

Teacher Education in India (Vedic to 1947) - An Analysis

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Abstract

India has one of the oldest and largest systems of teacher education in the world. We are always interested to know about the history of teacher education in India. Teacher education in India has a strong historical perspective. It starts molding from the ancient education system and till the present system of education taking shape according to the global and local needs of the Indian society. In the ancient system of education pre Vedic education had a very prominent place in society. History of teacher education in India can be classified into two parts, one part was teacher education during pre independent India which starts from ancient education system of education till India got independent and other part was teacher education during post independent India that is after independent till present year. This paper also highlights the major milestones in the history of teacher education in India during pre independent only.

Keywords: historical perspective, largest systems, pre independent only, teacher education

Introduction

Teacher education programme starts molding from the ancient education system and till the present system of education taking shape according to the global and local needs of the Indian society. The history of teacher education in India is as old as the history of Indian education itself. India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Education of teachers must have been born in India in 1500 B.C.

Objective of the study

Teaching has been one of the oldest and respected professions in the world.

The education commission recommends the introduction of a “sound programme of professional education of teachers”.

The role, functions, competence and preparation of teachers have undergone a dramatic change from time to time. But the need for teachers has been imperative for all times.

The changing times as well as the requirements of the society have necessitated changes in the ways of teacher preparation.

This paper elaborates the progress of teacher education in India from Vedic age to Pre- independent India (1947)

The history of Indian teacher education may be divided into four parts

1. Ancient and Medieval Period (1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.)
2. Buddhist Period (500 B.C. to 1200 A.D.)
3. Muslim Period (1200 A.D. to 1700 A.D.)
4. British Period (1700 A.D. to 1947 A.D.).

Ancient and Medieval Period

In ancient India, the education was centered mainly on the Vedas. In Rig Vedic age the first and supreme teacher's were the 'Rishis' 'Gurukula' system -- 'Guru'-teacher and 'Sishya'-pupil existed, and 'individualisation of instruction' was a salient feature of the system. Thus the transmission of methods of teaching through imitation and repetition facilitated the transformation of scholars into teachers. The monitorial system of inducting senior pupils to the position of teachers can be considered as a contribution of the ancient educational system

Buddhist Period

In the absence of formal programmes for teacher preparation, the mastery of subject matter and skill in the methods of teaching imbibed through imitation of teachers were the ways to become teacher. The teacher was sometimes assisted in his work by some of the older and abler pupils who acted as monitors.

Muslim Period

During this period there was no formal system of teacher training. The teachers teaching in the Makhtabs were mostly moulvis, but in the Madrassahs scholarly persons were employed. The method of teacher preparation was mostly initiation of what the old teachers practiced. Good and experienced teachers with a discerning eye identified able students and appointed them tutors to look after and teach the junior students in their absence.

British Period**Teacher's Training Schools :**

The idea of formal teacher training originated out of an indigenous technique, called "Monitorial System". The first formal teacher's training School in India was set up at Serampur in Bengal in the name of "Normal School" by Carey, Marshman and Ward in 1793

Wood's Despatch (1854):

It gave some very valuable suggestions for the improvement of the education of teachers.

- 1) It suggested that allowances be given to persons who possess and aptness for teaching.
- 2) The introduction of pupil teacher system.

Lord Stanley's Despatch (1859):

Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India, greatly emphasized on teacher training.

- 1) New grant-in-aid rules provided that salary grants to schools be given to those teachers who had obtained a certificate of teacher training.
- 2) In 1886, the first training college to prepare secondary school teachers was set up at Saidapet in Madras.

Government of India Resolution on Education Policy (1904)–

It made some very vital suggestions for the improvement of the teacher-training Programme. These were:

- i. To enlist more men of ability and experience in the work of higher training.
- ii. To equip the training colleges.
- iii. To make the duration of the training programmes two years and for graduates, one year. The course would comprise knowledge of the principles which underlie the art of teaching and some degree of technical skill in the practice of the art.
- iv. The course would culminate in a university degree or diploma.
- v. There should be a close link between theory and practice and practicing schools should be attached to each college.

The Government of India Resolution on Education Policy (1913)–

- 1) Teachers should be drawn from the class of the boys whom they will teach and they should have passed the middle vernacular examination and undergone a year's training.
- 2) Periodical repetition and improvement courses for teachers.
- 3) No teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate and that there should be a constant exchange of ideas amongst the training college staff members and that they should visit different colleges.

Calcutta University Commission (1917-19)–

It recommended the introduction of Education as an optional subject at the Graduation and P.G. level. The recommendations of the Sadler Commission had salutary effect on the teacher training Programme in India.

The Hartog Committee (1929):

The Committee was primarily concerned with primary education but it made far-reaching recommendations for teacher training as well.

- 1) It suggested that teachers for rural areas should be inducted from persons who were close to rural society.
- 2) Journals for teacher in the vernacular, refresher courses, conferences and meetings of teacher associations can do much to brighten the lives of the teachers and improve their work.

The Abbott - Wood Report (1937)-

It primarily analyzed the position of vocational education but also made valuable suggestions about teacher education.

- 1) Duration of training should be 3 years.
- 2) Pupil to continue with general education along with professional training.
- 3) Refresher course for the teacher.

The Sergeant Report (1944)-

"Sergeant Plan" recommended that :

- 1) Suitable boys and girls should be picked out into the teaching profession after high school.

- 2) Practical training should be provided, refresher courses be planned and research facilities be provided.
- 3) It suggested a two year course for preprimary and junior basic schools (after high school) and a three year course for the senior basic schools.
- 4) It proposed revised pay scales for all categories of teachers, to attract better teachers.

Teaching Methods in Ancient India

Sravana means First the jnanendriyas are used. Hearing, seeing and feeling are used to receive wisdom. Through words the wisdom of the ultimate reality is offered to the student, either through a living form of a master, teacher, coach or through the sacred texts. Receiving the wisdom on which you contemplate is called sravana.

Manana means When these words are received, the seeker will have to sit with these words. She can use the karmendriya of inner speech to chew on these words. Learning to have a dialogue with these words of wisdom will reveal the knowledge that is packed within these words. The mystery of the universe slowly unfolds in the understanding of the seeker when s/he quietly contemplates on the nature of the Non-dual Reality. This process of using the mind and its instrument to contemplate on this wisdom with the use of words is called manana.

Nididhyasana means Playing with words to unravel the unknown of the Non-dual Reality will lead the student to a state in which a knowing is present without needing words. The words used during contemplation, if the seeker allows it, can fall away and will lead the seeker to silence. A silence filled with knowing. The seeker can rests in this knowing. This state is known as nididhyasana.

There are some teaching method in ancient India like Lecture (Knowledge was transmitted orally), explanation, Discussion, Debate, Question-answer, Exposition, Oral recitation, Group-drill, Storytelling, 3H (Head, Heart and Hand).

The **Panchatantra** is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables in Sanskrit verse and prose, arranged within a frame story. The surviving work is dated to about 300 BC, but the fables are likely much more ancient. The text's author is unknown, but has been attributed to Vishnu Sharma in some recensions and Vasubhaga in others, both of which may be fictitious pen names. It is likely a Hindu text, and based on older oral traditions with "animal fables that are as old as we are able to imagine".

It is "certainly the most frequently translated literary product of India", and these stories are among the most widely known in the world. It goes by many names in many cultures. There is a version of *Panchatantra* in nearly every major language of India, and in addition there are 200 versions of the text in more than 50 languages around the world.

Conclusion

So a teacher in Rig Vedic age was the one who was first instructed by his own master, became an excellent and successful student, further enhanced his bank of knowledge and was finally acknowledged by the learned society around him as fit to become a teacher. In the medieval ages, the task of the teacher was to impart knowledge to his pupils. In tune with the changes in the role and task of the teacher, the pattern of teacher education is also varied from time to time.

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