Original Research Article

Re-envisioning Teacher Education for Post-pandemic Future of India

Dr. Kalpana Kharade

K.J. Somaiya Comprehensive College of Education, Training & Research. Vidya Vihar (E), Mumbai

Abstract:

During the past two years, schools, colleges and universities, shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic, causing disruptions in pre-service teacher education in many parts of the world. The training dimension that was hardest hit was the pre-service practicum. Due to the locked down, prospective teachers were deprived of the 'normal' field experience and actual classroom teaching practices in authentic school settings. Various practicum modalities however unfolded all over the globe and these are documented in many papers published during 2020 and early 2021. (Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020), (Ellis et al 27],(Zhang, W., Wang, Y., Yang, L., & Wang, C. 2020),(Ferdig, R. E., Baumgartner, E., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Mouza, C. 2020),(Ersin, P. I, & Atay, D. 2021) they do present detailed exposition about the impact of COVID-19 on the pre-service teacher education.These studies help us to explore, how pedagogies got adapted when students, learners and teacher educators moved to new online spaces. These studies also help us to understand, how established student teaching practices changed quickly, with students showing an immense disposition for change.

Despite the many challenges this 'emergency practicum' caused, including anxiety, a number of benefits were noted. They include: in addition to learning how to teach, students also learned how to teach online – a valuable and needed competency in today's world.

- A change in attitude towards technology enhanced teaching- learning   among the students and academicians.

- Increase in interactivity, relatedness and professional learning.

- The most important benefit to my mind is the student- teachers, school teachers and the teacher educators made very sincere efforts for humanising their pedagogy there by making the learning accessible, engaging and inclusive for all the learners.

- After initial emergency modifications, innovation and experimentation   became the focus of activities.

- All these gains should not be left behind when we move ahead. They should be keptfor our future re-envisioning of teacher education.

- Keeping in view the crucial role of teachers in the post COVID period it is really isential to redefine the teacher education. This process would involve:

OPEN ACCESS

Original Research Article

- Identifying the characteristics of the teachers needed for facing the challenges in the education system due to any unforeseen situations
- Defining the elements of teacher education programme, that can prepare teachers for facing the challenges.
- Identifying the Institutional, State or National policy structure, that can support such programme for the preparation of teachers.
- Reinventing the role of teacher that can contribute for the transformation of education system to make it inclusive , humanistic and progressive for todays' learners and society.

Teacher education system should be planned in such a way, which could support present and future teachers in becoming more resilient to crisis we may come across in future, similar to COVID-19.

For this a variety of content based on multi-disciplinary approach, pedagogies of inquiry, inclusion and collaboration for humanising the learning and robust practicum training is the need of the time. This process of teacher preparation should focus on four key dimensions namely: "Connect", "Communicate ", "Collaborate" and " Co-construct".

In this process, along with other factors like availability of financial resources, innovative curriculum, quality infrastructure etc, information and communication technology(ICT) can become a catalyst. + This overhauling of teacher education should happen at four levels:

1. Redesigning the curriculum

The efforts in this direction should focus on:

- Multi-disciplinary approach to content designing
- Providing big basket of electives for the prospective teachers to choose from
- Pedagogies for offline as well as online teaching
- Choice based credit system
- Flexibility in curriculum planning

2. Curriculum transaction

Keeping in view the experiences for last two years, the curriculum of teacher education needs to be transacted in a blended mode. Following are some of the ideas suggested in this context:

- **Using flipped learning approach for content delivery-** Teacher educator can provide content to the students in the form of presentations, documents and videos before conducting the class. Allow the students to go through the content and prepare their notes or queries or even reflective comments, the same can be discussed in the classroom interactions.
- **Using digital platforms**- For sharing the course content teachers can use platforms like Edmodo, CANVAS, Moodle or Google classroom.
- **Creating LMS-** The institutions can have their own LMS which can be used to disseminate course content. Students can share their learning doubts on the same learning platform.
- **Creating discussion forum and blogs-** Discussion forums or teachers' blogs can help to conduct the discussions on various educational issues.
- **Using collaborative learning strategies-** Teachers can plan collaborative group activities, group discussions, and group tasks, projects for meaningful engagement of the learners in the classroom or outside of the classroom.

OPEN ACCESS

Original Research Article

➢ **Giving opportunity for exploring vast e-resources**– The teacher can acquaint the learners with the available knowledge reservoirs for enriching their learning experiences. They may include:
- Knowledge repositories
  - E-gyankosh,
  - e-content repositories.
- Websites - NCERT, NCTE, UGC, DSERT.
- MOOCs (Massive Open online Courses)

Massive Open online Courses (MOOCs) are recent development that is reshaping the trend of higher education on the web. It represents an emerging methodology of online teaching, based on the philosophy of connectivism. "Massive" refers to the large number of students can be engaged in online course, and its "Openness" is associated with software used registration to anyone who has access to web, open curriculum, learning resources and evaluation.

-MOOC providers: USA (Coursera, EdX, Udacity), Ireland (ALISON), Germany (iversity), Australia (open2study), Japan (schoo), FutureLearn,

- Open courseware, Open UpEd, KHAN ACADEMY, educa, saylor.org, MOOC2DEGREE, NovoED, Canvas network, Neodemia, World Education University (WEU), Stanford Online, Eliedemy, EURODL, CLASS, CENTRAL, edSurge, EFQUEL, Commonwealth of Learning, Minglebox, Swayam etc.

-E-journals: www.e-journals,org/, http://www.sciencedirect.com/, www.doaj.org

Open- education Resources for Teacher Educators, Teachers and Learners-

- Geogebra, Google Earth, Hot potato, C-map, R- campus, Mahara, Moodle and wiki-spaces, classroom-2.0, Visual field trips, statistical tools and web conferencing Tools.

Using creative assignments- The teachers can give assignments which would require application of ICTs. They may include:

-Creating blogs;

- Creating website;

- Observing innovative video lessons based on various strategies and writing review of them;

- Designing ICT enhanced learning activities individually or collaboratively and creating a repository of them;

- Visiting various websites and access policy and other landmark documents and writing critical reviews;

-Writing book/ article reviews;

- Developing educational case –based vignettes;

- Designing audio-visual materials for teaching practices etc.

3. Preparation of prospective teachers for future classroom

This domain of teacher preparation should include:

• Development of digital pedagogical competencies, eticates and ethics for online as well for offline teaching

• Equipping preservice teachers with pedagogies of inquiry, inclusion and collaboration

• Development of TPACK among the preservice teachers

• Capacity building of preservice teachers for developing digital learning resources and open educational resources

• Promoting reflective practices

OPEN ACCESS

Original Research Article

- Capacity building of pre-service teachers for providing timely support for students' mental and emotional health and well-being.

4. Extension

This domain of teacher preparation should facilitate the creation of learning community consisting of pre-service and in-service teachers, leadership at schools and teacher education institutions levels, teacher educators, parents and community at large.

This learning community should engage in constructive dialogue and collaborate to take action for powering up the education system.

It should also engage in participatory research, creating ecosystems for quality support for learners and capacity building of teachers and teacher educators along with parental education.

- **Conclusion**

It is the need of the hour that teacher education must prepare teacher for the roles of being an encouraging, supportive and humane facilitator in a teaching- learning situation, in order to make teacher education more sensitive to the emerging demands of the society.

Hence, the reimagining of teacher education for upcoming future would require to think differently and creatively.