



TEACHER EDUCATION IN ODISHA: CONFORMING TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SECONDARY-LEVEL TEACHING

¹ ELIZA MAHAPATRA

Research scholar

PG. Dept. Of Education

Fakir Mohan University, Balasore, Odisha

Abstract: The quality of pre-service teacher education programs depends upon the quality of the teacher. The future of the Indian classroom depends upon the teacher educator. They shape the classroom according to their skills, competencies and knowledge. Odisha's teacher education programs focus on pedagogical skills, subject expertise, inclusive education, and the integration of technology in teaching. The state has implemented reforms in pre-service and in-service training to enhance the professional competencies of teachers, ensuring their preparedness for evolving classroom dynamics. There are faces many challenges in implementing professional standard in Odisha like-mindset of the people, shortage of expertise, lack innovations, limited infrastructure and resources, disparities between urban and rural education, in sufficient teacher educator preparation, financial in constraints, lack of monitoring and evaluation. Findings of the study indicate that while secondary-level teacher education programs in Odisha provide a strong theoretical foundation, there are gaps in practical training, technology integration, and alignment with evolving educational policies. Internship experiences vary significantly in quality, with some institutions offering structured mentorship while others provide limited classroom exposure. To enhance the quality of secondary pre-service teacher education in Odisha, the study recommends strengthening field-based learning through extended and structured internships.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Professional Standards, Secondary Education, Odisha, Teacher Training, Quality Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The work of pre-service teacher education is essential to cultivating the skills, knowledge, and professional disposition that teachers will need. It is the bedrock upon which teachers cultivate the skills to deliver

instruction, manage classrooms and respond to student needs. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to assess whether these trainings are up to mark with the current educational standards.

Pre-service teacher education at secondary level in Odisha is designed to make with the requisite pedagogical skills and domain knowledge. Yet, there are changing education needs and stakeholder expectations along with globalization of professional standards including teaching professions, which raises the question on the professional relevancy of these programmes. Competency based training, digital literacy and inclusive education have always been major areas of focus for the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Yet, there are still gaps in syllabus design, pedagogic techniques, exposure to real-world issues, and assessment methodologies.

AIMS OF THE STUDY.

This paper aims to assess the merits and challenges of Odisha's secondary-level pre-service teacher education programs and suggest future possibilities for enhancements. Based on data collected, the research will investigate through curriculum adequacy, field experiences, and integration of technology to develop actionable recommendations for improving teacher preparation. Developing well-rounded teachers who are prepared to face the challenges of contemporary classrooms requires ensuring that teacher education adheres to national and international professional standards.

Literature review

Sahoo and Behera (2018) The opinions of teacher educators and student teachers on pre-service secondary teacher education programs in Odisha examined by this study. The results showed that there are significant gaps in the curriculum even though it mostly complies with the 2009 National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) criteria. To completely achieve the goals of the NEP, the study specifically found a substantial gap between academic knowledge and real-world application, indicating the need for a more integrated and balanced approach to teacher preparation.

In light of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the study "Perception of Teacher Educators about Teacher Education Programme in Odisha" (2024) investigated the opinions of educators regarding the state's teacher education initiatives. According to the report, despite efforts to modernize the teacher education system, issues such as a lack of faculty, inadequate infrastructure, and differences between urban and rural institutions still exist. To properly achieve the goals of the NEP, these structural problems must be resolved.

SCERT by Odisha 'State Policy on Continuing Professional Development' emphasizes the importance of comprehensive and rigorous pre-service teacher education. The policy advocates for the reflective engagement of teachers in various professional development activities within a lifelong learning framework,

underscoring the need for continuous improvement in teaching competencies to meet evolving educational demands.

Nayak and Pani (2019) conducted study about the competencies required for effective teaching. The study emphasized that meet the current educational demand of teacher education programs should focus on developing a robust knowledge base, self-competence, and pedagogical skills. The researcher advocated for a broader view of competence that encompasses both theoretical understanding and practical application.

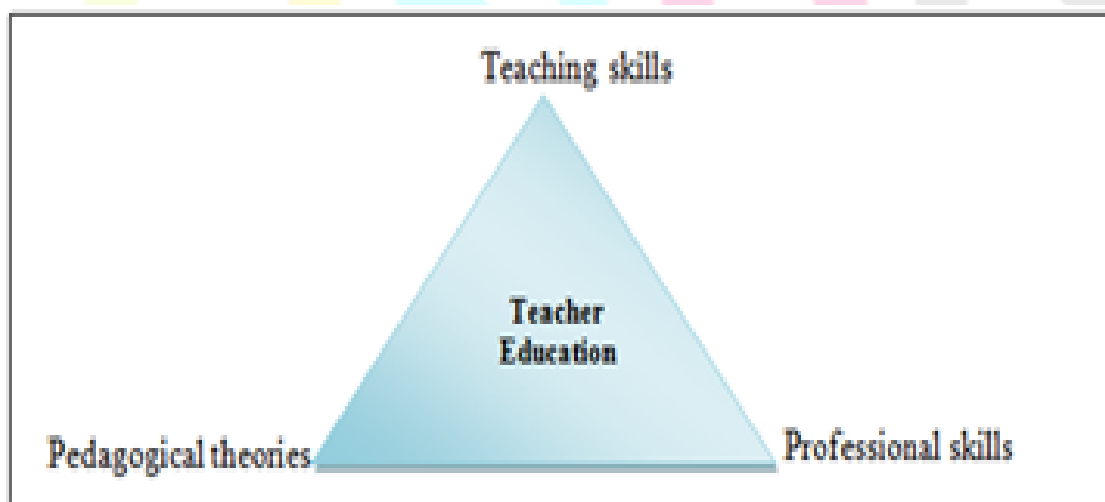
Behera (2018) conducted a study on the professional development activities of teacher educators in Odisha's secondary-level institutions. The finding of the study shows that educators' performance is positively impacted by engagement in various professional development programs. The study also recommended to enhance teacher educators' competencies and address contemporary educational challenges effectively incorporating diverse activities into the curriculum.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Odisha released a policy emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers. The policy outlines the need for comprehensive pre-service education and continuous in-service training to ensure educators meet the current professional standards. It advocates for a lifelong learning framework to maintain and enhance teaching competencies.

ORGANIZATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ODISHA

In Odisha, it's important to focus on teacher education to help teachers grow and become more skilled in their roles. This type of education gives teachers the tools they need to handle their jobs and respond to the needs of society. As defined in Goods Dictionary of Education, teacher education includes all the formal and informal activities that prepare someone to take on responsibilities in the education field or to do their job better. You can think of teacher education as a blend of teaching skills, understanding how to teach, and professional development.

Teacher education can be considered as the triangular combination of teaching skills, pedagogical theories and professional skills.



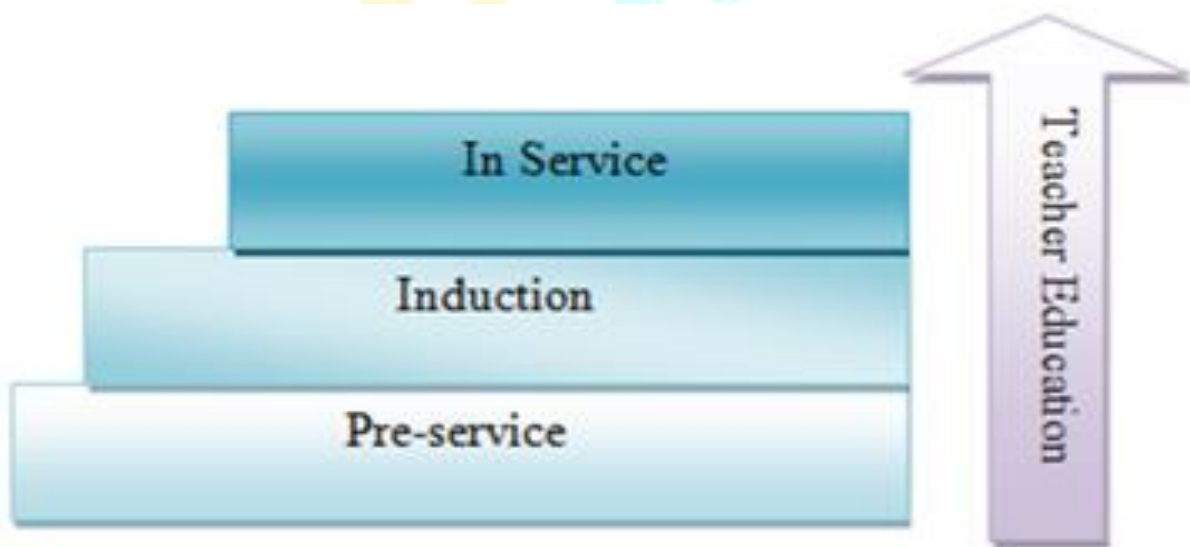
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND INSTITUTIONS

- The teacher education programs in Odisha are governed by
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)

- Department of School and Mass Education
- Government of Odisha
- The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)
- now transformed into the Directorate of Teacher Education
- SCERT (TE & SCERT)

In the state, various institutions provide organized programs to train teachers. These include District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs). Besides these, universities and private teacher training colleges linked to Utkal University, Sambalpur University, and Berhampur University play an important role in teacher education.

TYPES OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS



International Research Journal

IJNRD

1. Pre-Service Teacher Education

- Pre-service teacher education is the education and training provided to the pupil teacher before entering into the teaching profession. Pre-service teacher education program prepares the student-teachers from primary level to university level. All the pedagogical and practical components, community work, practical teaching, internship etc. are covered under this program. Diploma in Elementary Education (D. El. Ed.) Conducted by DIETs and private institutions to train elementary school teachers. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Offered by CTEs, IASEs, and university-affiliated colleges to prepare secondary school teachers. Integrated B.A./B.Sc. B.Ed. four-year integrated program for developing subject-specialist teachers.

2. Induction:

The process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school. After their recruitment, primary and secondary teachers will undergo two months' foundation training and for the college teachers it will be of four months. The primary and secondary level teachers must achieve Certificate-in Education(C-in-Ed) and Bachelor in Education (B. Ed) within three years of joining their post.

3.In-Service Teacher Education

This is an in-service process for practicing teacher's development or continuing professional development (CPD). There are several development projects to improve the quality of the education. Under these projects teachers are taking training on different pedagogy to meet the current challenges of classroom, new concepts of assessment, use of ICT in teaching- learning and also on the modern techniques of teaching- learning.

- a. Regular training and professional development programs are conducted by TE & SCERT and DIETs to enhance the teaching skills of existing educators.
- b. Workshops, refresher courses, and online training programs, such as those offered through SWAYAM and DIKSHA, contribute to continuous professional development.
- c. Institutions or Agencies for in-service Education
 - State Institutes of Education
 - State Institutes of Science
 - Correspondences courses for teachers
 - Summer institutes for teachers
 - Seminars
 - Refresher courses
 - Distance education

Innovations in pre-service teacher education

Despite its structured framework, Odisha faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, faculty shortages, and the need for curriculum updates. However, several initiatives have been undertaken to improve teacher education like- ICT Integration: The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teacher education aims to provide interactive and flexible learning opportunities. Online portals, e-learning modules, and video-based instructional content facilitate continuous professional development. Additionally, digital assessment tools and virtual simulations help in refining teaching methodologies, ensuring teachers remain updated with contemporary pedagogical trends. other innovation Collaboration with National Agencies such as NCERT, NCTE, and NIEPA to ensure its teacher education programs are aligned with national policies and best practices. These partnerships help in curriculum development, policy formulation, and faculty training. Regular workshops, joint research initiatives, and expert consultations are conducted to enhance the

quality of teacher education. Additionally, the collaboration facilitates access to national digital resources and training modules, thereby strengthening the professional development of educators in the state. Internship-Based Training: is a structured, hands-on learning approach where students, trainees, or early-career professionals gain practical experience in a real-world work environment. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and professional skills, preparing individuals for career challenges.

TEACHER EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IN ODISHA

The regulatory framework for teacher education in Odisha is governed by national and state-level policies, including:

- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Guidelines** The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, responsible for regulating teacher education across the country, including Odisha. The key functions of NCTE in Odisha include: NCTE lays down norms and standards for B.Ed., D. El. Ed., M.Ed., and other teacher education programs offered by universities and colleges in Odisha. It ensures that teacher education institutions (TEIs) meet infrastructure, faculty, and curriculum requirements. TEIs in Odisha must obtain NCTE recognition before offering any teacher education programs. Institutions must follow NCTE's revised Regulations 2014, which prescribe guidelines for teacher training. NCTE defines eligibility criteria for teacher education courses, including minimum qualification and entrance tests.
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Emphasizing a multidisciplinary approach, skill-based learning, and technology integration. NCTE aligns teacher education curricula with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and integrates ICT, inclusive education, and experiential learning.
- Odisha Teacher Education Curriculum Framework:** The Odisha Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (OTECEF) is designed to align with national policies such as the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It aims to enhance the quality of teacher education by integrating pedagogical innovations, ICT, inclusivity, and experiential learning.

- Recruitment and Service Conditions**

The Orissa Education Act of 1969, supplemented by the 1974 rules, outlines the recruitment processes and service conditions for teachers and staff in aided educational institutions. These regulations define the qualifications required for teaching positions, procedures for appointment, and terms of service, ensuring a standardized approach to teacher recruitment and employment within the state.

- Continuing Professional Development**

Recognizing the importance of ongoing professional growth, Odisha has instituted a State Policy on Continuing Professional Development. This policy emphasizes the selection of suitable candidates for

pre-service teacher education, the rigor of these programs, and the engagement of teachers in lifelong learning activities. The goal is to foster a culture of continuous improvement among educators, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education.

- **Institutional Support and Reforms**

The Directorate of Teacher Education and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in Odisha play crucial roles in policy formulation and implementation related to teacher education. Initiatives such as the Think Tank–Teacher Education have been established to analyze systemic gaps, integrate emerging developments, and plan both immediate and long-term reforms in teacher education. These efforts aim to create a dynamic and responsive educational environment that meets contemporary needs.

- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:**

Mandating teacher qualification standards. These policies shape the curriculum, teacher recruitment, and professional development strategies implemented in the state. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, enacted by the Government of India, mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Odisha, as a state, follows the national framework while implementing state-specific policies to ensure effective execution of the Act.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN ODISHA

There are several challenges in implementing professional standards in Odisha like-

Mindset of the people

Overcoming traditional mindsets that hinder the adoption of innovative approaches in teacher training. Encouraging the institutions to embrace technology and interdisciplinary methods.

Shortage of Expertise in teacher education field

Addressing gaps in teacher educators' knowledge regarding new tools, technologies, and methodologies. Balancing the theory and practice, especially in emerging areas like AI and sustainability.

Lack of new Innovations

Ensuring equitable implementation of new practices across all teacher education institutions, including those in rural areas. Managing the integration of novel elements without overloading the curriculum.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Providing access to digital infrastructure and resources for teacher trainees, especially in underserved regions. Promoting equal participation in technology-driven training programs. **Limited Infrastructure and**

Resources

Many institutions face deficits in infrastructure and resources, such as inadequate digital tools, outdated libraries, and insufficient laboratory facilities. Addressing these gaps is essential for effective reform.

Faculty Development Needs

Current educators need training to adopt interdisciplinary teaching approaches and integrate technology effectively. Ongoing professional development programs are critical to address this gap.

Disparities Between Urban and Rural Education

Urban areas often enjoy better access to resources than rural regions, leading to inequalities. Focused interventions are required to bridge this gap and ensure equitable opportunities for all.

Raising Awareness Among Stakeholders

Effective implementation requires stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and students, to understand and align with NEP 2020's vision. Awareness campaigns and training sessions are essential.

Ensuring Accountability and Standards

Mechanisms for assessing and ensuring the quality of educational programs need to be robust and transparent. Continuous evaluation will be necessary to maintain high standards.

Variability in Institutional Standards

Underperforming TEIs: Many institutions fall short of basic quality standards, leading to subpar teacher training. Addressing this issue involves rigorous quality monitoring and phased closures of non-performing institutions. **Limited Interdisciplinary Integration like-** The absence of multidisciplinary approaches in standalone TEIs hinders the development of teachers with broad and collaborative skill sets.

Resistance to Educational Reforms

Conservative Practices and Awareness Deficits: Traditional methods dominate in many TEIs, making it challenging to introduce innovative, experiential, and competency-based pedagogies. A lack of comprehensive understanding of NEP 2020 among educators and administrators creates reluctance to adopt its reforms.

Curriculum Modernization Hurdles

Complex Overhaul Process: Transforming the teacher education curriculum to incorporate areas like critical thinking, problem-solving, and emerging technologies requires extensive planning and resources. Integrating new subjects, such as artificial intelligence and environmental education, demands significant investment in curriculum development and faculty training.

Insufficient Teacher Educator Preparation

Skill Gaps: A lack of updated training for teacher educators impairs their ability to effectively deliver modern pedagogical content. An inadequate number of qualified teacher educators hampers the capacity of TEIs to deliver high-quality training programs.

Barriers to Equity and Inclusion

Access Issues: Students from marginalized communities face challenges accessing teacher education due to socio-economic and geographical barriers. **Insufficient Focus on Diversity** Many programs fail to adequately train teachers to handle diverse classrooms, including students with disabilities or from varied cultural backgrounds.

Financial Constraints

Inadequate Funding: Many institutions lack the financial resources required for infrastructure upgrades, innovative program development, and continuous professional development for educators. Sustainability of

Reforms like- Long-term initiatives like the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) require consistent and substantial financial support.

Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges

Quality Assurance Issues: Inconsistent and inadequate mechanisms for accrediting and evaluating TEIs result in varying levels of program effectiveness. Outcome Measurement Gaps like - Limited systems are in place to assess the impact of teacher education reforms or track graduate competencies.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To further improve teacher education in Odisha, the following measures are recommended:

Strengthening Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs): Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) play a crucial role in preparing and equipping future educators with the necessary pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and professional competencies. Strengthening TEIs is essential to improve the quality of teacher education, ensuring that teachers are well-trained to meet the evolving demands of modern classrooms

Regularly Updating Teacher Education Curricula

The continuous evolution of education systems, pedagogical innovations, and societal needs necessitate the regular updating of teacher education curricula. A dynamic and relevant curriculum ensures that teachers are well-prepared to meet modern educational challenges, use emerging technologies, and address diverse student needs. To meet the demands of the modern educational landscape, it is essential to continuously revise and update the teacher education curriculum in Odisha

Enhanced Use of ICT-

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teacher education is a transformative step toward modernizing teaching and learning processes. The enhanced use of ICT enables innovative pedagogy, personalized learning, and global connectivity, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped for 21st-century classrooms.

Expanding Practical Teaching Experience

Expanding practical teaching experience is crucial for preparing future educators with the necessary classroom management skills, pedagogical expertise, and real-world problem-solving abilities. A well-structured practicum helps bridge the gap between theoretical learning and actual classroom teaching, ensuring that pre-service teachers are confident and competent professionals.

Encouraging Reflective and Self-Directed Learning

Reflective and self-directed learning are essential for developing autonomous, lifelong learners among teacher trainees. Encouraging critical thinking, self-assessment, and continuous professional growth enables teachers to adapt to changing educational landscapes and improve their instructional effectiveness.

Regular Assessment and Monitoring: Regular assessment and monitoring are essential for ensuring the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of teacher education programs. Systematic evaluation helps track progress, identify areas for improvement, and enhance teaching-learning outcomes in both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Implementing a robust teacher performance evaluation system.

Supporting Research in Education

Research in education is essential for advancing teaching practices, shaping policies, and improving learning outcomes. By fostering a strong research culture in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), educators can develop innovative strategies, address classroom challenges, and contribute to the broader field of education.

Fostering Continuous Professional Development

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential for teachers to stay updated with new pedagogical strategies, technological advancements, and evolving educational policies. CPD ensures that educators remain competent, adaptable, and innovative, leading to improved student learning outcomes.

Enhancing Accessibility in Rural Areas

Odisha should focus on improving the infrastructure, resources, and faculty in rural teacher training institutions. Enhancing accessibility in rural areas for teacher education is critical for addressing educational disparities, improving learning outcomes, and ensuring that teachers are equipped to serve diverse and underserved communities. By breaking barriers of geography, infrastructure, and socio-economic challenges, teacher education can become more inclusive and impactful in rural settings.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusivity

Embracing diversity and inclusivity is essential in teacher education to ensure that all learners, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or identities, receive high-quality education. Teacher education programs must equip educators with the skills, attitudes, and strategies to understand, respect, and address diverse learning needs while promoting equitable and inclusive classrooms.

Strengthening Community Collaboration

Community collaboration plays a crucial role in the development of effective, context-sensitive teacher education programs. By engaging with local communities, teacher education institutions can enhance the relevance of training, build stronger connections between schools and families, and create a support network for teachers and students. Community-driven approaches foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, promoting shared goals and mutual benefits in education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the teacher education system in Odisha has made significant progress in aligning with the professional standards for secondary-level teachers. These efforts reflect a focused attempt to improve the quality of teaching by equipping educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to meet the demands of contemporary classrooms. The key professional standards for teachers, including mastery of subject content, pedagogical expertise, classroom management, and adherence to ethical principles, are now core components of teacher education programs in Odisha. By emphasizing these areas, the state ensures that teachers are not only proficient in their subject areas but are also adept at using innovative teaching strategies, integrating modern technologies, and fostering inclusive and student-centered environments. Odisha has implemented several initiatives to strengthen its teacher education system, such as upgrading teacher training programs and establishing well-equipped Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

In conclusion, while Odisha has made considerable strides in aligning its teacher education system with professional standards, continuous efforts are needed to address the remaining challenges. By focusing on improving access to training, fostering professional development, and ensuring inclusivity, the state can continue to enhance the quality of education. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to the creation of a more effective and equitable education system that benefits all students in Odisha.

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