

Teacher Education in Bihar: Challenges and Suggestions

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Abstract

Teacher education plays a crucial role in improving the quality of school education and shaping the future of society. In Bihar, teacher education has undergone several reforms in recent decades; however, it still faces multiple structural, institutional, and professional challenges. Despite efforts by the government to expand teacher recruitment, training programs, and professional development initiatives, issues such as inadequate training infrastructure, shortage of qualified faculty, outdated pedagogical practices, and limited access to continuous professional development persist. Additionally, teacher education institutions often struggle with limited resources, insufficient mentoring systems during internships, and weak institutional coordination. These challenges significantly affect the quality of teaching and learning in schools. This research article examines the present status of teacher education in Bihar, identifies the major challenges faced by teacher education institutions and teacher training programs, and suggests practical measures for improving the effectiveness of teacher education in the state. The study highlights the need for strengthening teacher training institutions, promoting technology-integrated pedagogy, enhancing professional development opportunities, and implementing policy reforms aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Strengthening teacher education will not only improve teaching quality but also contribute to enhancing educational outcomes and sustainable development in Bihar.

Keywords: Teacher Education, student Teacher, Challenges, Suggestions, Professionalism, Bihar

Introduction

Teacher education is considered the foundation of an effective educational system because teachers play a central role in shaping students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills. A well-trained teacher not only delivers subject knowledge but also promotes critical thinking, creativity, and social values among learners. In India, teacher education has evolved through various reforms aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. In the state of Bihar, improving teacher education has become a major policy priority due to the large number of school students and the need to enhance learning outcomes. Bihar has witnessed significant expansion in school enrolment and teacher recruitment over the past decade. Government initiatives have resulted in the appointment of several lakh teachers in government schools and improvements in the pupil-teacher ratio. Despite these efforts, the state continues to face several challenges related to teacher education and training. Issues such as shortage of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure in teacher education institutions, and limited opportunities for professional development continue to affect the quality of education.

This research article examines the current status of teacher education in Bihar, identifies the key challenges, and provides suggestions for improving the teacher education system.

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education refers to the systematic process of preparing individuals to become effective teachers. It includes pre-service education (such as B.Ed., D.El.Ed.) and in-service training programs aimed at improving teachers' professional competence.

Teacher education programs focus on developing:

- Subject knowledge
- Pedagogical skills
- Classroom management abilities
- Professional ethics

- Educational research skills

The objective of teacher education is to ensure that teachers are capable of creating effective learning environments and responding to the diverse needs of students.

An analysis of ongoing teacher education programmes in Bihar

Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.)

Diploma in Elementary Education is two-year (full-time) educational program. This course is recognized by NCTE. Minimum eligibility to take admission in this program is 12th. However selection of the candidates to this program is solely based upon merit and as per the norms laid down by NCTE and government from time to time.

Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)

It is a two-year, fulltime degree to prepare the teachers from upper primary level to Secondary level and higher secondary level. Admission to this program is done as per the norms laid down by NCTE and government from time to time. Candidates are eligible to enrolment in this program if they have at least 55% of their marks in either the bachelor's or master's degree.

Diploma in Physical education program (D.P.Ed.)

An intensive two-year curriculum called the Diploma in Physical Education prepares instructors of Physical education for primary school teaching. To apply for this program, candidates must have secured at least 50% of marks in their 12th grade or comparable grade.

Integrated B.A. B.Ed. /B.Sc. B.Ed.

It is a flagship teacher education program recognized by NCTE. It allows the students to complete their graduation along with B.Ed. at a time. The duration of this program is 4 years. The purpose of this curriculum is to get teachers ready for upper primary and secondary education.

Master of Education (M.Ed.)

It is a two year full time teacher education program which prepares the teachers to teach the trainee teachers and other students at various levels. Candidates having at least 50% marks in B.Ed. or graduate with D.El.Ed. (50% in each) are eligible for the admission.

Master of Physical Education (M.P.Ed.)

The purpose of the Master of Physical Education (M.P.Ed.) program is to prepare physical education teachers at various levels. In physical education departments at universities and colleges, they can work as assistant professors, directors, sports officers, or teacher educators. Its duration is two years. Applicants are eligible for the program if they have secured at least 50% marks in B.P.Ed. or B.Sc. in health and physical education.

The qualifying marks for reservation students are lenient in accordance with the guidelines established by the central and state governments for the aforementioned teacher education programs.

Status of Teacher Education in Bihar

Teacher education in Bihar is provided through institutions such as:

- District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)
- Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs)
- Universities offering B.Ed. and M.Ed. programs
- State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)

These institutions are responsible for training teachers for primary, secondary, and higher education levels. In recent years, the government has initiated several programs to improve teacher effectiveness. For example, the Bihar Enhancing

Teacher Effectiveness Programme, supported by international organizations, aims to improve teacher training, certification, and professional development across the state.

However, the effectiveness of teacher education programs varies widely across institutions due to differences in resources, faculty quality, and training methods.

Major Challenges in Teacher Education in Bihar

1. Shortage of Qualified Teachers and Faculty

One of the major challenges in teacher education is the shortage of qualified faculty members in teacher training institutions and universities. Many higher education institutions operate with less than half of their sanctioned teaching positions filled, increasing the workload of existing teachers.

This shortage affects the quality of teacher training and limits opportunities for research and innovation in education.

2. Inadequate Infrastructure

Many teacher education institutions in Bihar face infrastructural challenges such as insufficient classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and digital learning facilities. In several schools and colleges, limited access to electricity, teaching materials, and technological resources further affects the training process. Poor infrastructure restricts the use of modern teaching methods and educational technology in teacher training.

3. Traditional Teaching Methods

In many teacher education programs, traditional lecture-based teaching methods still dominate. Innovative pedagogical practices such as activity-based learning, collaborative learning, and ICT-integrated teaching are not widely implemented. As a result, trainee teachers may lack exposure to modern teaching strategies required for contemporary classrooms.

4. Inappropriate teaching internship

The most important component of any teacher education program is practice teaching. But the thing is that due to shortage of pedagogy teachers the pupil teachers are not getting proper guidance. So that they face many problems during classroom transactions and failed to develop command on pedagogy part which is a big concern.

5. Lack of Supervision

The supervision for practice teaching should aim at guiding the pupil teachers in learning to organize their content, planning their lessons, techniques of assessment and essential skills. But at present their lesson plans are checked superficially also there is no class observation by the concerned pedagogy teachers for which the students are not getting proper feedback which is a big issue.

6. Attitudinal barrier

The quality of teacher education is steadily declining because some of us view teaching as a secondary career. Students with this mindset approach everything with a casual attitude and lack the motivation to understand the subjects covered in teacher education.

7. Lack of Professionalism

It is essential to be up-to-dated on a daily basis so that we will be able to know about the daily happenings around the globe. Only by confining ourselves within the books or syllabus we can't provide quality education to the student teachers. In order to be professional a teacher educator have to read journals, magazines, current affairs, etc or he or she can join conferences, webinars to enhance his/her outlook.

8. Monitoring of the institutions

Monitoring of the teacher education institution is important nowadays as there are some institutions which are not recognized by NCTE still they are taking the admission of the students and they are more oriented to money making rather than the educational growth of the students (Dodiya, 2018).

9. Qualification of Teacher Educators/Assistant Professors

Qualifications and eligibility criteria for appointing teacher educators is changing frequently. It is noticed that sometimes the recruiting body is lowering the qualification. Hence by lowering the qualifications how can we expect to get the teachers of higher quality? (Bala, 2018).

10. Lack of Funds

A shortage of funding prevents an institution from providing workshops and in-service training for teacher educators, which eventually lowers the standard of teacher education.

11. Administrative and Policy Challenges

Teacher education in Bihar also faces administrative challenges such as delays in recruitment, insufficient monitoring of training institutions, and limited coordination among educational authorities. These issues affect the implementation of teacher education policies and reduce the overall effectiveness of training programs.

12. Weak Mentoring and Internship Systems

Practical teaching experience is an important component of teacher education. However, research studies indicate that mentoring and supervision during B.Ed. internships often remain inadequate due to heavy workloads and lack of coordination between training institutions and schools. This limits the effectiveness of practical teaching experiences for student teachers.

Suggestions for Improving Teacher Education in Bihar

Some suggestions to overcome the challenges:

1. Strengthening Teacher Education Institutions

Teacher education institutions should be strengthened through improved infrastructure, better funding, and recruitment of qualified faculty members. Modern libraries, laboratories, and digital resources should be provided to support effective training.

2. Integrating Technology in Teacher Training

Teacher training programs should incorporate digital learning tools, online resources, and ICT-based teaching methods. This will enable teachers to adopt innovative teaching strategies and improve classroom engagement.

3. Enhancing Continuous Professional Development

Regular training programs, workshops, and refresher courses should be organized for teachers to update their knowledge and skills. Continuous professional development should become a mandatory component of teacher education.

4. Improving Internship and Mentoring Systems

Teacher education programs should strengthen the mentoring system during teaching internships. Collaboration between schools and teacher education institutions should be improved to provide meaningful practical teaching experiences.

5. Policy Reforms and Institutional Accountability

The government should implement effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure quality standards in teacher education institutions. Policies should focus on improving teacher recruitment processes, strengthening teacher training programs, and promoting research in education.

Some others suggestions

- The qualification of Teacher Educators or Assistant Professors to teach the student teachers should be decided strictly as per the NCTE norms.
- The curriculum needs to be changed periodically to meet the needs of both society and the pupils.
- Stricter requirements for affiliation and an efficient monitoring system by NCTE are necessary to uphold the decorum of teacher education in Bihar.
- The trainee teachers' evaluations have to be continuous and comprehensive. So that they will be able to know their strength and weakness and accordingly they can improve themselves. The nature of feedback should be constructive.
- To preserve the standard of teacher education in Bihar, timely appointments of Assistant Professors or Teacher Educators are required.

Recommendations of national education policy (2020) on teacher education

Some of the key recommendations of NEP (2020) regarding Teacher Education are listed below.

- NEP (2020) has placed emphasis on the Integrated Teacher Education Program.
- By 2030, all standalone teacher education institutions will become interdisciplinary ones in order to provide the four-year integrated teacher education program.
- By 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree will be the minimal need for teachers in schools to instruct pupils at different levels.
- To uphold the consistent standards for teacher education in India, admission to the pre-service teacher training program will be conducted through the National Testing Agency (NTA).
- For teachers' ongoing professional development, the usage of online platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA for online training will be promoted.
- To guide the teachers, a National Mission for Mentoring will be formed, and senior/retired faculty members will be the mentors.

An overall analysis reveals that if the NEP (2020) recommendations on teacher education are properly implemented at the local level, it will contribute in improving the quality of teacher education program in Bihar.

Conclusion

Teacher education is a key factor in improving the quality of education and achieving sustainable development in society. In Bihar, significant progress has been made in expanding teacher recruitment and training initiatives. However, several challenges such as shortage of qualified faculty, inadequate infrastructure, traditional teaching practices, and limited professional development opportunities continue to affect the effectiveness of teacher education. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms in teacher training institutions, stronger policy support, and greater investment in educational infrastructure and technology. By strengthening teacher education programs and ensuring continuous professional development, Bihar can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Ultimately, effective teacher education will contribute to better learning outcomes, stronger educational institutions, and the overall socio-economic development of the state.

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