

Vision Statement for Teacher Education

On July 25, 2012, Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee said in the Parliament: Education is the true alchemy that can bring India its next golden age. Our motto is unambiguous: All for knowledge, and knowledge for all.

The 12th Five Year Plan of the GoI states that improvement in the quality of education is not possible without investing significantly into improving the quality of teacher educators and teachers. Indeed, we owe it to every child of the country to provide education of the highest quality. The project for quality teacher education therefore needs to be mounted as a mission.

Even though teachers have always been recognized as key to quality education, our understanding of the significance, nature and process of teacher development has grown over the past few decades. The GoI has understandably increased the outlay on teacher education in the 12th Plan and has initiated a process of interacting with the States through specially chosen teams to review and support the progress of teacher development efforts. Deliberations at the national and international forum have brought out the necessity for ensuring possibilities of continuous learning for the teachers and the need to sensitize them to fundamental aspects of human learning and to diversity and inclusion. Teacher education must involve systems of continuous engagements with fundamental issues of education, capacity building and sustained exposure to scholarship and discussions. There must be a space for the articulation of the initiatives and needs of the teacher. The importance of the agency of the teacher, strengthening and consolidation of her motivation to learn are crucial elements. These would require creating suitable facilities and opportunities to learn more and to grow professionally and in self-esteem.

The understanding of the nature, content and process of educating children was articulated carefully and coherently in the NCF 2005; this articulation was also in consonance with the contemporary developmental ideas in education. The

NCFTE 2009, the GoI 12th Plan and other documents regarding teachers' educational development have been informed by this. The key ideas of this document viz. purpose of education, the nature of knowledge, how knowledge is structured, concepts and ideas in disciplines and what should be the process of transaction keeping in mind the diverse contexts available in learning institutions and the diversity of learners among others need to reach *all* teachers and teacher educators without any more delay. It is important that these become a part of the understanding of teacher education institutions, the teacher educators and the teachers coming to these institutions. The DPEP initially and then SSA have tried to orient teachers across the country to the ideas related to NCF 2005. The lessons from both these efforts have been to emphasize sustained dialogue and engagement with teachers. These experiences also brought out the need for strengthening materials and persons who interact with teachers.

There is an urgent need for well prepared and motivated teachers and teacher educators in adequate numbers. They must be supported by systems that motivate them and enable them to learn continuously so that they can provide education in diverse context to children from diverse backgrounds, interest and capabilities. Therefore, teachers' and teacher educators' education needs to be continuously invigorating, purposeful and participative.

Delivering good quality education to the community of teachers is not merely a question of providing a good curriculum document and some good materials but a question of helping each individual, each institution and then a network of institutions understand these in their contexts and appropriate and adopt them according to their own respective contexts. This process will develop a sense of ownership and understanding of the issues and the materials. Only then they can engage with the ideas and share it with others in a similar manner. This is necessary to set up a system that is constantly thinking, learning and therefore, living.

Both the government and non-government structures are available to deliver this support in the domain of teacher education. There is a need to develop synergy between them and set up effective mechanism for their continuous empowerment to

fulfill the role expected of them. Processes must be initiated to bring together resources and develop systems to scaffold, monitor and support government and non-government structures. They need to be enabled to engage with the questions of confronting them with greater confidence and capability. Needless to say, this would require more resources, new structures, new ideas and new ways of functioning.

The recent JRMs to 14 States have brought out the potential and energy that exist on the ground. In general, there is a strong desire in the teaching community to be a part of the process to reach quality education to all children. Often, the deep-seated desire of teachers and teacher educators to learn more is comparable with children and parents' desire for education; we need to build on this solid foundation. There are several DIETs, CTEs and SCERTs which are doing outstanding work. There are, however, serious gaps that need to be addressed at all levels. These gaps are seen in the shortage of faculty members and resource persons, learning resources including libraries, ICT accessibility, infrastructure facilities, systems of continuous learning and processes that encourage, motivate and empower individuals and institutions. Our Mission is to fill in these gaps and ensure high quality education for teachers and teacher educators.

Vision and role of Centers of Excellence

Centers of Excellence can be set up in both the Government and the Non-government sectors. These Centers would have to be trans-state and function in a multi-dimensional space to build linkages between schools and academia on the one hand and Teacher Education institutions and research on the other, thereby ensuring a sustained dialogic relationship among all the components. They would attempt to ensure sustained professional development of teachers and teacher educators. These Centers should be credible and have a proven track record of training teachers over

substantial periods of time; they should be able build on the knowledge and the potential teachers bring to sites of training and open up their minds to the philosophical, sociological, historical and moral aspects of education. They should be able to engage teachers in a way that they begin to explore issues of conceptual clarity about the ways in which children learn and construct knowledge in different epistemological domains. They should be able to train them in the processes of scientific enquiry in ways that they become autonomous learners and begin to function as agents of change.

A great challenge for these Centers of Excellence would be to regularly produce materials in different languages that address fundamental issues in education including the potential of the child, construction of knowledge, nature and structure of different systems of knowledge such as Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Science, concepts in different curricular areas, learning processes and methods of classroom transaction, conduct capacity building workshops and evolve reliable models for teacher assessment. They will also carefully document their own work and undertake a critical survey of the existing models of Teacher Education ensuring the dissemination of seminal ideas underlying such work. An important function would involve the sensitization and re-orientation of different functionaries at the community, village, district, state and national levels. Inclusive education should not just mean adding some cosmetic access related structures to a building; it involves a fundamental change in the mindset of all people, children, teacher, parents, politicians and officials included.