

Qualifications Framework and Competency Standards

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The Challenge of Inclusion: The Challenge of Equity and Social Empowerment

- There are factors that ‘constrain’ the education of children in a general sense as well as those that are specific to particular groups because of ‘group identity’, such as gender and social (language, community) and economic vulnerability
- Schools usually create conditions that result in unrecognized learning potential for millions of young children
- Young learners from marginalized sections of society in particular experience education in distinctly different forms from those who occupy mainstream positions of power and privilege
- Their sheer neglect, discrimination and rejection poses specific challenges to students who continue to attend schools with aspirations despite all odds

The Challenge of Inclusion: The Challenge of Equity and Social Empowerment

- Therefore equity and social justice cannot be separated from the notion of diversity
- Diversity cannot be separated from the notion of Quality in Education, especially because:
- Systemic and institutional context necessarily leads to educational disadvantage (and advantage) for diverse social groups

Unrecognised Learning Potential in the Classroom

- It has been argued that dropout rates and the performance of students are not as much matters of administrative concern as of sound pedagogy and the provision of a conducive ‘learning environment’
- Research shows that “teachers credited high caste students for their success but did not blame them for failure...
- On the other hand, scheduled caste students were held responsible for their failure but were not given credit for their success”
- Teachers’ attributions of students' success and failure are linked in complex ways to the backgrounds of the students, teachers’ belief systems and expectations and students’ attributions of themselves

Other Gaps in the Preparation of Teachers

- Evidence from some states corroborates the understanding that often primary school teachers do not have conceptual knowledge and understanding that their students are expected to acquire
- The large numbers untrained teachers with less formal qualifications have added to this problem.
- The language proficiency of teachers in their own mother tongue leaves much to be desired.
- With English having become mandatory from class I in most states, we need many more teachers who can speak the language.

Other Gaps in the Preparation of Teachers

- TEIs comprise of faculty from a diverse set of disciplines but with minimal link with parent disciplines
No incentives or opportunity to engage with disciplinary study, severed from frontiers of knowledge, interdisciplinary research
- Even where structurally part of a University, TEIs operate in an insular manner
Thus remaining isolated from other Faculties and liberal disciplines, running the danger of becoming breeding grounds of academic stagnation and resistance to change.
- Teacher education programmes are dominantly designed to ‘transact’ methods of teaching with no engagement with subject-matter
Leading to lack of engagement with content, thus creating a false divide between content and pedagogy; accentuating the sharp divide between school curriculum and the teacher

Belittling Theory in the Preparation of Educating Teachers

- Teacher educators often erroneously explain the absence of the desired impact of teacher training programmes in terms of a huge gap between theory and practice
- This popular view has led to several attempts that advocate the training of teachers in school settings rather than in university-based institutions
- Implicit in this approach is an attempt to render educational theory redundant.
- This argument often feeds into formulating policies that justify the systemic shift from investing in long-term pre-service teacher education programmes to short-term in-service teacher education programmes.
- This is likely to reduce the teaching profession to mere technical skill

The Problem with Stand-Alone Institutions for Preparing Teachers

- The intellectual isolation of teachers actively discourages educational theorisation and the growth of interdisciplinary enquiry.
- Locating programmes of teacher education within colleges of general education is one way of breaking this insularity.
- Teachers need to undergo a rigorous pre-service programme of a minimum of four years after high school and two years after graduation

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- Critical components of the education of teachers (pre and in-service) include developing sound foundational perspectives of education, developing language proficiency, sound subject knowledge and a repertoire of professional skills
- Teachers need to be prepared psychologically, academically and professionally to teach in diverse classrooms. This would mean knowing diversity and deconstructing popular assumptions and stereotypes
- This would include dispositions, attitudes, capacity for independent learning and capacity to reflect and engage in collaborative work

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- Knowledge, skills and dispositions to work with children for instance, would require the ability to reflect on the finer nuances of developmental differences as tied in with varying social, political and other contexts
- Pre-service teacher education needs to be vertically linked with post-graduate-studies and research in education
- Teachers' remuneration needs to be linked to qualification rather than the stage of teaching
- Occupational mobility should be available for teachers within a stage-sector of school education

Locating Teacher Education in an Environment of knowledge Generation

- The undergraduate model of pre-service education provides the much needed interdisciplinary frame and a corporate life to young adults for developing their aspirations as teachers
- It is an economically viable model and
- a model that offers possibilities of deep engagement with young adults, thus channeling their aspirations to make a difference.
- The BEEd provides an example of a critical opening for undertaking postgraduate studies in a variety of humanities, social science disciplines and other disciplines.
- This has led young professionally qualified teachers to undertake research (within and outside the university) in areas of children's learning, curriculum enquiry and classroom processes, promoting the creation of a body of knowledge in education within the Indian context.

Critical Engagement with Teachers

- Engage teachers with subject knowledge: reconstruct concepts, confront misconceptions
- Enable them to experience learning as a social process and reflection as essential to learning
- Enable them to experience teaching as social practice and not just a practical activity requiring skills
- Engage in interdisciplinary enquiry into processes of schooling beset with dynamics of caste, gender, identity, linguistic and social diversity

Critical Engagement with Teachers

- Help them interrogate the relationship between school and society. For instance, examine how diversities come into being, why there is inequality amongst diverse groups and how attitudes supporting this inequality are socially constructed
- Encourage them to examine their own positions in society vis-à-vis diverse groups of people
- These diverse experiences and theoretical engagement would help them develop their identities as teachers
- Developing to be a teacher involves learning to discern between ‘learning outcomes’ and ‘learning experiences’
- Recognise teachers as thinking people rather than implementers