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PRESENT STATUS OF RESEARCH IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Research in teacher education has its unique nature along with two purposes, i.e. to understand the educational phenomenon and to transform it. The areas of research in this field cover a large area of inputs like goals of teacher education; characteristics of teacher educators as well as student teachers; processes such as classroom interactions and outputs like gaining of theoretical knowledge, acquisition of required skills and attitudes, etc. In case of research methodologies, mainly descriptive surveys, experimental studies, developmental studies, relational studies, action research, etc are used. In India, research in teacher education was started by Banerji in 1956, which was further characterised with some remarkable aspects like quantitative leap, systemization of instruction, larger coverage of objectives and alternative model. The implications of research findings in the field of education are not of its expected level. The reasons behind it are lack of qualified and skilled researchers, shortage of funds, unavailability of enough facilities and resources, etc. So researchers should be self motivated considering the need of research in this field and the government must take some necessary steps such as establishing proper networking among educational institutions, provide adequate facilities and funds at the time of need, etc. Only then research in teacher education will have its expected impact on the educational development of our country.

Keywords : *Two Purposes, Larger Area of Research, Various Research Methodologies, Inadequate Progress, Government's Attention*

INTRODUCTION

Educational research is that which develops new knowledge, which is then applied to the improvement of educational practices. This thing is also true in case of teacher education.

Research in this field was started by *Banerji* in 1956. The main aims of research in teacher education are to understand the educational phenomenon and to transform it. The areas of research are associated with various sub-systems

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like - inputs, processes and outputs. Most of researches in this aspect have been conducted within a few areas like – micro-teaching, teaching strategies, etc whereas many areas have been neglected like – educational administration and supervision, teacher education curriculum, etc. But a well balanced development is

needed in case of research in teacher education so that research outputs can be helpful for teachers, pupil-teachers and teacher educators by transforming them into educational policies. Thus research in teacher education can have a fruitful impact on overall educational development of our country.

PURPOSES OF RESEARCH IN TEACHER EDUCATION

There are mainly two purposes behind the research works in the field of teacher education. They are as follows –

Purposes Of Research In Teacher Education

A. To understand the educational phenomenon –

It means that it should be fitted into a theoretical framework. This actually helps to conceptualize, explain, control and predict the dynamics of a given phenomenon. Conceptualizing means arriving at interrelated set of variables. A well articulated framework applicable to many contexts based on systematic perspective is the *presage-process-product* paradigm of teacher education. Presage variables would include the personality variables, process variables would imply curriculum transaction (i.e. mode of teaching) and product variable would be a performance of students on a test.

➤ **Areas Of Research** : There is a wide spectrum of variables related to teacher education such as personality of student teachers and teacher educators, different types of training (pre-service and in-service) at different levels of education, etc. Most of researches are isolated and there is no linkage among them. So super imposing

B. To transform it –

This means incorporating changes in the phenomena as it exists because of some dissatisfaction with it. This is true in case of teacher education too. When there is dissatisfaction with existing practices in teacher education, changes are required in the *structure* and the *process*. Research provides necessary ground for any change to take place as research based changes are more sound and effective.

of a classificatory system helps to identify cluster of variables. Thus a cluster of identified variables may be called an 'area' of research.

During the *seventies*, researches in teacher education were classified in *five areas* such as *selection criteria; abilities and*

qualities of teachers; pre and in service training of teachers; work load, job expectations and difficulties expressed by teachers and procedures as well as practices of teacher education in India. In later years, researches were categorised under context, input, process and output variables. During the eighties; context, presage, process and product were the categories.

The context variables include student-teacher characteristics and institutional characteristics. Student-teacher characteristics mean student-teachers formative experiences, academic qualifications abilities, personality factors, intelligence, etc. Institutional characteristics include climate of teacher education institutions, administrative set up, classroom climate, etc.

The presage variables mean teacher-educator characteristics (formative experiences of teacher educators, their education and training, motivation, abilities, personality factors, intelligence, teaching as well as training skills, etc).

The process variables are classroom interactions, classroom transactions and mediating processes that lead to learning. Such variables are task persistence, active learning time, student teacher engagement with learning task, teacher behaviour in the classroom, supervisory behaviour of teachers relating to student teaching, etc.

The outcome variables of teacher education include two types of variables. One are those which describe immedi-

ate outcomes of teacher education (such as achievement, attitudes, skills of student-teachers) and another are long term outcomes, describing level of professional skills and teaching effectiveness.

➤ **Research Methodology** : Various types of research methodologies such as *action research, descriptive surveys, experimental studies, developmental studies, relational studies*, etc are applied for research works in the field of teacher education. The purposes of the different types of research methodologies are as follows –

- a) **Action Research** – It is conducted by teacher educators to *improve classroom practices*.
- b) **Descriptive Surveys** – They are used to *procure data in teacher education or describe its characteristics*.
- c) **Experimental Studies** – These studies examine *the impact of various inputs and processes with different modes or forms on the programme of teacher education and finally decide the correct option to transform it into educational policies*.
- d) **Developmental Studies** – These studies put forth *the historical developments in teacher education in order to explain the status of teacher education at a particular time or changes over a period in one or more sub systems of teacher education*.
- e) **Relational Studies** - These studies try to find out *relationships between input and process, process and output, or input, process and output*.

➤ **Trends Of Research –**

- a) **Quantitative Leap** : The first research in teacher education was done by *Banerji* in 1956. After that 45 studies were reported during the *first survey (up to 1973)*. During the *second survey (up to 1978)* and the *third survey (1978-1983)*, 65 studies and 116 studies were reported respectively. This scenario indicates that researchers were getting attracted towards this field and the probable reasons behind it were *easy accessibility of sample for research work, availability of ready made tools, etc.*
- b) **Systematization Of Instruction** : Initially '*Lecture Method*' was used in case of curriculum transaction of teacher education. Researches on instruction show a *shift of emphasis from lecture method to structured methods* such as *programmed learning, instructional model based teaching, etc.* The purpose of this kind of research was to make the instruction a systematic activity at teacher education level. The main intention was to make the instructions more reproducible for the benefits of student teachers and teacher educators.
- c) **Larger Coverage Of Objectives** : Attempts to cover a larger number of objectives were also seen. It was as follows –
- i) **Classroom Interaction Analysis** – It was for objective evaluation of lessons to achieve the objectives of understanding dynamics of classroom teaching.
- ii) **Micro-teaching Studies** – These were re-

searched for developing skills of teaching.

- iii) **Programme Learning** – It was studied to impart theoretical knowledge.
- iv) **Discussion Method** – It was analysed for making it an alternative method for developing social interaction skills and higher order cognitive skills.
- v) **Simulation** : It was researched for development of application and decision making skills.

- d) **Alternative Model** : In the field of teacher education, earlier researches were mainly conducted on Harbartian Model, Flanders Interaction Model and Micro-teaching. At present, researches are also conducted on various behaviouristic models such as Concept Attainment Model, Inquiry Training, Model, Advanced Organiser Model, etc.

- **Importance Of Networking And Collaboration For Research In Teacher Education:** Networking should be established with central agencies of teacher education like *Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), University Grants Commission (UGC), etc.* There are other supporting institutions like *National Institute of Educational Planing and Administration (NIEPA)* now known as *National University of Educational Planing and Administration (NUEPA), Central Hindi Institute (CHI), Central Institute of English (CIE), Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Directorate of Adult Education*

(DAE), National Institute for Handicapped (NIH), etc. Both vertical and horizontal linkages among the institutions of teacher education are necessary. Vertical linkages are needed to *remove isolation with state level agencies such as State Departments of Education, SCERT, State Institutes of Education, State Institute of Science Education, State Educational Technology Units, etc.* On the other hand, horizontal linkages are essential to *enable the institutions to assist each other by sharing educational resources, which ultimately aims to development of teachers.*

➤ **Implications Of Research :** Teaching, like other professions, has a knowledge base that aims to guide practitioners. Knowledge generated by researches is an important component of this knowledge. Teacher education and staff development programme may be considered to be a central avenue of knowledge

dissemination on one hand and of practicing its use in varied contexts on the other hand. The curriculum of teacher education and the text books which are used, determine what aspects of research knowledge will be brought to the attention of becoming teachers. The practicum and teacher induction programmes may serve student teachers and novices in learning how to use this knowledge base. Research findings constitute a regular feature of teacher education courses in the foundation disciplines like psychology and in method courses. But the translations of findings into classroom action is usually left to the student teachers who find this an extremely difficult or

even impossible task.

Teacher education is an important field of research since the quality of research has been regularly questioned. Consequently, teacher education researchers need to work together for some reasons like *to share emerging research findings, to develop innovative research methodologies, to disseminate innovative pedagogical methods, to find new publishing outlets within an overcrowded academic field, to support colleagues in institutions with under developed research profiles, to develop important emerging themes in teacher education programme, etc.* Thus research works in teacher education can fulfil the basic purposes i.e. to make the programme more relevant and to apply in the real life situation.

➤ **Problems Of Research –** There has not been enough research of quality level in the field of teacher education since researches face a lot of problems. These problems are both *intrinsic* as well as *extrinsic*. Some of the remarkable problems are as follows –

a) **Lack Of Qualified Personnel :** Researchers must have the minimum abilities and skills to conduct any research work. But at present, most of the researchers do not have it. It is important that besides acquiring the qualifications, researchers should gain knowledge of the theory of teacher education, skills of scientific inquiry, ability to analyse as well as interpret data and make rational judgements.

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- b) **Lack Of Motivation** : Due to lack of minimum qualifications and skills, most of the researchers are not self motivated to conduct the quality level research work. Moreover, proper incentives are not given to researchers.
 - c) **Lack Of Resources And Facilities** : Our country cannot provide enough resources and facilities to conduct the research work in the field of education. For example, unavailability of expert devices for proper planning, statistical procedures for analysing data and proper reporting of findings, lack of material facilities such as hardware, stationary, etc create a lot of hindrances to complete the research works by the time.
 - d) **Problem Of Finance** : There are less researches due to lack of finance. Funding agencies such as UGC, NCERT and ICSSR at times fail to provide the necessary funds.
 - e) **Arbitrariness** : Arbitrariness in research means lack of meaningful relation among studies. Any research should be based on previous researches for its assumptions, hypotheses and theoretical background for *hierarchical growth* in any discipline. So it is very important to establish proper linkage among studies to develop a coherent understanding of the phenomenon after a certain number of studies. It avoids duplications and enhances the possibility of attending all involved aspects and variables properly.
 - f) **Lack Of Coverage** : Research works have not covered all aspects in teacher education so far. For example, there are many researches on *test construction, teacher behaviour, micro-teaching*, whereas some areas are still neglected such as *educational planning and administration, educational sociology*, etc.
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Necessary Steps For Improvement : Some steps can be taken for improvement of research work in teacher education. They are as follows :

Important Groups To Take Steps

Researchers

The Government

a) Researchers should understand the necessity of research work in this field. They need to gain the minimum *qualifications* and *skills* so that they can identify the areas which need to be researched carefully and only then the research findings can be helpful for future development of the education system of our country.

b) They also need to be *self-motivated* and have enough *interaction* with the authorities of other educational institutions like – DIET, SCERT, NCERT, etc.

a) The government must establish *linkages* (both *vertical* and *horizontal*) among the educational institutions. It will be helpful for researchers to get sufficient help (in terms of materials like hardware and softwares) and guidelines for proper research strategy as well as analysing the data and reporting the same from higher authorities who are enough qualified and skilled.

b) The government should conduct regular *workshops* and *seminars* under the guidance of experts so that researchers can be updated with current educational issues as well as modern research techniques.

c) The government should provide researchers some *incentives* to encourage them. Excellent works of researchers should be recognised also.

d) There are some facilities (like study leaves) for researchers. But most of them are only in papers as researchers face a lot of problems to have their legal facilities while conducting research work. It discourages them, which ultimately results into unsatisfied or average research outputs.

CONCLUSION

Thus it has been found that research in teacher education is highly important for the development of teachers, pupil teachers, teacher educators and over all the education system of our country. But research works have not been conducted in all spheres of teacher education so far. So qualitative research works in all aspects of this field are very much needed for balanced development of the discipline. This is only possible by overcoming the hindrances in the way of teacher education like – lack of networking among educational institutions, shortage of funds, unavailability of necessary resources like softwares for data analysis and lastly lack of qualified researchers with self-motivation. The government should take some necessary steps for improvement of research works in teacher

education such as *establishing network among the educational institutions to help researchers (i.e. to provide necessary guidelines in case of research strategy as well as way of analysing data and reporting the findings), providing enough funds for availability of important materials like softwares, giving some incentives (in forms of money or promotion) to researchers to encourage them, making suitable educational policies, etc.* Only then research works will cover all aspects of teacher education and the research outputs will have a remarkable impact on the development of teacher education in our country.

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