



Post-Covid Teacher Education in India with Respect to Alternative Pedagogical Practices

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ABSTRACT

Higher Education, especially in the Post independent India, has been transforming in manifold ways. The post-colonial higher education has manifested growth in fundamental institutional set-up in new urban areas on one hand and, increased infrastructure, manpower and learning resources in existing institutions of higher learning on the other hand. The second wave of transformation in higher education was observed in the post-LPG era which has boosted professional education and IT-based revolution in the education sector. The most recent and third phase of transformation in higher education has been manifested in the post-Covid era through online technology and in the presence of the National Education Policy 2020. The present paper made here an attempt to look into the present status of the Post-Covid Educational world and its consequences a digital revolution in the education sector in general and teacher education in particular. Some of the popular online platforms which are being used for education and training purposes, some of the key institutions responsible for contributing to the plethora of educational resources, and digital devices are widely discussed in the coming sections of the paper.

Keywords: Higher Education, Teacher Education, Post Covid, Alternative Pedagogy, Digital Revolution

The digital revolution in higher education in general and teacher education, in particular, have added supplementing and assisting to the conventional classroom teaching-learning practices in India. Whether the digital revolution is supplemented to enhance quality education or has deprived a large section

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of the students of rural and semi-urban less techno-friendly stakeholders is an area to be researched for future direction. As far as teacher education is concerned, a large number of students comprise of underprivileged, especially in terms of gender and rural-urban backgrounds students might have opted for teacher education programmes as the last professional option. The positive linkages between education and job-market, low educational cost among other professional disciplines, a large number of untrained teachers across the states in India, in-region job opportunities, etc. have contributed to the sustainable demands of teacher education.

However, a uniform approach to the digitalization of teacher education along with other professional education will further marginalize teacher education only. The pedagogical practice in other professional education sectors is different from the teacher education sector. Therefore, a homogeneous approach may boost the existing knowledge transformation system either in negative or positive ways depending on the disciplinary practices. The present paper is attempting to explore the post-covid period along with the NEP 2020 directives for blended, online, e-resource-based models of teaching-learning as an alternative model of teaching-learning, especially in the teacher education sector.

Teacher education basically means an education that prepares teachers for schools at different levels such as D.El.Ed. for elementary, B.Ed. for secondary and M.Ed. for postgraduate level. Teacher education in India has been suffering from the problems of quality degradation, commercialization, unprofessionalism, and moreover from an identity crisis. 21st century has brought teacher education at a crossroads in terms of moving towards professionalism by introducing long-term teacher preparation programme and the impact of ICT revolution on one hand and dealing with commercialization and quality degradation on the other hand.

The present school education as well as teacher education system are being guided by the constructivist approach to teaching. This perspective can consist of the problems of teacher education, the role of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), why NCTE failed teacher education in India, the menace of commercialization and its way out, quality concerns and the role of ICT in reforms in teacher education in India, the issue of professional development from a policy perspective, etc. Since the tile does not specify mere curricular aspects, the readers have expectations of representations from policy and planning viewpoints in teacher education at different levels.

Alternative Pedagogical Practices in Teacher Education

Teacher education programmes in India namely D.El.Ed., B.Ed., and M.Ed. are being practiced in multiple ways across the universities. Some of the popular ways of conducting these programmes are the one in which psychological orientations became the popular guiding principle to deliberate upon the classroom activities, examination system, and practice teaching cum internship. The second is the constructive approach of pedagogical practices which can in the forefront during the last two decades and especially after the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) for school education in 2005. NCF 2005 was subsequently followed by the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) largely based on the constructive philosophy. Further as a result of Justice Verma Commission

Report 2013, the one-year curriculum of teacher education programmes was revised to a two-year long duration teacher education programmes. A major shift and transformation in teacher education were observed due to this reform which further provided an opportunity to practice and implement the directives and approaches given by NCFTE (2009).

The third phase came during and just prior to the global pandemic of Covid-19 which revolutionized the entire education sector in general and school and teacher education sectors in particular by intensive use of digital devices, platforms and resources. Although the discussion on alternative pedagogy is not new but Covid-19 has given rise to digital pedagogy in education sector in general and teacher education in particular. The extensive use of digital pedagogy inside the classroom transaction, seminars, conferences, workshops, in-service training, etc. has brought the digital revolution to the forefront of the teacher education sector.

Factors of Pedagogical practices influenced by Pandemic

Resources for curriculum transaction: The Pandemic gave rise to an enormous number of thoughts on resource development and online learning materials. From Individuals, agencies and experts to institutions, all have started a mad race to develop online educational resources and materials for students. Some of these were free of cost and many authentic materials were developed on a commercial basis. The most popular resources for teaching and learning have been developed by the institutions like NIOS, CBSE, NCERT, SCERTs, etc. for school education and IGNOU, UGC, AICTE, and Universities along with the popular free resources developed in collaboration with YouTube channels for the higher education sector. The majority of these are freely available and some are priced versions and few are based on nominal registration or institutional affiliation based.

Professional development of teachers/Faculty: The pandemic also gave rise to the teachers and faculty in higher education including teacher education to explore beyond the traditional scope of professional development. UGC-Human Resource Development Centers and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT) have transformed their capacity building programmes through Online-Mode, Offline-mode and also through Hybrid-mode with more degree of effectiveness and capacity development. World Economic Forum 2022 revealed that there are already 13.6 million active learners are there with an online platform called “Coursea’s” alone besides several other active platforms available worldwide. It concludes the increasing role of online platforms and alternative pedagogies in the recent past in the entire education sector.

ICT instruments: The recent advancements in technology and communication devices and social media-specific software applications developed by the technocrats have helped to reenergize and motivate the learners at their speed, requirements and, mode of education and training they needed. Computers, Laptops, Tablets, Electronic devices, Google Play Store-based software, etc. gave ease of work and learn, although it is a costly affair but on the other hand it saves time and space for both learners and institutions. Institutions like UGC-HRDCs, PMMMNMTT, UGC, AICTE, NCERT, SCERTs, etc. have developed programme and stakeholder-specific applications such as DIKSHA, Shodhganga, E-Pathshala,

E-Gyankosh, different MOODLE and MOOCs platforms to deliver knowledge, education, and training for teachers, students, and in-service training in both school and higher education level.

Teacher Education Institutions in recent years have also utilized, developed, and extended the existing and newly developed technologies, electronic devices, and social media platforms for the in-service and pre-service education and training programmes including the practice teaching cum internship. The traditional mode of face-to-face teaching might not have adequately satisfied the students of different institutions to learn in the most effective ways due to several regions such as, the lack of teachers, infrastructures, libraries & Laboratories and the training required by the faculty. Teachers of the institutions. The recent reform in education led by technological advancements and integration has made a brief solution to this problem by providing relaxation on a temporal basis.

CONCLUSION

Alternative pedagogy emerged and developed especially due to the Covid-19 pandemic, also due to ICT revolution in the last decade, have reformed the entire education delivery system at both, school as well as higher education levels. The recent inclusion and extension of Online resources, Social-media platforms, Video-lectures, Electronic-resources, etc. have compelled us to look at education and its delivery from a more effective and outcome-based perspective. Besides, the age-old problem of the knowledge-transfer gap between teachers and students, lack of resourceful libraries, teachers' vacancies, and questionable effectiveness of their knowledge transaction has also forced the education system to look for alternatives and modes of effectiveness with minimal financial consequences to the institutions. The present paper looked into the existing practices of educational delivery, the available alternative pedagogy, and the future way out for technological integration to educational institutions at large.

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