

## **Teacher as Social Entrepreneur: A Paradigm Shift in Indian Teacher Education**

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**[Abstract]** Teachers are the torch bearers and ambassadors of national missions for human development. However noble, sophisticated, and well-designed public education policies are, they all come to nothing if teachers do not understand them. The current challenges of the education system in India extend to embracing the concept of ‘social responsibility’ and ‘social entrepreneurship’ to educators, who have the power to create social value through access to education for educationally deprived members of society. Teacher Entrepreneurs can develop innovative practices that are customized and tailored to local situations and can effectively address challenges like low awareness on educational opportunities; social-cultural barriers to enrolment, particularly of girls, social issues that spill into the educational domain; lack of resources for schooling environments and poor social capital. A new breed of teachers is required to address these challenges. This recounting of practices provides insights into the measures and practices envisioned and implemented by the Indian education policies to improve access to and quality of education in India.

**[Keywords]** Education reform in India, social entrepreneurship, democratic education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education, Millennium Development Goals, Education for All.

### **The International Perspective of Education**

The UNESCO Report of the International Commission on Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century strongly believes that the rethinking of teacher education is necessary in order to develop future teachers with those human and intellectual qualities that will facilitate a fresh approach to teaching. (UNESCO, 1999). The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) also emphasized innovation and good practices in teacher education. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council Report on Quality Indicators for Teacher Education (NAAC, 2007) has highlighted that the quality of teacher educators is an important factor that decides the quality of teacher education. The content and pedagogical inputs of teacher education require teacher educators who are qualified and competent to provide them. Their professional development should be of concern for an institution that seeks to provide quality teacher education.

A NCFTE (2009) Report observed that the education and training of prospective teachers will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by educators, who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. According to Singh (2011), one way to improve the situation is to modernize teacher education. There clearly is a need to revamp teacher education to be in tune with the needs of society and particularly with the changing the needs of the schools.

### **The Challenges for the Education System in India**

Internationally, education has been recognized as a fundamental right and it is viewed as a

process of human development where the knowledge, skills, and capabilities are sharpened to achieve a wide range of objectives. The Indian system of education has experienced several accomplishments in the post-independent era in terms of educational access, enrollment, and reducing drop-outs even in rural areas. Significant efforts have been invested through various policies and programs to invigorate the quality of education in India. Enrollment rates across the school education have been increased in India. Educational access has been widened over the years and now schools are accessible in almost all villages in the country.

These success stories, at the same time, have pushed the system of education into new challenges. The dropout-rates and school transition issues still pose challenges. Improving learning outcomes require special attention to many things, including increasing teacher accountability. Raising the amount of time teachers spend on-task and increasing their responsibility for student learning also needs improvement.

Along with these issues, there are many social challenges in India that could be tackled through the education system. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals and Education for All Goals need specific attention and require effective interventions. Gender disparity, poverty, inequity, intolerance, ecological imbalance, immorality, and high mortality rates are still troubling the country, and education can certainly aid in addressing these issues in a more efficient manner. Teachers are the best hope to bring transformational change in any education system and help in realizing the development goals.

### **The Indian Government Response**

The Indian Education Commission of 1966 chaired by D.S. Kothari had opined that the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, and the competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly most significant. According to the Commission report that no system of education, no syllabus, no methodology, no textbook can rise above the level of its teachers. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers. There is no substitute to a quality teacher. A quality teacher is effective in realizing the goals of education. So, the effectiveness of teaching undoubtedly correlates with the competence of teachers. Competence in entrepreneurship can lead to more productive, self-enhancing, and fulfilling outcomes for all stakeholders.

The National Policy on Education recognizes a substantial improvement in the quality of education. It further believes that improvement in education, whether qualitative or quantitative, can be secured through the efforts of teachers who are the direct agents in the process of education. Children with good character, right tastes, sound knowledge, research and inquiry, creativity and innovation, techno-friendly, entrepreneurship, courage and moral leadership are essentially the products of the teaching by able and competent teachers. The education commission has rightly concluded that the future of India is being molded in her classrooms. It is in this context of effective teaching that the importance of Teacher Entrepreneurship becomes evident.

### **The Need for Teacher Education Reform**

Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring about a greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration, and structure. Reform of teacher education has been one of the abiding concerns in the reports of major Education Commissions and Committees on Education in India. The Education Commission (1964-66)

discussed various issues related to teacher education. It recommended professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programs, comprehensive colleges of education, and internships. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) recommended the overhaul of teacher education to impart the professional orientation and referred to the same concerns voiced by the earlier committees. Later on, a committee known as the Yashpal Committee (1993), was appointed to analyze the academic burden on students and unsatisfactory quality of learning. The committee expressed concern over the poor quality of teacher preparation programs in the country, which leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. This committee also suggested restructuring of the course content of teacher education programs to ensure relevance to the changing needs of schools, longer duration of training, emphasis on self-learning and independent thinking, and making teacher education programs more practicum-oriented.

### **The Search for Excellence in Education**

The system for teacher education has been experiencing several changes in both academic and administrative dimensions. Preparation of teachers has been repeatedly emphasized in the National Policies on Education in 1968 and 1986, and it was revised in 1992. The National Policy on Education (1986) stated that improvement in status and professional competence of teachers is the cornerstone of educational reconstruction. It emphasized the significance and need for a decentralized system for the professional preparation of teachers.

Teacher Education Curriculum - A Framework (1978 and 2006) provided a comprehensive view of the existing realities and perceived futuristic scenario for quality teacher education. Establishment of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) in 1993 as a statutory body of the Government of India has been exploring possibilities and designing strategies for monitoring quality in pre-service teacher education programs by imposing regulations and identifying quality indicators for the teacher education program in India. Moreover, centrally sponsored programs by the Indian government resulted in strengthening teacher education institutions as Institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASs) and Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs). Their intent was that these institutions would act as resource centers to conduct research and provide in-service programming along with pre-service teacher education. This is certainly a strong boost to the system of teacher education to search for excellence.

### **Teacher Training and Development**

In teacher development, pre-service is the first step in the ladder of developing professionalism in teachers that is, in turn, dependent on the professional preparation of teachers through well designed teacher education courses suited to the needs of the contemporary educational system. Teacher education has a symbiotic relationship with the school education. Developments and changes in both the sectors mutually reinforce the concerns necessary for the quality improvement of the entire system of education. Therefore, any reform in the educational system should ideally be accompanied by reforms in teacher preparation courses also (Pandey, 2011). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) has observed that it is obvious that the education and training of a prospective teacher will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by teacher educators who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. NCFTE (2009) promises to translate the vision into reality and prepare humanistic and reflective teachers that has the potential to develop more professional teachers and improve the quality of education.

This vision can be realized through entrepreneurship development for teachers. Teachers need

to be recognized as change agents and social entrepreneurs. The quality of pedagogical inputs in teacher education programs and the manner in which they are transacted determine and ensure the professional competencies of the teachers. Training in leadership skills and entrepreneurship qualities are important aspects of teacher professional development. The effective management of an educational system is needed for such quality development. Effectiveness to a large extent does depend on the teacher entrepreneurship.

Teachers are the most potent factors for preparing children not only to fit into the democratic, secular, and socialistic pattern of the country but also to meet the various challenges posed in society. Teacher Entrepreneurship enables the teacher to facilitate the learner more clearly, about his attitudes, aptitudes, averages, strengths and weaknesses. Father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi defined education as the drawing out of the best. In order to attain this aim a thorough of pupil is a must. Only a competent person can bring the possibilities of the pupil to actualities, from the seed to a fruitful plant.

### **Teaching as a Social Entrepreneurship: A Paradigm Shift in Teacher Education**

There are several key issues in the teacher education programs in India. One of the challenges that need to be addressed is the shortage of teachers. Most of the teacher education institutions in the country are managed by the private sector and are functioning on the market models for profit making. There is a great need for professional standards and regulation of pre-service teacher training institutes. Even the state-run institutes suffer from multiple deficiencies and most of them are far from being effective. Thus, developing institutional mechanisms for periodic monitoring of teacher training institutes and strict adherence to quality parameters is vital.

The National Policy on Education (2020) highlighted that teachers need to be viewed as professionals who require multiple skills to do their job, and accordingly professional standards need to be built into all teacher education programs. These programs must focus both on building an essential knowledge base, as well as skill sets required for making a difference in the classroom. Importantly, they must locate the professional development of teachers within the larger socio-cultural, economic, and political context of contemporary India.

Teachers need to be made more accountable through enhanced involvement of the school management committees; teacher professional, development programs need to provide supportive supervision and incentives to ensure teacher performance and accountability, and administrative staffers need to become more knowledgeable in the use of technology to monitor teacher attendance and curb absenteeism.

More than ever, the future of our country lies in the hands of those who teach our children in the classrooms and therefore teachers should be the best minds in the country and that a guru is someone who teaches specific types of knowledge and skills, but also helps mold values and offers real life experiences to 'book learning.' Therefore, we need a new breed of teachers who are highly skilled, committed, and have grit and resilience.

There is a need to re-conceptualize teacher education programs and empower novice teachers with entrepreneurship skills. The key elements of which are personal resourcefulness, achievement orientation, strategic vision, opportunity seeking and innovativeness.

### **Teachers: Social Entrepreneurs and Change Agents**

Entrepreneurship is an art which makes one successful in whichever enterprise one chooses and pursues to reach one's goals. It seems George Bernard Shaw was talking about entrepreneurs

because this is what entrepreneurs do - they create their own future. The entrepreneur envisions possible futures and creates the futures of his or her choice. Everybody is entrepreneurial in some aspect of his or her life; entrepreneurial in terms of creativity, self-development, and self-decision making. Different scholars have defined the terms in different ways.

- Economist defines an entrepreneur as one who brings resources, labour, raw material and other assets into combination that increases their value from before and also one who introduces changes, innovations and a new order.
- Psychologists define an entrepreneur as a person who is typically driven by some forces, which create a desire to obtain or attain something.
- Sociologists define an entrepreneur as a person whose action would determine his asocial status and who contributes to the development of society.
- Management experts define an entrepreneur as a person who has a vision and generate action plan to achieve it.

According to these authors, entrepreneurship is more an attitude than a skill of a profession. It is an attitude towards excellence. People choose an entrepreneurial opportunity that “feels right”. So, it is an affective part of life. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating value by bringing together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity. Entrepreneurship is, above all, about change. Entrepreneurs see change, as the norm and something healthy.

Entrepreneurs have many of the same character traits as leaders, similar to the early main theories of leadership; however, trait-based theories of entrepreneurship are increasingly being called into question. Entrepreneurs are often contrasted with managers and administrators, who are said to be more methodical and less prone to risk-taking. Such person-centric models of entrepreneurship have shown to be of questionable validity, not least as many real-life entrepreneurs operate in teams rather than as single individuals.

### ***Characteristics of an Entrepreneur***

Still, a vast, but now clearly dated literature, studying the entrepreneurial personality found that certain traits seem to be associated with entrepreneurs. Being the contributors to the society, their personality traits and skills are being analyzed. According to McClelland (1961), the entrepreneur is primarily motivated by an overwhelming need for achievement, a psychological need to achieve and a strong urge to build. Beglley and Boyd, identified five dimensions unique to entrepreneurs (Lall and Sahai, 2006).

- Entrepreneurs are high need-achievement
- Entrepreneurs like to think that they are pulling their own string (They control their own lives, not luck or fate)
- Entrepreneurs are willing to take moderate risks; this enables them to earn higher returns on assets
- Entrepreneurs have the ability to tolerate ambiguity. They also face more ambiguity since they may be doing certain things for the first time.
- Entrepreneurs have the drive to get more done in less time and, if necessary, despite the objection of others.

Contemporary writers in management and business have presented a wide range of theories of entrepreneurship. Peter Drucker (1985) argues that entrepreneurs do not require them to cause

change but sees them as exploiting the opportunities that change (in technology, consumer preferences, social norms, etc.) creates. He says, “this defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship – the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. The notion of opportunity has come to be central to many current definitions of entrepreneurship. It is the way today's management theorists capture the notion of shifting resources to areas of higher yield. An opportunity, presumably, means an opportunity to create value in this way. Entrepreneurs have a mind-set that sees the possibilities rather than the problems created by change. The entrepreneur is on the lookout for,

- ‘The unexpected’: an unexpected success, failure, or event (see below).
- Incongruities: between things as they ought or are said to be – and how they actually are.
- Problems with an existing process for which no one has provided a solution.
- Changes in how an industry or market operates that takes everyone by surprise.
- Demographic (population) changes; and
- Changes in ‘perception, mood or meaning.’

### **Teacher as Social Entrepreneur: Desirable Traits and Characteristics**

The investment in education in terms of physical and human resources has grown tremendously. Everyone now wants that education, as a part of social system, should be accountable for many reasons. On the basis of the Principle of cost effectiveness, investment must be productive. Teacher entrepreneurship would enhance accountability. So, it is a necessary aspect of educational system. There is growing realization that all education progress depends ultimately on the quality of teachers. Without good teachers even the best system of education is bound to fail. The teacher is a key link in the educational process, whether it is in school or out of school. He has to instill leadership qualities in pupils. He has to inspire the pupils and help to choose their future careers. He has to shape the character and personality of students.

On the other hand, the spatial and numerical expansion of schooling facilities at primary and secondary levels over the last decade has resulted in corresponding increase in the demand for teachers. As a result, large number of teacher education institutions is created throughout the country and the maximum number of these institutions is managed by private organizations. This has posed exceptional challenges for the management of Teacher Education to ensure quality in programs.

India has made considerable progress in the areas of education, since the 1990 with a significant overall literacy, school enrolment, infrastructure and political priority of Universal Elementary education. Regional, educational and gender disparities however continue to prove new challenge. Large investment on reaching remote habitation and the marginalized have had little impact in the teaching learning environment and children learning. School curriculum and text in many states remain disconnected from the lives of the learner and burden on children continues to grow. More importantly, teachers across the country, continue to remain disempowered with increasing normalization of their career (Curriculum framework of teacher education, 2006, NCTE).

For teachers as social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central. This obviously affects how social entrepreneurs perceive and assess opportunities. Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation. Wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs.

Teachers as Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value),
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission,
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning,
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and
- Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.

Each element in this brief definition deserves some further elaboration as follows.

**Change agents in the social sector:** Teachers as social entrepreneurs are the reformers and revolutionaries with a social mission. They make fundamental changes in the way things are done in the social sector. Their visions are bold. They attack the underlying causes of problems, rather than simply treating symptoms. Though they may act locally, their actions have the potential to stimulate global improvements in their chosen arenas, whether that is education, health care, economic development, the environment, the arts, or any other social sector field.

**Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value:** Making a profit, creating wealth, or serving the desires of customers may be part of the model, but these are means to a social end, not the end in itself. Profit is not the gauge of value creation; nor is customer satisfaction. Social impact is the gauge. Social entrepreneurs look for a long-term social return on investment. Social entrepreneurs want more than a quick hit; they want to create lasting improvements. They think about sustaining the impact.

**Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities:** Where others see problems, entrepreneurs see opportunity. Social entrepreneurs are not simply driven by the perception of a social need or by their compassion, rather they have a vision of how to achieve improvement and they are determined to make their vision work. They are persistent. The key element is persistence combined with a willingness to make adjustments as one goes.

**Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning:** Social Entrepreneurs are innovative. They break new ground, develop new models, and pioneer new approaches. They simply need to be creative in applying what others have invented. It is not just a one-time burst of creativity. It is a continuous process of exploring, learning, and improving. Of course, with innovation comes uncertainty and risk of failure. Entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and learn how to manage risks for themselves and others. They treat failure of a project as a learning experience, not a personal tragedy.

**Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand:** Social entrepreneurs do not let their own limited resources keep them from pursuing their visions. They are skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources from others. They use scarce resources efficiently, and they leverage their limited resources by drawing in partners and collaborating with others. They develop resource strategies that are likely to support and reinforce their social missions. They take calculated risks and manage the downside, so as to reduce the harm that will result from failure. They understand the risk tolerances of their stakeholders and use this to spread the risk to those who are better prepared to accept it.

**Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created:** Social entrepreneurs work with commitment and passion to create a social value. This means that they seek a sound understanding of the constituencies they are serving. They make sure they have correctly assessed the needs and values of the people they intend to serve and the communities in which they operate. In some cases, this requires close connections

with those communities.

**Personal resourcefulness:** The root of the entrepreneurial process can be traced to the initiative taken by individuals to go beyond the existing way of life. The emphasis is on initiative rather than reaction, although events in the environment may have provided the trigger for the person to express initiative. 'Personal resourcefulness' is the belief in one's own capability for initiating actions directed towards creation and growth of enterprises. Teachers need to select their profession with such an understanding.

**Achievement-orientation:** While personal initiative and purposeful behavior can be viewed as a good starting point of an entrepreneurial effort, many such initiatives fail. The archetype successful entrepreneur is supposed to epitomize achievement motivation, which facilitates the creation and development of enterprises in competitive environments. Toward such ends, entrepreneurial teachers need to build relationships with the stakeholders in the education process.

**Opportunity-seeking:** The context in which an individual brings to bear their initiative, achievement orientation, and visioning has a strong bearing on what is produced. When these forces are directed towards realizing surplus or value in a market environment, over a period of time, we see the creation of enterprises. Hence 'opportunity seeking' would include one's ability to see situations in terms of unmet needs, identifying markets or gaps for which a product or concept is to be evolved, and the search for creating and maintaining a competitive advantage to derive benefits on a sustained basis. This means that teachers can become change agents in that they collaborate with stakeholders and still participate in creating a less competitive environment among colleagues in their institutions.

**Innovativeness:** Entrepreneurs as persons who are not necessarily capitalists or those having command over resources, but as ones who create new combinations of the factors of production and the market to derive profit. Innovativeness refers to creation of new products, markets, product-market combinations, methods of production and organization, and the like that enable the enterprise to gain competitive advantage in the market. This can hold true also in educational institutions. Here, program and curriculum design and appropriate facilities and equipment are crucial along with teachers' skills to provide sound instruction to meet the tasks at hand and their students' learning preferences to improve the quality of life for students by means of education.

### Conclusion

Teacher education programs need to focus more these components of entrepreneurship and social agency in an integrated fashion to develop entrepreneurial approaches among teachers for serving students. Teacher entrepreneurship can effectively handle many challenges that being faced in a system of education and can transform this system into a socially responsive one. Fostering innovation requires changes in education. The idea that everyone can be a change maker should be integrated in school level so that students can become comfortable with the ideas and skills necessary to effect change early on. When students are encouraged to test out their own ideas in a safe and non-judgmental environment, they learn to value their own ideas, and valuing one's own ideas is crucial for a social entrepreneur. Therefore, teacher education programs need to take the initiative. This is important because social entrepreneurs are action researchers, learning through experimentation.

Also, the most valuable step a teacher can take to prepare him/herself to participate in the field of social entrepreneurship is to deepen his or her self-knowledge. In order to be successful and

make an impact, an educator must first understand what he/she cares about and has always cared about, what his/her strengths and weaknesses are, what his/her value set is, what environments he/she works best in, and what his/her motivations are. Without knowing these things about oneself, one may inadvertently add to the already ample store of negative leadership in the world. It is more to understand the workings of the system s/he want to change and the history of the problem with which s/he are concerned, to be a successful social entrepreneur. Most of all, one needs to be prepared to listen to face challenges and work for the betterment of the area dealt with.

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