

Professional Identities among Teacher Educators: Perception of Pupil Teachers & Trainees

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Abstract

It is an interesting question that who becomes a teacher or teacher educator? Teaching is a noble profession and the identities of educators influencing their role in their practice. The job of teacher educators to develop professionals for primary and secondary education and it is interesting to find the nature of work among teacher educators. In this paper we have tried to understand the nature of work of teacher educators and found some professional and personal attributes/qualities among teacher educators. We have done a discussion with pupil teachers and trainees about professional and personal identities among teacher educators and revealed that teacher education institutions needs; knowledgeable, disciplined, friendly and honest teacher educators. We also argue that the role of teacher educators becomes more complex and the performance of teacher educators depend on their pre and in service training.

Keywords: Professional identities, Professionalism, Perception of Pupil Teachers, Teacher Educator

Introduction

It is an obligation to be a professional, but there is a question arise how can we set a work as profession. Profession, professional, professionalism and professional development, all of these words deal with the any work, which developed with some cognitive, affective, psychomotor and social norms. Every profession has some personal identities and skills and to develop as a professional, individuals need to learn these skills and set their behaviour according to the norms of profession.

It is very difficult to create an appropriate definition of "*profession*". The term can be taken *narrowly* to refer to the traditional "learned" profession: medicine, law, architecture and some time ministry. These occupations have a long history as open to gentlemen and involving intimate relationship with individual clients. Profession also can be taken *broadly* to embrace the literally hundreds of occupations that so label themselves and fret over their professionalism. Teachers, engineers, scientists, government officials, journalist, counsellors and military persons etc.. are some of the examples of broad definition of profession. The broad definition of profession is based on the nature of work and their organisational structure and it is also influenced by society or social norms of work but without ethical permissive, the definition of profession cannot be completed. It means *profession* is a structure of work's identities, skills, organisational and social pattern and ethical codes. Profession is a dynamic construct and with the ecological changes and at different times the definition could be changed but the core component of profession always remain the same. Every profession has a long history and repudiated literature but without theoretical bases we cannot define any work as a profession. Every profession has own theoretical background and basic theories but these theories has been changed time to time. It is very critical to identify that, when was the beginning of any particular profession? Every work has developed slowly as a profession.

Teaching is the oldest and noble profession and who become a teacher? It is an interesting question for the researchers and academicians. The identities and skills of teacher have been changed time to time. We are seeing a complex world in 21st century. The expectations and nature of society is very complex to understand. So it is very important to identify that which kind of teachers needs in 21st century? There are many theoretical discussions have done to identify the professional skills of teachers and many empirical studies have also argues about this particular matter but research gaps always found within these studies. In this paper we want to try to find out the answer of this particular question. It is a theoretical discussion with pupil teachers to understand the framework of professional identities for teacher educators.

The work of teacher educators is different from the work of teachers working in school education as well as working in higher education. It is really a critical work to develop a teacher for schools according to demand of society and school organisations. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a supreme body of teacher education in India and with the light of National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education

(NCFTE-2009), it shows us a unique and different path to develop a professional and human teachers. India has made considerable progress in school education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure and universal access and enrolment in schools. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and National curriculum Framework, 2005; these are two major developments occurring in the recent years in India. Because of these developments, the demand of quality teachers would increase and the supplying of professional and qualified teachers for primary and secondary education depends on the performance of teacher education institutions. The role of teacher education institutions is going to be very crucial and the performance of these institutions will depend on the human resource, who working in these particular institutions. It means that the role of teacher educators is going to be very significant for the future of Nation. The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programmes, comprehensive colleges of education and internship. The National Policy on Education (NPE-1986) recommended the overall of teacher education to impart it a professional orientation and referred to the same concern voiced by the earlier commissions. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC-2009) has observed that teachers are the single most important element of the school system and the country is already facing a severe shortage of qualified and motivated teachers at different levels. (Sharma, 2005) found in his study the leadership to be a crucial factor and the teachers are selected not just on the basis of merit but also on the basis of their love for children, curiosity to learn, greater need for job satisfaction than for monetary benefits etc. Teachers are also deputed periodically for training and attending workshop to enhance their skills. (Sharma, 2007) revealed that a majority of the B.Ed. alumni were satisfied with the accessibility and responsiveness of teachers outside the class during their study in the College and the B.Ed. course enhanced their enquiry/research skills to a moderate extent. A large majority of the alumni felt that the B.Ed. course enhanced their ability to use multi-media technology in the classroom from moderate to a limited extent only and most of the alumni used very much too moderately the strategies/methods learnt during B.Ed. in their day to day teaching. (Swennen, Volman, & Essen, 2008) revealed that the teacher educators use the innovations in teacher education to develop professionally at the beginning of their institutes later they also look for ways to develop outside their institutes and play an increasingly significant role in the community of teacher educators. (Grievel, 2010) suggest that teachers have a clear view of excellence. They consistently described excellence in terms of personal qualities and interpersonal skills. Teachers gave high rating to qualities which demonstrated their expectation of positive classroom ethos and positive relationship with students. Practitioners consistently rated characteristics related to classroom relationship in action as essential teachers. These findings suggest a new emphasis on interpersonal skills in continuing professional development for teachers who are increasingly expected to develop students' dispositions relating to openness to new thinking, self respect and a commitment to responsible participation in social cultural, economic and political life. (Czerniawski, 2011) was found that national context and international setting combine to influence the kinds of relationship teachers' form and the way in which these relationships can affect the construction of teachers' identities during their first two years as emerging teacher. (Clarks, Killeary & Moloney, 2013) suggests that mentors' knowledge about teaching is practice oriented and emerges from their professional experiences, their teaching skills, their pre-service teacher education and a considerable extent from their personal experiences. The authors argue that mentor require support to reflect on their attachment to practice based experience as a source of professional knowledge, in this way they can better understand and carry out their role as mentor. (Reynolds, Ferguson, Patrick & McCormack, 2013) found in their study the teacher educators were required to be change agents at the interface of theory and practice and their experience reflected individual journeys but their reflections have ongoing implications for clarifying and professionalising the role of teacher educators. (Izadinia, 2014) done a review of literature on teacher educators identities and suggested that new teacher educators generally develop negative self-views about their abilities and professional identities. Self support and community support activities were found to facilitate teacher educators' transitions and enhance their identity development. Key features of academic induction were identified as acting as a learning community, cultivating supportive and professional relationship, encouraging self enquiry and research and involving teacher educators in reflective activities. There are many of professional identities has been found in earlier researches and set framework of professional identities for teachers and teacher educators, but there is a more need to know and understand the point of view of stakeholders of teaching profession. Student is an important and significant stakeholder of teaching profession. With the light of pupil-teacher perception towards their faculty members in teacher education institutions, this study aimed to identify the professional identities of teacher educators.

Objective

- To find out the professional and personal identities among the teacher educators.

Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature. A theoretical discussion of one hour, every day for five days have been done

with pupil teachers and discussion of one hour, every day for six days with B.Ed. trainees from IGNOU, about the professional identities of teacher educators and finally they were asked to write attributes/qualities about their educators. The pupil teachers of Department of Education HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar and trainees of B.Ed. from study centre Birla Campus, IGNOU were taken as sample for the study. To study the professional identities of teacher educators according the visualisation of pupil teachers and trainees, 109 pupil teachers from Department of Education, HNBSGU and 57 B.Ed. trainees from IGNOU were taken to discussion and asked to write the attributes/qualities of teacher educators, independently. All the 109 pupil teachers of Department of Education and 57 B.Ed. trainees out of 100 trainees from IGNOU participated in discussion and write the attributes/qualities of their educators. To analyse and presentation of the data researchers used frequency distribution and graphs.

Findings

TABLE NO. 1: PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS; PERCEPTION OF PUPIL-TEACHERS

S.N.	Attributes/Qualities	Frequency
1.	Friendly behaviour	56
2.	Knowledge of subject	71
3.	Use of equitable instructional method, according to the subject content	23
4.	Explanation skill	64
5.	Planning of lecture	20
6.	Understanding of individual differences of students	59
7.	Understanding of social differences of students	48
8.	Communication skill	42
9.	Deal justly with students	43
10.	Guidance	60
11.	Motivation	62
12.	Establish a purposeful environment for learning	40
13.	Integrate the theoretical knowledge with practice	30
14.	Questioning skill	15
15.	Use of ICT	35

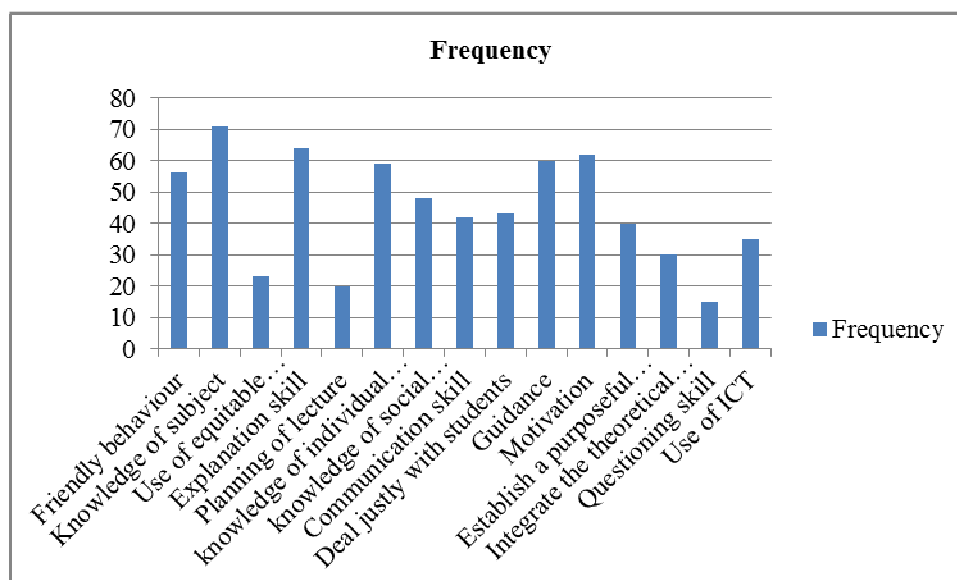


FIGURE 1: PREFERENCE OF PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS BY PUPIL TEACHERS

In response to write professional qualities of teacher educators, maximum pupil teachers preferred subject knowledge (71) is most important quality of teacher educators. Explanation skill (64), motivation (62) and guidance (60) are also important qualities, suggested by pupil teachers. Many of pupil teachers replied that understanding of individual differences (59), friendly behaviour (56) and understanding of social differences (48) are important. It is interesting that few pupil teachers suggested that questioning skill (15), use of equitable instructional method (23) and use of ICT (35) are important qualities of teacher educators.

TABLE NO. 2: PERSONAL QUALITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS; PERCEPTION OF PUPIL-TEACHERS

S.N.	Attributes/Qualities	Frequency
1.	Sensitive	28
2.	Sympathy	22
3.	Liberal	18
4.	Submissive	30
5.	Tolerant	28
6.	Restraint	35
7.	Empathy	6
8.	Patience	34
9.	Co-operation	40
10.	Disciplined	56
11.	Dutiful	51
12.	Scientific attitude	15
13.	Critical thinking	6
14.	Problem solving ability	10
15.	Punctual	54

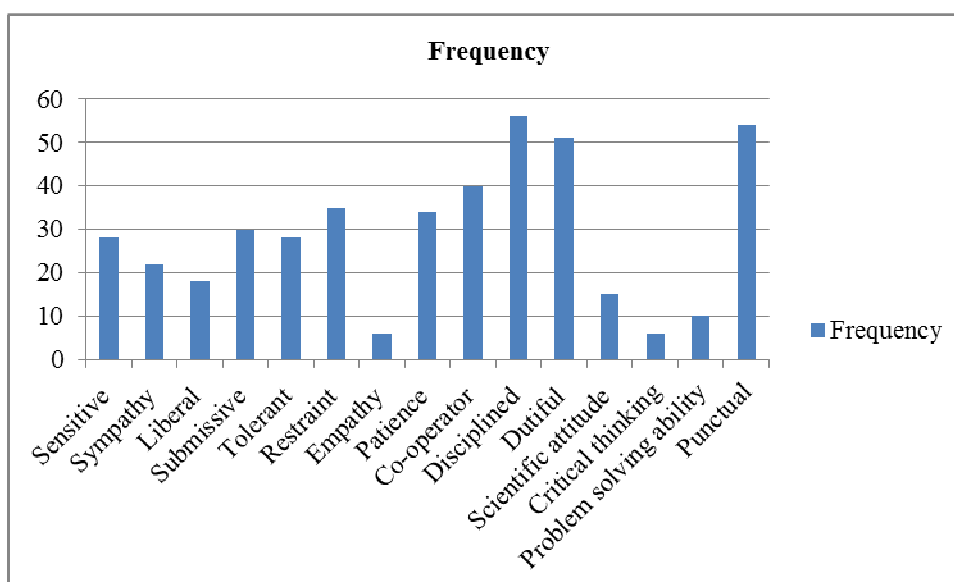


FIGURE 2: PREFERENCE OF PERSONAL QUALITIES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS BY PUPIL-TEACHERS

Table No. 2 depict the perception of pupil teachers towards personal qualities of teacher educators. It was found that, discipline (56), punctuality (54), and dutiful (51) highly preferred by pupil teachers. Most of pupil teachers preferred Co-operation (40), restraint (35), Patience (34), Submissive (30), Sensitive (28) and tolerant (28) was important qualities of teacher educators. Few pupil teachers preferred sympathy (22) and liberal (18) are important for teacher educators. Some of them suggested that scientific attitude (15) problem solving ability (10) empathy (6) and critical thinking (6) is also important qualities of teacher educators.

TABLE NO. 3: PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS; PERCEPTION OF TRAINEES

S.N.	Attributes/Qualities	Frequency
1.	Understanding of individual differences of students	34
2.	Knowledge of subject	45
3.	Explanation skill	30
4.	Deal justly with students	26
5.	Deal friendly with students	37
6.	Integrate the theoretical knowledge with practice	30
7.	Planning of lecture	10
8.	Guidance	19
9.	School management	15
10.	Communication skill	5
11.	Creativity	16
12.	Knowledge of Pedagogy	20
13.	Research ability	3
14.	Observation skill	2

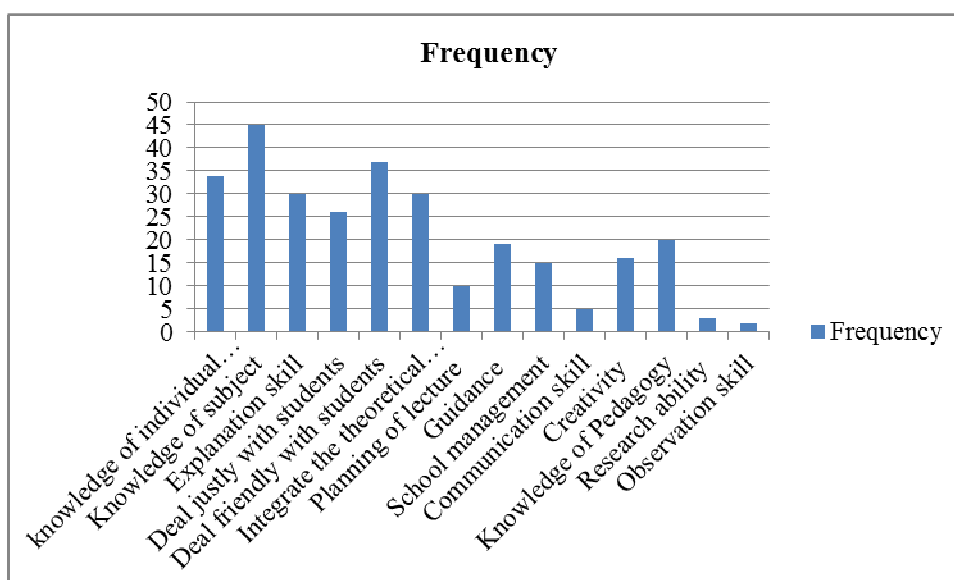


FIGURE 3: PREFERENCE OF PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS BY TRAINEES

Table No. 3 depict the perception of trainees from IGNOU towards professional qualities of teacher educators. Maximum trainees preferred knowledge of subject (45), Deal friendly with students (37), and understanding of Individual differences of students (34) is the most important qualities of teacher educators. Most of them suggest integration the theoretical knowledge with practice (30), deal justly with students (26), knowledge of pedagogy (20), and guidance (19) are important attributes for teacher educators. It was really interesting that, trainees give least preference to creativity (16) and school management (15). Few trainees suggested that communication skills (5), research ability (3) and observation skill are also some important qualities of teacher educators.

TABLE NO.4: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS; PERCEPTION OF TRAINEES

S.N.	Attributes/Qualities	Frequency
1.	Soft spoken	33
2.	Tolerant	16
3.	Discipline	28
4.	Dutiful	28
5.	Punctual	37
6.	Patience	28
7.	Honest	47
8.	Studious	19
9.	Leadership	26
10.	Effective personality	24
11.	Self evaluation	3

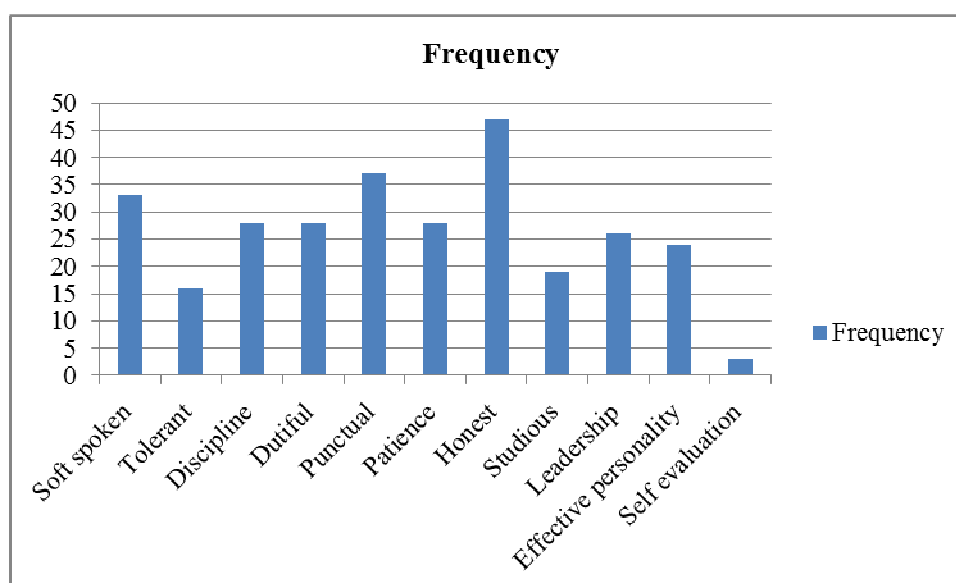


FIGURE 4: PREFERENCE OF PERSONAL QUALITIES AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS BY TRAINEES

Table No. 4 present the perception of trainees from IGNOU towards personal qualities of teacher educators. Honesty (47), punctuality (37) and soft-spoken (33) are most preferred qualities, by trainees from IGNOU. Discipline (28), dutiful (28), patience (28) leadership (26) and effective personality (24) are next preferred qualities. Some trainees preferred tolerance (16) also an important quality of teacher educators. Few trainees suggested self evaluation (3) is a quality of teacher educators too.

Discussion

The most important professional qualities suggested by pupil teachers are subject knowledge, explanation skill, guidance and motivation. Knowledge is a core component to be a teacher or teacher educator. All knows that without mastery in subject teachers never satisfied to their students. Explanation skill is a major competence of teaching process, an equitable explanation create a purposeful environment for teaching-learning process in the classroom and develop understanding about content among students. Guidance and motivation both are related to each other and these competences are significantly important for teacher educators, mostly adults comes in teacher education institutions to learn how to be a teacher? So it is quite important to teacher educators to guide and motivate them to be an effective teacher. Guidance and motivation are also important for the purpose of research because a teacher educator also play the role of supervisor in the field of educational research. National Knowledge Commission (2009) also emphases that teacher are the single important component of education system and India need more qualified, knowledgeable and motivated teachers.

The most important personal qualities suggested by pupil teachers are discipline, dutiful, punctuality and co-operation. Discipline is one most important personal attribute for everybody but for a teacher it is an integral part of life because it is a duty of a teacher to make a sense about discipline among students. If a teacher is not performing disciplined behaviour, so how can he expect that his students behave in disciplined manner? Dutiful and punctuality are also some important personal qualities for teachers. Duty is basic component of any

work and the excellence of organisation depends on dutiful and punctual employees. Basically punctuality is a component of dutiful behaviour of employees but it has become a major problem of education system in recent years in India. Many of empirical studies observed this issue and report about that. Personal and interpersonal skills are the basic element of work, without these skills we never found excellence in any profession. Bloom & Saeki (2010) grouped skills for employees and reported personal and interpersonal skills play a pivotal role to be a professional, most of employers' emphases on personal and interpersonal skills, during interview session. Grieve (2010) suggest a new emphasis on interpersonal skills in continuing professional development for teachers who are increasingly expected to develop students' dispositions. There is an important role of personal skills to make a worker, professional and development of sense of accountability among professionals.

The most important professional and personal attributes suggested by trainees from IGNOU are subject knowledge, friendly behaviour, knowledge of individual differences, honesty, punctuality and soft-spoken. We have discussed about the subject knowledge and punctuality earlier so now we are discussing on friendly behaviour and other attributes suggested by trainees. (Dhawan, 2015) Friendly behaviour is a necessity of teacher, kindness makes the teacher complete and helps in accepting students. (NCFTE, 2009) also emphases on the development of human teachers. Understanding of individual differences among students is one of critical quality of educators. Without knowledge about individual differences among students, educators never play a significant role in and outside the classroom. Individual differences are the basic component to understand that how an individual learn with his environment. Every learner have an individual capacity to interact so it is important for teachers to understand that how an individual learn and what is his capacity? Honesty plays a vital role to be a pure professional and good human. Basically it is important to everyone but for a teacher it is an integral part of life, without honesty teacher never contributes anything for stakeholders of education. (Dhawan, 2015) reported honesty is an important personal quality, preferred by pupil teachers. To be a human teacher, teachers should be soft-spoken. Basically it is an important quality for primary and secondary school teachers but teacher educators are making professionals for primary and secondary schools so it also important for teacher educators. (Sharma, 2005) also suggests leadership to be a crucial factor and the teachers are selected not just on the basis of merit but also on the basis of their love for children and curiosity to learn. Friendly behaviour, soft-spoken, honesty and understanding of individual differences play an important role to make a perfect professional teacher.

It was interesting that few pupil teachers' gives importance to questioning skill, use of equitable instructional method in classroom and use of ICT. These skills are important to make a professional teacher. Questions create a purposeful learning environment, equitable instructional method is important for the purpose of pedagogy and use of ICT in teaching-learning process makes content acquirable to students. Some IGNOU trainees also give least preference to creativity. Although, it is an important attribute of teachers to link the theoretical knowledge with practice. A very critical and important term emerge in this study; understanding the social difference of students. The understanding of social differences is most important for teachers as well as teacher educators. India is a country with lots of cultural heritage and diversities and in Indian conditions, it is important to understand the social and cultural background of students because, these social and cultural backgrounds play a pivotal role to construct their personality and reflections. The new curriculum of B.Ed. & M.Ed. (according to the new norms of NCTE-2014) also focused on the development of understanding about social differences among pupils. So it is become more important to teacher educators to develop their understanding about social and cultural diversities of students and make justifiable environment to understand this issue among pupil teachers. Some new trends also emerged like critical thinking, observation skill, scientific attitude, self evaluation, proper communication and research ability. These all skills were found earlier studies but it was not a pupil teacher perception among their educators. It is not an easy task to understand these complicated terms as a pupil teacher but it is sound quite good that now pupil teachers understand these terms and want to see these skills among their educators.

Conclusion

Teaching is not a easy job, it has many difficulties and to understand the nature of teaching and to be a perfect professional in this field is vary striving, but last few decades teaching has become more complex and set their own professional norms. Educationists and thinkers have done a verity of discussions about that particular matter and now they are seeing teaching profession with the eye of 21st century. Last few decades the meaning of education has immersed in some new manner. The concept of education has slightly shifted from teacher to student. Child-centred education has become a priority for all over world and constructive approach of teaching-learning process has changed the role of teachers. Higher and technical education has also become a part of this change and the concept of teacher education has been totally changed in present era. It is paradigm shift in the field of teacher education and now these days it is a burning issue in the field of teacher education in India. NCFTE-2009 shows a different and unique path to develop teaching professionals according to changes occurring in education system as well as society. Now the focus on that to make *open* and *flexible* teacher

education. The main objective to empower the teacher to relate himself/herself to them and make an equitable environment to create a *learning society*, willingness to *learning to learn* and construct a *liberal, humanistic and responsive* education system. To find out these objectives teacher educators need to empower himself/herself and make a difference between a teacher educator and other teachers (who working in higher & technical education). It is obvious that the effectiveness of teacher education programme depends on the performance of teacher educators. The quality of pedagogical inputs in teacher education programme and the manner they are transacted to realize their intended objectives depends largely on the professional competence and commitment of teacher educators.

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