

DISMAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR? WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Habibullah Shah *

ABSTRACT

Based on an analysis of teacher education in Jammu and Kashmir state, this article draws together a set of dilemmas that face the field, arguing that a comprehensive policy is required to complement the more common institutional practices of teacher education in the state. The article concludes with thoughts on some promising directions for the improvement of the field of teacher education in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Words: Teacher education, Teacher, Policy, Creation, SCTE

Introduction

Teacher education across the globe is plagued with a number of recurring predicaments that have combined to baffle what has passed for reform (Wang et al, 2010). Facing these problems is a significant starting point both for appraising the emerging agenda for change and for considering alternative prospects (Sykes, Bird, & Kennedy, 2010). Teacher education reform has become an international trend (Bates, 2008; Garm & Karlsen, 2004), which in spite of the different national contexts and traditions, shares a set of similar expectations, foci, and even policy interventions (Loomis, Rodriguez, & Tillman, 2008). Teacher education reform in different parts of the world like the United States (US) is a crucial part of a wider educational reform intended to improve teaching practice and, thus, student performance (Darling Hammond, 2005; Wang et al, 2010,) India is no exception to it, however the context of Jammu and Kashmir is different from rest of the states of India.

Why Teacher Education?

The importance of teacher education cannot be overemphasized (Asare & Kofint, 2014). Teachers lays the foundation for the development of the human resource of every nation and are backbone for any sound educational structure. It is worth remembering that “A sound education structure leads to an enlightened society and manpower development, which is able to lead a crusade for social transformation and economic progress” (Asare, 2011, p. 43). Central to the educational enterprise is the teacher. The role of the teacher is so crucial that no nation can afford to ignore it. This is because, “Education is a condition for development and the teacher is the ultimate definer of its reality” (Adegoke, 2003, p. 5). Whether teachers are born or made is now no longer a debate in education. Because irrespective of the fact that some persons are endowed with those positive qualities which a good teacher should have even without undergoing any formal teacher training course, but no one can undermine the need and importance of teacher education programmes, especially for those who join the teaching profession with no experience. This is particularly applicable in a country like India where universalization of elementary education is a national obligation. The system here requires services of thousands of teachers who can impart quality education. This obviously implies that a good teacher preparation program should be in place to achieve the goals of universalisation and quality education. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is no exception to it. With

* Assistant Professor (Education) Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir , Srinagar.

progressive realization of the importance of professionalization of teaching profession, it is accepted that continuous professional development of teachers by way of pre-service and in-service teacher training is a dire mandatory in the large interest of human resource development. It is with this vision that the Indian State established a separate statutory body called *National Council for Teacher Education* (NCTE) to regulate the teacher education programmes across India except J&K state.

Teacher Education in Jammu and Kashmir State

Teacher education in this state is directionless and a big chunk of teacher training colleges are at the edge of their fall down (Shah, 2016). On one side, we talk about quality teachers but on other side we are trying to put teacher education back to Dark Age. This state is the only state in India which does not have its own teacher education policy as on date. On one side, we try to come at par with national standards but at the same time we try to keep our outdated and obsolete rules as they are. It is fact that in JK state too, B. Ed has been two year course, very expensive but on other side, the basic qualification of General Line Teacher is still 10+2 without any mandatory teacher education qualification which is basic issue that needs immediate attention. That is what MHRD, New Delhi have also noticed in the 8th Teacher Education Appraisal Board (TEAB) meeting held on 28th March, 2014 at New Delhi and the minutes of which were notified vide number No.F.43-3/2014-EE.9 dated 29th April, 2014 which reads as,

“Minimum qualification (10+2) is still an issue in the matter of restructuring of teacher educator cadre, the state government was advised to follow the norms of NCTE, even though JK does not come under the purview of NCTE, or devise its own norms on similar lines.”

Researcher's simple question is if D.Ed/B.Ed/M.Ed programmes are not getting any credit in the recruitment criteria of teachers in school education department at entry level in our state, why students will investment time and huge money for such degrees which has no relevance from employment point of view as per existing policy of the state. Earlier B.Ed as well as other teacher education programmes was getting due credit in SSRB selection but same has been scrapped. If Education Minister is bothered about the future of more than 120 B. Ed colleges as well as 22 DIETs of the state, which generate a good chunk of employment opportunities for the un-employed youth of the state, I would suggest few things in this regard for the revival of this sector and promotion of teacher education in the state.

First of all, Minister of Education should direct the administrative department of school education to modify the recruitment rules regarding the eligibility of general line teacher as minimum graduation with B. Ed from current eligibility which is 10+2 for both Govt. as well as Private Schools without any further delay. As maximum states across India has the same eligibility for the appointment of teachers and NCTE vide gazette notification dated 12-11-2014 has already made mandatory for centre and all states (except JK state as it does not come under the purview of NCTE) not to appoint any teacher at any level without teacher education degree (s). While as in our state, teachers are required to produce B.Ed degree(s) at the time of promotion. What is the logic of keeping B.Ed essential just for promotion of master grade when a person has already put enough service in the department as teacher? Better to make his/her entry in the department with B.Ed. Similarly all those staff appointed in DIETs/SIEs, should have at least M.Ed as well as their respective Masters Degree then they are professionally eligible to be as teacher educators so this issue needs also to be addressed appropriately. As per MHRD communications, JK state has been directed from time to time to create separate teacher educator cadre in the DIETs/SIEs /Colleges

of Educations. As in the recent 10th TEAB meeting held at MHRD New Delhi on 17th April, 2015 the minutes of which were circulated vide number dated No.F.43-3/2015-EE. 9 dated 8th June 2015 have also observed the same which reads as

“it has been noticed that there are large number of vacancies in DIETs. Keeping in view the academic leadership role of DIETs, the state Govt. should review the faculty requirements and norms”.

Good thing is that in a latest communication bearing F(49-21/2005/NCTE/N&S/8168 dated 8/12/2015, NCTE have acknowledged that NCTE regulations does not apply to the JK state and previous NCTE order issued in this regard vide no F.No.49-21/2005/NCTE (N&S) dated 31-5-2007 stands valid. It speaks that J& K state is free as on date to frame its own teacher education policy keeping its own context, topography and requirements in view. State has once again good chance to boost its own teacher education sector. Before it is too late, researcher’s another suggestion to the authorities is that kindly *direct Commissioner Higher Education Department* to come with an act on the analogy of Jammu and Kashmir Private Colleges (Regulations and Control) Act, 2002 which can simply be called as *Jammu and Kashmir Teacher Education Act, (Year)* for streamlining the teacher education in the state. If passing of act is not possible and seems time consuming then, a SRO for regulation of teacher education in the state is also sufficient to meet the urgency for which Jammu and Kashmir Private Colleges (Regulations and Control) Act, 2002 can become a source for framing regulations. In this regard, Commissioner Higher Education Department should take an initiative and constitute a committee in order to frame teacher education policy of the state and notify the same through SRO. The committee should constitute the following important stake holders also as its core members because all of them are major stake holders of teacher education in the state. Committee should constitute, Dean Academic Affairs, University of Kashmir/University of Jammu; Dean/Head Faculty of Education, University of Kashmir/University of Jammu; Dean College Development Council, University of Kashmir/University of Jammu, Director, Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir/University of Jammu, Principal Govt. College of Education, Srinagar/Jammu, Principal SIE Srinagar/ Jammu; Director Academics, J & K Board of School Education and other members to decided by the competent authorities. However above than these members, at some subject experts from teacher education field and some legal experts should also be as are part of the committee. Researcher suggests that Dean School of Education, Central University of Kashmir/Jammu should be specially invited being stake holder of teacher education in the state. The committee should be assigned the job of framing eligibility, medium of instruction, draft model statutes, syllabi and other components in light of NCTE regulations. We can also think to have our own State Council for Teacher Education (SCTE) on the analogy of National Council for Teacher education NCTE, New Delhi. Creation of SCTE will be the historical contribution of present government in the history of JK Education.

Since this state is not like other states which have robust corporate sector and strong private sectors like engineering colleges and private universities, therefore it is responsibility of the state to work out such legal options which will save this education sector from rust and other malpractices. Instead of closing the doors of these private colleges, we have to strengthen these institutions both in terms of infrastructure, employability and ensure quality teacher education in these institutions. We should learn lesson from the Governments of Haryana, UP, Punjab and other states which are promoting their engineering and other private educational institutions like their own babies and have established separate educational colonies. At present a number of B.Ed colleges are without students both in Kashmir as well in Jammu province and

have expelled their respective academic staff which has put once again state's educated youth in limbo. During previous PDP-Congress Govt. the then Chief Minister Mufti Syed acknowledged that private B.Ed colleges of the state has played an important role in promoting academic tourism and generating employment therefore, we have to flourish these academic institutions across the state and save this educational industry from collapse.

Conclusion

It is good to have two cluster universities in the state but I think this state is dire need of education university which will reduce the burden of our state universities and will improve their functioning especially research culture. This state should have at least one teacher education university seeing the potential of teacher education in the state as Tamil Nadu and other states have also separate universities for teacher education. This researcher also suggest authorities to go through the latest policy document of New Delhi entitled as *Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education of JK State*, 2013 which will give them a more broader picture of the situation. Briefly speaking, the flawed policy and lack of attention and a salutatory body in the field of teacher education, political control of teacher training colleges of the state is responsible for the dismal teacher education in the valleys the Last but not least, let us hope authorities will come with a policy on teacher education and prepare good teacher for the world from this land of saints and teachers.

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