

Quality of Teacher Education in West Bengal

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The quality and character of our schools largely depends on its teachers. The teachers in turn, strongly reflect the strengths and shortcomings of the colleges that select and provide initial preparation to them. If school must change to meet the challenges of this century, the education of our teachers must change as well. Various committees and commissions stressed the need of a quality teacher education programme from time to time. It has been realised that whatever is the change or progress we want to bring in to our children, it has to be reflected on the teacher preparation programmes since the teacher education programmes prepare quality teachers for the present and future generations. Indian Education Commission, popularly known as Kothari Commission (1964-66), in their Report of the Education Commission (REC) pointed out that the important aspect of the teacher education programme is to develop in the students (student teachers) insight, understanding, capacity to learn and resourcefulness (Report of the Education Commission, 1966). Chattopadhyay Commission (1983-85) noted that "if school teachers are expected to bring about revolution in their approach to teaching...that same revolution must precede and find a place in the colleges of education". Inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools (Yashpal Committee Report, 1993). Teachers now cannot afford to remain a

passive classroom entity carrying out dictates from remote authorities who prescribe that they should teach for students' examination performance. In the altered circumstances, the teacher has to share a much larger responsibility of active and intelligent participation in the educational process. The Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 made 15 education for children between the ages of 6-14 years a fundamental right and compulsory (Government of India, 2002) and the right of children for free and compulsory education act 2009 made the mandate for free and compulsory education for all children of the age of six to fourteen years (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2009).

These constitutional amendments may help to improve the admission rate of children to schools. Certainly the school system of the country would be in demand of more and more responsible and qualified teachers. The launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) in 2002 and the recent financial commitment and the educational cess to augment the mission of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) points towards the preparation of teachers who are adequate to address the growing demand for quality education. After achieving the targets of UEE we are planning to move ahead with Universalisation of Secondary Education (USE). A committee of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) on Universalisation of Secondary Education have already submitted an interim report in 2005

to the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD). The report mentions quality as one among the major challenges of secondary education (Expansion of secondary education, 2007).

According to the Government of India estimates while 82 per cent of the 20 crore children of the 5-14 age group were in school as per enrolment figures, almost about 50 per cent of them drop out before completing class VIII (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education [NCFTE], 2009). This finding stresses the role of a teacher as a person who not only can teach but can also understand the students and the community of parents. A good teacher can make them realise the worth of education and can keep the children regular to school. Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (CFTE) 2006 aptly mentioned that “the education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing professionally competent teachers, but also function as a bridge between schooling and higher education” (p. 11), while discussing the need to enhance the professional identity of school teachers. It is a common notion that at present, teaching is the most unattractive profession and teachers no longer occupy an honourable position in the society. A ‘good’ teacher is always respected and dignified. The ‘goodness’ is nothing but the quality of teachers. Any profession can become unattractive and people may dishonour professionals, if they lack good credentials. This holds well in case of teachers too.

The teacher education programmes should be competency as well as performance based. Even if subject matter competency is there, presentation of competency has to be inculcated. Performance depends on one’s qualification, aptitude, interest and attitude. Commitment is yet another important aspect. If we want to get quality teachers, the quality of teacher education programmes also should be very high. The NCF, 2005 observed that the teacher education programmes must have provision for processes of reflection and insight to challenge certain wrong beliefs. Teachers have to keep their personal beliefs and assumptions about learning and learners aside. They have to follow meticulously what they have been ‘taught’ through methodology

courses. Most of the teacher education programmes fail to provide space for student teachers to reflect on their own experiences and assumptions as part of class room discourse and enquiry (NCF, 2005).

Student teachers should have a clear understanding of the objectives and implications of the syllabus of the schools. During teacher education programme, the student teachers should develop the necessary insights for developing the concepts in the school syllabus in a way that is meaningful to the children (Report of the Education Commission, 1966). The CFTE, 2006 mentioned that the present system of evaluation of teacher trainees is not at all sufficient. It has been pointed out that the evaluation system is more concerned about the rituals that govern most of the theoretical and practical components of teacher education programmes. This is because learning is considered as tangible outcomes which are assumed to be linearly and simplistically related to predetermine objectives. The assessment pattern of teacher trainees emphasises on quantitative aspects rather than estimating the qualitative development of a trainee teacher (CFTE, 2006). If the teaching performance of a trainee teacher is assessed in terms of marks, it could serve the limited purpose of passing the examination but cannot help to make an analytical statement about the trainee’s developing capacities as a teacher.

An overhauling of the present teacher education programme has become the need of the hour. To assure the quality of the final outcomes from a teacher education institution, great care to be taken right from the admission of teacher aspirants till their final evaluation. Mere mastery over school subjects may not be sufficient for a teacher whose aim is the all-round development of an individual. The teacher should know their students’ backgrounds, cultures, interests, strengths and weaknesses, aptitudes and skills along with the ability to apply the psychological and sociological 17 theories and principles in the classroom with a view to give students a meaningful learning experience. The CABE committee report (2005) identified that the success rate of students in the board examination (X standard) is less than 40%.

Improving the quality of schooling is considered as the key to overcome this issue. Since teachers are the most important component of quality schooling, it will be necessary to continuously upgrade the quality of teachers through various in-service and pre-service programmes (The CABE committee report 2005). Within the last two decades drastic changes took place in the teacher education scenario. Along with government teacher education colleges, universities also started teacher education programmes. Then private organisations with funding from government (aided) also came in to teacher education scenario and finally self-financing teacher education institutions were started and now the foremost role in teacher preparation programmes is played by self-financing institutions. There exists a great regional disparity in the provision for secondary teacher training institutions in the country. Inadequate number of B.Ed. colleges contribute to the shortage of trained teachers in the North-Eastern region of the country whereas at the same time, states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka have numerous private teacher training institutions (The CABE committee report 2005). Towards the end of eighties, there were only 19 secondary level teacher's colleges (B.Ed.) in Kerala with an intake of around 4000 students.

Now (March 2010) the numbers of colleges are increased to around 191 with an intake capacity of around 19,500 students. Three years back, the number of B.Ed. colleges were 164 with an intake of about 17,000 students. Similar trend is visible in all the other southern states too. In Karnataka, presently there are 420 (345 in 2007) colleges offering teacher training at secondary level with around 42,000 seats. In Tamil Nadu the numbers of B.Ed. colleges were shot up to 664 in 2010, whereas it was 243 in 2007, with an increased intake capacity of around 66,500 students (NCTE, 2007; NCTE, 2010). In Andhra Pradesh there are 564 B.Ed. colleges are functional at present (NCTE, 2010). Majority of these are privately owned and managed self financing institutions. This phenomenon is happening at the master's level of teacher education (M.Ed.) too, where the teacher educators are trained. At present Andhra Pradesh is having 48 M.Ed. colleges. Kerala

(37) and Karnataka (48) are also having a respectable number of M.Ed. colleges. Tamil Nadu with 143 colleges stands tall in this 'competition'.¹⁸ Our common sense will not permit us to think that this proliferation is happening because of the keenness to provide quality teachers and teacher educators to the country.

The picture will be clear if we look in to the enrolment rate of students to these B.Ed. colleges at present. Many of the colleges started recently had vacant seats (Teacher Educators, personal communication, 2007-10) during last academic year. We cannot expect that all these institutions are working to provide quality teacher education. Purely business minded institutions may also be there in this bulk, instead imparting quality, they may concern only about quantity. Quantitative expansion is necessary but more important is qualitative aspects. The permission granting authorities should also open their eyes to this issue. Otherwise it may lead to catastrophic effects on the quality of teacher education. The CFTE, 2006 comments: the teacher education institutes...merely fulfil the formality of completing the prescribed number of 'lesson plans' with little concern for preparing teachers for constantly demanding and fluid class room situations. The rapid commercial mushrooming of private 'teacher education shops' has further accentuated such divides (pp. 18-19).

Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (CFQTE), 1998 gives a clear panorama of the status of present teacher education programmes in the country. Teacher education is conventional in its nature and purpose. The theory and practice are poorly integrated, and the student teachers do not get adequate curricular inputs to meet the requirements of the school system. Teachers are prepared in competencies and skills, which do not necessarily equip them for becoming professionally effective (CFQTE, 1998).

Familiarity of student teachers with latest educational developments remains insufficient till today. The system of teacher education still prepares teachers who are neither professionally competent nor committed. The framework also commented about the institutions providing teacher training as

institutions that do not practice what they preach. The programme of action (PoA), 1992 has pointed out the following in respect of teacher education.

- (a) Professional commitment and overall competencies of teacher leave much to be desired.
- (b) The quality of pre-service education has not only improved with recent developments in pedagogical science, but has shown signs of deterioration.
- (c) Teacher education programmes consists mainly of pre-service teacher training with practically no systematic programmes of in-service training, facilities for which are lacking.
- (d) There has been an increase in sub-standard institutions of teacher education and there are numerous reports of gross malpractices; and
- (e) The support system provided by SCERTs and the university departments of education has been insufficient and there is no support system below the state level.

CFTE, 2006 give us a comprehensive idea about the way in which the teacher education curriculum of both pre-service and in-service should be modified to cater the present needs of school education. The teacher education curriculum should be in consonance with the curriculum framework for school education. The theories of learning and development, that the trainee teachers study in B.Ed. course is used only for getting good marks in examination. It is neither implemented nor tried out by teachers when they are in actual classroom situations. The practice teaching is 'teaching of required number of isolated lessons'. The teacher trainees will not get a chance during the practice teaching session to experience the duties and responsibilities that are undertaken by regular teachers. Teaching should be for construction of knowledge. It goes beyond the syllabus and textbooks. The teacher should understand the learning and growing of a child. The teacher should know that the learning occurs in shared social and everyday context and hence the emphasis on the psychological characteristics of the individual

learner should be minimised and is supplemented with the learner's social, cultural, economic, political and humanitarian contexts. The teacher education programmes should be modified in such a way that it can help the 'would be teachers' to teach according to the revised school education curriculum. Teacher trainees should learn to reflect on their experiences. The evaluation of teacher education programme should be re structured.

The NAAC and NCTE have entered an MoU for executing the process of assessment and accreditation of all TEIs coming under the provisions of the NCTE Act. The efforts of NCTE and NAAC to ensure and assure the quality of TEIs in the country are complimentary to each other.

Any institution or university offering programmes in education recognized by NCTE and having a standing of at least three years since establishment and with a record of two batches having graduated are eligible for undergoing the process of assessment and accreditation by NAAC. The eligibility criteria with reference to TEIs of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which are not covered under the NCTE Act, the TEIs having a standing of three years since establishment and a record of at least two batches having graduated will be eligible to apply for Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC. However, these institutions need to go through the process of IEQA and gain eligibility to submit the self-appraisal report and undergo the process of A & A by NAAC.

NAAC considers the Institution as the unit of Assessment and has accordingly developed and adopted the assessment strategy which is largely based on self-appraisal by the TEIs.

National Assessment and Accreditation council is a autonomous body established by University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country.

To address the issues of quality, the National policy on Education (1986) and the plan of action (POA-1992) advocated the establishment of an independent National accreditation body. Consequently, the quarters at Bangalore. To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of

higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects. To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

NAAC Model in India, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is the assessment and accreditation body of higher education institutions. NAAC identified the key areas, which are the most important contributors to the quality of higher education.

The overall quality depends on the score of each of these key areas. The major key areas identified are:

1. Curricular aspects;
2. Teaching-learning and evaluation;
3. Research, consultancy and evaluation;
4. Infrastructure and learning resources;
5. Student support and progression;
6. Organization and management;
7. Healthy practices.

Under each of these key areas, NAAC identified various quality aspects that may help to give a clear picture about the key area. To measure the quality aspects various indicators are also identified. These indicators are focused towards a specific 29 characteristics of the key aspect. Suitable weightage is given to each indicator based on its importance. So, various indicators under a specific key aspect together would give an idea about the overall grade of that particular quality aspect. The grade for each of the key aspects contribute together to the grade of the key area and the grades of each of these key areas are taken together to express the grade of an institution.

Table 1: Status of NAAC in West Bengal

| Total number of Colleges | 501 |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Valid NAAC score | 102 |
| Grade "A" colleges | 24 |
| Grade "B" colleges | 72 |
| Grade "C" colleges | 06 |

In the present assessment model for higher education, NAAC uses seven criteria and under these there are 36 key aspects. For each quality

aspect, there will be more than one indicator and there are a total of 196 assessment indicators under the 36 key aspects (NAAC, 2007).

From the Table 1, it is seen that 102 colleges are accredited by NAAC in West Bengal out of 501 colleges. Among 102 colleges 24 colleges are accredited by NAAC "A" Grade, 72 are B grade and 06 are C grade.

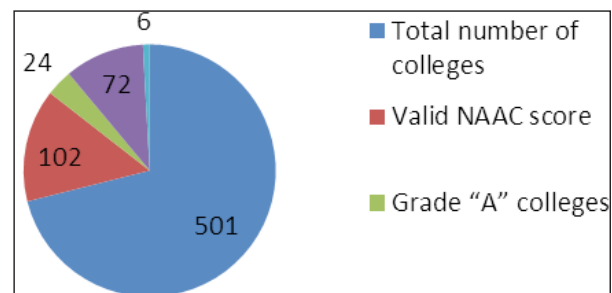


Fig. 1: Pi-chart of NAAC Accredited Colleges

Table 2: WB status of NAAC in WB universities

| Total number of Universities | 31 |
|------------------------------|----|
| Valid NAAC score | 3 |
| Grade "A" University | 1 |
| Grade "B" University | 2 |
| Grade "C" University | 0 |

From the Table 2, it is seen that 03 universities are accredited by NAAC in West Bengal out of 31 Universities. From the 03 universities 1 university is accredited by NAAC "A" Grade and 2 are B grade.

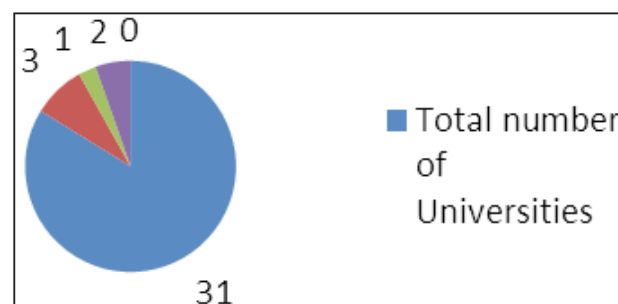


Fig. 2: Pi-chart Of NAAC Accredited Universities in West Bengal

From the Table 3, it is seen that 452 secondary teacher training institutions are in West Bengal out of which 02 are accredited by NAAC, "A" grade

.02 are accredited by NAAC, "B" grade and 03 are C grade.

Table 3: Accreditation status: Secondary Teacher's Training Colleges, in West Bengal

| | |
|--|------------|
| Total number of Secondary Teacher's Training colleges | 452 |
| Grade "A" colleges | 02 |
| Grade "B" colleges | 02 |
| Grade "C" colleges | 03 |

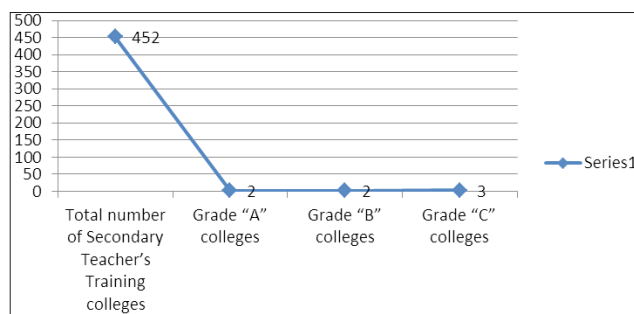


Fig. 3: Graphical representation of NAAC Accredited Teacher Training Institution in West Bengal

From the above table only 7 colleges are accredited by NAAC where as other secondary teacher's colleges are not accredited by NAAC. For quality assessment all the secondary teachers training colleges should be accredited by NAAC as per the MOU with NCT 2005.

Teacher Education in West Bengal

West Bengal is one of the 29 States in India with an area of 88,752 sq.kms. and a population of 8.02 crore according to 2001 Census. At present there are three Divisions in the state. The Jalpaiguri Division comprises the northern districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda with its headquarters at Jalpaiguri. The Presidency Division comprises the districts of Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24-Parganas, South 24- Parganas, Kolkata and Howrah with its headquarters at Kolkata. The Burdwan Division comprises the districts of Hooghly, Burdwan, Birbhum, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia with its headquarters at Chinsurah. The number of revenue districts in the

state is 19. Siliguri being a separate educational district, the number of educational districts is 20. These districts are divided into 65 sub-divisions. The number of Panchayat Samitis is 341. The state has constituted 3,355 Gram Panchayats with 44,846 Gram Sansads. There are 707 Circle Level Resource Centres, 4,217 Cluster Resource Centres and 47,651 Village Education Committees or Ward Education Committees.

West Bengal occupies 2.7 percent of the area of entire India at though it accommodates eight percent of the total population of the country. It's situated in the east coast of India and is surrounded by Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam. According to 2001, the literacy rate of the State was 64.91 percent (74.09 percent male and 55.13 percent for female). He directorate of school Education is the principal implementing agency for the teacher education programmes. The SCERT Looks the after the academic aspects of teacher education. Looks after curriculum examinations and certification under the teacher education programme. He secondary teacher education institutions are controlled by higher education Department as well as by the Directorate of Education under which CES and IASES are also running. There are 10 Government and 532 private teacher Education institutions at the primary stage: 413 B.Ed. colleges and 18 Physical education institutions. Previously the Primary Teachers' Training Institutions (PTTIs) offer one-year training course with pass as entry qualification. Right present Government has divided to conduct two years courses of study higher secondary pass as entry qualification as per CE norms. The Directorate of school Education SCERT and WBBPE are the main implementing agencies for teacher education. SCERT develops curriculum and materials for school education, teacher education and conducts research, training and extension programmes. The IASE David Hare Training College conducts B.Ed, M.Ed. courses, in-service training programmes and research. Now it has become a university WBUTTEPA. The mission of this newly setup University is to monitor Teacher Education and Administration in the state in compliance with the directions from all

the regulatory bodies with special reference to the National Council for Teacher Education. The TES conduct programmes such as pre-service teacher's training extension services, literacy and social awareness programmes. The 16 number of DIETs of the state conduct teachers' training programmes at induction level. They provide research support in the form of extension, guidance, development of teaching learning materials, including teaching aids evaluation tools etc. The state of West Bengal has a large network of teacher education institutions. These institutions run several types of pre-service and in-service and in-service teacher education courses starting from pre-primary to Ph.D. courses in its hire universities in eight regions as well as teacher education institutes and colleges.

Presently the training of teachers, both prospective and practicing, is very weak in the state West Bengal. One of the main factors contributing to this situation is that teachers are trained in a way that students in schools are taught. The first decade of the twenty first century had the privilege of the liberalization policy introduced in early nineties. The education sector was opened for private sector participation and there was Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Foreign Universities are encouraged to set up their campaign in Indian soil to spread education, Many Private Universities came into being during this period so also the deemed universities becoming full-fledged universities by UGC under section 3 of UGC Act 1956. National knowledge commission has been set up which recommends achieving Gross Enrolment Ratio of 15% by 2015 in higher education. After universalization of education and flagship programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, now efforts are made to universalize secondary education through Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

The 11th plan is therefore called education plan as it gives more emphasis to education especially to higher education. During this period a number of central Universities have come up and IIT's and IIM's have set-up their new campaign to spread quality engineering and management education across the country.

Agencies and Process of Quality Assurance in India

Quality Council of India (QCI) has come out with a set of accreditation standards for quality school governance. National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) is a subsidiary of QCI and this has come out with a set of standards and specific procedures for accrediting the schools.

University Grants Commission (UGC) is the statutory body to maintain the quality of higher education. As per the suggestion of National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Programme of Action (PoA) (1986), UGC established National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an autonomous body. NAAC grades the institutions of higher education and their programmes. It helps to improve the quality of teaching and research activities in these institutions and supports the academic 60 growths of these institutions. UGC itself has come out with a set of performance RADARS to find out the performance and development of universities which are funded by the UGC.

National Board of Accreditation (NBA), which is established by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) accredits programmes and courses of technical institutions. It will not accredit the institution. Other agencies are also there in India which assures quality of specific professional education programmes. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Indian Nursing Council (INC) and Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) are some such statutory bodies. A brief looks in to the above discussion is enough to reveal that there are large numbers of agencies associated with quality assurance of different sectors of education across the globe. All those are external agencies for quality assurance and many are for profit organisations. Educating its citizens is one of the foremost concerns of every country. Majority of the countries have developed tailor-made quality assurance procedures to assess and assure the quality of education. Some of them are general in nature whereas some are specific for different stages of education. Some international agencies have

even developed measures which would be suitable for the needs of different countries. A number of agencies at international level have prepared quality measures which are germane for different types of service sectors including education. Some countries have more than one agency for quality assurance. Different agencies have their own criteria and procedures for quality assurance and accreditation. They have identified the different quality aspects or thrust areas for various types of services. Based on this, majority of them prepared standards and indicators to measure the quality. The quality of an institution is measured against some benchmarks and then based on the criteria laid down by the accreditation agency, the accreditation status is granted

Ranking and Accreditation

TEIs is classified in one of four categories "A" category TEIs that meet all the requirement and category "B" get an aggregate score. TEIs which fulfill all the land, building and faculty qualification criteria and obtain both the bench mark score for each section. The category "C" who on verification are found to have fulfilled the criteria for land, building faculty and faculty qualifications but score poorly in aggregate category C TEIs will be given a chance to resubmit a revised self-evaluation form (SEF) within 12 months of its notification and also submit a monthly action plan. Face with a crisis of quality in the pre-service training of teachers, NCTE vide notification dated 28th April 2017, in the exercise of its powers under section 2 of section 32 of the NCTE Act, 1993 introduced an amendment to Regular to Regulation 8(3). According to this amendment is institution recognized by NCTE is required to obtain accreditation from an agency identified by it once every 5 years. It was decided, for the first time to rank the top 100 TEIs in the country once every 2 years.

The agency designated by NCTE for accreditation instead of NAAC is Quality council of India (QCI) an autonomous agency under the Department of India. Over the last 5 months NCTE has been

working with QCI to design and open nationalize a new accreditation and marking frame work. This builds on recent efforts to obtain affidavits from TEIs. Beyond the physical absent and rudimentary academic assets in the original framework it gives maximum weight age to teaching and Learning Quality as well as Learning out comes.

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