



SCENARIO OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN INDIA: (1861 -1871) AD

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Abstract

Teacher education has been described by NCTE as 'a process of professional preparation of teachers' for performing their roles as facilitator of learning in an efficient manner through an effective way. The definition and concept of 'teacher education' as one of the most significant branches of higher education, has been modified from time to time with changes in society. This concept of teacher education was somehow different in the pre-independent India from its modern concept. At that time it was known as training, which meant acquisition of certain skills to teach. The history of formal teachers' training started with the establishment of normal schools or training schools by the Christian Missionaries. Later on, British Government took the responsibility of training of teachers. The scenario of teacher education in the two northern most provinces of British India namely, North-Western Provinces and Punjab, between 1861 and 1871 has been discussed in the present article. The researcher has gone through the available primary sources of information in preparing the paper.

Keywords: Teacher' Training, Training School.

Introduction

Teacher education has been described by NCTE as 'a process of professional preparation of teachers' for performing their roles as facilitator of learning in an efficient manner through an effective way. The definition and concept of 'teacher education' as one of the most significant branches of higher education, has been modified from time to time with changes in society. This concept of teacher education was somehow different in the pre-independent India from its modern concept. At that time it was known as training, which meant acquisition of certain skills to teach. The history of formal teachers' training started with the establishment of normal schools or training schools by the Christian Missionaries. Later on, British Government took the responsibility of training of teachers. The history of teacher education in various provinces of British India had been found in various official documents of the then India. The provinces were: North- Western Provinces, Punjab, Central Provinces, Oude, Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Out of the seven provinces, the scenario of teacher education in the two northern most provinces of British India namely, North-Western Provinces and Punjab, between 1861 and 1871 has been discussed in the present article.

North-Western Provinces

In the North-Western Provinces there were three Training Schools at Agra, Meerut and Benares for the training of Village School Masters. The Meerut and the Benares Schools were set up in 1856-57 and the Agra School in 1858-59. In the Report of 1860-61 satisfactory statements regarding the operations of these schools had been given in the following way:

"General Results.-Since the submission of the Educational Report for 1859-1860, I have examined personally the Normal Schools at Agra and Benares. They are still under the admirable management of Mr. Sharply and Mr. Tresham, and I have every reason to be satisfied with their condition, and the progress effected during the past year, in the course of which the Normal Schools at Agra, Benares and Merut turned out 565 teachers, of whom 113 gained first class, 270 second class, and 182 third class certificates. Through their means the Village Circuit Schools are supplies with teachers competent to carry their pupils through the simple and elementary studies prescribed. Without their assistance the establishment of Village Schools, on a large scale, would be hardly possible." (Note on The State of Education in India 1861-62, page 46)

During 1865-66 total Govt. Normal Schools in the North Western Provinces were eight. Of the eight Government Normal Schools in North Western Provinces, six schools were for male Teachers and two schools were for female Teachers. The male training institutions were designed to train teachers of Vernacular Schools in the Province. Among these five Institutions, three were located at the large Circles of Agra, Meerut and Benaras. There was one school at Almorah for the Hill Circle and Special Normal Classes at the Schools of Ajmere and Etawah. Regarding the Almorah School, Major Smyth said that, "This is now (and has always been) in a very satisfactory state, and deservedly popular, and this reflects great credit on the teacher, Nunoo Mul." (Extracts from the Report of DPI North Western Province 1866-67, page 181) It is also found from the DPI report that the Normal classes held at Etawah School had relieved the Agra School of many students from Bundelkhand. There were 41 students in all. The little Normal School for women was established at Fatehpore in the year 1865-66 and it was running successfully. Two teachers were employed from this institution in 1866-67. With a view to extend its operations, measures were taken to remove it to Benaras. In the opinion of the Inspectors the Female Normal Schools at Agra and Futtehpore were also performing their functions quietly and well. To train other than the Native Teachers three Private Normal Institutions were there in the Provinces.



Punjab

There were eight Normal Schools in Punjab, the details of which are found in the Extracts from the Reports of 1860-1861 and 1861-1862: It had been mentioned in the report that during 1859-60 nine Normal Schools were opened. But for dearth of pupils the school at Peshawur was compelled to be closed. Normal Schools at Lahore and Rawul Pindee had a fairly efficient staff of Masters. These schools were organized on a very poor footing due to monetary reason. The educational staff of all these institutions was strengthened from 1st May 1860. The District Officers had the responsibility to select teachers and candidates for teacher training in Normal Schools. They used to send in a certain quota of respectable men from each district for instruction. The legitimate duty of the Education Department was to train them. One-fifth of the Vernacular Teachers received instruction at the same time. Initially the duration of study was six months in order to bring all under instruction within the next two and half years or three years. The intention was to call them in again in turn after accomplishment and then to detain them for a period of twelve month's training course. Though six month's training was not enough to derive much benefit still their performance was better than those who were untrained. Some improvements were proposed and introduced in Normal Schools during the year 1861-62. The Normal Schools in Lahore and Rawaul Pindee Circles had worked on successfully. 398 teachers got certificate of qualification of various grades. Among these 398 teachers, 59 teachers were from Umballa Circle, 221 teachers from Lahore Circle and 118 teachers from Rawal Pindee Circle. As a result Vernacular schools in several districts were provided with trained or certificated teachers.

It had also been found from Educational Records of Government of India (Vol. I, Educational Reports, 1859-71) that seven Government Normal Schools were designed to train Vernacular Teachers for the Town Schools and Village Schools. In 1865-66, 44 Town School Teachers and 133 Village School Teachers were turned out from these institutions. Out of 2,012 Teachers employed in Government Vernacular Schools in Punjab, 1417 had been trained from Normal Schools. 166 teachers were under training. Rest 429 teachers would be sending for training to a Training Institution.

For the training of female Vernacular Teachers there were three Private Normal Schools. One such school was attached to S.P.G. Mission at Delhi. This school continued to work successfully and several of the students had been employed as Mistresses in the neighbourhood. Two schools were under Native Committees at Lahore and Amritsar. The Female Normal School at Amritsar was in connection with the Christian Vernacular Education Society. It was under the management and personal tuition of Mr. C.J. Rodgers himself who in the opinion of the DPI, "I believe, a trained teacher from one of the Normal Colleges at home; who has been in India for the last three years, and devoted himself to the study of its languages." (Extracts from the Report of the DPI, Punjab, 1866-67, page 205) The average daily attendance in the school was 12 and the cost of education was as high as Rs. 364 per head. The number of female candidates under instruction was 80, of whom 40 were Hindus and 40 Muslims. These private Normal Schools were not opened to Government inspection and interference of Educational officers was prohibited. From the report of Committee attached to Amritsar School, the DPI had gathered, "that the students of the so-called Female Normal School were not women but men, who agree or promise to teach their female relatives, after they themselves have been duly educated. These men are provided with the usual stipends during their course of education. On the whole, there are at the 4 private Normal schools, 107 students, male and female, and the daily average throughout the year has been 89. The annual cost of education per head comes to Rs. 114, of which Rs. 37 falls upon Government." (Vol.I, Educational Reports, 1859-71, page 223)

Conclusion

The two Educational Despatch of pre-independence period, namely the Wood's Despatch (1854) and the Stanley's Despatch (1859) had prepared the ground for development of training schools in its' early phase. From the above discussion, it is clear that the training schools of northern India, in general, were running in a satisfactory condition. In the training schools facilities were provided both for male and female candidates. Separate institutions for women also existed. The number of enrolled students varied from one institution to another. Responsibility of training was taken both by the government and by private bodies. Recognizing the importance of training efforts had been made to expand training facilities and improve the quality of teachers' training.

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