

Teacher Education Accreditation Practices and Procedures: Comparison of USA, England, Australia and India

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Abstract: “Teacher quality is an important consideration in student achievement, and although defined differently by different people, continues to be the central concern of those responsible for teacher education. Quality teachers are products of quality teacher education programmes, policies and practices” (UNESCO-ILO, 2010, p20). Setting of professional standards, assessment and accreditation of teacher education institutions will certainly yield society such teachers, who through their capabilities and competence will ensure that every student is knowledgeable, possess attributes and disposition and is skilled enough to meet the challenges of this dynamic world. “Accreditation is the process that involves the examination of institutional procedures for quality assurance as well as involves the assessment of arrangements for achievement of stated objectives.”(Dey, 2011). In the present paper, the author has adopted comparative method so as to have a profound and comprehensive cognizance of teacher education accreditation procedures and practices in these four diverse cultures (USA, England, Australia and India).The comparison drawn focuses on historical background of the accrediting entities, their vision, goals, governance, eligibility requirements, accreditation process, duration and the award of accreditation being offered.

Index terms: teacher education, accreditation, practices, procedures

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of any education system is relative to the quality of its teachers, as it is the teachers who make or mar the destiny of a nation. It has been acknowledged universally and rightly stated that “teacher quality is an important consideration in student achievement, and although defined differently by different people, continues to be the central concern of those responsible for teacher education. Quality teachers are products of quality teacher education .” (UNESCO-ILO, 2010, p20). In this era of globalization the capacities of world’s

countries, whether the most advanced economies or those experiencing speedy developments, depend on their ability to programmes, policies and practices meet the fast growing demands for specialized knowledge and skills. This in turn, pivots, on the quality of educational outcomes across the educational systems [1][2][3]. At this juncture, the most frequently raised question is, quality of teachers, as teacher is the maker of a man, a fulcrum, on which success and failure of any education system rests. Whitehurst highlighted that the most vital school-related factor in student attainment is teacher’s quality [4][5][6]. Students made substantial gains with high performing teachers in comparison to those placed with worst performing teachers. (Another study “Teacher Effects on Student in Dallas, showed the performance gap of 49 percentile points between students assigned three effective teachers in a row and those assigned three ineffective teachers in a row” [7][8][9]. Barber and pinpointed that “the impact of low-performing teachers is severe and is largely irreversible, particularly during the earlier years of schooling”. “Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality emphasized the significance of trained teachers with sound content - pedagogical knowledge and skills for influencing achievement of students in mathematics” [10][11][12], cited in McConney, Likewise, Dobbie in 2011, emphasized that teacher characteristics such as leadership capability and diligence, academics are linked with student attainment in maths. All this indicates that despite good systems, if students are not taught by teachers of good competence during the first years of schooling, there is little chance that student recovers this loss. In fact the student learning outcomes is relative to quality of the teachers.

Today’s student require skilling for academics, livelihood and life, knowledge and dispositions such as curiosity, creativity, problem solving, innovation, technological expertise, ethics necessary to navigate in this dynamic world. The expectation from today’s teacher is very high as they have been assigned a very vital role than ever before in this technologically advanced, knowledge economy. In today’s context, teachers must be subject masters and skilled enough to ensure that every student is knowledgeable, possess attributes and disposition and is skilled enough to meet the challenges of this vibrant world. The role, function, competence, preparation,

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professional standards and certification of teachers needs to be focused from time to time, as the quality of nation depends upon quality educational outcomes, which in turn, in critical measure depends on its teachers. It is rightly said, “one cannot give what one does not have”, implies that the teachers can only build a society which is socially useful, productive and global if they themselves model and reinforce the required knowledge, skills and attitude [13][14][15]. In fact, the need of the hour is to focus on quality teacher education programmes so as to enable teachers to become an erudite, skilled, compassionate and committed professional. Setting of professional standards, assessment and accreditation of teacher education **institutions will definitely** improve scholastic quality as well as will yield society such teachers, who will shape the destiny of its country in her classrooms, for meeting the varied challenges of life. Quality assurance in teacher education can be pivotal in the total quality management mission of system, if along with stakeholders, main attention is given to primary customers i.e. learners [16][17]. Efficient teacher education programs try to harmonize both knowledge and skills for teacher trainees through coursework and practical skills [18]. Murty rightly pinpointed that teacher education if reshaped and reformed, as per varying international levels, can play a substantial role in the fulfillment of various socio-economic needs of our plural society. Singh recommended that in order to prepare teachers for local, national and global challenges and to bring qualitative improvement in teacher education and there is a need to establish and standardize norms for teacher education programmes. All this pin points that accreditation of teacher education and its academic programs are important for assurance of quality educational outputs.

At global level, there is a greater interest in procedures and practices adopted with respect to assessment and accreditation of teacher education institutions, so as to assure better outputs in terms of teachers, who are able to develop students who are a not a misfit in this world, rather match and meet the needs and challenges of the changing society. Teacher education accreditation pinpoints on accountability towards society. Kingsbury) pinpointed that these days “higher education institutions are facing the challenges of accountability, value adding and transparency” (as cited in emphasized that by recruiting teachers from bottom third of high school students going to college, it will not be possible for students to graduate with the required skills till the teachers have the required knowledge and skills, that we want our children to have [19][20]. Hobson et al.) reported that in few countries, the potential candidates must demonstrate their suitability to teaching by passing a national level or university level exam so as to get access to initial teacher preparation programmes. While in few other countries along with it interviews are also conducted. “The two of the world’s higher performing education systems, Singapore and Finland, place great emphasis on academic achievement, communication skills and motivation for teaching”[21][22]. Special attention was paid to initial teacher education and it was pinpointed that criteria of accreditation should shift its focus from ‘inputs’ as content and methodology to ‘outcomes’ in the form of graduates ability to know and ability to do. (OECD, 2005).

“Accreditation is becoming the major method of evaluation” [23][24][25][26].

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Accreditation is a process or an act of granting credit or recognition or validation especially to an educational institution, college, university or institution of higher education that maintains required standards. It is a process whereby educational institutions are evaluated against standards of quality as set by accreditation bodies. “Accreditation implies the assessment of an institution’s capacity that is, whether an institution deserves to be called a college or university [43][44][46]. “Accreditation is a shared responsibility and involves self-evaluation by the institution itself as well as external peer assessment, and was conventionally inclined more towards accountability, rather than improving operational quality [27][28]. “Accreditation is the process that involves the examination of institutional procedures for quality assurance as well as involves the assessment of arrangements for achievement of stated objectives [29]. In most of the European countries, there is one single body; usually an agency or independent body, responsible for accreditation and general regulations apply to evaluation of teacher education institutions except for few countries that have teacher education specific regulations [30]. Indeed accreditation is necessary for an institution to prove that they meet the professional standards.

The setting of standards and criteria of teacher education accreditation varies from country to country in priorities and criteria as these reflect and are based on the national culture, political choice and traditions. In the present paper the author has tried to draw a comparison in the accreditation practices and procedures of the United States, England, Australia and India, also enquires into the various criteria, requirements, processes taken into consideration before arriving at any judgment to accredit or not to accredit any teacher education institution.

In US, where education is the responsibility of state, in early to mid-1900, teaching was viewed as a routine activity, and it was only in late 1980’s, the necessity of defining standards for teacher education preparation was felt, due to lack of satisfaction with **quality of teaching both at** educational administration level as well as public level. Thus accreditation procedures and practices by professional bodies, so as check quality status of teacher education system against set standards emerged. **The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), established in US in 1954, is oldest as well as largest accreditor of teacher education. Similar to NCATE, Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) established in 1997, offered teacher education institutions a voluntary accreditation system. In 2013, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) merged into a new accrediting body for teacher education preparation, as Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).**



“Accreditation is quality assurance through external peer review. Accreditation ensures that educator programs are preparing the new teachers to know their subjects, their students, and gain required clinical training so that they can teach effectively in the classroom [38][39][40].

In England, on 29 March, 2013 the inception of National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) occurred due to merging of National College for School Leadership and Teaching Agency. National College for Teaching and Leadership on behalf of Department for Education provides guidelines with respect to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and focuses that accredited initial teacher education providers must adhere to the criteria provided by ITT as per The Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003. On April 1, 2012, National College for Teaching and Leadership provided a reference point, called Teacher’s Standards, with respect to standard behavior expected out of a teacher. NCTL accreditation implies that “the provider can offer initial teacher training that leads to award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to the concerned individual. NCTL accredits those providers that are judged good or outstanding by Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) and comply by the criteria as laid by Secretary of State that govern Initial Teacher Training, otherwise even withdraws the awarded accreditation to the provider”.

In Australia, The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) on 15 April, 2011 focused on establishment of “a national approach to accreditation of initial teacher education programs.” Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) developed Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures through the involvement of teacher regulatory authorities and education stakeholders. The standards and procedures of accreditation focus on conditions against which initial teacher education programs are assessed, including program standards, professional standards, and the accreditation process. “In order to be nationally accredited the initial teacher education programs must fulfill these standards and procedures.” (AITSL, 2015)

In India, due to rapid expansion in higher education, many questions pertaining to quality arose. Consequently in 1994, to address these questions pertaining to quality, an accreditation body, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established by University Grants

Commission, to assess and accredit higher education institutions in the country. In India, prior to 28th April 2017, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) coordinated and worked together in accrediting teacher education institutions. “Assessment and Accreditation pinpoints towards the “Quality Status” of an institution” (NAAC, 2016). But very recently “NCTE vide notification dated 28th April 2017, in the exercise of its powers under sub-section 2 of section 32 of the NCTE Act, 1993, introduced an amendment to Regulation 8(3). According to this amendment, an institution recognized by NCTE is now required to obtain accreditation from an agency identified by it, that is, Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous agency under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India (registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860) to establish an accreditation structure in the country and to spread quality movement in India. Thus NCTE took a decision to discontinue the mandate given to NAAC and instead work with the Quality Council of India (QCI)”. [31][32]. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and Quality Council of India (QCI) coordinate and work together in accrediting teacher education institutions [33][34]. The “TeachR framework for ranking and accreditation is designed to provide a thorough, holistic assessment of TEIs. Beyond the physical assets and rudimentary academic assets in the original framework, it gives maximum weightage to teaching and learning quality as well as learning outcomes [35]. In the present paper, the author has adopted comparative method so as to have a profound and comprehensive cognizance of teacher education accreditation procedures and practices in these four diverse cultures (USA, England, Australia and India), and the latest amendments, especially with respect to recent changes in India, have been incorporated, similarities and disparities have been pinpointed as shown in Table 1. A similar comparison was also drawn [36][37] but was primarily limited to USA, Australia and India only, and secondly till 2016, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and NCTE worked together for accrediting teacher education institutions in India. Further, the comparative view drawn focuses on historical background of the accrediting entities, their vision, goals, governance, eligibility requirements, accreditation process, duration and the award of accreditation being offered.

Teacher Education Accreditation practices and procedures

Table (1)

	United States of America	England	Australia	India
Historical background	On July 1, 2013, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) consolidated together to form Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) - sole accrediting body for educator preparation providers; Presently “CAEP accreditation standards are fully implemented; while NCATE and TEAC legacy standards are no longer used for accreditation” (CAEP, 2018).	On 29 March, 2013 the inception of National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) occurred due to the merging of National College for School Leadership and Teaching Agency. National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) an executive agency, sponsored by Department of Education (DfE), will accredit only those schools that have been judged good or outstanding by Ofsted. “The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspects Teacher Training Institutions to confirm that they fulfill the ITT criteria”. (NCTL Framework, 2015).	In 2010, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) registered and initiated operations as a public company limited by guarantee under the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001. AITSL, though a non-governmental department acts on the behalf of all Education Ministers, viz. State, territory or federal, The Minister of Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs on behalf of The Australian Government is the sole company member. “AITSL is the custodian of the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures, agreed by all Education Ministers in 2011” (AITSL, 2015b).	Both, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) established in 1993 and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 coordinated and worked together to assess and accredit teacher education institutions through the country. Presently, according to recent amendment in NCTE Act, 1993, “an institution recognized by NCTE is now required to obtain accreditation from an agency identified by NCTE, called Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous agency under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India. NCTE in collaboration with QCI, designed a new Ranking and Accreditation Framework For TEIs, i.e. TEACHR.” (TeachR, June 2017).
Vision/ Mission	“Excellence in Educator Preparation. CAEP advances excellent educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning” (CAEP, 2018)	“To achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for children and young people, no matter what their background or family circumstances” (NCTL, 2015).	“To promote excellence so that teachers and school leaders have maximum impact on students learning in all Australian schools” (AITSL, 2015a).	“The National Well Being” (QCI, 2007). “Unlocking the potential of teacher education in India.” (TeachR, June 2017).

	United States of America	England	Australia	India
Goals/ Objectives	Five Strategic Goals of CAEP are as follows: “Goal 1: Continuous Improvement “Goal 2: Quality Assurance” “Goal 3: Credibility” “Goal 4: Equity” “Goal 5: Strong Foundation” (CAEP, 2018, strategic goals).	Two strategic aims of agency are as follows: 1 “Improving the quality of the education workforce” 2 “Helping the schools to help each other improve.” (NCTL, 2015).	The Institute's role is to: 1 “Develop and maintain rigorous Australian professional standards for teaching and school leadership.” 2 “Implement an agreed system of national accreditation of teachers based on these standards.” 3 “Foster and drive high quality professional development for teachers and school leaders through professional standards, professional learning and a national approach to the accreditation.” 4 “Undertake and engage with international research and innovative developments.” 5 “Fulfill the role of assessing authority under Migration Regulations (1994) for school teachers” (AITSL, 2015b).	The objectives of QCI are: 1 “To develop, establish and operate National Accreditation Programmes for various service sectors such as education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector, vocational training etc., to site a few, as may be required, based on national/international standards and guidelines and where such standards are not available, to develop accreditation standards to support accreditation programs.” 2 “To build capacities in the areas of regulation, conformity assessment and accreditation to overcome TBT/SPS constraints.” 3 “To encourage development and application of third party assessment model for use in government, regulators, organizations and society.” (QCI, 2018)

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Governance	CAEP is a non-governmental voluntary organization, and its activities are governed by three distinct bodies; the Board of Directors, the Accreditation Council, and the Appeals Council. (CAEP, Governance policy ratified, June 2017)	“The permanent Secretary is the Principal Accounting Officer for the Department For Education (DfE) and is responsible for overall leadership and working of Department as well as the Agency” (NCTL,2015).	“AITSL is a national body, has its own constitution and a Board of Directors that possess decision making authority” (AITSL, 2015b).	“Quality Council of India (QCI), is an autonomous agency under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India” (Teach R, June 2017).
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	United States of America	England	Australia	India
Eligibility and Application process	<p>Any Education Preparation Provider (EPP) in order to be eligible for CAEP accreditation must be accredited by a regional or institutional accrediting agency, recognized by US Department of Education and Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Further those Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) seeking accreditation for the first time follow a two- phase application process to enter the accreditation system, CAEP provides two ‘tracks’ for those seeking accreditation for the first time:</p> <p>“CAEP Accreditation – Phase I Accreditation eligibility status, is provided to EPPs that judge themselves to be ready to engage in an accreditation review and are confident that they will have sufficient evidence of meeting all five CAEP standards within two years”.</p> <p>“Candidacy for accreditation status, is provided to EPP’s that opt to enter accreditation process, to ensure that they are better prepared to address all of CAEP’s standards successfully in their accreditation bid within five years”. (CAEP, 2015a).</p> <p>“CAEP Accreditation – Phase II The phase II of application process includes completion of characteristics and capacity tables by each EPP” (CAEP, 2015b).</p>	Potential New Provider (PNP) to become accredited to deliver Initial teacher Training must put forward a proposal to DfE justifying how its provision are at the, at least good according to Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Secretary of State criteria of ITT. “PNP can only provide courses that lead to recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) if it has been accredited by DfE” (ITT, 2017a).	All providers of Initial Teacher Education. The providers seeking accreditation pass through two stages, namely- 1Accreditation Stage I (for new entrants, focuses on a provider’s plan for demonstrating impact 2Accreditation Stage II (focus on interpretation of evidence as outlined in their plan for demonstrating impact) The Program Standards are applicable to both the stages of accreditation (AITSL, 2015c).	“Any Teacher Education institution recognized by NCTE”(TeachR, June 2017)
Standards and Criteria	CAEP has given five standards which are as follows: “Standard1:Content Pedagogical Knowledge” “Standard 2:Clinical Partnerships and Practice” “Standard 3:Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity” “Standard 4: Program Impact” “Standard5: Provider, Continuous Improvement and Capacity” (CAEP, 2018).	Initial Teacher Training Criteria (ITT) must be met by PNP to be accredited; ITT criteria includes: 1 “Entry Criteria” 2 “Training Criteria” 3“Management and Assurance Criteria” 4“Employment-based Criteria” (ITT, 2017a).	AITSL has given six program standards which are as follows: 1 “Standard program outcomes” 2 “Standard program development, design and delivery” 3 “Standard program entry” 4 “Standard program structure and content” 5 “Standard experience” 6 “Standard Program evaluation, reporting and Improvement” (AITSL, 2015b).	Teach R has identified four pillars of framework, namely: 1 “Physical assets” 2 “Academic Assets” 3 “Teacher and Learning Quality” 4 “Learning Outcomes” “The latter two pillars now account for 70% of a TEI’s score.” (TeachR, June 2017).

	United States of America	England	Australia	India
Accreditation Process and Level of Accreditation	<p>The accreditation process involves the following steps: 1. Self- Study Process 2. Formative Review 3. Visit by the Visitor Team (provides a written report with respect to completeness, quality and strength to the Educator Preparation provider and to the Accreditation Council) (CAEP, 2016). Following accreditation decision are given by CAEP to Education Preparation Provider seeking accreditation: “Initial Accreditation Decisions- for EPP seeking accreditation for the first time, four decisions may follow: Accreditation for seven years is granted if the EPP meets all of the CAEP Standards Accreditation with stipulations is granted if an EPP receives one stipulation on a non-required component under any one standard Provisional accreditation is granted if an EPP fails to meet not more than one required component under any one standard Denial of accreditation if the EPP fails to meet the CAEP Standard” “Continuing Accreditation Decisions-for EPP seeking continuing accreditation, four decisions may follow: Accreditation for seven years Accreditation with stipulations is granted if an EPP receives one (1) or more stipulations on non-required component(s) and all standards are met. Probationary accreditation is granted for two years when an EPP does not meet one of the CAEP Standards Accreditation is revoked, if an EPP does not meet two or more of the CAEP Standards” (CAEP, 2018).</p>	<p>The Accreditation Process (NCTL,2017b) 1. Potential New Provider (PNP) attends briefing session on accreditation process conducted by Department of Education (DfE) 2. Submission of the Business case by PNP 3. Assessment of business case by DfE’s Accreditation and Performance Committee and provision of feedback 4. The PNP prepares an accreditation bid against the assessment criteria. 5. Submission of bid to DfE, followed by rigorous assessment against the set criteria by DfE accreditation team. 6. DfE Accreditation Team makes a recommendation to DfE Accreditation and Performance Committee (APC) for accreditation. The APC, if satisfied, will recommend accreditation to the Secretary of State for Education.</p> <p>The DfE has the right not to accredit or remove PNP from the accreditation process at any point, which may lead to decline of accreditation or suspension of application for a fixed period of time. If the accredited provider does not meet the ITT criteria or financially in viable, NCTL will withdraw the accreditation of a provider” (ITT, 2017a).</p>	<p>The process of accreditation involves: 1. Submission of an application to Authority 2. Accreditation of programs to be provided across jurisdictions 3. Eligibility and compliance check 4. Assessment of application by panel convened by Authority 5. On site visit by panel and final accreditation report to Authority. 5. Accreditation decision and notification of outcome by the Authority Accreditation decision can be as follows: “Accreditation be granted, if program has met the Program Standards” “Accreditation with conditions, grant of accreditation subject to particular conditions and specification of time frames under which such conditions should be met” “Non-Accreditation, accreditation not be granted, if Program Standards have not been met.” Authority will forward to AITSL a summary report of the program accreditation status report and AITSL” (AITSL, 2016).</p>	<p>The accreditation and ranking process involves: 1. Registration on Teach R web portal by TEI 2. Submission of self-evaluation form on the portal by TEI. 3. Desktop assessment (DA) team verification of SEF; if a TEI has filled the SEF as per requirement, its form will be accepted for further action; if not, there will be issue of show cause notice for cancellation of recognition 4. QCI Assessment process: After clearance from DA phase, TEI will be moved to “field verification stage” where assessors by Quality Council of India, (QCI) will visit the TEI for verification of the claims made. Apart this, “feedback from three points of contact (POCs) in schools where the student teachers from the TEI have worked as interns”. Feedback from TEI students and members of the management committee will also be taken and AV recording for teacher educators and a proctored test for the student teacher will be conducted. 5. Ranking and accreditation decision can be as follows: “Category A and B: TEI fulfilled criteria of pillars of TeachR framework. Category A institutions will be granted more independence over their functioning through a reduction in regulatory oversight as compared to category B institutions if it submits SEF each year, otherwise, it will be categorized as B. Category C: TEIs fulfill the criteria of TeachR framework, but score poorly in aggregate score or fail to get minimum score in each section. Category D: TEIs do not fulfill the criteria of TeachR framework; will be shut down immediately”(Teach R, June 2017.)</p>
	Duration	<p>“Accreditation for two or five or seven years. Seven (7) years for full accreditation; Five (5) years if the EPP’s status was previously a two (2) year probationary or provisional accreditation or a stipulation was assigned and corrected; Two (2) years for a probationary or provisional accreditation decision. (CAEP, 2018).”</p>	<p>“Twice in six years all providers are inspected (NCTL, 2015).”</p>	<p>“Accreditation granted for five years (AITSL, 2015c).”</p>
	United States of America	England	Australia	India



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Accreditation Cost	Educator Preparation Provider interested in CAEP accreditation bear the accreditation fees. “Financial support is also provided to CAEP by coalition of educational organizations and states that are committed to excellence in educator preparation”. (CAEP, 2018)	The Agency is sponsored by Department for Education (NCTL,2015)	Australian Government funds AITSL (AITSL, 2015a)	TEI will bear the accreditation fees (Teach R,June 2017).
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III. CONCLUSION

Across the globe, in many countries rigorous procedures and practices of accreditation and assessment of teacher education programs have been adopted, for the improvement in quality of teachers, so as to provide society with teachers who are efficient and possess a positive attitude. Such teachers may in turn shape the future of a country, that is, its students, through actualization of their potential to the maximum and thereby helping them to create a niche for themselves in this competitive global society.

In United States, England, Australia and India, teacher education programs are governed by accreditation bodies. In United States, in 2013, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) emerged as a single accreditation body (merging of NCATE and TEAC) for Educator Preparation Providers. Now in 2018, “only CAEP accreditation standards are fully implemented, while NCATE and TEAC standards are obsolete (CAEP, 2018).”CAEP in order to attain its vision of excellence in Educator Preparation follows rigorous accreditation process for accrediting Educator Preparation Provider (EPP). In fact by assessing the performance of EPP, the accrediting bodies ensure that after the completion of teacher education course the students are ready to enter the teaching profession as registered or licensed teachers. In United States after the completion of Teacher Education program, the student has to appear in state teacher licensing examination, Praxis Series comprising of two tests namely, Praxis I for assessing Pre- Professional Skills and Praxis II for subject assessment. Gupta in 2011, drew a comparison between teacher education in USA and India and pinpointed that in USA, along with the passing scores in basic skill test and subject matter test, a candidate’s personal goal statement notifying that candidate is committed to his professional career and intellectual curiosity, two letters of references (one from professor in department of education and other from the department in which the candidate wants to do his content specialization) are required; further also endorsed and recommended India to adopt USA’s decentralized administration as a central agency cannot meet the diverse needs and demands of a large country like India.

In England, National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) accredits the initial training institutions as per ITT criteria and thus entitles the passed out candidates with Quality Teacher Status (QTS). In England, the candidate

who does not receive Quality Teacher Status or its equivalent is not qualified to teach in schools. NCTL provided a reference point, called Teacher’s Standards, with respect to standard behavior expected out of a teacher. Teacher Standards comprise of two parts, namely- Teaching, Personal and Professional Conduct. The providers of initial teacher training (ITT) must assess the candidates against the teacher standard before awarding the Quality Teacher Status (QTS).

In Australia, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) provides the standards and procedures against which Initial Teacher Education programs are assessed. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programs guarantee that academic qualifications attained by graduates of the concerned programs make the students acceptable for teacher registration across all Australian jurisdictions.

In India, according to recent amendment in NCTE Act, 1993, “an institution recognized by NCTE is now required to obtain accreditation from an agency identified by NCTE, called Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous

agency under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India.” (TeachR, June 2017). In fact, NCTE took this step with a perspective “to help prospective student teachers make informed choices about the TEI in order to (1) acquire the Attitude, Skill and Knowledge (ASK) required to become a good teacher and, (2) passing the teacher eligibility test (TET), a mandatory requirement to become a teacher in both government and private schools in India, it was an endeavour to ensure quality in education. Additionally, it was also decided, for the first time, to rank the top 100 TEIs in the country once every two years.” (TeachR, June 2017). In all the four countries, United States, England, Australia and India, vision is to promote excellence in teacher preparation, thereby creating excellent teachers who can contribute in the creation of educated and sustainable society. Further, the methodology adopted for accreditation is broadly similar to a great extent in United States, England, Australia and India. Usually the process of accreditation initiates with the determination of institution or program eligibility seeking for accreditation status, followed by self-study report submitted by the concerned institution or program, then visit of concerned site by the accreditation team who scrutinize the institution or the program and culminates with accreditation decision regarding the provider of teacher education program. Further, as far as awarding of

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accreditation status by accreditation authority is concerned, in United States there can be full accreditation, provisional / probationary accreditation, accreditation with stipulations denial of accreditation, as well as revocation of accreditation; in England, NCTL approves the accreditation on behalf of Secretary of State and has the right not to accredit or suspend or withdraw the accreditation of provider if not meeting the required criteria; in Australia, accreditation is granted to the program that has met the Program Standards, accreditation is granted subject to particular conditions and time frames, and accreditation is not be granted if the program does not meet the standards. While in India, there is Institutional Grading and awarding of Letter Grade as A, B, C and D. "Category A and B institutions are fit to continue delivering teacher education, while Category C organizations will be granted one year to meet the necessary standards, Category D organizations will need to stop admitting new students immediately and shut down in an orderly manner" (TeachR, June 2017). In all the four countries, broadly the accreditation is granted for five to seven years. In United States and India, the accreditation cost is borne by the teacher education provider, while in England and Australia it is sponsored by Department for Education and Australian Government respectively.

Further, as far as United States is concerned, accreditation of teacher education institutions has a long history of experiences starting right from the inception of NCATE in 1954 and ultimately culminating into creation of a single unified body CAEP, as an accreditation body in United States. Similarly in England, NCTL was created by the merging of 'National College for School Leadership' and 'Teaching agency'. While in Australia and India accreditation is not a very old concept, but has made significant progress by setting of standards, followed by rigorous processes in the accreditation of teacher education programs.

Indeed, accreditation has become the need of the hour, as it is the necessary condition that assures the Government, policymakers and stakeholders with respect to teacher quality and quality education outcomes. The accreditation process not only contributes towards improvement of teacher education programs, consequently also builds public confidence and provides a worthy status to the teaching profession itself. Furthermore, due to greater competition and societal pressures for skilled human resources, the higher education institutions for their survival have to beat other (Kingsbury, 2007b, as cited in Ching, 2013). The only way to achieve excellence is to practice accreditation system as reiterated by Hernes and Martin, 2005 (cited in Ching, 2013). Indubitably, accreditation not only provides the institution to build a good reputation for itself but also helps to create a strong viability for itself in this highly competitive world.

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