

# Critique of the Development of Teacher Education in Bengal

**Ajoy Ghosh<sup>1</sup> and Swami Tattwasarananda<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies, University of Calcutta.

<sup>2</sup>Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah

---

**ABSTRACT** : Teacher education in modern period in modern sense was characterized by the colonizers in India. Different committees were instituted to look in to the system of teacher education and training. Amongst them Wood's Dispatch, Government of India's Resolution on Education Policy of 1904 and Saddler and Hartog Committees made substantive recommendations which hold good for the present times too. Teacher education includes teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Hence, now Teacher Education is equal to Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills. Though the culmination of teacher training into teacher education is an event which dates back to 1964, in the present study, both teacher training and teacher education have been used interchangeably to express the same meaning. The present study would describe why and when teacher training had been established as a system of education in India. It would identify the forces that shaped and developed teacher training in un-divided Colonial Bengal. It would find and locate the premier institutions and their role in that historical context. The term Bengal, wherever used in the present study to delineate the scenario before partition (1947), has been used to indicate undivided Bengal which included parts of Assam, Bihar and Orissa including the present West Bengal and Bangladesh.

**Keywords** : Teacher education, Teacher training, Bengal, Normal school

---

Teaching is one of the oldest and respected professions in the world. 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 indigenous systems of education that increased during the first ten centuries were the Hindu and Buddhist systems. In which the students usually studied under one teacher, a guru, for a number of years. The instruction was in Sanskrit language. Meritorious students of

higher classes called “Pattacharya” who assisted their teacher in performing the lesson. If the teacher sometimes went outside, he used to delegate the task of teaching and the whole system. In this context Mukerji (1964) said,

“ The method of training teachers prevalent in indigenous schools at the beginning of the nineteenth century was what has come to be known as the ‘monitorial system’. It consisted in dividing a school or a class into a number of homogenous groups- each group consisting of young pupils kept in charge of a monitor or an advanced student. It was the duty of the monitor to give lessons to his group, assist the pupils in learning and to report their behaviours and progress to the teacher.”

Thus, in this system, meritorious students of the same class and some students of the higher classes assisted the teacher in performing teaching and other allied works, and after having been thus trained, these students became efficient teachers and school organizers. During the early period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Muslims introduced two types of educational institutions, the *maktabs* primary schools, and the *madrasahs* - seats of higher learning. At the primary level the emphasis was on learning parts of the Koran in order to perform the daily devotions, and only secondary consideration was given to the teaching of the three R’s.

The arrival of the British in the 18th century did not immediately upset Indian education. The East India Company established schools for the children of its own employees. But who would teach them? The efforts made for the

development of teacher training in Bengal were attempted by mainly three types of agencies:

- i) Christian Missionaries,
- ii) British East India Company and British residents in Bengal, and
- iii) Indigenous effort by urban elite class or education societies.

The Christian missionaries entered India in the early 19th century, and started schools for the natives and later initiated teacher training institutions. For the first time the Danish Missionaries established the first formal teacher training school in the name of ‘normal school’ at Serampur situated on the opposite bank of Calcutta in 1793. Normal school meant the school which provided training for the would be school teachers. In 1919 the Calcutta School Book Society was established and started to educate the indigenous teachers. By 1857, Bengal had four normal schools at Calcutta, Chinsurah, Dacca and Guwahati respectively. The Calcutta normal school was established in 1855 by Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The Chinsurah normal school was opened by Mr Pratt and Dacca normal school was set up by Mr. Henry.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was debated whether full time training was needed for secondary teachers at all. The general belief was that good general education was enough for a person to be a good teacher than professional training (Mukerji, 1964). It may be mentioned here that even today, those who belong outside the domain of teacher education but are prominently placed in general education, perhaps believe in the same philosophy. It is of significance to note that although the need for and importance of training teachers was accepted by all concerned, still

there was a controversy in England as to what type of training should be introduced in India. should it be the pattern of the French Normal Schools or that of the German Schools? Under these circumstances, the progress made in regard to the training of secondary teachers was very slow during the initial years following the report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882.

Some valuable recommendations for teacher training were made by Wood's Despatch of 1854, Report of the Hunter Commission of 1882 and the Sargent Report of 1944.

#### **Wood's Despatch, 1854**

The 1854 Education Despatch of the East India Company (known as 'Woods Despatch') outlined, for the first time, a comprehensive educational policy for the whole of India. It gave some very valuable suggestions for the improvement of the education of teachers. The Despatch (1854) said:

"In England when systematic attempts began to be made for the improvement of education, one of the chief defects was found to be the insufficient number of qualified school masters and the imperfect method of teaching which prevailed. This led to the foundation of normal and model schools for the training." (Education Despatch, 1854, p. 211)

The Despatch further suggested that allowances/ award/ stipend, be given to persons who had obtained a certificate of teacher training. On successful completion of the training programme they were to be given certificates and employment. Thus, the Dispatch opined in favour of sufficient incentive for the would-be teachers. It may be mentioned here that

following Wood's recommendations even up to 2001 such practice of giving stipend to the fresher trainees was practised in West Bengal.

#### **Lord Stanley's Despatch, 1859**

Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India, in his Despatch in 1859, laid even greater emphasis on teacher training than the Despatch of 1854. According to Stanley's Despatch:

"The new grant-in-aid rules framed after 1859, often provided a salary grant to schools only for those teachers who had obtained a certificate of teacher training" (Mukerji, 1964). This reference helps us to locate the genesis of the present practice in West Bengal owing to the teachers with a B.Ed. degree to enjoy one extra increment in the salary structure; on the contrary, teachers without a B.Ed. degree will run short of one such increment for 5 years at least and they will be entitled to enjoy such increment from the last day of their final examination provided they are to qualify successfully.

#### **The Indian Education Commission, 1882**

In 1882, Indian Education Commission laid emphasis on the establishment of a number of normal schools for secondary teachers' training throughout the country. The Indian Education Commission, 1882, which is popularly known as The Hunter Commission recommended introduction of the principles of practice-teaching and only successful candidates should be employed as teachers in any secondary school, government or aided. This reminds us of the dictums of the RTE, 2009, further augmented by NCTE Regulation, 2014. By 1882 there were 116 training institutions for men and 15 for women in India with the annual expenditures off our lakh Rupees.

### **Government of India Resolution on Education Policy, 1904**

This is one of the most important educational documents which laid down the policies for the future educational system, and initiated a new era in the training of secondary teachers. Lord Curzon ordered to improve and increase the number of training colleges with the following principles –

- (i) Men of ability and experience should be enlisted to provide adequate staff of well-trained members of the education service.
- (ii) Importance to be given to the equipment of training colleges for secondary teachers (the basic minimum of which has recently been specified in NCTE, Regulation, 2014).
- (iii) Need was felt for practicing schools to be attached with each college to correlate theory with the practice of teaching (In the said NCTE Regulation, 2014, the adaptation of an experimental school by each Teacher Education College has been seriously recommended).
- (iv) The course would culminate in a university degree or diploma (In West Bengal D.El.Ed. is yet to come under the purview of University education).
- (v) The training period must be at least two years, except in the case of graduates, for whom one year training might suffice (There has been initiated a lot of changes all over India in very recent years).

- (v) Training colleges should be linked with the schools, so that a teacher may not neglect the methods learnt in the college, when he or she accepts teaching as a profession.

As a result of the recommendations, three training colleges were established in the then Bengal as follows: David Hare Training College, Calcutta (1908); Training College, Patna (1909); and Dacca Teachers' Training College (1910). The Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 1913, further advanced teacher training by saying that "no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that he has qualified to do so."

### **The Sadler Commission in 1919**

The Calcutta University (Sadler) Commission of 1919 emphasised the role of university in the professional training of secondary school teachers and educational researches. For the improvement of secondary school teachers' training programme, the Commission suggested:-

- (i) a master's course in education to be introduced (As a result, University of Calcutta launched post-graduate degree in Education in 1934 and next year (1935) opened a Teachers' Training Department to promote the systematic study of the science and art of teaching).
- (ii) To make Education as a subject of study at the intermediate and B.A. levels both.
- (iii) To improve the physical facilities of training colleges (Now-a-days the basic minimum criteria of which are determined by the NCTE).

- (iv) To emphasize the role of universities in the professional training of secondary teachers and the need to establish a demonstration school attached to each training college.

**The Hartog Committee, 1929**, also made some important recommendations regarding the training of primary teachers. As a result of these declarations, the teachers' training institutions in India developed steadily, with improved libraries, and better equipped laboratories. Practicing schools for trainees were also made accessible. The committee recommended and suggested conferences, refresher and orientation courses for those teachers who were already in service to raise the standard of school teachers. As a result, refresher and orientation courses, workshop for teachers started to be organized in the training colleges.

#### **The Abbott-Wood Report, 1937**

This report submitted in 1937 is again a landmark in the field of education. It primarily analysed the position of vocational education but also made valuable suggestions about teacher education. According to the report the duration of training should be 3 years to enable the pupil to continue with general education along with professional training. It may not be out of the context if we mention here about the 4 year integrated teacher education courses (B.A.B.Ed. or B.Sc.B.Ed. etc.) run by the RIEs (now Assam University also runs such course) in contemporary India. The preamble of the NCTE norms and Standards made for such courses as if echoes the same vision as was enunciated in the Abbott-Wood Report:

“The 4 year integrated programme aims at integrating general studies comprising

science (B.Sc.B.Ed.) and social sciences or humanities (B.A.B.Ed.) and professional studies comprising foundation of education, pedagogy of school subject and practicum related to the task and functions of a school teacher. It maintains a balance between the theory and practice, and coherence and integration among the components of the programme, representing a wide knowledge base of a secondary school teacher. The programme aims at preparing teachers for upper primary and secondary stages of education.” (NCTE, 2014)

The Abbott-Wood Report further suggested a refresher course for the teacher so that he could get a wider experience.

#### **The Sargent Report, 1944**

In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) presented a scheme of education named “Post-war Educational Development in India”, popularly known as the “Sargent Plan”. The scheme was a broad-based educational plan. It made some practical suggestions for teacher's training programme. This report suggested two years' training for senior basic school teachers and the non-graduate teachers in high schools were expected to undergo a training course for two years and the graduates would receive one year training.

In 1947, at the eve of independence, there were 650 training schools with enrolment of 38,770 students in India. The number of secondary training colleges all over the country was only 42 with an enrolment of 3100 teacher trainees. After independence, government of India took the task of reconstruction of Indian

**Teacher Training Colleges in Colonial Bengal at a glance**

<b>Name of the Centre</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>	<b>Name of the affiliating University on 1947</b>	<b>Present Position</b>
David Hare Training college	1908 in July	University of Calcutta	The college offers B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses. From 2015 the college has been affiliated by the West Bengal University of Teacher Training, Education Planning and Administration.
Patna Training College	1908 in October	The college was primarily affiliated by the University of Calcutta. But from 1st October, 1917, the Patna Training College was affiliated to the Patna University under section II of the Patna University Act 1917	Now Patna Training College is a constituent unit of Patna University. In 1935, the Patna Training College started one year Master of Education (M.Ed.) programme for postgraduate teaching in Education.
Dacca Training College	1910	Initially the college was affiliated by the University of Calcutta; however since 1921 the College has been affiliated by the University of Dacca.	Dacca University Act of 1920, Act No. XVIII, was passed by the Legislative Council that received the assent of the Governor General on 23 March and in 1921 when Department of Education was started the College merged in the department.
Diocessan College	-	The institution initially pioneered enlightened education for girls in West Bengal. It was the first and only Christian College for women in this city.	The recognition of the college was revoked in 1935, because one of our students Smt. Beena Das (renowned freedom fighter of West Bengal) shot Stanley Jackson, the then Governor of Bengal.
B.Ed. Department of Loreto College	1913	University of Calcutta	The Department offers B.Ed. Programme
Union Christian Training College, Berhampore, Murshidabad	1938	From its inception it was affiliated to the University of Calcutta but since 1999 it is affiliated to the University of Kalyani.	This Institution was the joint enterprise of seven missionary societies and churches, established with the primary object of meeting the urgent need for trained teachers in Christian secondary schools in West Bengal, but the facilities for training are extended to students of all communities. The B.Ed. Course started in the year 1938 and B.P.Ed. in the year 1975.



education on priority basis. Likewise many committees and commissions were set up by the government of India for strengthening the system of teacher education in India. It may be mentioned in the light of very recent developments of the teacher education scenario in West Bengal that the West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed a Bill In the month of November, 2014, announcing the setting up of *West Bengal University for Teachers' Training, Education, Planning and Administration* with the aim to "bringing all D.El.Ed., B.Ed. and M.Ed. colleges under one umbrella streamlining teachers' training and education in the state". But, D.El.Ed. course is yet to come under the purview of the said University.

### Conclusion

Thus it is made evident that Teacher education in India has not been a static system, on the contrary it was a dynamic and continuous process. In this study, an attempt has been made to examine and evaluate the evolutionary process of development of teacher education programme in Bengal. This work has attempted to make a historiographical account of teacher education in Colonial Bengal and locate the genesis of the recent developments in Teacher education in India in general and in West Bengal in particular by means of locating their roots in the reports of the committees and commissions constituted in Colonial Bengal. For example:

1. Most of the component of teacher education in present India is deeply embedded to the past history.
2. What lessons can we learn from recent and remote historical experience, for the stepping of the theory and practice of

present and future teacher education programme? Till date we have failed to introduce at least one four-year integrated college of education in our state which was strongly suggested by report of National Commission on Teachers(1983-85).

3. From the very beginning it was recommended that demonstration school must be attached to the training colleges. Practically, this scenario is very rare in this state even now.
4. In Colonial Bengal Teacher Training was looked at in terms of both quantity and quality aspects and from a western perspective. All the commissions and reports emphasized on the quality of teachers in general and teacher educators in specific. India was never absent of the stimulating existence of high quality teachers. Although in ancient and medieval times, there were no proper arrangements of teachers' education, but the high standard of Indian people's moral uprightness showed that the teachers were totally successful in creating an honest and vibrant society.

### Reference

- Babu, M.A. (1990). History of teacher education in Kerala State (1956-1976). In A.K. Chattopadhyaya Committee Report. (1983-95). The Teacher and Society. MHRD, GoI.
- Cabral, R. (2009). Specifications of the development of teacher education in Portuguese Goa (1841-1961). Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi
- Chauhan, C.P.S. (2013). Modern Indian Education, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
- Hemambujam, K. (1983). A critical Study of Teacher Education at the Secondary Education in Tamil

- Nadu. In M. B. Buch (Ed.) 4th Survey of Research in Education. Vol. – II. NCERT, New Delhi.
- Kothari Commission Report.(1964-66). Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. New Delhi.
- Marker, N. S. (1975). Survey of Teacher Education in the State of Maharashtra. In M.B. Buch (Ed.). 3rd Survey of Research in Education (1986). NCERT, New Delhi.
- Mishra, A. (1986). Growth of Teacher Education for Women and Problems thereof with special reference to U.P. In M. B. Buch (Ed.) 4th Survey of Research in Education. Vol. – II. NCERT, New Delhi.
- Mohanty, J. (2003). Teacher Education. Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.
- Mookherji. R.K. (1969), Ancient Indian Education, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi.
- Mukerji, S.N. (1957). Education in India Today and Tomorrow. Acharya Book Depot, Baroda.
- Mukerji, S.N. (1964). The Education of Secondary Teachers in India: A Historical Survey (1800-1964). In Symposium on Teacher Education in India (1964). The India Publications, Ambala Cantt.
- Mukerji, S.N. (1968). Education of Teachers in India. Voll. II. S. Chand & Co, New Delhi.
- Nagpure. V. R. (1991). A critical study of the system of teacher education at secondary level in Maharashtra. In A.K. Sharma (Ed.). 5th Survey of Research in Education. (1997). Voll. II. NCERT, New Delhi.
- NCTE Regulation, (2014), NCTE, New Delhi.
- Nurullah, S. & Nayek, J.P. (1951). A History of Education in India. Macmillan & Co, Bombay.
- Pathak, V. B., (1979). Teacher Education in Eastern U.P. In M.B. Buch (Ed.). 3rd Survey of Research in Education (1986). NCERT, New Delhi.
- Sharma, A.K. (2008). Teacher Education In The Eyes of Education Commission: Time We Made Incisive Decisions. In VedPrakash (Ed.) Perspectives on Education and Development Revisiting Education Commission and After (2008). Shipra, New Delhi.
- Sharma, J.P. (1982). Growth and Development of In-service Education of Secondary School Teachers in the State of Bihar since 1955. In M.B. Buch (Ed.). 3rd Survey of Research in Education (1986). NCERT, New Delhi.
- Sharma, M. (1982). Progress and Problem of Teacher Education in India. In M.B. Buch (Ed.). 3rd Survey of Research in Education (1986). NCERT, New Delhi.
- Siddiqui, Md. A. (2008). Teacher Education: Vision of Kothari Commission and Its Realism. In VedPrakash (Ed.) Perspectives on Education and Development Revisiting Education Commission and After (2008). Shipra, New Delhi.
- Singh, L.C. (1990). Teacher Education in India: A Resource Book, Delhi, NCERT.
- Srivastava, R.C. (1997) Teacher Education in India Issues and Perspectives. Regency Publications, New Delhi.
- Yadav, D.D. (1980). A critical study of Teacher Education in the State of Hariyana and its comparison with that of CIE, Delhi and the RCE, Ajmer. In M. B. Buch (Ed.) 4th Survey of Research in Education. Vol. – II. NCERT, New Delhi.

*Received : 18th June, 2015*

*Accepted : 28th July, 2015*