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Seventy Years In-service Teacher Education Programme of India: An Overview

Anjali Kumari* and Sambit Kumar Padhi**

India has one of the largest education systems in the world and teacher education in India has a strong historical perspective. Teacher education has come a long way to reach the present destination. In-service teacher education is mainly based on the needs of the teachers to reconstruct and update their knowledge from time to time, as well as re-equip their teaching skills so that they work in their field very effectively and face all the related field barriers very skillfully. It may be regarded as the sponsoring and pursuing activities, which will bring new insight, growth, understanding and co-operative practices to the members of the teaching profession (Buch, 1974). Bolam (1980), said that In-service teacher education involves those education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary teachers and principals to improve their professional education.

In-service teacher education and training programmes have their own journey from pre-independence and post-independence period which is geared by various policies and recommendations of different commissions and committees in context of its content and process. In the past era in India, the formal Teacher Education programme was meant only for employed teacher. They were trained in the normal schools where they worked and it was based on the on-service teacher training as stated by the Gardener (1994). At that time, primary level training was not available to most teachers. In 1930, when large number of trained teachers grew then their further training became a significant matter. Thereafter, with the recommendation of the Hartong Committee (1929), refresher courses were organized which was also endorsed by the Sargent Committee (1944).

In 1947, Central Institute of Education (CIE) was established which supported in-service education of school teachers. This institute was responsible for the continual professional development of school teachers and formulates training modules according to the

*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Koni, Bilaspur - 495009 (C.G.)

**Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Koni, Bilaspur - 495009 (C.G.)
padhigv@gmail.com

teachers' need. The statement given by University Education Commission (1948) that 'A teacher to keep alive and active should become a learner from time to time' highlighted the importance of In-Service Education of Teachers. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) also supported and advocated this. This commission was more specific in recommending the programme of extension services for secondary teachers. As a result All India Council for Secondary Education was established to provide in-service education to secondary teachers. First attempt was made during the period 1955-58 by establishing extension services department known as Basic Training Institutes (BTIs) for in-service teacher education. Further in the year 1961, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established with the responsibility of extension, research and training for the improvement of school education. At the end of the Third Five Year plan (1966), approximately four lakh untrained teachers were working in primary and middle schools. All India Council for Elementary Education appointed the study group on the training of Elementary Teachers in India in 1960 under the chairmanship of Raja Roy Singh. This study group recommended some valuable measures to cover the backlog of those untrained teachers which were identified during the 3rd Five Year Plan. Training inputs of those teachers were differentiated according to the length of service. Short term (one year) training course prescribed for those teachers who are more than 35 years and had teaching experience of more than 5 years as well as full-term (two years) training course would be for those teachers aged less than 35 years and had teaching experience less than five years. This study group also emphasised on correspondence education which was further recalled by NCERT (1961). In the field of in-service Teacher Education, NCERT also established Department of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education. In the year 1964, State Institutes of Education (SIEs) were set up which mainly focused on elementary school teachers and had responsibility to cover regional specificity in the training programmes. The Education Commission (1964-66) supported this view and also suggested separate training and some valuable suggestion for In-service Teacher Education.