in 1929 to review the growth of education in British India. The recommendations of the committee regarding training were:

- "The efficiency of a school depends mainly on an adequate provision of competent and well trained teachers." (page115)
- Great differences in quality of the training colleges in the several provinces had been observed. Conventional and obsolete methods were used in some colleges; where as in others valuable work had been done on the investigation and application of modern methods. "Institutions such as these are turning out not merely mechanically trained teachers but men able to appreciate the many-sided difficulties of school organization and well-equipped to meet them". (page 117)
- The committee realized that enough could not be done in the short space of nine months, to uproot the old methods of teaching.
- More frequent refresher courses at the training colleges would be of great advantage for in-service teachers of training colleges.

Report of the Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education appointed to consider the question of Training, Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Teachers, together with the decisions of the Board thereon: 1943

In 1942, to consider the question of Training, Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Teachers, the Committee members of CABE met in the Secretariat, New Delhi, on 12th, 13th and 14th November, 1942. At their Eighth Meeting held at Lucknow in January, 1943, the Central Advisory Board of Education considered the report of the Committee and adopted the recommendations of the Committee. Regarding training of teachers relevant recommendations of the Committee is mentioned below:

- The Committee without any hesitation expressed that every teacher employed in any kind of school must be trained.
- According to the Committee the technique or art of teaching could be learnt and "before any man or woman is allowed to operate on human material, he or she must be required to acquire the necessary mastering of this technique."
- All existing untrained teachers should be trained.
- It was essential to take steps without delay to provide the necessary training facilities in order that all entrants to the teaching profession after a given date shall have received the minimum training.
- A progressive programme should be worked out by all responsible authorities for ensuring that all teachers in their schools become trained within a specified period.
- Any person entering upon a course of training should have minimum educational background.
- The duration for secondary teachers' training course would be of one year.



- The whole of one year course of secondary teachers should be equally divided between theory and method of teaching and practical teaching in front of a class.
- Regarding model practicing schools, they came to the conclusion that it may be necessary to continue such schools where facilities for practice in ordinary schools were not readily available. As conditions in the practicing schools tended to be artificial wherever possible, students should do their practical teaching in ordinary schools.
- The Committee put emphasis on the importance of providing refresher courses at reasonably frequent intervals. In addition to refresher courses the committee recommended that facilities should be provided for teachers to visit other districts or areas from time to time to observe work which was being done in comparable schools or to study new experiments
- In the higher stages of education they advocated “the grant of study leave in order that teachers may bring their knowledge up-to-date in their particular subjects.”(pages 3-7)

Sargent Committee Report on Post-War Educational Development in India, 1944

Chapter VII of the report had very comprehensively dealt with the training of teachers from paragraph numbers 1 to 11, pages 47-52

- The provision of an adequate establishment of teachers and of necessary institutions for training them was of utmost importance for any comprehensive development in the educational system.
- Training Colleges for training graduates were usually situated as separate units of universities and their trainees were almost completely divorced from University life.
- The duration of the course at the Training Colleges for graduates was one year but some of them used to provide facilities for research and led to the degrees of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) or Master of Education (M.Ed.)
- The Board regarded that every encouragement should be given to selected teachers to proceed abroad for professional training or research.
- Study leave should be granted for the purpose of higher education.
- Existing teachers’ training system failed to keep pace with modern ideas in education due to rigid curriculum and there was lack of co-ordination between theory and practice.
- The Board adopted the principle of training for all teachers.
- “The next question for consideration is what should be the basis of selection for training. In this connection it is suggested that a system similar to that vogue in some parts of England might be adopted. In this system suitable persons who wish to become teachers are picked out during the last two years of their High School course. They are kept under observation by Heads and Inspectors and given the opportunity of visiting other schools and trying their hand at actual teaching. Doubtful cases are sifted by this means.”
- All schools which were easily accessible should be made available for teaching practice. Otherwise it would be difficult to train large numbers within stipulated period.
- Moreover, teaching practice can be best done in ordinary schools since the atmosphere of model schools attached to Training Institutions is usually artificial.
- In Training Colleges, facilities should be provided for those students who wished to conduct research or pursue special lines of teaching after the completion of one year’s course.
- Universities should establish Education Departments, in which graduates can enroll and pursue their professional.
- Maximum number of students in a Training College should be 200, though the Education Department of a Unitary University might be much larger.
- Refresher course should be provided at frequent intervals in order to keep trained teachers up-to-date.
- Emphasis was laid on the importance of providing ample facilities for research.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first comprehensive and detailed document on education in the pre-independence period had been the Wood’s Despatch of 1854. The Court of Directors announced their decision that the Government should actively assist in the more extended and systematic promotion of general education in India in dispatch of 1854. It was reaffirmed in 1859 when the administration had been transferred to the Crown as per Government of India Act in 1858. The question of teachers’ training for the first time gained official attention in these two educational despatches. The Education Commission of 1882 made training a necessary pre-condition for permanent employment in school, which has been made compulsory at present. Due importance to teachers’ training had been attached to two educational policies of 1904 and 1913. “The equipment of Training College for secondary teachers was at least as important as that of an Arts College.” This was a significant statement of Education Policy of 1904. The same has been reflected in Norms and Standards formulated by NCTE from time to time for colleges of teacher



education. Various rules and regulations regarding essential and compulsory infrastructural facilities for teacher education colleges have been laid down by NCTE. Again, the qualitative improvement of teachers' training had been highlighted in 1913 Education Policy, more than a century back, that we are talking today. The recommendations of Calcutta University Commission regarding demonstration school and practicing school have got an important place in various educational documents of post-independence period such as the Kothari Commission (1964-66), the National Commission on Teachers I (1983) and very recently in Justice Verma Commission Report (2012). Various steps for qualitative improvement of teacher education like refresher course for teacher educators to enhance their professional efficiency, study leave for higher education, exchange of faculties of different educational institutions associated with teachers' training, improvement of curriculum, extended duration of training, link between theory and practice all were recommended in the Sargent Committee Report (1944). Same are found in a modified form in post-independent educational documents also. So, from the above discussion we can conclude that official views regarding secondary teacher education had always been positive. The recommendations regarding secondary teacher education which have been made hundred years back are still relevant. The basic tenets and principles of secondary teachers' education have remained more or less same even today. Actually what we have now is nothing but "OLD WINE IN A NEW BOTTLE."

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