

# CONCEPT NOTE

## International Conference on Journey of Teacher Education: Local to Global

17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> August, 2019



### INTRODUCTION

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was set up as a statutory body by an Act of Parliament (Act No. 73 of 1993), and started functioning on 17th August, 1995. The August of this year, that is 2019, marks the beginning of the 25th year of its existence.

On the occasion of its silver jubilee celebrations, NCTE wishes to reiterate that the teacher education system, being responsible for preparing the teachers who nurture and educate the future generations, is the backbone of any country. Further, in order to improve the standards of the Indian teacher education system and to bring it in alignment with global developments, NCTE is organizing Conference to send optimistic signals across the sector. It intends to provide a platform to eminent academicians, thinkers, practitioners and administrators to discuss the various aspects, issues, challenges, solutions and possibilities of the existing teacher education system in India.

These deliberations will commence with an International Conference on the "Journey of Teacher Education: Local to Global" to reflect on the contributions of NCTE to the teacher education sector, and how it can begin to look beyond the borders of India to imbibe best practices available elsewhere while sharing the Indian experience with other countries.

The Conference will highlight and celebrate the achievements of the Indian education system and facilitate dissemination of quality global practices in teacher education. These deliberations will contribute to the vision that NCTE and the teacher educators in the country must aspire towards for the coming 25 years. To this end, the objectives of the Conference are:

- To examine the current scenario of teacher education– challenges, policy, focus, processes and prospects.
- To share innovations in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in schools and teacher education institutions.
- To examine the integration of information and communication technologies in teaching, learning and evaluation
- To examine the status of inclusion in our country with focus on gender, learners from economically weak sections and learners with disabilities.
- To examine possibilities for internationalisation of teacher education.

While the canvas is vast, the attempt will be to locate the landscape of schooling in India in the practice and processes of teacher education. The Conference will address ways to innovate, integrate ICT meaningfully in the curriculum and pedagogy, and include all children in learning while preparing them for the global and ever changing world. To guide the deliberations, the following themes have been identified for the Conference:

- Teacher Education in India: The Present Scenario
- Innovation in Teaching Practices: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment
- Teacher Education: Knowledge Traditions and Practices of India
- Integration of Information and Communication Technologies in Teaching, Learning and Evaluation
- Inclusive Education: A Reality Check (Gender, Economically Weak Sections and Disability)
- Internationalization of Teacher Education

In order to ensure alignment between the objectives and the proceedings of the Conference, the themes are elaborated below.

### **Context for the Themes of the Conference**

Teachers are central to educational processes – this has been emphasized often enough in our policy and related documents. The National Policy on Education 1986 states that 'No nation can rise above the level of its teachers' while the Kothari Commission emphasized that 'The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms'. Fundamentally, equity, access and quality are critical concerns the world over; however, given the history and diversity of our nation, they remain a challenge.

In response to these concerns, educational provisions have changed in terms of access, inclusion of previously marginalised groups, consideration of learning at all ages, and so on. It is clear that the guiding framework remains the Constitution – thus, we need classrooms which develop contributing citizens with the capacity to engage in democratic processes, with a sound sense of ethics and a commitment to equity. Hence, our teachers also need to be prepared for such classrooms. It is important to note that even after leaving pre-service teacher education, the process of learning continues. During the ongoing interaction between teacher, classroom and school setting, the teacher's knowledge and beliefs are constantly tested, even contested, and refined.

The teacher we need today is one who is capable of reflecting on her experiences in order to enhance her own professional capacities. With this context, a brief description of the concerns and questions which have informed the themes is given below.

### **Teacher Education in India: The Present Scenario**

Any attempt to look forward necessitates reflection on what has been and is. Teacher education has a long and varied history in our country. Of late, the discourse has shifted from 'teacher training' to teacher education and development, with the aim to prepare professionals. These teachers, within a supportive ecosystem, should have the capacity to take responsibility for the learning of their students and become reflective learners themselves in this process. This is to be made possible through comprehensive teacher education programmes with depth and breadth across disciplines.

At the same time, our teacher education system is extremely complex, with a variety of programmes spread unevenly across geographies. We also have a detailed structure for teacher support in place, which spans the distance from schools to national level institutions.

In order to bring about coherent and systematic improvement across these programmes and structures, it is important not only to reflect on the current scenario and how it can be optimized so as to forge ahead.

### **Innovations in Teaching Practices: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment**

The transaction of curriculum is not a function of the capacity of the teacher or teacher educator alone. Teaching-learning does not take place in a vacuum but within a deeply impactful ecosystem. The understanding and learning that students acquire are also mediated by student-related factors such as student agency, motivation, home language, needs, age, gender and socio-economic status. Hence it becomes important to examine the pedagogic practices, the contexts and conditions that support the learning of all students. Further the need is also to examine in what ways the teacher education programme and the school curriculum support pedagogy that is effective.

Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment of school and teacher education are inextricably linked. For decades, curricular reforms have moved away from 'teacher-centred' pedagogic approaches to more 'student-', 'learner-' or 'child-'centred, or 'active' learning approaches. The ability to transact the curriculum in a manner which leads to the desired learning is the aim of every educator. A teacher must be able to transact the curriculum in a meaningful way for learners, in a manner that engages them and advances learning. However, there is no single 'formula' or approach to doing this successfully. These successes may be at the level of a single classroom or at the level of a district or State. In any case, these innovations must be shared so that others can try them out for greater success in their educational endeavours.

### **Teacher Education: Knowledge Traditions and Practices of India (KTPI)**

India has a rich repository of our ancient systems of knowledge in different and diverse fields. This has added to our rich cultural heritage and such tradition has translated into practices for survival, sustenance and for leading a healthy and purposeful life. Knowledge and traditions have been handed down to us mainly in the form of oral traditions, textual materials, inscriptions, and art and architecture. Ancient systems of knowledge mainly consisted of understanding the mysteries of the universe, human interactions with environment, philosophy of life, importance of conservation and preservation of environment, development of art and aesthetic sensitivities and inculcation of just and humane qualities among all.

The glimpses of our glorious past have been inter-woven in fields like- philosophy, grammar, literature, economy, agriculture, polity, medicine, yoga, astronomy, astrology, life-sciences, architecture, metallurgy, mining, gemology, shipbuilding, trade and commerce and so on. Plans are there to inculcate KTPI into school education in integrated manner through various subject areas across classes. This includes knowledge and understanding of different fields related to language and literature in India, Indian philosophical systems, Performing arts, Art and Architecture, Astronomy, Mathematics, Indigenous system of Medicines, Chemistry and Metallurgy in India and Yoga for healthy living.

Teachers also need to be well grounded in such knowledge of the Indian traditions as only then they will be able to communicate such knowledge to the children.

### **Integration of Information and Communication Technologies in Teaching, Learning and Evaluation**

Information and communication technologies (ICT) has advanced in ways which could not be imagined even a decade back. This has deeply impacted our lives. However, the integration of ICT in teaching-learning remains to be satisfactorily implemented.

The questions that arise are – are our teachers and teacher educators well equipped or trained for integration of ICT? Do our teacher education programmes adequately prepare teachers for using ICT in teaching-learning? Have we been able to digitalize the entire process of admissions, teaching-learning, assessments and declaration of results? To what extent are our teachers and teacher educators efficient in this? Are we teaching our students with laptops and computers, are we sharing the information with them digitally? Are we giving them daily assignments and receiving them digitally? Are they and their parents able to see their everyday performance digitally online? Have we created such profiles of our students and teachers? And much more. But before all this is possible, we must examine the levels of integration of ICT in teaching, learning and evaluation we must thrive for.

### **Inclusive Education – A Reality Check (Gender, Economically Weak Sections and Disability)**

The specificities of the country with regard to diversity, abilities, migration, inequalities across social groups and gender, and stratified educational provisions demand re-envisioning of teacher education programmes. The Salamanca Statement defines inclusion as the "recognition of the need to work towards 'schools for all' – institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs". Have we been able to create such "schools for all"? Do we see deprived and disadvantaged children, and children with disabilities sitting in the same classroom? Have we been successful in developing such teachers who can celebrate these differences? How will we overcome the gender bias that still exists in so many regions of our country, where the girl child cannot even share the same classrooms with boys?

Teachers are yet to develop the capacity to follow pedagogy suitable to diverse learners in the classroom. The discernment to identify needs of individual learners and the ability to meet these needs should be central to a teacher's practice. For this, institutional support, sensitising of all stakeholders are as important as teacher education.

### **Internationalization of Teacher Education**

Changes in technology have facilitated dramatic shifts in communication and commerce, making it easier to cross borders, promote access, and cause changes in political, economic, social and cultural landscapes. These changes connect people in unprecedented ways and require that today's students have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to engage responsibly and effectively in this increasingly globalized context.

What would be the meaning of internationalization in our scenario? What would be the implications? Do our programmes need to undergo a major change or will the current approach suffice to prepare globally competent teachers? Would students from other countries be attracted to prepare to become teachers in our country? Would internationalization involve only pre-service teacher education programmes or would they involve in-service programmes as well? There is, thus, a need to examine the possibilities and prospects for internationalization of teacher education in India.

### **Conclusion**

This Conference intends to provide a platform to reflect on the critical areas described above, which are central to a teacher's practice in the current scenario, and therefore critical to teacher education. It is our belief that this initiative will indicate and communicate to all the stakeholders in the teacher education sector the urgent need for improvement, and will lead to the creation of a cohesive environment for such change.