

How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators are criticised in Indian education policies, academic research, and media reports for failing to implement policy reform. These criticisms centre around teacher educators' practice being lecture-based, promoting rote learning, and not addressing student teachers' beliefs and backgrounds. However, few studies investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies and what this means for their teacher education practice. This necessitates the need for a first-hand understanding of the complex relationship between education policy reform and teacher education practice through the voices of teacher educators in India.

In Indian education policies, teacher educators are tasked with preparing teachers for quality education. However, quality education is conceptualised in various ways in these policies, each with implications for defining the role of the teacher and thereby teacher education practice. In this regard, it is important to examine how teacher educators understand quality education, what this means for their teacher education practice, and if and how this is related to Indian education policies. Accordingly, the overarching research question and sub-questions for this study are:

How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

1) How do teacher educators understand 'quality education'?
2) Which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?
3) How do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?

The study used an in-depth qualitative research design to investigate the research questions. Fifty-two virtual interviews were undertaken with teacher educators based in universities, colleges, and NGOs across India. The data were analysed using an adapted form of Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings demonstrate how teacher educators draw on their personal views and experiences to understand quality education and explain their teacher education practice, though this is sometimes aligned with the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies. The study points to the significance of teacher educators' professional preparation in India, and the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs that respect teacher educators' professional autonomy while enabling them to translate education policy reform in contextually-meaningful ways.

This thesis makes four key contributions to teacher education research. First, it illustrates how the distinction between different types of Indian education policies – Acts, Regulations, National/State Policies, and Reports - serves an important analytic function in explaining the relationship between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice. Secondly, it interrogates the complex notion of causality in education and the role of NGO-based teacher educators in India, with implications for conceptions of the role of the teacher educator in achieving social transformation. Thirdly, it addresses the universal-contextual dichotomy in teacher education by suggesting that understandings of (and practices for) quality education and preparing teachers for quality education can be simultaneously relevant across the world, while also meaningful to the local context. Finally, drawing on the findings and their attendant insights, the study proposes some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India.

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CHAPTER ONE

WHY INVESTIGATE TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA?

1.1 The Story Begins

For three years before starting the DPhil in 2018, I was a schoolteacher in rural, Himalayan India. For two years, I lived in a small village called *Shuru* – which means 'start' or 'beginning' in Hindi – in the mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh in north India where I taught middle school English and History. Subsequently, I shifted to an even smaller village in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in northeast India, where I taught high school History and Economics for a year. Over these three years, and two schools separated by almost 3000km, I noticed patterns of differences and similarities in how my teacher-colleagues understood the purpose of education, and the kind of teacher and teaching required to achieve its envisioned aims.

All these teachers cared for their students and wished for them to live happy and successful lives, yet this manifested differently in how they talked about the purpose of education. For some, it meant getting children to do well on the tests, for others it was about laying a path for students to find a successful job or ensuring the holistic development of the learner. These differences in the purported purpose of education were reflected in the teachers' pedagogic practices. For example, using drills and rote memorisation to prepare students for tests, or discussion and role-play to engage with students' beliefs and experiences and thereby contextualise their teaching. Despite these differences in the perceived purpose of education – and the role of the teacher and teaching – we teachers had one thing in common. We all had similar professional degrees in education (primarily, a B.Ed.).

I wondered how a single, policy-mandated teacher education program could result in teachers with such different understandings of the aims and means of education. This led to questions about teacher educators' understanding of quality education, and the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to provide quality education in schools. I also pondered on the potential diversity of practices across teacher education institutes and teacher educators, and how this might be related to the prescriptions and recommendations of centralised education policies. This wandering wonderment – via my experiences of the diversity of teachers' beliefs and practices in the rural Himalayas - inspired my initial interest in teacher education in India.

1.2 Context

In Indian education policies, teacher educators are tasked with preparing teachers for quality education. However, quality education has various meanings in these policies, each with implications for defining the role of the teacher and teacher educators' practice. Further, there is little clarity in the policies concerning the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teachers to be able to achieve the diverse envisioned outcomes of quality education, and how teachers for quality education can be prepared through teacher educators' practice. Given these myriad expectations and ambiguities in policy definitions of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education, the present study aimed to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. In this way, the present study contributes to a first-hand understanding of the complex relationship between education policy reform and teacher education practice in India through the voices and experiences of teacher educators.

In Indian education policies, 'quality education' is described in various ways. For example, the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 emphasises metrics such as pupil-teacher ratios and the availability of infrastructure and resources as indicators of quality education (MHRD[1], 2009, pp. 15-16). The National Education Policy (NEP) defines quality education through an assemblage of *goals* (e.g., Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by grade 3), *methods* (e.g., increased use of ICT in teaching-learning) and *concepts* (e.g., holistic education, life skills, equity, and inclusion) (MHRD, 2020, p. 5). In the NEP, quality education is defined as 'experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable' (ibid, p. 3). Each of these ways of defining quality education has implications for the role of the teacher and their teaching, and teacher educators' practice. Further, quality education as explained in Indian education policies is expected to achieve an array of positive outcomes for individuals and society. The NEP states that quality education is the 'key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation' (MHRD, 2020, p. 3). However, there is no clarity yet on what teachers need to know or be able to do to achieve these wide-ranging outcomes, and how they can be prepared for quality education through teacher educators' practice.

To ensure teachers are being prepared for quality education, previous Indian education policies have prescribed increased external accountability, regulation, and monitoring regimes for teacher education institutes (e.g., NCTE[2], 2014). However, despite decades of policy reform since Indian independence in 1947, there has been little reported improvement

[1]Ministry of Human Resource Development
[2]National Council of Teacher Education.

in the quality of teacher educators' practice, as reflected in changes in teacher education pedagogy and assessment (Rajput & Walia, 2001). Srinivasan (2019) suggests that this is because education policies neglect to account for the complexities of teacher educators' practice, and instead position teacher educators as 'passive recipient(s)' of policy reforms (p.111). In effect, there is a research need to foreground the voices of teacher educators and how they explain their engagement with Indian education policies. This will contribute to a 'bottom-up' understanding of the relationship between policy reforms and teacher education practice in India, and reposition teacher educators as active and agentic participants in the policy dialogue on what counts as – and how teachers can be prepared for - quality education.

Scholars have long highlighted the need for such research that represents the voices, experiences, and practices of teacher educators in India (e.g., Dyer et al., 2002). Drawing on interviews with 30 teacher educators in one district of a south-Indian state, Srinivasan (2016) illustrates how teacher educators explain their teacher education practice in relation to four problems - rigid curriculums, the lack of a uniform knowledge base for teacher education in India, the absence of professional development opportunities for teacher educators, and the challenge of engaging with all student teachers in the class. She concluded that 'a teacher educator knowledge base framework, specific to the context of India, needs to be developed through a sustained dialogue among the community of teacher educators' (ibid, p. 210). The present research builds on Srinivasan (2016) in two ways (a) by using a larger sample of teacher educators in diverse geographical and institutional settings across the country, and (b) by analysing teacher educators' explanations of their practice in relation to their personal and professional contexts. The former is important to represent the heterogeneity of the teacher educator population, and the latter is vital given the lack of research on teacher educators and their teacher education practice in India.

Three ethnographic studies offer some insights into how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. Almeida (2015) illustrated the 'trickle-down' reform process from policy prescription to teacher educators' practice through an ethnography of one teacher education institute. She showed that teacher educators' views on environmental education were similar to official policy perspectives, but the 'implementation' of environmental education policy in teacher educators' practice was limited by numerous factors including the lack of resources, rigid curriculums, and a dearth of professional development. Sarkar (2014) showed that the teacher educators drew on their own experiences (rather than policy or theory) to explain 'learner-centred education', yet their teacher education practice remained 'teacher led' (p. 53). And, Pathmarajah (2014) found that teacher educators' practice was largely lecture-oriented, did not engage with student teachers' backgrounds and beliefs, and aligned with normative policy discourses that 'construct teachers as *technicians of administrative labor*, students as *passive and neutral*, and *learning as memorization*' (p. 1, original emphasis). These few ethnographic studies point to the personal, institutional, social, and political factors that mediate[3] teacher education practices, and foreground the need to further investigate how teacher educators in India explain the complex relationship between their practice and education policy reform.

There have been many critiques of teacher educators and their teacher education practice in India. For example, Goel & Goel (2012) suggested that 'teacher education is starving and striving for competent & proficient teacher educators' (p. 235). Dixit (2014) wrote of a 'quality crisis' and 'identity crisis' in Indian teacher education and claimed that 'teacher educators are averse to innovation and experimentation in the use of methods of teaching' (p.

[3] This study draws on the Oxford English Dictionary to define 'mediate' as 'related, dependent, or acting through an intermediate person, thing, action, or context' (Oxford University Press, 2022).

416). Mir (2016) criticised teacher educators' practice as 'one uniform, mechanistic way of student learning' and proposed the need for a 'culture-specific pedagogy' (p. 33). Similarly, Deswal (2017) declared that 'teacher educators are also responsible for the worst condition of the teacher education (sic)' (ibid, p. 65). Unlike in other countries such as the USA, UK, and Australia, the criticisms listed here come from teacher educators themselves – primarily drawing on their personal views and experiences – rather than policymakers, bureaucrats, and media reporters. The present research responds to these critiques by investigating how teacher educators explain and provide rationales for their teacher education practice, thereby contributing to the limited evidence base for teacher education in India.

In sum, this study is important because teacher educators are tasked by Indian education policies to prepare teachers for quality education. But there is little clarity in the policies on (a) what quality education means, (b) the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers require to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education, and (c) how teachers for quality education can be prepared through teacher educators' practice. Therefore, it is important to investigate how teacher educators understand quality education, their explanations of what this means for their practice, and how this is related to Indian education policies. Further, while teacher educators are criticised in Indian education policies and research, few studies represent their voices and experiences, and examine how they engage with Indian education policies. This is an important first step in involving teacher educators in the policy dialogue on what counts as quality education, and how teachers for quality education can be prepared in India. In this light, the overarching research question for the study is - *How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?*

1.3 Rationale

In countries like the USA, UK, and Australia, several researchers have investigated the complex relationships between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice. However, there is no similar evidence base for teacher education in Low and Middle Income (LMIC) countries like India. In this section, I draw on insights from teacher education research in other countries to situate the Indian context, and thereby draw out the rationale for the overarching research question of the present study.

Teacher education in many countries – such as the USA, UK, and Australia - has been framed as a 'policy problem' (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Viewing teacher education as a 'policy problem' means that policymakers have aimed to solve the reported crisis in teacher education by identifying 'which of the broad parameters of teacher education policy that can be controlled by institutional, state, or federal policymakers is most likely to have a positive effect' (p. 297). To improve the quality of teacher education, policy reforms around the world have included measures such as accreditation, increased external accountability of TEIs, mandated standards, fixed entry and exit requirements for student teachers, and prescribed curricula and assessments. For example, an analysis of selected teacher education policies in Australia and England demonstrates how the policies of 'both countries engage a deficit discourse positioning teacher education as a problem and feature increased accountability, standards and performance management' (Mayer & Mills, 2021, p. 57). Some researchers critical of neoliberalism have linked this increased policy regulation to wider neoliberal influences in policymaking that value external accountability and standardisation to ensure quality. Teacher educators' engagement with these education policy reforms have important implications for the professionalism, and professional knowledge base, of teacher education.

Teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in various ways depending on the political, social, institutional, and personal contexts of their teacher education practice (e.g., Mayer, 2021). Take the example of the portfolio-based Educative Teacher Performance Assessment[4] (edTPA) for student teachers' assessment and teacher recruitment, mandated by the teacher education policy of several states in the USA. Studies have shown that the implementation of the edTPA in teacher educators' practice is mediated by the program structure and organisational support (Davis & Peck, 2020), and how teacher educators balance their beliefs about the edTPA with the constraints and opportunities of their teaching-learning setting (J. Cohen et al., 2020). In effect, the implementation of the edTPA is influenced by policy design, institutional considerations, and teacher educators' views of the edTPA (de Voto et al., 2021). The edTPA example illustrates how teacher educators engage with teacher education policies in different ways based on their personal and professional contexts. Though well developed in some countries like the USA, UK, and Australia, few studies in India investigate the complex ways in which teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies.

Teacher education researchers have proposed diverse conceptions of what counts as quality in school education, and thereby differing foci for teacher educators' practice. For example, Molyneux & Tyler (2014) focus on 'place-based education' and the attendant importance of teacher educators' practice in preparing teachers for culturally inclusive teaching. Bürgener & Barth (2018) highlight the concept of 'education for sustainable development', and subsequently the need for teacher educators' practice to provide student teachers with concomitant resources, tools, and scaffolds. Ladson-Billings (2000) links quality education to the needs of historically marginalised communities, with a range of recommendations for

[4] Developed by Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE).

teacher educators' practice including situated pedagogies and antiracist education. These studies illustrate how teacher educators' practice is importantly mediated by their understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

In many countries, teacher educators are tasked by education policies with preparing teachers to provide quality education in schools. However, there are several contested meanings in the policies of what counts as 'quality' in school education, each with implications for defining the role of the teacher and thereby teacher educators' practice. Policy definitions of quality education include the competing concepts of classroom readiness, standards, and effectiveness, and the obscured notions of responsibilisation, performativity and identity (Churchward & Willis, 2019). These conflicting discourses of quality in education policies mean that 'teacher educators face the challenge of working in this discursive space while deliberating on the relationship between themselves as agents of education and the educational structures and policies affecting them and future teachers' (ibid, p. 262). In this contested light, Dwyer et al. (2020) highlight the need to investigate teacher educators' explanations of their engagement with teacher education policies because 'official stories of reforms and policy change often conflict with the lived experiences of those who are charged with implementing the reforms "on the ground"' (p. 573).

Conceptions of quality education in education policies and their implications for teacher educators' practice are inextricably linked to the culture in which they are embedded. For example, the notion of 'learner-centred education' is constructed differently in education policies around the world, with varied implications for teacher educators' practice based on specific social, cultural, and political contexts (e.g., Britton et al., 2019; Carney, 2008; van de Kuilen et al., 2019; You, 2019). Hahambu et al. (2012) found that in Papua New Guinea

teacher educators' 'perspectives on teaching were not strongly aligned with the Western, learner-centred views of teaching…[and] included cultural teaching approaches that were not learner-centred in nature but promoted the transfer of information by understanding the learner, promoting active, holistic and community-based teaching and learning practices' (p. 121). In Tanzania, scholars have highlighted the need for teacher educators' practice to 'acknowledge the importance of local cultural and educational circumstances to avoid the simplistic polarisation of pedagogy into 'teacher-centred' versus 'child-centred' (Hardman et al., 2012, p. 605). This example of 'learner-centred education' shows how the same vision of quality education espoused in the education policies of different countries can have different implications for teacher educators' practice based on each country's specific teaching-learning contexts.

In response to the top-down standardisation and external accountability advocated by education policies, Cochran-Smith (2021b, 2018) has called for the need to rethink and reclaim teacher education through the 'intelligent professional responsibility' of teacher educators. This necessitates trusting that teacher educators – like other professionals – are able and willing to uphold high standards in their teacher education practice based on their professional expertise and judgement. The first step in achieving this goal is to examine the views and experiences of teacher educators, and their explanations of how they engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies. In this light, the present study is important for two reasons. First, it builds on existing teacher education research from other countries by contributing to the nascent evidence base for teacher education in India that investigates the complex relationship between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice. Secondly, it adds to professional knowledge base for teacher education in India by investigating how teacher educators understand quality education and preparing teachers for

quality education, and how this is related to their unique personal, institutional, and social contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

Though teacher educators are tasked by Indian education policies with preparing teachers for quality education, there is no clarity or consensus on the meaning of quality education, or how teachers can be prepared for quality education. Further, while teacher educators are criticised in Indian education policies and research for failing to implement policy reform, few studies have investigated how teacher educators' explanations of their practice and its relationship with policy prescriptions and recommendations. In this light, investigating how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies can contribute to an in-depth understanding of the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher education practice in India. Stemming from the above context and rationale, the overarching research question and sub-questions for the study are:

How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

a) How do teacher educators understand 'quality education'?

b) Which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?

c) How do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?

Drawing on 52 interviews with 50[5] teacher educators located in universities, colleges, and NGOs across India, this study provides a nuanced analysis of how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies.

[5] Three teacher educators were interviewed twice, and one interview involved two NGO-based teacher educators representing their organisation.

1.5 Key Contributions

This study offers several key contributions to the existing research. It illustrates how teacher educators in India translate education policy reform into teacher education practice through their personal views and experiences, thereby pointing to the significance of investigating (and reforming) their professional preparation and development. It delineates how the distinctions between different types of Indian education policies serve an important analytic function in explaining the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher educators' practice. It investigates teacher educators' explanations of the narrative of causality in education, with implications for conceptions of the role of the teacher educator in achieving social transformation. It addresses the universal-contextual dichotomy in teacher education by proposing that understandings of (and practices for) quality education can be simultaneously relevant across countries and meaningful for local contexts. And finally, based on the findings and their attendant insights, the study proposes some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum in India.

Building on its implications and limitations, this study offers new directions for teacher education research in India - longitudinal and mixed-methods studies to create a comprehensive evidence base, using multiple languages for data collection and analysis to represent teacher educator diversity, and further investigating teacher educators' views and explanations of their practice (including those based in NGOs and schools). Taken together, this thesis adds to the nascent evidence base that explores how teacher educators engage with education policies in Low and Middle Income Countries like India, with universal implications for conceptions of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

1.6 Outline of Thesis

Chapter One: *Why Investigate Teacher Education in India?*

This chapter sets the scene for the study. Two gaps are highlighted through a critical overview of the literature on teacher educators' practice and education policies in India. Teacher educators are tasked by Indian education policies with preparing teachers to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education, yet there is little clarity on what this means for teacher educators' practice. While many studies that criticise teacher educators' practice, there are few that document their voices and experiences, and explanations of their teacher education practice. Drawing on insights from the teacher education literature in India and other countries, this chapter provides the context and rationale for the overarching research question: *How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?*

Chapter Two: *Education Policies and Teacher Educators' Practice*

The critical analysis of the relevant literature is divided into two parts. It begins by investigating how education policies around the world have aimed at regulating and reforming teacher education. Specifically, it shows how teacher education policies and school education policies have different implications for defining the process and purpose of teacher educators' practice. Next, it examines how teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies for what they teach (curriculum), how they teach (pedagogy), and how student teachers' learning is assessed (assessment). It illustrates how teacher educators' engagement with education policies in their practice is mediated by a complex confluence of personal, institutional, social, and historical factors. Taken together, this chapter sets the universal context of education policies, teacher education, and teacher educators' practice.

Chapter Three: *Teacher Education In India*

This chapter situates the Indian context of the present study. It begins with a brief history of teacher education and education policies in India, highlighting key themes including where teacher education is located, who can be a teacher educator, and the purpose and process of teacher education across different historical periods. This is followed by an investigation of the differences between teacher education policies and school education policies in present-day India, focusing on their impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. Finally, it examines the existing research on teacher educators' practice in India, and how this is related to the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in terms of the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. When viewed in relation to the international evidence base highlighted in the previous chapter, this chapter illumines the context and rationale for addressing the many gaps in the Indian teacher education research through the voices and experiences of teacher educators in India.

Chapter Four: *Methodology*

The chapter begins by revisiting the rationale for the study and the research questions. It then explains and justifies the selection of an in-depth qualitative research design along with the method of semi-structured online interviews to investigate the research questions. Next, it details the data collection process, including sampling, recruitment and organising online interviews. Then, it explains why and how the study used an adapted form of Reflexive Thematic Analysis to answer the research questions. Finally, the chapter concludes with reflections on how my various positionalities (as a young, male, Oxford scholar, and former schoolteacher in India) influenced the data collection and analysis, and how I navigated the attendant ethical challenges that arose during the research.

Chapter Five: *How do teacher educators understand 'quality education'?*

This findings chapter addresses the first sub-research question. The interviewed teacher educators understood quality education as a select set of aims and means for school education. An array of aims was envisioned for individual school learners, and by extension for the economy, society, and nation. To achieve these intended aims, the teacher educators emphasised the role of the quality teacher – as a particular kind of person with specific characteristics and values – and quality teaching. Further, they highlighted the importance of the supportive 'education system' to enable the aims of quality education. In this sense, teacher educators' understanding of quality education both contributes to – and complicates – the linear logic of causality between education and its intended outcomes for individuals, society, the economy, and the nation. These findings are significant because teacher educators do not refer to Indian education policies to explain their understanding of quality education, rather drawing on their personal views, knowledge, and experiences.

Chapter Six: *Which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?*

This findings chapter addresses the second sub-research question. It begins with teacher educators' descriptions of the creation and flow of Indian education policies, and the perceived relationship between the sites of policymaking and teacher educators' practice. Next, it investigates teacher educators' explanations of how school and teacher education policies are important in different ways for their practice, including their views and expectations of the new National Education Policy 2020. Notably, this chapter illustrates how the interviewed teacher educators draw on – and contest - different aspects of specific Indian education policies in accordance with their personal understanding of quality education, and the practical considerations of their professional contexts.

Chapter Seven: *How do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?*

This findings chapter addresses the third sub-research question. It consists of four main parts that explore teacher educators' explanations of their teacher education practice through the dimensions of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and relationship. Then, it investigates teacher educators' reported teacher education practice during the pandemic period, and how this was transformed in the absence of, or contradictory, policy guidance. In all, teacher educators' explanations of their practice demonstrate that they engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in various ways, importantly based on their personal understandings of preparing teachers for quality education, and their professional role as teacher educators.

Chapter Eight*: Reimagining Teacher Education In India*

This discussion chapter draws together insights from the findings in relation to the existing research literature to make four contributions. It begins by noting the analytic distinctions between different types of Indian education policies – Acts, Regulations, National/State Policies, and Reports – and their impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. Next, it addresses the relationship between teacher educators' practice and social transformation by interrogating the narrative of causality in education, and spotlighting the role of NGO-based teacher educators. Then, it draws on teacher educators' reported views and experiences to illustrate how understandings of (and practices for) quality education and preparing teachers for quality education can be simultaneously relevant across the world, while also meaningful for the local context. And finally, drawing on the findings and their concomitant insights, the study proposes some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India.

Chapter Nine: *Conclusion*

This chapter provides a summary of the entire study. It opens by restating the rationale for the research problem, and the methodology used to investigate the research questions. Then, it summarises the key findings and insights from this research, and highlights the implications of the study for teacher education research, policy, and practice. The chapter concludes by addressing the limitations of the present study, and suggesting new directions for future teacher education research in India.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION POLICIES AND TEACHER EDUCATORS' PRACTICE

In several countries, education policies have aimed to improve the quality of school education, and this is often done by regulating teacher education and teacher educators' practice. However, the implementation of education policy reform in teacher education practice is not always uniform due to the unique contexts of each country and individual teacher educators. Accordingly, this chapter critically reviews the relevant research literature on education policies and how teacher educators engage with education policies.

2.1 Education Policies and Teacher Education

At the outset, I define the key terms used in this thesis - teacher education, teacher educators, education policies, and 'engage with'. This is important because a 'disagreement between people is often a disagreement over the meaning of the words being used' (Pring, 2004, p. 9). In effect, defining the key terms used in this thesis will help to avoid ambiguity, and set the scene for meaningful dialogue between the present study and the teacher education research.

For the present study, 'teacher education' refers to the network of universities, colleges, schools, and NGOs that offer pre- or in-service courses to prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for school education. 'Teacher educators' are individuals who are involved in the professional preparation of teachers within teacher education. This includes university and college lecturers, school-based (e.g., Grimmett et al., 2018) and community-based mentors (e.g., Guillen & Zeichner, 2018), and teacher educators based in NGOs including organisations such as Teach for America, Teach First (UK), and

Teach for India. 'Policy' can be defined as a 'set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation' (Jenkins, 1978, p. 15). Education policies are policies that are aimed at regulating different levels of the system including school, higher, vocational, and teacher education. For the present study, 'education policy' refers to both school and teacher education policies, each of which has different impacts for teacher education and teacher educators. School education policies affect the aims and means of teacher education through their prescriptions and recommendations for quality education and the role of the teacher. Teacher education policies are aimed at improving the quality of teacher preparation by regulating a variety of variables, such as institutional accreditation, teacher educator qualifications, entry and exit requirements of student teachers, teacher credentialing, and the structure and content – including curriculums, pedagogy, and assessment - of teacher education programmes. In effect, this thesis is primarily concerned with how teacher educators engage with school and teacher education policies.

Internationally, scholars have investigated how teacher educators 'engage with' a variety of theories, methods, tools, phenomena, and policies. For example, studies have examined how teacher educators engage with queer *theory* (Staley & Leonardi, 2021), and *methods* for teacher education practice including blogs (Hall, 2018), reflexive memos (Elliott & Blair, 2020), and mindfulness (Lemon, 2021). Furthermore, research has investigated how teacher educators engage with 'artefacts that mediate the work of teacher educators' (Nuttall & Brennan 2016, p. 375), the needs of the local community (Haddix, 2015), and phenomena such as racism (Shannon-Baker, 2020) and the tension between teacher educators' professional and religious boundaries (Westerlund et al., 2021). These studies use the phrase 'engage with' to examine how teacher educators' understand the object of investigation and

what this means for their teacher education practice. Similarly, for this study, I use the phrase 'engage with' to explore teacher educators' personal understanding and interpretation of education policies, and their explanations of how policies are translated in their teacher education practice (Aldous et al., 2022; Aydarova et al., 2021a; Lambert & Penney, 2020).

An important way in which education policies seek to regulate teacher education is by defining a problem, and the proposed policy solution. According to Blackmore and Lauder (2004), 'problem setting' is an important function of policy, whereby policies 'define a problem in a particular way and then set up categories and certain logics that typically go unquestioned' (p. 22). For Dunn (2017), this process begins with a 'problem situation' which is 'the state of "unsettled belief " we face when we sense vague and ill-defined situations requiring action' (p. 70). Specific elements from the problem situation are subsequently selected and abstracted through 'problem-structuring methods' to create the policy problem and its purported policy solution. The logic of the problem in teacher education is structured in four causal steps – (i) there is a crisis in school education evidenced by students' poor and differential learning outcomes on standardised tests, (ii) teachers are responsible for these low learning outcomes, (iii) teacher educators are to blame for the poor preparation of teachers, and therefore, (iv) teacher education requires increased regulation to ensure quality education in schools. In several countries - like the USA and Australia - education policies have espoused similar patterns in problem setting for teacher education (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2017). Through this causal logic, education policies define specific problems and subsequently propose their purported solutions for teacher education.

2.1.1 Teacher Education Policies: Policy Problems and Solutions

In several countries – like the USA, UK, and Australia – teacher education is increasingly being framed as a 'policy problem' (e.g., Mayer, 2014, Mutton and Burn, 2020). The theoretical lens of teacher education as a 'policy problem' is based on the historical analysis of teacher education policies in the latter half of the 20th century in the USA and Canada (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Grimmett, 2009). This analysis regarded the development of teacher education policies as three 'problems'. First, as a *training problem* under relatively benign government control in the 1960s-70s that spotlighted the role of the teacher educator in equipping future teachers with the technical behaviours and skills required to be 'effective'. Second, as a *learning problem* that highlighted the role of student teachers, and how their learning in teacher education – and subsequent teaching - is mediated by their unique beliefs, knowledge, and experiences. Third, as a *policy problem* in which the goal of teacher education policy is 'to determine which of the broad parameters that can be controlled by policy-makers (e.g., teacher testing, subject matter requirements, alternate entry pathways) is most likely to enhance teacher quality' (Cochran-Smith, 2008, p. 273). Viewing teacher education as a 'policy problem' focuses our attention on how the problems and solutions for teacher education are constructed by policymakers, and its implications for teacher educators' practice and professionalism. Notably – and also drawing on Grimmett (2009) and Cochran-Smith (2005) – a small-scale, mixed-methods study of teacher education policy in Japan suggests teacher education might be simultaneously cast as a training problem, learning problem, and policy problem (Fujimura & Mistilina, 2020). The authors conclude that teacher education 'may better be understood and addressed if we appreciated that problem frames do not have to be singular or exclusive of each other' (ibid, p. 34).

The evidence for teacher education as a policy problem is often extrapolated from school students' poor outcomes on standardised tests and international assessments like PISA, which are in turn blamed on poor teacher quality. In effect, the view that teacher education is a policy problem implies the logic of causality that suggests that regulating teacher education will improve teacher quality, and improving teacher quality will lead to the achievement of an array of envisioned positive outcomes of education for individuals, and society. Part of the purported policy solution is the increased regulation of teacher education through measures that establish – for example - institutional accreditation, mandated teacher education curriculums and assessments, professional qualifications of teacher educators, standardised entry/exit tests for student teachers, teacher standards, and the promotion of alternate pathways into the profession. Taken together, scholars have viewed this increased reform and regulation in teacher education through the lens of 'accountability' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018).

Policy mechanisms of external accountability have led to quality in teacher education being assessed against standardised data. This means that teacher quality is often inferred from students' test scores on standardised tests, and teacher educator and teacher education quality is subsequently inferred from teacher quality. In this regard, an important way in which teacher education policies assess the quality of teachers and teaching is through school students' achievements on standardised tests. Specifically, increases in students' test scores are statistically attributed to the role of teachers using Value Added Measures (VAM), with VAM scores subsequently used as a proxy indicator for teacher quality (e.g., Gansle et al., 2012). However, studies using VAM measures have been yet unable to identify the specific characteristics of teacher education programs, teacher educators' practice, student teachers' learning, and teachers' teaching that explain the observed changes in school students' test

scores (Amrein-Beardsley et al., 2017). Given this ambiguity, the VAM method has been redefined by scholars as an 'additional form of evidence that can inform our understanding of the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in producing teachers who can positively affect student learning' (Plecki et al., 2012, p. 328). The VAM example highlights the conceptual challenges in defining teacher quality – and inferring the quality of teacher education - through prescriptions for external accountability based on standardised data.

The rise of the accountability paradigm in teacher education has been linked to wider 'neoliberal' agenda in education policies (e.g., Lewis & Young, 2013). This neoliberal agenda is purportedly to create a free market in teacher education, whereby consumers (student teachers) and producers (TEIs) can make 'rational' transactions using data from standardised metrics such as institutional accreditation and mandated assessments. This 'performative turn' in teacher education – as illustrated by the examples of England and Sweden - has had the effect of narrowing teacher education curriculums and pedagogies, and threatens to return teacher education to mechanistic models of teacher training prevalent in preceding decades (Beach & Bagley, 2013). In this vein, scholars have argued that neoliberal teacher education policies in the UK and Australia have reshaped the expected role of the teacher away from professionalism and towards greater external accountability, standards, and performativity (Mayer & Mills, 2021). The authors conclude that increasing accountability is part of the global teacher education policy discourse, and that 'to limit the damaging effects of such constructions, we need to learn about how they manifest in the local in order to support democratic professionalism across the globe' (ibid, p. 58).

In response to policy accountability through standardised 'cultures of evidence', scholars have highlighted the multidimensional work of teacher educators and the 'complex role of

interpretation, traditions, beliefs, and values in establishing and using multiple forms of evidence in situated local contexts' (Cochran-Smith, 2009, p. 465). As Bullough (2014b) bellowed, accountability in teacher education needs to be 'understood not as a matter of satisfying externally imposed mandates but of forging and articulating institutionally and situationally authentic visions of possibility, and then realizing and defending them with generous data' (p. 193). Notably, Cochran-Smith et al. (2017) emphasise the need to shift from policy-mandated external accountability to the notion of 'democratic accountability' based on the concepts of 'intelligent professional responsibility', 'strong equity', and policy and institutional structures that support stakeholder collaboration (p. 583). This conception of 'democratic accountability' focuses our attention on individual teacher educators and their beliefs about education, and how this related to the prescriptions and expectations of education policies (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). In effect, researchers have eschewed increasing external policy accountability, and stressed the need to reclaim the institutional governance of teacher education, and the professional agency of teacher educators.

In light of reclaiming accountability in teacher education, scholars have advocated the need to establish a common professional knowledge base for teacher education (including teaching, and learning teaching). For many, this professional knowledge base is distributed over *space* [in recognition of the unique knowledge produced by universities, schools, and the community], and *time* [requiring a comprehensive integration of pre-service, induction, and in-service education] (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kretchmar & Zeichner, 2016; McMahon et al., 2015; K. Zeichner et al., 2015). From this knowledge base, scholars have described how teacher educators might prepare student teachers for specific views of quality education and quality teaching, for example regarding multicultural education, social justice, and equity (Grudnoff et al., 2017; Sleeter, 2013). For example, Burke & Whitty (2018) explain that

'equity' must be an integral component of teacher education curriculums around the world (though contextualised to integrate local indigenous knowledge) and teachers must be prepared to address the specific socio-economic inequalities of the local teaching-learning context. These studies point to a burgeoning professional knowledge base for teacher education that is simultaneously relevant across countries, and meaningful to each country's unique context.

In essence, two opposing solutions are proposed by teacher education policies and academics to the problem of improving teacher education - accountability and professionalism. This can lead to a 'quality conundrum' in teacher education that occurs 'when some views are orientated around standards or value for money and others are orientated around change for transformation or excellence' (Brooks, 2021, p. 139). For example, narratives of Australian teacher educators highlight the tensions between the policy accountability demands, their sense of professional autonomy, and 'the constraints of centralised policy juxtaposed against each unique educational context' (Dwyer et al., 2020, p. 581). This quality conundrum between policy accountability and professional autonomy reinforces the rationale to investigate teacher educators' descriptions and explanations of their practice.

Policy Solutions for Teacher Education

Teacher education policies in many countries are aimed at improving the quality of teachers and teaching through the reform and regulation of teacher education. To do so, these policies draw on both international and national influences to define similar policy problems (e.g., school students' low learning outcomes, poor teacher quality, and failure of existing HEI-based teacher education programs). However, these similar problems are addressed through different purported policy solutions (e.g., shifting teacher education into schools and NGOs,

regulating entry requirements for student teachers, mandated teacher education curriculums). Importantly, both the problem and solutions proposed by teacher education policies are influenced by each country's unique historical, social, political, and economic context (e.g., Menter et al., 2017).

Teacher education policies often draw on national and international precedents and influences to propose policy solutions for teacher education. For example, Beach et al., (2014) show that teacher education policies in Sweden are 'based on ideologically founded reactions to earlier policy formulations, rather than empirical scientific analyses of actual policy outcomes' (p. 165). And, an analysis of two reviews of teacher education published by the Australian government four decades apart shows that they draw on three discourses common to teacher education policies in several countries around the world – quality, professional practice, and professional learning (Alexander & Bourke, 2021). In this sense, teacher education policies are embedded within both national and international policy trends and discourses in teacher education.

This kind of global 'fast policy' in teacher education implies the 'social practices and infrastructures that enable and sustain policy "mobility," which enable the complex folding of policy lessons derived from one place into reformed and transformed arrangements elsewhere' (Peck & Theodore, 2015, p. xvii). An example of such transnational education policy is provided by the member states of the European Teacher Education Area where policy coordination is 'employed by EU institutions to align policies of the community in accordance to commonly agreed policy goals' (Symeonidis, 2018, p. 17). However, while 'fast' education policies 'borrow' from other countries, the formulations of policy problems and solutions are manifest in contextually-specific ways. For example, the common problem

of lack of teacher quality has been addressed through different policy solutions in Norway, the Netherlands, and Australia, by either strengthening university-based teacher education, promoting alternative routes into the profession, or increasing teacher salaries (Hardy et al., 2021). In another example, education policies in Ireland position reflective practice as a tool for teachers' self-improvement, whereas in Norway reflective practice is rationalised in relation to its contribution to teachers, the school, and the wider community (McGarr & Emstad, 2020). Notably, this phenomenon of 'policy borrowing' has been problematised for its 'assumption that a policy/pedagogy/curricula dominant in the Global North can be transferred to countries in the Global South' (Gupta, 2022, p. 375).

Several policy solutions have been proposed to improve the quality of teachers through the reform of teacher education. For example, an analysis of teacher education policies and practices from Australia, Canada, Finland, and Singapore highlights several 'promising strategies for the improvement of teacher learning and teaching' (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 306). This includes policies that established the selective recruitment of teacher candidates, teaching standards, integration of theory and practice through coursework and clinical practice, teacher performance assessments, induction programs, and professional development courses. In contrast to the tendency of centralising the policy accountability of teacher education, in Finland, teacher education policies are credited with the development of a high-quality, research-based teacher education system by decentralising the design and implementation of teacher education programs to universities (Tirri, 2014). In this sense, teacher education policies have reportedly played an important role in improving the quality of teacher education, albeit through different policy routes.

Teacher education policies in some countries exhibit inherent paradoxes, i.e., tensions between prescriptions that are aimed at achieving goals that contradict each other. Take the example of England. An analysis of education policies of the Coalition Government from 2010-2015 illustrate these tensions and paradoxes with 'the impact of certain policies effectively undermining the stated aims of others' (Burn & Childs, 2016, p. 393). See & Gorard (2020) argue that contradictory education policies in England are aimed at increasing teacher demand (e.g., through school funding reforms) while simultaneously restricting teacher supply (e.g., through controlling admissions in teacher education, and increasing tuition fees). And, an in-depth review of the Carter Report indicates six competing tensions in the policy that address key debates in teacher education including the extent of external accountability, the location and content of teacher education, and the recruitment of teacher candidates (Mutton et al., 2017). These paradoxes and tensions in education policies are important because they often mask politically or ideologically driven agendas.

The tensions in teacher education policies, and their implicit ideological agendas, can be illustrated through the debates concerning where should teacher education be located. Traditionally, teacher education has been located in universities (and related institutes of higher education, like colleges). However, in countries like the UK and USA, some education policies are aimed at shifting teacher education programmes away from universities and into schools and alternative routes including through NGOs. In England, for example, education policies have aimed at shifting teacher education into schools (Childs, 2013) by funding School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programs that are delivered by partnerships of neighbouring schools and colleges, leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and in some cases a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in conjunction with a university. This proposed policy shift in teacher education away from higher education is based on the

manufactured crisis that universities are not doing a good job of preparing teachers (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). In the USA, the policy shift away from university-based teacher education is achieved by a series of actors including alternative teacher education providers like the Teach For All network, advocacy groups that prefer candidates certified through non-university-based routes, and legislative lobbyists (Kretchmar et al., 2018). Evidence for the poor quality of teacher education is often causally extrapolated from school students' scores on standardised tests (including international assessments like PISA, and TIMSS), and high teacher attrition rates. According to the logic of these policies, shifting teacher education out of universities and into schools and alternative routes (including organisations in the Teach for All network) will improve the quality of teacher preparation, address the teacher shortage, and increase teacher supply. These networks 'have served to shift governance and influence policy first by manufacturing crisis, or by promoting public acceptance that the system is broken and then by providing a solution that includes systems of deregulation and privatization' (ibid, p. 48).

While education policies in some countries have advocated for shifting teacher education away from universities, in other countries – like in Wales - education policies have conversely aimed at improving and strengthening the university-based teacher education programmes that are expected to work in close collaboration with schools (e.g., Furlong, 2019). In this regard, Zeichner (2010) has advocated for non-hierarchical 'hybrid spaces' where university- and school-based teacher educators along with community members collectively contribute to teacher education based on their unique knowledge and expertise. In this way, scholars have pointed to the need to move beyond the dichotomous dilemma of whether teacher education should be located in universities or schools. Accordingly, Kretchmar & Zeichner (2016) advocate for 'Teacher prep 3.0' programmes based in

universities, and in partnership with schools, that 'value community expertise, emphasise place-based learning, and prepare community teachers who are knowledgeable of the communities in which they teach' (p. 428). In effect, teacher education policies in different countries *address the similar purported problems* (e.g., school students' low learning outcomes, poor quality teacher preparation in higher education institutes) *through different policy solutions* (e.g., by locating teacher education in schools, alternative routes, or universities).

In several countries, similar policy solutions have also resulted in different outcomes for teacher education. For example, education policies that aim to restrict entry into the teaching profession have led to mixed results in terms of ensuring the selectivity and high standards of teacher candidates. In Australia, researchers have argued that the policy-mandated Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE) screening test for student teachers has had a minimal impact on ensuring selectivity in recruitment into teacher education programs since most students pass on their first attempt, with an over-50% chance of passing on subsequent attempts if needed (Barnes & Cross, 2020). They conclude that the LANTITE had limited impact 'as a gatekeeping mechanism aimed at reforming teacher quality, and selecting the "right" people into teacher education' (p. 316). Meanwhile in Taiwan, a study showed that stringent entry criteria for teacher education programs have led to the high calibre of student teacher candidates (as measured by college entry test scores and GPA), though this is also explained in light of the wider context of teaching as secure public employment with attractive pay and benefits, and the esteemed social status of the profession (Wang & Huang, 2016). In this sense, the different outcomes of similar policy solutions must be viewed in relation to the specific social and historical contexts of the country.

In sum, teacher education is increasingly being viewed as a 'policy problem' whose redressal is possible through policy solutions. Notably, teacher educators are positioned as part of the problem and solution. This situation has led to vociferous and contested debates among researchers about the meaningfulness of the purported problems and attendant solutions for teacher education. These debates foreground the need to further investigate how teacher educators engage with education policy reforms through explanations of their teacher education practice.

2.1.2 School Education Policies: Defining Quality Education

School education policies affect teacher education through their conception of what counts as quality in school education, and expectations of teachers and their work. For example, an important way in which school education policies regulate teaching in schools is through a mandated national curriculum. Teacher educators have both criticised and commended the notion of preparing teachers to teach a policy-prescribed national curriculum. For example, a study of 28 reputed physical education teacher educators in the USA, who were involved in shaping and implementing education policies, showed that while they resisted the rigidity of the 'one-size-fits-all approach', they also reported how a national curriculum can benefit the profession by offering specific guidelines for teacher standards and students' learning outcomes (Oh & Graber, 2019, p. 369). In practice, teacher educators engage differently with the policy mandate of preparing teachers to teach a national curriculum, based on their understanding of teacher professionalism. In this sense, their engagement with the mandates of school education policies is dependent on their own understanding of the role of the teacher and their teaching, and how such teachers can be prepared through their teacher education practice. The example of a mandated national curriculum for schools highlights the

importance of investigating how school education policies conceptualise quality in school education, and what this means for teacher educators' practice.

Quality education has been conceptualised differently in school education policies in countries around the world. In Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) contexts, policy definitions of quality education primarily focus on metrics such as the availability of infrastructure and resources in schools, especially pupil-teacher ratios. For example, in India, the Right to Education Act defines quality education through specific 'norms and standards' including pupil-teacher ratio (maximum of 40 up to grade 5, and then 35 up to grade 8), required infrastructure (e.g., number of classrooms, separate toilets for girls and boys, safe drinking water), and resources such as a library, sports and games facilities, and 'teaching-learning equipment' (MHRD, 2009a, pp. 15-16). In other countries - such as the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, and Finland – policy definitions take the above criteria as a given, and instead focus on the specific aims and means of quality education by emphasising the role of the teacher and their teaching. For example, in Finland, the Basic Education Act (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1998) states that the aim of education is to 'support pupils' growth into humanity and ethically responsible membership of the society and to provide them with knowledge and skills needed in life' (p. 1). In effect, education policies – in part - define quality education in accordance with each country's specific historical, social, and economic contexts, and the constraints and opportunities this creates for teaching and learning in schools.

School education policies - like teacher education policies - have also been impacted by the global rise of neoliberal influences in policymaking (e.g., Ball, 2016; Connell, 2013). This is primarily evidenced through the increased deregulation, privatisation, external accountability,

and standardisation of school education (e.g., Hursh, 2007; Erlandson et al., 2020). More specifically, neoliberal conceptions of quality education in school education policies have resulted in shaping teacher educators' practice towards preparing teachers as 'technicians', whereby teaching practice is standardised and teacher quality is inferred indirectly from school students' test scores (Sleeter, 2008, p. 1952). In response, teacher education scholars have called for a shift in focus from teacher quality to quality teaching, and its concurrent focus on the specific knowledge and skills required by teachers in the school classroom (e.g., Gore, 2021). Some scholars have responded to the rise of neoliberal school education policies by calling for 'de-essentialising teacher education' away from narrow, technicist views of teaching and instead preparing 'teachers as researchers and advocates for equity, social and educational justice, culturally sustaining curricula and pedagogy, and social transformation through democratic community building' (Stremmel et al., 2015, p. 171). Notably, this response to neoliberal school education policies posits a teacher education system that shares professional aims and knowledge bases across countries in locally-meaningful ways. This implies a professional consensus across countries on what teachers should know and be able to do, and how such teachers can be prepared within each country's unique historical, cultural, social, and economic contexts.

In several countries such as the USA and UK, commentators have argued that quality teachers and teaching are increasingly being assessed against policy-mandated teaching standards, teacher competencies, certifications, and licensure tests (Bullough, 2014a; Furlong, 2013; O'Flaherty & Beal, 2018). The relevance of these developments has been contested by teacher educators, mentors, schoolteachers, and other stakeholders in education. For example, a study of teachers, school-based teacher educators, and school principals located across five schools in Australia demonstrated how these stakeholders both resisted and welcomed

teacher standards and attendant competencies (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017). Specifically, the policy-mandated teacher standards were criticised for painting an incomplete picture of what an effective teacher must know and be able to do, while also lauded for their role in creating 'substantial support for professional development and career growth, as well as playing a key role in increasing the credibility of the profession in the broader community' (ibid, p. 122). The Scottish case illustrates this tension arising from the dual purposes of teacher standards (regulation and development), with Forde et al. (2016) highlighting the significance of in-service teacher education that 'can enable teachers to enhance their practice in ways that move beyond a narrow compliance approach' (p. 122). Though problematic in some ways, teaching standards and competencies have come to serve as an important policy tool to benchmark quality teachers and teaching, and thereby regulate the practice of teacher educators.

Teacher standards have been both appreciated and eschewed by teacher education researchers. For example, while studies show that carefully articulated teaching standards can further student teachers' learning and establish the foundations of professional practice for teachers, teaching standards can also lead to a narrowing of the curriculum and fail to meet the diverse knowledge needed by teachers in local contexts (Krise, 2016; Zuzovsky & Libman, 2006). For example, an analysis of Scottish education policies suggests an 'inherent tension within standards…on the one hand, this can be seen as restrictive, focusing on narrow elements of behavioural competency as part of performance management… on the other hand, standards can have an aspirational dimension offering alternative and more comprehensive understandings of what it means to be a teacher' (Torrance & Forde, 2017, p. 121). Though problematic in some ways, prescribing teacher standards is an important way in

which school education policies affect teacher educators' practice by positing a view of what teachers need to be able to do.

A notable criticism of the policy emphasis on teacher standards is that it focuses almost exclusively on what teachers can do, at the cost of what teachers know. In this light, there are ongoing debates in the literature regarding what constitutes the professional knowledge base of teachers (what they know and can do), and whether (and in what ways) it should be country, subject and grade-specific (e.g., Crisan, 2001; Gleeson, 2012). Many studies draw on Shulman to argue that all teachers should have the following types of knowledge - of content, pedagogy, curriculum, learners, educational contexts, and educational ends (Almeida et al., 2019; Herold, 2019; Loo, 2007). Building on Shulman's dimensions, Dyches & Boyd (2017) propose that 'Social Justice Knowledge' should be the foundational knowledge domain for teachers, consisting of 'social justice pedagogic knowledge' and 'social justice content knowledge'. These studies point to important differences and academic debates in conceptions of the professional knowledge base of teachers and the nature of teaching, based on specific views of what counts as quality in school education.

In teacher education research, quality teaching has been defined in three different ways related to what teachers know and can do, and the concomitant outcome of their teaching (Wang et al., 2011). First, quality teaching is a function of teachers' knowledge, reflected in (for example) their educational qualifications and performance on teaching certification exams (Gere & Berebitsky, 2009). Second, quality teaching is what teachers do in practice, including such factors as pedagogic and assessment strategies, and classroom management (W. Chen et al., 2011). Third, quality teaching is assessed by educational outcomes, notably school students' achievement on standardised tests often using value-added measures (Loeb

et al., 2011). However, each of these conceptions of quality teaching is partial and problematic. Studies show mixed results regarding the impact of teaching qualifications on learning outcomes (Manning et al., 2017; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008) which in turn impels us to consider the specific nature of teachers' educational training (Cohen-Vogel & Smith, 2007; Kennedy, 2008; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017, 2018). Further, VAM studies have been unable to identify common teacher behaviours which constitute quality teaching, and are criticised for providing a skewed understanding of quality teaching because students' achievement scores are also influenced by an array of personal and socioeconomic factors (Darling-Hammond, 2015; A. Singh, 2015). In effect, each of the three conceptions of quality teaching in academic research has its relative strengths and weaknesses.

In essence, school education policies are important because of their conceptions of quality education, and their prescriptions for teachers and their teaching. This has implications for shaping teacher educators' practice through the policy expectations of what teachers know and can do. Importantly, teacher educators' engagement with the expectations of school education policies is mediated by their own understanding of quality education and quality teaching, and the embedded institutional, social, cultural, and historical contexts of their practice.

2.1.3 Summary

Teacher education policies in many countries have been aimed at reforming teacher education programs through market-based reforms (e.g., through the promotion of alternative routes into the teaching profession) and increased government accountability (e.g., through institutional accreditation and curriculum mandates). This is justified in the policies by the

failure of the existing teacher education system to prepare teachers for quality education in schools, often evidenced by students' poor learning outcomes on summative and standardised assessments especially international benchmark assessments like PISA and TIMSS. Importantly, the conceptions of problems and solutions in teacher education policies speak to common debates in teacher education around the world concerning the location, structure, and content of teacher education programs.

School education policies are important for teacher educators' practice because of their conceptions of quality education, and their prescriptions for teachers and teaching. In this regard, two important points can be made. First, how school education policies conceive quality education (e.g., pupil-teacher ratios, teacher standards) is dependent on each country's specific context, and international influences such as global neoliberal influences in education policymaking towards standardisation and external accountability. Second, how teacher educators understand quality education, often drawing on their personal and professional contexts, mediates how they engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of school education policies in their teacher education practice.

Albeit in different ways, both teacher education and school education policies are aimed at regulating teacher education and teacher educators' practice. The former through prescriptions for preparing teachers for quality education in schools, and the latter through conceptions of what counts as quality school education including the role of teachers. Importantly, the conception and implementation of education policies is notably influenced each country's specific cultural, historical, economic, and political contexts. This complexity foregrounds the need to investigate teacher educators' explanations of their teacher education practice, i.e., what they do and why.

2.2 Teacher Educators' Engagement with Education Policies

An important way in which education policies are aimed at improving the quality of school education is by regulating teacher educators' practice. Education policies are aimed at shaping teacher educators' practice by mandating what they teach and how, and how student teachers' learning is assessed (e.g., Rowe & Skourdoumbis, 2019). However, teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in diverse ways based on the unique personal, institutional, social, and historical contexts of their teacher education practice. This section delves deeper into this relevant research on teacher educators' engagement with education policies through the three lenses of teacher education curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

2.2.1 Teacher Education Curriculum

An important way in which education policies regulate teacher educators' practice is through mandated teacher education curriculums. However, studies have shown that mandated curriculums manifest differently in teacher educators' practice based on an array of personal, institutional, social, and historical contexts (see also Section 2.2.5). This section investigates the unique ways in which teacher educators engage with the prescribed teacher education curriculum because of its implications for defining the professional knowledge base of teachers – what teachers are expected to know and be able to do – and the pedagogy and assessment of teacher educators.

In many countries, there have been critiques of existing teacher education curriculums for being overly theory-laden with few opportunities for student teachers to rehearse and refine

their teaching skills, and not relevant for the unique needs of the local context. These criticisms include, for example, limited attention to preparing teachers for family-school partnerships in the Netherlands, Belgium, and the USA (de Bruïne et al., 2014), the lack of emphasis on English as Lingua Franca in Indonesia (Sakhiyya et al., 2018) and global education in Pakistan (Sadruddin & Wahab, 2013). Notably, these criticisms of teacher education are related to the perceived quality of the existing system of school education, and thereby the envisioned aims of education and the role of the teacher in each country's education policies.

The myriad criticisms of teacher education are often captured under the conceptual umbrella of the gap between theory and practice. The theory-practice dichotomy in teacher education is explained by teacher educators as 'a divide between what they want their new teachers to be doing in classrooms, on one side, and what is actually possible in contemporary schools… between the constructivist learning approaches espoused in the university and the scripted-curricula, testing, behaviourist, and didactic-instruction pressures' (Olsen & Buchanan, 2017, pp. 25 - 56). In turn, these criticisms have led to a shift in the policies and research from an emphasis on 'theory' to 'practice' (McDonald et al., 2014; Reid, 2011) – labelled by some scholars as the 'practice turn' in teacher education – through a focus on the specific skills required by student teachers for teaching in schools. However, the turn towards practice-based teacher education has been criticised for its reductionist framing and de-professionalisation of teaching. These criticisms of the teacher education curriculum are closely related to those made of the teacher standards movement (see section 2.2.2). As Zeichner (2012) put it:

> 'there is a danger of narrowing the role of teachers to that of technicians who are able to implement a particular set of teaching strategies, but who do not develop the broad professional vision (deep knowledge of their students and of the cultural

> contexts in which their work is situated), and the relational skills they need to be successful in the complex institutional settings in which they will work' (p. 379).

In addition to the theory-practice dichotomy and its attendant practice-turn, policy-mandated curriculums have also been criticised by teacher education scholars for being Eurocentric and urban-centric. Studies have suggested that Eurocentric curricula are responsible for reproducing existing social inequalities, ignoring indigenous knowledges and traditions, and neglecting the voices of local and marginalised populations (e.g., Lopes Cardozo, 2012; Mudaly, 2018; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2019). These criticisms have led to calls to 'decolonise' teacher education curriculums. In this regard, Gupta (2020) questions 'the sustainability of applying Euro-Western theoretical frameworks' to teacher preparation in Asian contexts like India (p. 43), and advocates that 'the content of teacher education curriculum should demonstrate a stronger support for pedagogical hybridity and cultural empathy by a conscious inclusion of local and global' themes in education (p. 54). In China, even mandated curricula established by education policies specifically for rural teacher education are criticised as urban-centric. For example, Qiao & Lai, (2019) demonstrate how the Free Teacher Education programme aimed at preparing quality teachers for rural schools instead 'yoked itself to an urban-centred approach, thus separating itself from the authentic rural practice' (p. 796). These criticisms and subsequent disciplinary specialisations raise questions about the context-specificity of teacher education curricula, and whether and how teacher education curricula are relevant across countries and contexts.

In response to these criticisms, teacher education researchers have called for a transformation of the teacher education curricula drawing on diverse knowledge bases, and recent advances in research. Higgins (2022) suggests the teacher education curriculum must be grounded in philosophical anthropology (e.g., 'what is our nature and condition?') and ethics ('what does

it mean to flourish individually and collectively?'). Franchi (2016) opines that 'to shift the focus away from explicit training models of ITE' (p. 151), the teacher education curriculum must include the study of liberal arts within a wider liberal approach to education studies that blends professional knowledge, judgement, and reflection. Rector-Aranda (2019) reports that teacher education curriculums need to further the social justice and reconstructionist aims of education by including features of 'genuine compassion and relational connection—creating contexts of mutuality, respect, and authentic care' (p. 397). In this way, some teacher educators have proposed new foci for teacher education curriculums by drawing on their unique views on quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

Scholars have proposed particular foci for teacher education curriculums based on specific understandings of quality education. For example, these foci include inclusive education, multicultural education, and social justice (e.g., Cherng & Davis, 2019; Michelli & Keiser, 2005). Scholars rationalise these different curricular foci by pointing to their views of quality education, prescriptions of education policies, and evidence from teacher education research (e.g., Pugach et al., 2020). For example, several scholars have stressed the significance of equity as a core focus of teacher education curriculums. Grudnoff et al. (2017) highlighted the need for an 'equity-centred teacher education curriculum' that is oriented to preparing teachers to 'address the persistent problem of inequitable educational outcomes and opportunities between advantaged and disadvantaged students' (p. 305). In effect, an equity-based teacher education curriculum is explained as relevant given common global challenges of social inequity and unequal power relations. Similarly, Schroeder & Curcio (2022) advocate a curricular module to prepare teachers with '21st-century critical curriculum literacy' based on the notion that quality teaching requires teachers around the world now need to be able to curate, critique, and adapt social media resources (such as Facebook,

YouTube, and Twitter) for use in school classrooms. In effect, these various foci for teacher education curriculums are positioned as relevant to all countries - rather than a specific country - by appealing to common challenges and opportunities for teacher education around the world.

Importantly, teacher education institutes play an important role in translating the prescribed teacher education curriculums into practice. For example, an analysis of the syllabi of 45 public and private TEIs located across the USA showed that the policy-mandated content of 'multicultural education' is positioned differently in each teacher education curriculum, and lies on a spectrum that either supports and reinforces existing hegemonies and power relations, or actively seeks to prepare student teachers as change agents for social reconstruction (Gorski, 2009). Similarly, policy prescriptions to include Education for Sustainable Development are manifest differently across TEIs, for example across all curricular areas, as a dedicated core subject or one of its components, or as an elective subject (Evans et al., 2017). In this regard, how teacher education institutes engage with education policies promoting 'education for sustainability' depend largely on the innovation and initiative of individual teacher educators, rather than institutional and system-wide efforts (Davis & Davis, 2021). Thus, policy-mandated (and institutionally recontextualised) teacher education curriculums are ultimately dependent on the ways they are translated through teacher educators' pedagogy.

2.2.2 Teacher Education Pedagogy

Education policies have prescribed and recommended a range of pedagogies for teacher educators to prepare teachers to provide quality school education. These expected pedagogic

strategies include dialogue, discussion, presentations, role-playing, drama and theatre, reflective writing, and seminars. Importantly, these pedagogies are aimed at achieving specific aims, such as preparing student teachers for reflective practice or critical pedagogy. In this section, I examine the relevant research concerning how teacher educators engage with education policies through their teacher education pedagogy and how this depends on their personal beliefs and experiences and the opportunities and constraints of their institutional context.

An important and contested aspect of teacher educators' pedagogy prescribed by education policies is preparing teachers for core practices (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020; Neel, 2017). A focus on core practices can purportedly help to dissolve historical divisions between theory and practice in teacher education by 'attend[ing] to both the conceptual and practical aspects associated with any given practice' (Grossman et al. 2009, p. 278). However, in identifying the core practices required for teachers, scholars have cautioned against 'a reductionist approach in which core practices become nothing more than the simple selection of specific moves or a list of best practices' (McDonald et al., 2013, p. 380). In this regard, the policy focus on preparing student teachers for core practices has been criticised for ignoring the professional knowledge on which these skills are based, and for its focus on observable behaviours rather than the educational purposes these behaviours serve. For example, Kennedy (2016) suggests that we need to reframe teaching from 'specific activities, moves, or practices…to an integrated practice in which each lesson represents a unique solution to five inherent challenges' (p. 13). The five challenges for teachers are (i) portraying the curriculum, (ii) enlisting student participation, (iii) exposing student thinking, (iv) containing student behaviour, and (v) accommodating students' personal needs. Importantly, the author explains this view as relevant across different teacher education

contexts drawing on his understanding of these 'five persistent challenges faced by virtually all teachers' (ibid, p. 10). These studies illustrate how – whether for or against policies that prescribe preparing teachers for core practices – teacher educators importantly draw on their understanding of teaching to explain their teacher education pedagogy.

In some ways, teacher educators' pedagogy aligns with the aims and mandates of education policies. For example, several scholars have stressed the importance of teacher educators' pedagogy in preparing future teachers as reflective practitioners for reflective practice – both foci of education policies in several countries around the world. Korthagen (2010) argued that teaching is an activity primarily driven by gestalt perceptions – unconscious interweaving patterns involving cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioural factors. Accordingly, he stresses the need for a 'pedagogy of teacher education that combines fruitful practical experiences – i.e., experiences that help form the type of gestalts the teacher educator wishes to develop – with the subsequent promotion of reflection in student teachers' (ibid, p. 104). Several strategies have been proposed to cultivate student teachers' reflective practice including discussion and dialogue, journals, blogs, and using videos. For example, Youens et al. (2014) suggest that video recordings of school placement teaching can be used as an opportunity for reflection, by bringing together teacher educators, student teachers, and mentor teachers to have a 'learning conversation' thereby bridging the boundaries between academic, practical, and professional knowledge (p. 106). In effect, teacher educators use different pedagogic strategies to achieve common aims – also espoused in education policies – based on their beliefs about teaching, and the unique opportunities and constraints of their teaching-learning context.

In other ways, teacher educators' pedagogy diverges from the stated foci of education policies. For example, several studies have proposed 'critical pedagogy' as integral for teacher educators, both for their own practice and preparing student teachers for critical pedagogy in schools. Drawing on scholars such as Freire (2017) and Giroux (2020), some studies contend that teacher educators can use critical pedagogy to enable student teachers to address entrenched social inequalities and the unequal power relations on which they are based. For example, Izadinia (2012) advocates for critical pedagogy based on her belief that 'one of the main responsibilities of TEs is to instil a sense of power and agency in STs so that they grow into responsible and caring individuals who resist the fatalist assumption that they are powerless and cannot do anything to improve the status quo' (p. 12). Taking another analytic step, scholars like Berchini (2017) lament how critical pedagogy is 'critical in theory [but] uncritical in practice', and recommend the need for teacher educators to reconceptualise 'white privilege pedagogy' to further foreground the ways in which racial relations unequally structure societies (p. 465). Meanwhile, scholars have also argued for a post-critical pedagogy based on the ideas of difference, hope, and love (*Manifesto for a Post-Critical Pedagogy*, 2018). For example, Alexander (2018) asserts the need for a 'pedagogy of difference' based on two levels – 'initiation into traditions of primary identity…and engagement with alternative perspectives' (p. 913). This is in turn based on the post-critical pedagogic premise that 'relies on an affirmative attitude towards the world' where education is explained as not as a 'device' to instrumentally change the present to improve the future, but to 'remain firmly in the present and concentrate our efforts not on what requires change, but what is worth preserving, caring for and loving' (Schwimmer, 2019, p. 502). Though drawing on the literature for support, these scholars advocate for - and against - critical pedagogies based on the social and economic contexts of their specific teaching-learning setting, and their beliefs concerning the purpose of pedagogy.

In sum, teacher educators importantly draw on their personal beliefs about education to explain their pedagogic practice. For example, Bai et al. (2009) draw on their beliefs in Buddhism, Daoism, and Ashtanga Yoga to emphasise the aim of education as cultivating four kinds of awareness – somatic, perceptual, relational, and contextual. To this end, they propose a 'contemplative pedagogy' for teacher education - including the use of strategies such as art, photography, and mindfulness – such that education becomes 'the art of awareness in all its fullness and richness' (ibid, p. 332). For Ma Rhea (2018), the aim of education is the cultivation of wisdom and so she draws on Buddhist pedagogy to inform her teacher education pedagogy by including the practices of meditation, stillness, and quietude. Notably, she advocates that this approach will enable the 'teacher educator and teacher to tailor their pedagogy to the needs of each student in order to cultivate the elements needed for *paññña* (wisdom) to emerge' (ibid, p. 201). Thus, teacher educators' pedagogy is importantly influenced by their understanding of the purpose of education, and the role of teachers and teaching.

2.2.3 Teacher Education Assessment

Teacher education policies have mandated different assessment criteria for student teachers. These have been translated differently at the level of teacher education institutions. This section explores the different ways in which teacher educators have engaged with this rise in the policy-mandated, and institutionally recontextualised, assessment of student teachers.

In countries like the USA and Australia, an influential policy-mandated tool for teacher education assessment has been capstone teacher performance assessments. The two most prominent capstone assessments were both developed in the Department of Education at

Stanford University, and subsequently mandated by several states in the USA. First, teacher education scholars created the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) in response to California's state policy mandate for TEIs to include a teacher performance assessment as part of their credentialing process. The PACT assessment used 'multiple sources of data (teacher plans, teacher artefacts, student work samples, video clips of teaching, and personal reflections and commentaries) that are organized into four categories of teaching: planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection' (Pecheone & Chung, 2006, p. 23). In the following decade, as a result of increased public funding for teacher education in some US states, PACT was transformed into the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). The edTPA is a capstone teacher performance assessment, now mandated in over 900 institutions across 41 states and the District of Columbia in the USA (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2019).

Policy-mandated teacher education assessments like the edTPA have received a mixed response from teacher educators. For example, an 18-month, case-study of one TEI in California demonstrated that teacher educators viewed the edTPA either as a tool for inquiry or compliance (Peck et al., 2010). The study illustrated a 'pervasive tension between state policy goals seeking alignment and coherence across multiple institutions of public education and the conditions of local control and autonomy, which are most likely to engage practitioners in the process of thoughtful and creative change' (ibid, p. 459). A more recent case study of 8 TEIs spread across the states of Illinois (which mandates the edTPA) and Iowa (which gives TEIs the option to adopt the edTPA) showed that teacher educators explained the edTPA as *good* (stimulating collaboration and dialogue among teacher educators, creating a shared language and evidence base for decision making and professional legitimacy), *bad* (narrowing the curriculum, limitations on social justice), *or* ugly (creating

additional accountability) (de Voto et al., 2021). Importantly, the differences in the reported views of the edTPA and its implications for teacher education practice were dependent on teacher educators' personal beliefs about how teacher learning can be assessed, and the institutional contexts in which their practice is embedded.

Some commentators have noted that policy-mandated criteria for assessment do not provide a complete picture of student teachers' learning, and require TEIs to contextualise assessments to their student teachers and teaching-learning context. DeLuca & Bellara (2013) explain that this is because assessment in teacher education policies is framed at global levels, whereas teacher standards and TEI curricula 'tend to operate at instructional or educational levels of knowledge across content themes' (p. 365). For example, a review of 16 courses of a teacher education syllabus of a mid-sized, university in the western USA showed that the policy-mandated criterion-referenced assessments provided only a partial picture of rigour, while institutional assessments were 'found to be criterion-deficient but were still moving students through cognitive tasks from the lowest to the highest level [of Bloom's taxonomy]' (Medaille et al., 2019, p. 85). Though some scholars have resisted the assault on their autonomy and its implications for narrowing teacher education curricula (e.g., Sjöberg, 2018), policy-mandated assessment criteria have enabled other teacher educators to find a shared language for teacher assessment competency, introduce new assessment practices like interviews and artefactual data, reimagine the practice and collaborative work of teacher educators.

In response to the rise of policy-mandated teacher education assessment, some teacher educators have argued the need for student teachers' assessment to be locally developed by TEIs considering the unique needs of the local teaching-learning context. For example,

Aydarova et al. (2021b) explain how a small group of teacher educators engaged in policy advocacy - through producing documentary artefacts, giving public testimonies, and cultivating relationships with policymakers - to shift the policy conversation from the implementation of the edTPA, to the introduction of the edTPA as a pilot in comparison with a locally developed assessment for student teachers. This work of engaging with policymakers led them to be 'perceived as participants in a dialogue rather than objects of reform' (p. 741). In this regard, the edTPA has been withdrawn in some states like Georgia and New York as a mandatory criterion, instead being replaced with the expectation that TEIs will develop their own teacher performance assessment in alignment with National and State teaching standards (Will, 2020; Amin, 2022).

Similarly, some scholars have advocated for a shift away from the policy-mandated teacher performance assessment, and towards forms of locally developed portfolio-based assessments to assess student teachers' learning about quality teaching (Cooner et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Girod, 2008). These assessments require student teachers to create a 'portfolio' of evidence over the duration of their teacher education program that documents what they know and can do. For example, Allard et al. (2014) advocate the use of 'Authentic Teacher Assessment' (ATA), a structured-portfolio-based teacher performance assessment along the five dimensions of teaching-learning context, planning, teaching, assessment, and reflection. There have been critiques of portfolio-based assessment in teacher education for being unstructured and unfocussed, including a random assortment of assessment strategies, and promoting a high-stakes scenario that narrows teacher education curricula and pedagogy (Cronenberg, 2020). Despite these criticisms, the ATA provides an important example of how teacher educators have engaged with the standardised policy-mandated assessment of

student teachers through the creation of – and advocacy for – a locally developed alternative for teacher assessment.

In sum, the research suggests an increasing tension between policy-mandated and locally developed assessments in teacher education. Importantly, studies demonstrate that teacher educators seek to reconcile this tension based on their understanding of how the knowledge and skills of student teachers can be assessed, and what counts as evidence of this assessment.

2.2.4 Student Teachers' Learning

Having addressed teacher educators' engagement with education policies in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, it is vital to investigate how this related to student teachers' learning in teacher education. Student teachers' learning in teacher education is mediated by multiple factors including their pre-existing beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds, motivations, knowledge, and life experiences (e.g., Rots et al., 2014). The research on student teachers' learning in teacher education serves to contextualise the complexity of teacher educators' work, and reinforce the rationale for investigating teacher educators' views and explanations of their teacher education practice.

Student teachers enter teacher education programs with diverse understandings of teaching and learning, and the role of the teacher (e.g., Leavy et al., 2007). These pre-existing beliefs arise from thousands of hours of experiences in school and higher education, whereby they draw on their own teachers as models for their practice, i.e., the 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975). This might even take the form of an 'anti-apprenticeship of

observation', whereby student teachers and schoolteachers explain that their 'negative experience as learners created intentions to be different from the models of teaching that they experienced' (Moodie, 2016, p. 36). Both teacher and school education policies have highlighted the importance of addressing student teachers' pre-existing beliefs about education during teacher education programs because of its implications for their learning (see Section 3.3.1 for an example from India).

Student teachers' pre-existing beliefs about education and the role of the teacher have been identified as a key obstacle to student teachers' learning in teacher education programs, and 'act as strong filters impeding the impact of teacher education' (O'Flaherty & Beal, 2018, p. 10). Addressing student teachers' pre-existing beliefs is important because research has shown that student teachers' learning in teacher education is mediated by their pre-existing beliefs, and the ways in which teacher educators engage with these beliefs in their teacher education practice. Further, research also illustrates how some student teachers draw on their pre-existing beliefs about education - rather than their professional preparation - to explain their teaching practice, leading to the 'washout effect' of teacher education (e.g., Richards et al., 2013; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981).

Researchers have highlighted a plethora of pedagogic strategies for teacher educators to address student teachers' pre-existing beliefs about education, such as using blogs (Westrick & Morris, 2016), creating curriculums based on student teachers' autobiographies (le Fevre, 2011) and the presentation of dramatically new ideas and reflective writing activities (Westrick & Morris, 2016). For example, to address student teachers' culturally-rooted perceptions of a teacher's role, Hall (2013) uses an array of pedagogic strategies including asking a variety of questions, wait time, positive reinforcement, humour, and non-verbal

communication. In effect, teacher educators' engagement with student teachers' pre-existing beliefs has important implications for student teachers' learning, and their subsequent teaching during school placements (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2009).

Student teachers' learning in teacher education programs is significantly mediated by their experiences during the school-teaching practicum. A review of 113 empirical studies about student teachers' practicums published in refereed journals between 1996 and 2009 showed that 'in many cases the practicum fluctuates between two approaches: the apprenticeship and personal growth' (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 370), the former involving modelling the teaching practice of specific teachers, and the latter dependent on student teachers' learning and reflection on their knowledge and teaching. In this regard, a systematic mapping of 97 empirical studies published in refereed journals from 2010 onwards illustrates how school-university partnerships in teacher education are framed as 'complex and resource-intensive cross-institutional infrastructures for knowledge sharing, with the ambition to enhance the practice-relevance of teacher education, bridge theory and practice and support mentoring and professional learning' (Lillejord & Børte, 2016, p. 550). However, as illustrated by Glaswegian example, the success of university-school partnerships and its implications for student teachers' learning during the practicum vitally depends on how the relative roles and responsibilities of school-based and university-based teacher educators are defined (Conroy et al., 2013). Thus, as Heineke & Giatsou's (2020) case study of a field-based teacher education program at a private university in the midwestern USA demonstrates, student teachers' learning does 'not occur by simply being in schools', and requires teacher educators' practice to transform 'spontaneous occurrences observed in classrooms into professional expertise' (p. 158).

In short, student teachers' experience of teacher education programs is mediated by a range of factors including their beliefs, and experiences. Teacher educators need to address these myriad factors in their practice through the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment because of its implications for student teachers' learning in teacher education programs. In effect, the research on student teachers underscores the complexity of teacher educators' work, and supports the rationale for investigating teacher educators' explanations of what they do and why.

2.2.5 The Contexts of Teacher Educators' Practice

Teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in different ways based on their unique contexts. Studies have shown how these differences in engagement can be explained in reference to the teacher educators' personal context, including their backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences (e.g., Kosnik et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2022). Further, teacher educators' engagement with education policies is also influenced by the institutional, social, and historical contexts in which their practice is embedded (e.g., Pantić & Wubbels, 2010). In light of this complexity, this section investigates how teacher educators explain their practice, and how this is related to education policy reform.

There is growing evidence to suggest that the personal contexts of teacher educators influence how they engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies. For example, Struyven & de Meyst (2010) demonstrate how teacher educators in Belgium translated the policy mandate of establishing teacher competencies differently, partly based on their beliefs, age, professional qualifications, and experience. Notably, the 'more experienced the teacher [educators] are, the more convinced they are about the insufficient

concreteness and operational nature of the basic competencies introduced by decree' (ibid, p. 1503). Similarly in England, Alexiadou & Essex (2016) explain that teacher educators' practice in preparing teachers for inclusion is based on their personal 'ideas about pedagogy and good teaching…[with] implications for the strategies used with the student-teachers throughout their training year' (p. 12). In the Netherlands, Bronkhorst et al. (2011) noted how teacher educators' pedagogic strategies to cultivate 'meaning-oriented learning' and 'deliberate practice' include questioning student teachers' implicit assumptions about teaching and learning, modelling ideal teaching strategies, and creating opportunities for reflective dialogue. The teacher educators' choices of specific strategies depended on their personal understandings of deliberate practice – either as enactment or regulation – and stemmed from 'the context and the intentions of the teacher educators' (ibid, p. 1127). In this sense, teacher educators' engagement with education policies is importantly influenced by their backgrounds, and beliefs about education.

Many teacher educators explain their practice as preparing teachers to achieve specific aims envisioned for school education. For example, to achieve the social transformation aim of education, studies have emphasised the need to prepare teachers with a social justice orientation based on critical theories that address existing entrenched inequalities and discrimination (e.g., Apple, 2011; Rust, 2019). In a similar vein, Steinberg & Krumer-Nevo (2020) write about 'poverty-aware teacher education' that equips student teachers with 'social-justice oriented knowledge regarding poverty' to address the complex and multi-dimensional structures of socio-economic inequalities (p. 11). And, Cochran-Smith & Keefe (2022) highlight the need for teacher education to acknowledge the systemic and policy structures that reproduce inequity, and thereby reorient teacher educators' practice away from the notion of 'thin equity' to 'strong equity' that consists of four elements - redistribution,

recognition, representation, and reframing. In this sense, teacher educators' practice is importantly shaped by their understanding of quality education, and the role of the teacher and teaching required to achieve the envisioned aims of quality school education.

In addition to the personal context, teacher educators' engagement with education policies is embedded within – and thereby influenced by - their institutional context. For example, a study examining institutional differences in the implementation of Icelandic education policy on inclusion found that some programs are based on the 'deficit model and direct transmission beliefs, [while] others are grounded in sociocultural theories and constructivism' (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2020, p. 103). Moreover, teacher educators' practice is shaped by the opportunities and constraints afforded by their institutional context. For example, Kelly-Jackson (2015) explains how her practice as a social-justice teacher educator stems from her experiences growing up as a poor, African American female at a time of heightened racial tension and discrimination. However, some weeks into the semester, she 'gave up teaching with a social-justice framework [and] simply focused on the methods of teaching science' because of her apprehensions about course evaluations, promotions, and tenure (ibid, p. 177). In this sense, teacher educators' practice is vitally mediated by the opportunities, constraints, and challenges afforded by their institutional context.

Teacher educators' willingness and ability to implement education policy reforms also depend on their access to professional development programmes. For example, a study from Ethiopia demonstrates that focused professional development programmes for teacher educators can enable them to acquire new knowledge, and shift their pedagogy from a lecture method to policy-mandated 'student-centred' teaching methods (A. E. Barnes et al., 2018, p. 6). However, researchers have cautioned against professional development programmes that

are policy-mandated, top-down, one-off 'upskilling' programmes designed to train teacher educators in how to implement the latest policy reform (e.g., Mockler, 2005). Instead, as Loughran (2014) stresses, the professional development of teacher educators must be 'purposefully conceptualized, thoughtfully implemented, and meaningfully employed' (p. 280). In effect, the success of professional development programs to implement education policy reforms also depends on the extent to which these programs respect teacher educators' professional autonomy, and are contextually-meaningful.

In addition to the influences of the personal and institutional contexts, teacher educators' practice is embedded within specific social and historical contexts. For example, unequal race relations in the USA are an important concern for many teacher educators. To dismantle 'Whiteness', and its attendant system of racism and abuse, these teacher educators draw on decolonial and critical whiteness theories to inform their pedagogy. For example, Domínguez (2021) describes how his pedagogy involves the use of theatre and reflective discussion to 'craft rich, decolonial, practice-based moments of teacher education that advance a teaching practice that is epistemically disobedient' (p. 560). And, Souto-Manning (2019) writes how she partnered with a teacher of colour to plan, co-teach and co-research, host parent-teacher meetings, and attend professional development programs – all based on a rejection of the deficit narrative of race. In this way, she responds to the 'white-centric rhetoric' in teacher education that 'continues to inflict harm on individuals and communities of colour, failing to acknowledge inequities and fostering structural racism, [and] the systematic but often invisible way in which routines, practices, traditions, values and structures perpetuate racial inequity in higher education' (ibid, p. 110). Building on this, Matias (2016) explains that white teacher educators must acknowledge (their) Whiteness - and its implied structures of racial and socioeconomic inequalities – to enact the transformative power of teacher

education. Importantly, some teacher educators' engagement with decolonial and anti-racist teacher education is deeply embedded in their own experiences of racism, for example as a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (e.g., Ohito, 2021). In this sense, teacher educators' practice is influenced by their positionality as embedded within the social and historical contexts of their work.

The studies cited in this section demonstrate a complex relationship between education policies and teacher educators' practice. They illustrate how teacher educators' engagement with education policies is uniquely mediated by their personal, institutional, social, and historical contexts. In short, this body of literature reinforces the rationale for investigating how teacher educators engage with education policies through their views and explanations of their teacher education practice.

2.3 Summary

This chapter critically reviewed the relevant scholarship on education policies and teacher educators' practice. It examined how teacher education policies and school education policies are aimed at regulating teacher educators' practice in different ways. The former is important for its prescriptions for the structure and content of teacher education, and the latter for its conceptions of the purpose of school education and the role of the teacher. Importantly, this chapter demonstrates that teacher educators engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in unique ways based on the personal, institutional, social, and historical contexts of their teacher education practice. Building on these insights, the following chapter investigates the research on education policies and teacher education in India to highlight pertinent gaps in the literature, and thereby establish the specific context

and rationale for investigating the overarching research question – how do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

3.1 Synopsis

In the previous chapter, I critically examined the wider teacher education literature to highlight the diverse and complex ways in which education policies are aimed at reforming and regulating teacher education, and how teacher educators engage with these education policies in their practice. In this chapter, I present the historical context for teacher education in India, investigate the nature and impacts of Indian education policies, and delve into the research on teacher educators' practice. In effect, this chapter analyses the origins and development of teacher education, education policies, and teacher educators' practice in India, and thereby sets the context for the present study.

The chapter begins with a brief history of teacher education and education policies in India, highlighting key themes including where teacher education is located, who are the teacher educators, the purpose of teacher education, and the logic behind increasing policy reforms and regulations in teacher education. Next, it provides an overview of education policies in India focusing on the different ways in which school and teacher education policies are aimed at shaping teacher educators' practice through their prescriptions and recommendations for quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. Finally, it investigates the existing research on teacher educators' practice to point out how the present study builds on - and contributes to – the nascent evidence base that investigates the relationship between education policies and teacher educators' practice in India.

3.2 A Brief History of Teacher Education and Education Policies

According to Gill (1954), teacher education in India can be traced across five historical influences: (i) Brahmin, (ii) Buddhist, (iii) Islamic, (iv) British, and (iv) independent India. In the Brahmin period (roughly 2000BCE to 500BCE), formal education was the sole prerogative of the highest caste, and education was provided by teachers called *gurus*. The student would go to live with the *guru* as part of his family; it was the sacred duty of the student to obey his teacher, and learn the religious texts called *Vedas*. Importantly, in the *Vedic* and Buddhist traditions, the *guru*'s teaching was oriented toward refining the character and personality of each learner, thereby leading them on the path of self-realisation. In this sense, the *guru* was positioned as an authority figure who was concerned with the holistic intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual development of each learner. There was no separate system of teacher education during this period. *Gurus* would pass their knowledge on to brahmin students, who in turn would become future *gurus*. In this sense, the *guru* was both a teacher and a teacher educator.

Teacher education in the Buddhist period overlapped and co-existed with the Brahmin period (roughly 500BCE – 700AD). The Buddhist period was different from the Brahmin period in that education was open to all people including girls, and was also provided in local languages. However, the Buddhist and Brahmin periods are similar in that education was primarily tied to religion, and teaching and teacher education had fluid boundaries. Teacher education at the time was located in Buddhist monasteries. Like the Brahmin *gurus*, monks were especially concerned with the spiritual development of each learner by awakening the potential for their self-realisation. Notably, among the students at the monasteries, 'only those persons were selected as possible teachers who were found exceptionally intelligent, with

necessary aptitude and interest' (ibid, p. 27). The process of becoming a teacher during this period took thirty years of rigorous learning and discipline. The monks (like gurus) played the simultaneous role of teachers and teacher educators. In this sense, the knowledge base of the monks and *gurus* included – among other aspects – knowledge of teaching and learning to teach.

In the Islamic period (roughly 700 AD to mid- 18th century), there was no separate system of teacher education. However, unlike the Brahmin and the Buddhist periods, teachers were themselves responsible for learning – and proving their mastery in – specialised content and pedagogy. Teachers had to qualify themselves by becoming experts in an array of content knowledge especially the Quran, and including mathematics, medicine, ethics, logic, and poetry (ibid, p. 37). During this period, teachers were regarded as qualified based on their mastery of content knowledge rather than specific training to be a teacher. In effect, a teacher was qualified by what they know rather than how they teach. This emphasis on teacher knowledge continues to be reflected in present modes of assessment in teacher education and teacher eligibility testing in India. Notably, in the Brahmin, Buddhist, and Islamic periods, education was concerned with the holistic development of their students, an aim that continues to be an important policy focus for quality education and teacher education in present-day India (see Section 3.3).

Of these three periods noted above, the Brahmin period is particularly important for its impact on positioning the image of the *guru* as an ideal teacher in India. There is a deep cultural significance to the embodied notion of an ideal teacher which draws on the image of the *guru* from Vedic education (e.g., Nandram, 2014). Traditionally, the guru used direct methods like 'analogies, parables, stories, illustrations, puns, hymns, prayers and

dramatization' (Gyan, 1998, p. 368), and indirect methods that 'were subtle, silent methods that communicated spiritual advancement, such as the gurus' look, gaze, touch, and presence' (ibid, p. 2). Using these methods, the *guru* was responsible for the complete intellectual-social-emotional-moral/spiritual education of the *shishya* (student). In contrast to this ideal framing, the *Vedic* tradition of the *guru* has been criticised for being notoriously hierarchical (e.g., the *guru* was positioned as an absolute authority, and the student kissed their *guru*'s feet every morning) and exclusionary since non-Brahmins and girls were not allowed to receive formal education with a *guru* (or allowed to become *gurus* themselves).

The cultural image of the teacher as a *guru* has two important implications for teacher education in present-day India. First, teacher educators are expected to prepare teachers as a *particular kind of person* with exemplary characteristics and values. Secondly, teacher educators are expected to be concerned with each student teacher's holistic development through cultivating personal relationships with them. The characteristics of the *guru* are echoed in the positioning of quality teachers as 'a friend, a mentor, a facilitator or an experienced travelling companion' (Bhatta, 2009, p. 51), and a 'co-learner - an expert guide who helps the students navigate the subjects being explored' (Sarsani, 2006, p. 57). The cultural legacy of the image of the guru is important because of its implications for shaping policy conceptions of the (a) purpose of education, (b) the expected qualities, values, and motivations of teachers, and consequently (c) the orientation of teacher educators' practice. Thus, though drawing on religious traditions within Hinduism and Buddhism, the tradition of the *guru* continues to influence teacher education research and education policies in independent India.

Following Brahmin, Buddhist, and Islamic influences, teacher education in India was subsequently influenced by both British rule, as well as Indian independence. During British rule, formal teacher education began in a small network of 'normal schools' established by the colonial government for the training of teachers both in the local language as well as English. The duration of the teacher education program ranged from one-year (for village teachers) to two-years (for town teachers) depending on the state. Not unlike today, the teacher education curriculum – which drew on pedagogic and core disciplines such as Methods of Teaching and History of Education – was criticised in the Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1919) for placing too much emphasis on theory and being irrelevant for student teachers' learning about teaching and to teach. Post-independence in 1947, teacher education shifted to a growing network of public and private teacher training colleges that subsumed the existing British-established normal schools.

Much changed in teacher education policies and practices during the years of colonial rule, and in the decades that followed Indian independence. Between 1883 and 1985, Mangal (2020) notes several important changes in the teacher education system. The teacher education program was streamlined into two routes - two years for high-school graduates, and one year for college graduates. There was a shift in the 'content of teacher education programmes from teaching school subjects to the pedagogy of teaching' (ibid, p. 284). Notably, correspondence courses in teacher education were launched to address the backlog of untrained teachers as it was purportedly the only option available to policymakers despite their concerns about its implications on teacher quality. As a legacy, correspondence courses in teacher education continue to exist in the present day, although they have been much criticised by scholars and policymakers alike. Importantly, the steady rise of teacher

education institutes in independent India led to a substantial rise in the number of trained teachers.

At present, teacher education in India is located in a network of public and private higher education institutions. Public teacher education is primarily provided through the 575 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET). The DIET system was designed to make teacher education responsive to the unique teaching-learning needs of local contexts. However, over three decades after they were established, Dyer (2005) notes how 'unresolved issues relating to responsibilities and power, between state and district levels, have compromised the decentralisation of teacher education' (p. 149). In Indian education policies, the DIETs continue to be criticised for poor infrastructure, inadequate use of ICT, and low teacher educator motivation (NCE, 2015). Over 90% of teacher education is in the private sector, with similar criticisms as for public teacher education, in addition to accusations of widespread corruption and bribery. Meanwhile, Indian education policies have also lauded certain TEIs as exemplars both in the public sector [e.g., Delhi University (MHRD, 2009b, p. 21)] and private sector [e.g., Tata Institute of Social Sciences – (NAAC, 2007, pp. 140-146)]. In this sense, the TEI quality in India is a function of institutional considerations rather than whether it is located in the public or private sector.

Further, there are also alternative routes into the teaching profession, notably through fast-track programs like Teach for India and NGO-based teacher training certifications. Teach for India - as part of the global Teach For All network – offers a two-year fellowship for college graduates to be full-time teachers in under-resourced public schools that serve children from low-income communities. The NGO 'Muktangan' provides a year-long pre-service teacher education program that, according to its website, seeks to amalgamate 'community

experience with formal knowledge to make learning relevant in its quality[6]'. Teacher graduates are subsequently absorbed within Muktangan schools. Meanwhile, according to the National Education Policy 2020, all teacher education programs will be shifted into multidisciplinary colleges and universities by 2030 (p. 23). Given that the education policies of some countries are pushing for the dismantling of university-based teacher education in favour of alternative routes [like Teach for America in the USA] and school-based initial teacher training (e.g., in England), it is notable that teacher education in India looks set to be consolidated within the higher education system (MHRD, 2020).

In essence, teacher education in India draws on – and has transformed tremendously in - the past two millennia. From the *Vedic* forest schools of the *guru* and the Buddhist monasteries, teacher education in present-day India is primarily located in a network of private and public universities, and colleges – along with a growing number of NGOs.

A Brief History of Education Policies in Independent India

Since independence in 1947, there has been a steady flow of education policies in India. Each of these policies has proposed particular definitions of quality for school education, and prescriptions and recommendations for teacher education and teacher educators' practice. Since education policies in India tend to draw on previous policy precedents, this section provides a broad overview of the history of education policies in independent India. This will help to locate Indian education policies within their specific historical, cultural, and social contexts.

[6] https://www.muktanganedu.org/muktangan-projects/

In 1948, the first government of India formed a commission to inquire into the provision and quality of higher education in India. Chaired by Dr. Radhakrishnan[7], the Report of the University Education Commission (UEC) was the first major education policy in independent India. Notably, the first two major education policies in independent India – the Report of the Universities Education Commission (Ministry of Education, 1948) and Report of the Secondary Education Commission (Ministry of Education, 1953) – focused on higher and secondary education at the cost of elementary education. The Radhakrishnan Commission criticised the teacher education curriculum for being overly theoretical with sparse opportunities for student teachers to rehearse their teaching skills, and teacher educators for lacking school teaching experience (pp. 185-188). The Secondary Education Commission highlighted the need for reform in the teacher education curriculum, and recruitment of teacher educators and student teachers (pp. 165-176). Both these policies lamented the lack of quality in teacher preparation, and noted the need for increased policy reform in teacher education.

In 1964, the Kothari Commission was appointed to make recommendations to improve the quality of education in the country. The subsequent Report of the Kothari Commission highlighted the importance of teachers and the educators that prepare them in ensuring quality education in schools (MHRD, 1966). In emphasising the centrality of the teacher for quality education, the Report stated:

> 'Of all factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the teacher is undoubtedly the most important. It is on his personal qualities and character, his educational qualifications and professional competence that the success of all educational endeavour must ultimately depend.' (p. xiii)

[7] The second president of India and first Indian professor at Oxford

Like previous Indian education policies, the Report of the Kothari Commission continued to criticise teacher education for not preparing teachers for quality education, using this criticism as the rationale for increased reform and regulation. The Report stated that Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) in India were 'either mediocre or poor', lacked competent teacher educators, and taught curriculums devoid of 'vitality and realism' that perpetuate mechanical and rigid teaching in future teachers (pp. 67-68). Importantly, the Report of the Kothari Commission proposed several reforms for teacher education that were subsequently accepted in succeeding education policies. This includes rooting the teacher education curriculum in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and philosophy (recommended in NCFTE 2009), increasing the duration of teacher education to two-years (prescribed by the NCTE 2014 Regulations), and moving teacher education into universities (proposed by the NEP 2020). In this regard, the Report of the Kothari Commission played an important role in influencing subsequent education policies in India.

In 1985, the government released the Report of the Chattyopadhyaya Commission titled 'Teacher and Society' (National Commission on Teachers, 1985). The Report described the teacher education system in India as 'woefully inadequate' (ibid, p. 82), and recommended an integrated 4-year teacher education program (now proposed in the NEP 2020). In the following year, the government launched the National Policy on Education (NPE) (MHRD, 1986). The NPE reiterated the crisis narrative in teacher education stating that many TEIs 'suffer from inadequate facilities human, physical and academic…curricula remain unrevised for years, reading lists out of date and practices adopted by teacher educators in direct contradiction to ones being prescribed to prospective teachers' (p. 176). Six years later, the NPE 1986 was operationalised through a National Policy titled 'Programme of Action' (MHRD, 1992). This policy proposed the establishment of the National Council for Teacher

Education (NCTE) as a statutory body charged with monitoring and regulating the quality of teacher education in India. The NCTE was subsequently established through an Act of parliament in 1993. In essence, the narrative of crisis in teacher education in the policies was used to rationalise the need for reform and regulation in teacher education.

In the 1990s, the central government launched several education policies including District Primary Education Program, Operation Blackboard, and the Mid-day Meal Scheme. These were intended to address specific aspects of quality education including improving school infrastructure, and boosting enrolment by providing afternoon meals for children. The Report of the Yashpal Committee acknowledged the difficulties that teachers face in the classroom including the lack of infrastructure, and pressure to complete the syllabus (MHRD, 1993). According to the Report, the aim of quality education to ensure the 'development of the child's total personality' (p. 4) had been reduced to mere 'joyless learning' in schools (p.3). During this period, most education policies were focused on teachers and their work, partly because a new policy solution had been proposed for the reform of teacher education – privatisation. Specifically, education policies promoted the privatisation of teacher education to meet the increased demand for teachers, attract new teacher education providers, and improve the quality of teacher preparation. This led to a significant increase in the number of stand-alone private teacher education institutes, and a rapid shift in teacher education from the public to the private sector by the early 2000s.

By the late 2000s, the prolific privatisation of teacher education was blamed for the massive 'mushrooming of teacher education institutions' (NCTE, 2009, p. 5) and the 'commercialization of the process of teacher education' (ibid, p. 7). The Report of the Justice Verma Commission noted that over 90% of teacher education was in the private sector, and

many that many of these private TEIs were sub-standard and corrupt (MHRD, 2012). In media reports, private teacher education colleges were assiduously accused of having inadequate infrastructure and resources, and rampant corruption including the selling of degrees (Behar, 2017). Though there has been little published research into the corruption in teacher education institutes, the problem appears to be prevalent (and can be extrapolated from) across private higher education institutions in India. For example, Tierney & Sabharwal's (2017) case study of one HEI highlights various forms of corruption including bribery for institutional accreditation and student recruitment, and students' paying to receive degrees without attending classes. According to Mythili (2018), the education policies that precipitated the privatisation of teacher education led – contra definition – to the proliferation of sub-standard teacher education institutes with little impact on the quality of teacher preparation.

Finally, with education policies (and research) noting that privatisation failed to pay dividends in improving the quality of teacher preparation (as evidenced by school students' poor and differentiated learning outcomes), the NCTE shifted to mechanisms of external accountability to regulate teacher education institutes (similar to historical and policy precedents from other countries). Subsequently, the NCTE launched the TeachR framework to accredit and rank colleges (NCTE, 2017). Institutes which did not complete TeachR accreditation would not be allowed to accept students. Yet, only half of all teacher education institutes submitted the four-part form detailing their physical assets, academic assets, teaching and learning quality, and learning outcomes. The subsequent drive to close defaulting institutions was met with resistance from TEIs. A year after the introduction of the framework, the NCTE was facing over 270 cases in the Delhi High Court by TEIs whose main objection was that the newly formed wing of the NCTE, the Quality Council of India,

'has no experience in the sector of education and that it was only set up for industrial purposes' (Sharma, 2018). The TeachR framework was subsequently withdrawn. The tension between increased policy accountability and private teacher education leads Sharma (2019) to conclude that 'regulation and policymaking in teacher education is a highly disputed arena with many conflicting interest groups (such as professional collectives of teacher educators, the private sector, and actors within governments) jostling for more control and a greater voice' (p. 5). Despite the failure of the TeachR framework, external accountability through the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies has now become the primary method of regulating and reforming teacher education in India.

This brief history of education policies in independent India underlines the increasing policy focus on the reform and regulation in teacher education. Teacher education and teacher educators' practice have been continuously critiqued in education policies since independence. Despite these criticisms, Indian education policies unanimously assert the importance of the role of teacher educators and teachers in achieving the envisioned aims of quality education.

3.3 Education Policies and Teacher Education in Present-day India

In India, there are four types of policies - *Acts*, *Regulations*, *National/State Policies*, and *Reports*. These distinctions are important because each type of policy serves specific functions, and thereby affects teacher education in different ways. In this section, I present an overview of the four types of policies and why this is relevant to the study of teacher educators' practice.

An *Act* is a law passed by both Houses of Parliament. As per Articles 107, 108, 117, and 368 of the Indian Constitution, the initially proposed law (the bill) - once drafted by legislators and bureaucrats - is introduced and debated in parliament, and subsequently involves feedback from other ministries and the public. If the bill is passed by a simple majority (or 2/3rds majority in case of a constitutional amendment) in the upper and lower house of parliament, it becomes an *Act*. For example, the Right to Education Act guarantees free and compulsory school education till the 8th grade for all students, with specific mandates for governments, schools, and teachers to achieve this aim (MHRD, 2009a). *Acts* are important because their mandates are legally binding and enforceable in court.

Regulations are directives issued by specific ministries or government organisations in accordance with the powers granted to them by specific Acts. For example, the NCTE periodically issues *Regulations* to govern the norms and procedures of teacher education in the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 32(2) of the National Council for Teacher Education Act 1993. Since they derive their powers from Acts, the prescriptions of Regulations are also legally binding and enforceable in court. For example, the NCTE Regulations 2014 draws its mandate from the NCTE Act 1993, and is important because it extended the B.Ed. program from 1 year to 2 years.

National/State Policies are guidelines and frameworks released by the government that outline policy problems and solutions. These national/state policies are created by specially appointed 'expert committees', and are based on wide-ranging dialogue and deliberation. Feedback on the draft policy is usually invited from other ministries and the public before the final policy is launched. For example, the National Policy on Education (MHRD, 2020) was reportedly based on the inputs of 'individuals, institutions, organisations, and groups of

people…representing different educational ideologies and ideas, different cultural and social backgrounds, and from different regions of the country' (MHRD, 2019, p. 23). National/State policies depend on state governments and TEIs for their implementation, thereby being translated differently across states and institutions based on the challenges and opportunities of the local context. While *National/State Policies* are not legally binding, they are important because they set the guidelines for the prescriptions and recommendations for subsequent education policies.

Reports are commissioned by government ministries to investigate a specific policy problem, and provide recommendations for policy solutions. For example, the Report of the Justice Verma Commission (JVC Report) was responsible for articulating the problem in teacher education (TEIs are failing to prepare teachers for quality education) and its solution (increased regulation of TEIs and teacher educators' practice). The recommendations of the Reports are not legally enforceable. However, many of the recommendations of the JVC Report were adopted and mandated by the NCTE Regulations 2014. Thus, apart from elaborating policy problems and solutions, *Reports* are important because their findings often form the basis of subsequent *Acts, Regulations,* and *National/State Policies*.

A point of clarification on the terminologies used in this thesis. 'National/State Policy' refers to a particular kind of 'policy'. This might be confusing as both (the sub-category and the overarching category) are labelled policy. Throughout this thesis, I distinguish between the two in the following way. If the label 'policy' is prefixed with National or State (as in National/State policy), it refers to a particular subset of policies as described above. If used by itself, 'policies' refer to an overarching category that includes Acts, Regulations, National/State Policy, and Reports.

In essence, there are four types of education policies in India – *Acts*, *Regulations*, *National/State Policies*, and *Reports*. Acts and Regulations are legally binding, while National/State Policies and Reports offer frameworks and guidelines for state governments and TEIs. Each of the four types of education policies has different impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice based on their purpose and process of creation, and accompanying legal mandate.

3.3.1 Teacher Education Policies

In the last two decades, the Indian government has released three landmark teacher education policies - National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) (NCTE, 2009), the Report of the Justice Verma Commission (MHRD, 2012), and the NCTE 2014 Regulations (NCTE, 2014). These policies are important because of their many recommendations and prescriptions for teacher education institutions and programs, and the work of teacher educators. In this section, I highlight the key features of these policies and their implications for teacher educators' practice.

In 2009, the National Council for Teacher Education created the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009). The NCFTE, officially launched in March 2010, was created to achieve the vision of quality education articulated in the National Curriculum Framework for school education (NCERT, 2005) and mandated by the RTE Act (MHRD, 2009a) (see section 3.3.2). The NCFTE states that 'the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 places different demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed both by initial and continuing teacher education' (p. 1). Specifically, the NCFTE refers to the NCF to establish the role of the teacher, and subsequently derive the

responsibilities of a teacher educator (p. 76). According to the NCFTE, the aim of teacher educators' practice – harkening to the *guru* tradition - is to prepare 'the total teacher' who is 'concerned, in an important way, with the total development of human beings – physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual' (NCTE, 2009, p. 23). Importantly, the NCFTE is a National Policy – thus, not legally binding – and depends on state governments and TEIs for its implementation (see Section 3.3). In this regard, Setty's (2014) analysis of the NCFTE shows how the framework uses monoglossic and heteroglossic language to position itself as 'authoritatively backed recommendations' (p. 84). Notably, the NCFTE lists nine criticisms of teacher educators' practice including 'no "space" to address students' assumptions about social realities, the learner and the process of learning' (p. 52). Thus, the policy describes the professional preparation of teacher educators as the 'weakest aspect' of the teacher education system (p. 15).

The NCFTE proposed a tripartite teacher education curriculum based on three curricular areas – (i) Foundations of Education, (ii) Curriculum and Pedagogy, and (iii) School Internship (NCTE, 2009, p. 24). The first draws on the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and philosophy of education, and the second on curriculum, pedagogic, and assessment studies. The school internship was recommended to be between 6-10 weeks for a two-year B.Ed. program. In addition to detailing these curricular areas, the NCFTE 2009 also makes many recommendations for 'transacting the teacher education curriculum' (p. 51), including considerations of teaching adult learners and addressing student teachers' pre-existing beliefs and experiences. For example, the focus on teacher educators' 'engagement with theoretical concepts and frameworks' states that 'conceptual inputs in teacher education need to be articulated in such a manner that they describe and explain educational phenomena – actions, tasks, efforts, processes, concepts, events and so on' (p. 53). In short, the NCFTE states that

'*reflective practice* [is] the central aim of teacher education' (p. 19, original emphasis). The NCFTE makes specific recommendations for the content of the curriculum and the nature of student teachers' assessment, while teacher educators' pedagogy is framed in general terms. This purportedly gives teacher educators the agency to contextualise their practice to the needs of their student teachers and the local teaching-learning context. However, in the absence of a consensus professional knowledge base for teacher educators or standards in teacher education, the ambiguity in expectations of teacher education pedagogy focuses our attention on the pedagogic decision-making of teacher educators in India.

In 2012, the government released the Report of the Justice Verma Commission (JVC Report). The JVC Report was precipitated by events that began in 2008. The Western Regional Committee of the NCTE had given recognition to 291 D.Ed. [Diploma in Education] colleges in Maharashtra, against the explicit recommendations of the state government that claimed there was already an over-supply of qualified teachers. In 2009, the Honourable Bombay High Court found in favour of the Maharashtra state government, and quashed the order granting NCTE accreditation. This decision was then challenged by the affected colleges, and the case was brought to the Supreme Court of India. Accordingly, a 'high-powered commission' was constituted under the chairmanship of Honourable Justice J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of India. Though the Commission was set up in response to a specific event of discontent between the NCTE and TEIs in the state of Maharashtra, the Commission's Terms of Reference were expanded to reviewing the overall state of teacher education in India and making recommendations to improve the quality of teacher preparation. This task culminated in the JVC Report (MHRD, 2012).

The JVC Report is important because of its scathing appraisal of the teacher education system in India. It outlined sweeping criticisms of teacher education institutes (especially in the private sector), teacher education curriculum, teacher educators' pedagogy, student teachers' assessment, and professional preparation of teacher educators. For example, it asserted that the current teacher education curriculum promotes 'ritualistic exposure to fragmented knowledge which is neither linked to the larger aims of education and disciplinary knowledge, nor the ground realities of classroom practice' (p. 13). Vijaysimha (2013) points out that the JVC Report decried teacher educators' practice as 'stultified and largely unchanged over the past half-century, [where] teaching is reduced to a set of techniques that have to be mechanically applied irrespective of the subject being taught, the specific circumstances of the students in the class, and the peculiarities of different school settings' (p. 296). By highlighting this narrative of crisis, the JVC Report was responsible for catapulting teacher education into the spotlight as a policy problem. This means that policymakers became concerned with regulating an array of variables that can be regulated by policies - for example institutional accreditation, entry and exit requirements, and curriculums - to improve the quality of teacher education. The JVC Report is particularly important because many of its recommendations, especially shifting to a two-year B.Ed., were subsequently prescribed by the NCTE 2014 Regulations.

In 2014, the NCTE published the 'National Council for Teacher Education (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulations' (henceforth, NCTE Regulations). The policy led to several impacts and implications for teacher education programmes and teacher educators' practice by mandating changes in institutional accreditation, entry requirements for student teachers, teacher educators' qualifications, and teacher education curriculums, pedagogies, and assessments (NCTE, 2014). Importantly, the NCTE Regulations mandated a shift from a

one-year to a two-year B.Ed. program (as recommended by the JVC Report 2012) and drew many of its prescriptions for the structure of the curriculum from the recommendations of the NCFTE 2009. Most aspects of the NCTE Regulations are prescriptive and specific, for example, teacher educators' qualifications, student teachers' entry requirements, and the number of working days. However, in aspects that directly concern teacher educators' practice – curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment – the NCTE Regulations offer paragraph-length frameworks, with broad recommendations. In this way, though the NCTE Regulations prescribed an array of changes in teacher education, this policy (like the NCFTE 2009) gives agency to TEIs and teacher educators to contextualise the teacher education curriculum to the specific needs of the local teaching-learning setting and individual student teachers.

In 2020, the National Education Policy (NEP) was launched (MHRD, 2020). Citing the JVC Report, the NEP emphasises the need for teacher education reform and 'revitalization through radical action, to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy, and high quality to the teacher education system' (Section 15.2). The NEP is important because it proposes wide-ranging changes for teacher education in India, including shifting all teacher education programs into multidisciplinary universities by 2030, introducing a 4-year integrated B.Ed., and recommending the government testing of student teachers to 'maintain uniform standards' (Section 15.6). Further, according to the NEP 2020, we can expect National Professional Standards for Teachers in 2022 (p. 22) and a new National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education[8]. These proposals will impact several aspects of teacher educators' practice – including who can be a teacher educator, the teacher education

[8] According to the NEP 2020, the NCFTE was to be launched by 2021 (p. 24). It was not, and is expected now in 2022. At the time of submission, it has not yet been released.

curriculum, and benchmarks for teacher educators' practice through the establishment of teacher standards.

These recent teacher education policies are important for various reasons. The NCFTE 2009 outlines the expectations of the teacher and their teaching, along with the contours of the teacher education curriculum. The JVC Report 2012 thrust teacher education into the policy spotlight by highlighting the inadequate preparation of teachers in universities and colleges as the rationale for increased policy reform and regulation. The NCTE Regulations 2014 – drawing on the recommendations of the previous two policies – was aimed at improving the quality of teacher education through an array of prescriptions including for institutional accreditation, teacher educator qualifications, and teacher education curriculums. The NEP 2020 has proposed sweeping reforms for the structure and content of teacher education, including teacher standards and a new curriculum framework for teacher education. In all, Indian teacher education policies are aimed at ensuring the preparation of teachers for quality education by regulating teacher education institutes and teacher educators' practice.

Beginning in late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic began to proliferate in India. On 16 March 2020, the Ministry of Human Resources (MHRD) ordered the closure of all educational institutions, including colleges and universities. The Universities Grants Commission subsequently issued two 'Guidelines' for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) – on 29th April and 6th July – that covered the dimensions of the academic calendar, examinations, and the shift to online teaching and learning (UGC, 2020a, 2020b). All HEIs would remain closed for the rest of the year, with the UGC proposing a pandemic-shortened, online academic year. These broad Guidelines were expected to be implemented by state governments and HEIs themselves. Consequently, teacher education institutions and teacher educators were left to

their own devices to traverse the turbulence precipitated by the pandemic. Within this policy vacuum, it is also worth investigating how teacher educators negotiated their practice during the pandemic.

In short, teacher education policies in India have aimed at regulating teacher educators' practice in terms of what to teach, how to teach, and how student teachers' learning can be assessed (e.g., NCTE, 2009, 2014). However, these policies provide only frameworks and guidelines to work within, and thus offer considerable leeway for teacher educators to tailor their practice to specific local teaching-learning contexts. In this sense, Indian teacher education policies enable the space for teacher educators to exercise professional judgement based on their specialised expertise. However, there is no official consensus on a professional knowledge base for teacher educators or mandated teaching standards to which to align teacher education practice. The lack of clarity and consensus spotlights the role of the teacher educator in translating the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian teacher education policies into teacher education practice.

3.3.2 School Education Policies

As seen in the previous section, school education policies in India have indirectly affected teacher educators' practice in important ways through their prescriptions and recommendations for who can be a teacher, and what counts as quality education. For example, I illustrated earlier how teacher education policies (such as the NCFTE 2009) are rooted in a vision of quality education, teachers, and teaching derived from school education policies (such as the NCF 2005). In this section, I delve deeper into the implications of school education policies for teacher educators' practice in India.

In 2002, the central government launched the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) policy to achieve the universalisation of elementary education in India. Translated as 'Education for All Movement', the SSA policy was designed to ensure quality education as measured through the indicators of attendance, enrolment, pupil-teacher ratios, and access to infrastructure and resources including uniforms and books, midday meals, and school libraries (MHRD, 2004, 2017). Under the SSA mandate, various state governments launched programs to train high-school graduates as 'para teachers' also called 'contract teachers'. The policy of para-teachers can be traced back to the '*Shiksha Karmi* Project' in the state of Rajasthan aimed at engaging local youths with high school diplomas as full-time teachers (with assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency). Presently, many states have similar policies where para-teachers are known as '*Guruji'* (Madhya Pradesh), '*Vidhya Sahayak*[9]' (Gujarat), or 'Shikshan Sevak[10]'(Maharashtra). The para-teacher schemes were designed to boost teacher supply, while ensuring quality education especially in rural and hard-to-staff schools. Notably, these para-teachers were not required to have a professional teacher education qualification, and most are only high-school graduates. This served as the policy rationale for SSA teachers to be paid much lower salaries than 'regular teachers' for doing the same work.

The policies that established para-teachers have been blamed for their detrimental effects on the quality of school education (especially on teaching and students' learning), teacher status and the importance of pre-service teacher education. Chandra (2015) claims that the lack of professional preparation and development, low salaries, and absence of job security affects para-teachers' motivations and teaching, and impedes their progress 'toward ''higher-order'' needs such as a sense of individual and collective professional efficacy, positive student-

[9] Knowledge Helper
[10] Teaching Assistant

teacher interaction, teacher collaboration, and teacher professional development' (p. 252). Along the same lines, Pandey (2006) posits that the various para-teacher policies have negatively affected the quality of school education because of these teachers' teacher-centric, and textbook-based teaching. Notably, she asserts that 'in the absence of any formal orientation on the methodology of teaching classes III, IV and V, these teachers often evolved their own approaches, which were not always effective' (ibid, p. 331). These critiques of the SSA-enabled para-teacher policies reinforce the importance of the professional preparation of teachers through teacher education programs.

In 2005, the NCERT launched the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) to transform teaching-learning in schools, and ensure 'quality education for all children' (NCERT, 2005, p. 126). The NCF 2005 is important because it defines the expectations of the teacher and teaching required for quality education, that were subsequently adopted and reinforced by the NCFTE 2009. Rooted in the constructivist tradition of education – and purportedly drawing on the ideas of Vygotsky, Chomsky, Piaget, Dewey, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and Krishnamurty - the NCF proposed sweeping changes in school curriculums, pedagogies, and assessments. In some ways, the NCF created the conditions to re-establish the importance of qualified teachers, and thereby teacher education and teacher educators' practice. Importantly, subsequent teacher education policy was aimed at ensuring the preparation of the kind of teacher and teaching envisioned in the NCF 2005.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (MHRD, 2009a) – or Right to Education Act (RTE Act) – was enacted on 26th August 2009, and came into force on 1st

April 2010[11]. Inserted as the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India[12], the RTE Act represents the culmination of efforts of the successive governments of independent India, the actions of the Supreme Court of India, and debates in civil society (Sripati & Thiruvengadam, 2004). In the RTE Act 2009, quality education is measured through requirements for school infrastructure and resources, and metrics like pupil-teacher ratios. Notably, by stipulating that all schools must reserve 25% of their seats in elementary education for children 'belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group(s)' (p. 7), the RTE Act highlights the importance of inclusive education. This focus on inclusive education involves preparing teachers to address and engage with the diverse backgrounds and needs of individual learners, and has been echoed in the subsequent teacher education policies (e.g., NCFTE 2009) and the recent National Education Policy 2020. The RTE Act mandates 'good quality elementary education' for all children, yet certain prescriptions of the Act have been described as counter-productive to the goal of achieving quality education. For example, Dhankar (2017) suggests that the no-detention strategy - prescribed in Section 16 of the RTE Act 2009- will negatively impact teaching and students' learning in schools. Instead, he proposes an alternative where teaching takes place in mixed-age classrooms and learning is measured against mandated learning standards. In effect, the RTE Act 2009 has had important implications for teacher education based on its vision of quality education, and expectations of teachers, and teaching.

Many scholars have presented descriptive analyses of the NEP 2020. Among these, some are singularly favourable, like Joshi and Somani (2021) who conclude their analysis by stating that 'it is only through administering NEP 2020 positively that we will be able to see positive change in the future' (p. 458). Other scholars are more critical, like Paliwal & De (2021) who

[11] 16th February 2010, Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3(ii)
[12] Article 21A [under Article 21 – 'Right to life and personal liberty']

point out some ‘loopholes and areas for potential improvement’ in the policy, especially regarding its implementation (p. 305). Meanwhile, Kaurav et al. (2021) used Twitter mining to analyse public sentiments about the NEP and illustrate similar concerns about implementation, noting that the views of the ‘general public and stakeholders appear to be positive, however, they are apprehensive about the execution of the policy’ (p. 24). In essence, while the idealistic goals of quality education in the NEP 2020 have been heralded in certain studies, some scholars and sections of the general public remain concerned about its implementation (K. Kumar et al., 2021).

In short, school education policies are important for various reasons. The SSA 2002 is important because of its implications for determining who can be a teacher, its detrimental effects for teacher status and professionalism and the dilution of the importance of teacher education. The NCF 2005 is noted for its definitions of quality education, especially the role of the teacher and their teaching, and thereby expectations of teacher educators’ practice. The RTE Act 2009 is significant for its role in defining quality education as inclusion, and its prescriptions for teachers’ work (and attendant implications for the educators who prepare them). In all, school education policies implicitly orient teacher educators’ practice based on their definitions of quality education, teachers, and teaching. School education policies are significant because they subsequently influence teacher education policies, and affect the wider context of teacher educators’ practice, for example by affecting teachers’ status and conditions of work.

3.3.3 Education policies, crisis, and causality

In 2005, Pratham – an education NGO – established an autonomous research unit called ASER[13] to assess the outcomes of school education. Through large-scale testing of children across the country, the results of these Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) have since consistently indicated low learning levels among school children, most of whom are several grade levels behind. For example, the ASER (2018) Report found that only 50.3% of children in grade five could read a grade two text (p. 41). The results of the ASER surveys are often cited in education policies – and in research, and media - as evidence of the crisis in school education and thereby, teacher education (e.g., Kant and Iype, 2020). The Report of the National Knowledge Commission noted that 'an all-India study Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) conducted by PRATHAM in 2006 found the levels in arithmetic and reading amongst primary school children to be surprisingly low' (Government of India, 2007, p. 178). Similarly, the Report of the Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy uses the ASER evidence of low learning levels in schools as a rationale for the reforms in education and teacher education (MHRD, 2016, p. 25). Scholars in other countries have long problematised this linear logic of causality that infers teacher (and thereby, teacher educator) quality from school students' standardised test scores (Cochran-Smith, 2005a). Still, as in countries like Australia and the USA, many Indian education policies have used this narrative of crisis and causality to criticise – and rationalise the increased reform of – teacher education and teacher educators' practice.

In Indian education policies, teacher education programs and teacher educators have been historically blamed for failing to implement policy reforms and prepare teachers for quality

[13] Meaning 'impact' or 'effect' in Hindi

education in schools. For example, the Report of the National Advisory Committee – 'Learning Without Burden' – stated that 'inadequate programme of teacher preparation leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools' (MHRD, 1993, p. 22). In the NCF, teacher education programs are critiqued for being authoritarian, transmissive, and teacher-educator-centric, and treating knowledge as a 'given' (NCERT, 2005, p. 110). In the NCFTE, several similar criticisms are listed including outdated curriculums, lack of engagement with student teachers' beliefs and experiences, 'information-oriented, excessively quantitative' assessments, and 'theory courses have no clear link with practical work and ground realities' (NCTE, 2009, p. 11). Further, teacher education programs are blamed for 'not addressing the needs of contemporary Indian schools and not preparing teachers who can impart quality education in schools' (ibid, p. 11). The draft National Education Policy stated that 'teacher education is severely lacking and indeed in a crisis at the current time…many (TEIs) are functioning as commercial shops where even the minimum curricular or course requirements are not met, and where degrees are essentially available for a price' (MHRD, 2019, p. 114-115). Despite these criticisms, teacher educators are explained as 'vital in creating the team of teachers that will shape the next generation' (ibid, p. 283). In essence, teacher educators are explained as part of the problem and solution. However, few studies investigate teacher educators' views and experiences, and their explanations of the relationship between education policy reform and their teacher education practice.

In effect, education policies are aimed at addressing the reported crisis in school education through regulating and reforming teacher education and teacher educators' practice. This reinforces the linear causal logic between teacher education, school education, and the array of envisioned outcomes for quality education in schools. Notably, the crisis and causality

narratives of Indian education policies spotlight the role of the teacher educator in preparing teachers to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education.

3.4 Teacher Educators' Engagement with Education Policies

To become a teacher educator in India, one must have the necessary qualifications and certification. Specifically, an individual must have at least a postgraduate degree in a school teaching subject and an M.Ed. (or M.A. in Education) to be a university/college-based teacher educator (NCTE, 2014, p. 117). In addition, individuals must also pass the government-mandated National Eligibility Test (NET) that consists of two papers involving multiple-choice and essay questions. Paper One draws on the B.Ed. curriculum to test teaching and research aptitude, along with communication skills and logical reasoning. Paper Two draws on the specialised content of the candidate's selected school teaching subject (e.g., history, economics, Hindi). Passing the NET exam qualifies an individual to teach in a higher education institution, and thus become a teacher educator. Further, in many TEIs - especially government-run teacher education colleges - teacher educators are often recruited from secondary schools. This means that in the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) teacher educators who only have experience teaching in secondary schools are also responsible for the preparation of primary school teachers. Importantly, school teaching experience is not a mandatory criterion to be a teacher educator in India. This raises questions about the legitimacy and credibility of teacher educators who do not enter the profession via school teaching. In effect, teacher education policies are responsible for deciding who can be a teacher educator, and what counts as their professional knowledge base.

Indian education policies are aimed at manipulating a range of variables, especially concerning the structure and content of teacher education programs. Specifically, these policies aim to improve the quality of teacher education by regulating teacher educators' practice in terms of what and how they teach, and how student teachers' learning can be assessed. Accordingly, this section investigates teacher educators' engagement with education policies concerning the (i) *curriculum* (what they teach), (ii) *pedagogy* (how they teach), and (iii) *assessment* (how learning is assessed).

3.4.1 Teacher Education Curriculum

Reforming and regulating the B.Ed. program has been a key variable identified by policymakers in improving the quality of teacher education. Until 2014, the B.Ed. the program was a 1-year program criticised in the policies (e.g., the JVC Report 2012) and research (e.g., Birdsell & Suckow, 2009) for providing neither a sound theoretical foundation in the disciplines of education, nor opportunities for guided teaching practice in schools. Accordingly, the NCTE 2014 Regulations prescribed a shift from a one-year to two-year B.Ed. program as the primary entry route into the teaching profession.

Based on the NCFTE 2009, the NCTE 2014 Regulations mandated a tri-partite teacher education curriculum – Theory Courses, Engagement with the Field/Practicum, and School Internship. The theory courses consist of two parts - Perspectives in Education and Curriculum and Pedagogic Studies. The first draws on the disciplines of child development, and the psychology, sociology, and philosophy of education. The second is oriented towards a specific school teaching subject and draws on the disciplines of pedagogy and assessment. Engagement with the field [defined as 'the Self, the Child, Community, and School' (NCTE,

2009, p. 115)] involves student teachers' formative assessments through tasks and assignments, community projects and field-based experiences, and school internships. The school internship is mandated to be least 20 weeks long, 4 weeks in the first year and 16 weeks in the second year. This includes 1 week of observing a 'regular teacher', peer observations, and being observed by a university/college-based teacher educator. The tripartite curriculum – expressed as guidelines within a general framework – subsequently depends on teacher education institutes for its implementation (NCTE, 2014, Section 4.2).

While the NCTE 2014 Regulations outline the broad guidelines for each section, there is no mention of the specific content required for the teacher education curriculum. Thus, within the circumscribed divisions and objectives outlined in the NCTE 2014 Regulations, TEIs are free to decide the content of their own curriculums, albeit with different degrees of agency. Universities are allowed to set their own teacher education curriculums that their affiliated colleges must follow. Only colleges with an A+ ranking from NAAC are allowed to set a curriculum different from the university. In this way, teacher education curriculums in India are determined by universities and well-ranked colleges of teacher education, but within the parameters outlined in the NCFTE 2009 and mandated by the NCTE 2014 Regulations.

Scholars have criticised the present B.Ed. curriculum for being overly theoretical and 'western', and emphasised the need for curricular reform. For example, a review of the teacher education curriculums of 15 major universities across 11 Indian states highlighted how preparing teachers for inclusive education is limited to theoretical knowledge, and concluded that the 'emphasis of the B.Ed. curriculum is more on theory of Inclusive Education with half credit paper, thus making the teaching incomplete and inadequate.' (Kumari et al., 2019, p. 147). In response to such criticisms, Batra (2021) asserted that the

teacher education curriculum for India needs to be based on equity and social justice, and rooted in the Indian constitution. This reimagined curriculum would draw on feminist, postcolonial, anti-caste/anti-racist thinkers, technology studies, and ecology, and 'would include cognizing the significance of subaltern disciplines and imagining transformative pedagogies that can help reclaim education spaces and sustain epistemic justice' (p. 421). Similarly, Gupta (2020) advocated for a curriculum that draws on postcolonial theory, and a '*pedagogy of third space* [that] would actively acknowledge the co-existing realities of both Indian and 'Western' educational ideas within the flows of global forces' (ibid, p. 271). Both the critiques and calls for reform of the teacher education curriculum highlight the role of the teacher educator in translating the curriculum to meet the specific needs of individual student teachers and the local teaching-learning context.

The NEP 2020 mandates a new four-stage model for school education (foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary), each with distinct definitions of quality education, and expectations of teachers and teaching. However, there is yet no clarity if teacher education curriculums will be transformed to align with the new stage-specific requirements for teachers. At present, the undifferentiated B.Ed. the curriculum provides uniform learning experiences for future primary, middle, and secondary school teachers. In certain countries like Australia and Sweden, there is some precedent for grade-specific specialisations in teacher education, though there is still uncertainty about how to define its boundaries and unique professional knowledge bases (Mitchell et al., 2003; Sjöberg, 2019). According to the NEP 2020, all existing teacher education programs will be consolidated into three B.Ed. routes: the 4-year integrated B.Ed. for high school students, 2-year B.Ed. for those with bachelor's degrees, and 1-year B.Ed. for master's or 4-year bachelor's degree holders. In this light, teacher educators in India can expect a new National Curriculum Framework for

Teacher Education that outlines the renewed expectations of teacher education institutes and teacher educators in preparing teachers for quality education.

The translation of the teacher education curriculum is vitally dependent on teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs concerning the purpose of education and the role of teachers. For example, Jetly & Singh's (2019) small-scale study illustrated how teacher educators drew on cultural traditions to conceptualise sustainable development that prized the knowledge dimension of sustainable development over values and skills. Relatedly, Ravindranath (2007) reports that environmental education must form an important part of teacher education curriculums and practice. To do so, he continues, 'the initial step is to 'make teacher educators become more responsive to sustainable development, to national and international perspectives on environment and development and above all to the critical role of EE and its contribution to sustainable development' (p. 199). The present research builds on these studies by investigating teacher educators' explanations of how their beliefs align with, and influence the translation of, the teacher education curriculum in India.

3.4.2 Teacher Education Pedagogy

Teacher educators' pedagogy is influenced by their conceptions of quality education, including the role of the teacher and teaching. For example, in Raina's (2016) self-study of her practice, quality education is explained as involving the dimensions of inclusion, emancipation and social change, and positioning teachers as change agents. This led her to tailor her pedagogy to boost critical engagement with concepts and theories, encourage multidisciplinary perspectives and reflection, and use student teachers' personal lives as points of departure for teaching. Drawing on the unique linguistic context of India and

research in multilingualism, another study suggests three pedagogic strategies for teacher educators to prepare teachers for multilingual education - 'encouraging a strongly bilingual approach… valuing the processes of meaning-making and participation that characterise emergent proficiencies [and] developing a critical stance towards language' (Menon et al., 2014, pp. 56 – 60). This aligns with one fundamental principle of quality education as espoused in the NEP - '**promoting multilingualism and the power of language** in teaching and learning (MHRD, 2020, p. 5, original emphasis). These studies point to the importance of investigating teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs concerning quality education, what this means for their teacher education pedagogy, and whether/how this aligns with the Indian education policies.

Few studies in India investigate teacher educators' pedagogy, and their pedagogic reasoning. For example, a few teacher educators in India have researched their practice in developing student teachers' reflective learning and teaching using interactive blogs (Chellamani, 2014) and journals, diaries, collaborative inquiry with mentors and peers, and audio and video recordings of practice teaching lessons (Kumari & Naik, 2016). The authors justify their study to cultivate student teachers' reflective practice by saying that in the state of Karnataka 'there is a constant urge to increase the quality of teacher education, which inevitably contributes to the quality of education' (ibid, p. 16). In effect, these studies are rationalised through teacher educators' understanding of the role of the teacher and teaching, pointing to the needs of the specific teaching-learning context, and the causality between teacher education and school education.

In alignment with the international literature on teacher educators' practice, these studies give us some initial insights into how teacher educators' pedagogy in India is influenced by their

understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education, while being embedded within the opportunities and constraints of their professional teaching-learning context. However, unlike research from other countries like the USA and UK, there are few studies from India that represent teacher educators' voices and their explanations of their pedagogic practice. The present study addresses this gap to deepen the understanding of – and evidence base for – teacher educators' pedagogy in India.

3.4.3 Teacher Education Assessment

The NCTE Regulations 2014 state that assessment in the B.Ed. the program will be divided into internal and external assessments. Internal assessment consists of 'individual or group assignments, observation records, student portfolio, diaries, journal etc.' (NCTE, 2014, p. 117), while external assessment primarily involves summative exams and counts for 70-80% of the final grade. The policy also mandates that 25% of the overall grade will be 'allocated for assessment of practice teaching' whereby the student teacher is observed by their university/college-based teacher educator during school classroom teaching. Within these broad parameters, the specific design and implementation of teacher education assessment is dependent on teacher educators' practice. Notably, the role of the school-based teacher educator in assessing student teachers' teaching is not mentioned in the NCTE Regulations 2014. In this sense, the university/college-based teacher educator has the sole responsibility of assessing student teachers' learning during the B.Ed. program.

The assessment of student teachers (as potential teachers) once they graduate is also based on the content of the mandated B.Ed. teacher education curriculum. Specifically, B.Ed. qualified teachers must clear state-run competitive exams to teach in government schools (though the

B.Ed. degree is a sufficient criterion for application to private schools). This includes exams like the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) and State Teacher Eligibility Tests (STET) – conducted by the central and state governments respectively - that are based on the model B.Ed. curriculum mandated by the NCTE 2014 Regulations. The TET and the STETs consist of two papers, each with 150 multiple-choice questions, drawing on fields like child development, psychology and sociology of education, language, pedagogy, and subject content knowledge. Pass rates on the CTET and STETs have been historically low. For example, in the state of Karnataka, the TET pass rate in 2021 was 19.51% (The Hindu, 2021). To boot, there have been allegations of malpractice and corruption in the administration of the various teacher eligibility exams. For example, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the police have arrested 89 people for attempting to cheat on the UPTET (The Times of India, 2022). And in Maharashtra, a police investigation revealed that the marks of 7800 TET candidates were manipulated to make them pass (Dighe, 2022). It is telling that a demonstration of teaching is not yet part of hiring requirements, because it implies that graduates who score well on these tests have the relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education.

In June 2021, the Union Education Minister announced that the validity of the TET certification would be extended from seven years to a lifetime retrospectively from 2011 (Press Information Bureau, 2021). This has important implications for teachers and teacher education. For example, in the state of Tamil Nadu, the state coordinator of the TNTET Qualified Teachers Welfare Association has been quoted as saying that this will benefit around 100,000 teachers who have passed the TET but have not yet secured government school jobs (Raman, 2021). However, it also raises questions about the relevance and validity

of past teacher certifications as evidence for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future teaching and learning settings.

Unlike in other countries, Indian teacher education policy has not (yet) turned to mandated capstone teacher performance assessments like the edTPA (see Section 2.3.3). Since these new waves in student teachers' assessment have not yet reached Indian teacher education shores, researchers in India are impelled to consider the primacy of high-stakes, standardised assessments in determining teacher educators' practice, and the learning of student teachers.

3.4.4 Student Teachers' Learning

In the previous chapter, I investigated research concerning the diversity of student teachers' learning experiences in teacher education programs, and how this is related to their personal beliefs and backgrounds (see Section 2.3.4). This highlighted the complexity of teacher educators' practice in meeting the unique learning needs of each student teacher. In light of these insights, this section investigates the research on student teachers' learning in India and points to gaps in our understanding of teacher educators' practice.

Much of the research on student teachers in India uses surveys and statistical analysis to measure a range of student teachers' attributes, for example, perceived emotional intelligence (G. Singh & Kumar, 2009), specific knowledge (Thiyagu, 2011), English language proficiency (Subramonian & Hallen, 2012), and anxiety in using the library (S. Sharma & Attri, 2018). Teacher education researchers have focused on measuring student teachers' knowledge (Saravanabhavan, 2010), attitudes (Banerjee et al., 2015; A. Kumar, 2015) and aptitudes (e.g., Padmavathi, 2016), and perceptions (Sundaresan & Muthaiah, 2014), with a notable focus on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in education (Ahmad

& Muneebulla, 2017; Kaur, 2019; Nasreen & Chaudhary, 2018; Suganthi, 2013). While these studies give us some insights into the profiles of student teachers, they tell us little about how these factors affect their learning in teacher education programs. Further (and unlike in other countries), few studies explain how teacher educators in India engage with student teachers' beliefs and backgrounds in their teacher education practice.

In India, practitioner research demonstrates teacher educators' intentions to shape student teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs in normative ways. For example, Dasari (2016) surveyed B.Ed. students and found their most preferred values were 'a comfortable life', 'true friendship', and 'pleasure'. In response, he recommends the reorientation of teacher education curriculums to promote freedom, equality, and peace, with the burden of implementation on the teacher educator and their practice (Dasari, 2017). Similarly, teacher educators have advocated shaping student teachers' beliefs towards specific visions of the teaching profession (Bhargava & Pathy, 2014), science teaching (Prakash & Xavier, 2014), and the use of ICT in teaching (A. Kumar, 2015). In the international research literature, several studies have explored student teachers' pre-existing beliefs and how this is related to their learning in teacher education programs. The international research suggests that student teachers' pre-existing beliefs can be either inflexible (e.g., Bikmaz, 2017) or amenable to change (e.g., Busch, 2010). Notably, these studies raise the questions of how a change in beliefs is conceptualised (e.g., Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000), how desirable beliefs are selected, and the ethics of 'whether we are justified in changing teachers' beliefs...particularly those grounded in cultural traditions' (Brinkmann, 2015, p. 354).

Different teacher education curriculums in India reportedly play an important role in affecting student teachers' learning. For example, Sarohe (2018) explains how two teacher education

programs lead to differences in student teachers' understanding of the notion of citizenship, based on their engagement with theoretical frameworks, opportunities for relevant fieldwork, and counter-socialisation. In one, student teachers 'do not get any space to engage deeply with stereotypes and notions…as a result, they fall back on their own understanding', and in another, they have the 'space to reflect critically and to question their deeply embedded notions, beliefs, values, and ways of life' (p. 32). Importantly, these differences in student teachers' experiences and learning during the teacher education program are reportedly mediated by teacher educators' practice.

Student teachers' learning about quality education, and the role of the teacher and teaching, are also vitally shaped by other aspects of teacher education especially fieldwork and school teaching internships (e.g., Bansal, 2021). However, in India, since student teachers spend three-fourths of their B.Ed. degree in university/college classrooms, teacher educators' practice becomes the primary expression of their teacher education experience. This underscores the significance of investigating teacher educators' practice, and their explanations of how this is related to the unique needs and backgrounds of individual student teachers.

3.5 Summary

Education policies in India tend to draw on previous policy precedents for their prescriptions and recommendations. For example, teacher education policies like the NCTE 2014 Regulations draw on the recommendations of the JVC Report 2012 and the NCFTE 2009. The National Policies on Education in 1968, 1986, and 2020 make the same recommendation for government expenditure in education to equal at least 6% of GDP, a key recommendation

of the report of the Kothari Commission (MHRD, 1966, p. xvii). The NEP 2020 also draws on certain recommendations of the NPE 1986 such as the introduction of the four-year integrated B.Ed. degree (MHRD, 1986, p. 179) [a recommendation also made in the JVC Report 2012 (section 2.1.1)]. For this reason, understanding how previous policies define quality education and preparing teachers for quality education can enable a deeper understanding of present Indian education policies, and their implications for teacher educators' practice.

In Indian education policies, teacher educators have been criticised for failing to implement reform in teacher education. Specifically, teacher educators are blamed for the poor quality of teacher preparation and consequently for the crisis in school education as evidenced by school students' low scores on standardised tests. The international literature demonstrates how teacher educators' engagement with education policies is mediated by a gamut of factors, including their personal and professional contexts. However, few studies represent the voices and experiences of teacher educators in India, and their explanations of their engagement with Indian education policies. The present research builds on these studies to contribute to a similar evidence base for teacher education in India.

In India, teacher educators are positioned as vital in preparing teachers for quality education. For example, Prakasha (2020) posits the need for a 'next generation teacher educator' to prepare teachers for the 21st century (p. 3586) with six major competencies including ICT, pedagogy, and assessment. Rishikesh (2017) notes that 'to bring about a substantial and sustainable improvement in the quality of teachers it is critical that the quality of teacher educators is improved and sustained' (p. 4). However, there is little clarity or consensus in the policies and research about what teacher educators in India should know or be able to do.

This has created an emerging need to identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of teacher educators in India.

In sum, this chapter provided the context and rationale to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. As in other countries, Indian education policies are aimed at reforming and regulating teacher education and teacher educators' practices to ensure that teachers are well-prepared for quality education. Unlike in other countries, however, there is a limited evidence base that examines the unique ways in which teacher educators in India engage with the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies - and how this is dependent on their personal and professional contexts. Thus, while teacher educators have been blamed for failing to implement Indian education policies, there is a lack of academic research that represents the voices and experiences of teacher educators, and their explanations of their engagement with education policy reform. Thus, we know very little about what teacher educators in India are doing and why, and how this is related to Indian education policies.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins by outlining the evolution of the present project - through the pilot and the pandemic - and its implications for the research design. Next, it revisits the rationale for the research questions, before justifying the choice of an in-depth qualitative research design using online interviews. Then, it details the organisation of the online interviews (including sampling and recruitment, informed consent, and interview design) and how the data were co-constructed and subsequently analysed. It concludes with an exposition of my positionality, and how I navigated attendant ethical challenges during the research process. Taken together, this chapter explains and justifies the methodology adopted to answer the overarching question – how do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

4.1 The Pilot, Pandemic, and the Project

The present research evolved over the course of the pilot study and the COVID-19 pandemic. The pilot study enabled me to refine my research questions, while the pandemic influenced the development of the research design. In this section, I trace my research journey from the pilot study, through the pandemonium of the pandemic, to the present project.

From August to October 2019, I undertook a pilot ethnography of a teacher education college in the rural Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh. The pilot aimed to investigate teacher educators' understanding of the ideal teacher and what this meant for their teacher education practice. This was influenced by the two contradictory 'images' of the ideal teacher in the Indian education policies and academic literature - the *guru* and the *technician*. The

overarching research question was - how does teacher education in India shape perceptions of the ideal teacher? Over the course of the nine-week ethnography, I observed a total of 22 lessons across five teacher educators (between 1-7 classes each), conducted 2 interviews with teacher educators, and 2 informal focus groups with student teachers. I also taught 10 lessons in the B.Ed. class, on request by the management, to fill in for teacher educators on leave. Most of my time, however, was spent sitting in the staffroom with the teacher educators and hanging about in the cafeteria and grounds with the student teachers.

The analysis of the pilot ethnography illustrated that teacher educators' descriptions of the ideal teacher drew on the image of the *guru* (for e.g., emphasising the importance of inculcating values, and the personality development of the learner), yet their classroom practice was lecture-oriented, presented knowledge as authoritative, appeared to be tailored to the summative exams. The teacher educators explained their pedagogy by referencing a range of social, institutional, and personal factors. This included the influence of local culture and traditions, large class sizes (97 in the new B.Ed. batch), staff shortages, expectations to 'cover the syllabus', and the diverse motivations and backgrounds of student teachers. Moreover, using the theoretical frame of the ideal teacher led to descriptions of the dispositions of the ideal teacher, and did not enable the identification of the specific knowledges and skills required by teachers for schools in the Indian context. In effect, the theoretical lens of the ideal teacher did not seem to predict or explain teacher educators' practice. The pilot study enabled me to assess the viability of the research questions, the feasibility of the proposed methods in an Indian context, and the practicalities of data interpretation and analysis.

Based on these learnings from the pilot, I changed the overarching research question to - 'how do teacher educators shape student teachers' perspectives of quality teaching?' This was

further motivated by the lack of clarity in defining quality teaching in Indian education policies, and compounded by the absence of mandated teaching standards and a common professional knowledge base for teacher educators. To answer the renewed research question, I proposed an eight-month ethnography of a Department of Education at a private university in Bangalore from May to December 2020.

In the final months of 2019, the pandemic began to proliferate in India. In March 2020, the Indian government ordered a complete lockdown, including the closure of all educational institutions. In May and June, I waited for universities to reopen. In July, the Head of Department of the university where I had planned the ethnography emailed me. He explained that they were shifting all teaching-learning online, and that this transition was proving difficult. As things stood, the ethnography would not be feasible. But he hoped that things would return to 'normal' soon. In August, the Department remained closed. Still, I waited in hope of embarking on the ethnography.

From May to August 2020, I studied the education policies in India. I had learned from the pilot that teacher educators did not draw on Indian education policies to understand or explain their teacher education practice. I began to wonder why. I examined education policies from ancient India to the present day, focusing on the prescriptions and recommendations for teacher education and teacher educators' practice. Finally, I studied five recent, landmark education policies in detail - the (i) RTE Act 2009, (ii) NCFTE 2009, (iii) JVC Report 2012, (iv) NCTE Regulations 2014, and (v) draft National Education Policy 2019. I noted that all these policies explained 'quality education' as an overarching goal, with the phrase 'quality education' being ubiquitous in most Indian education policies, and in the research and media reports on school and teacher education in India. I learned that the theoretical lens of 'quality

education' subsumed my initial research foci of the 'ideal teacher' and 'quality teaching', through descriptions of the kind of teacher and teaching required to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education. In this way, studying the Indian education policies led me to shift the theoretical lens of the study from 'quality teaching' to 'quality education'. Thus, I arrived at a new overarching research question – *how do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?*

By September 2020, universities and colleges of education were still shut because of the pandemic, and the proposed ethnography appeared impractical. Fortunately, the new overarching research question and sub-questions required an investigation of the views and experiences of teacher educators, and thereby were suitable to an in-depth qualitative research design using interviews. The new research questions aimed to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies, through their reported understanding of quality education, description of important education policies, and explanations of their teacher education practice. Thus, I selected a qualitative, cross-sectional research design to represent a diversity of teacher educators' contexts, views, and experiences, through using online interviews to circumscribe the circumstances of the coronavirus. In effect, the research design of the present project was guided by the new research questions, while also moulded by the catastrophic circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. This is important for two reasons. First, teacher educators are tasked by Indian education policies with preparing teachers for quality education. However, there is little clarity on (a)

the meaning of quality education, (b) the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers require to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education, and (c) how teachers for quality education can be prepared through teacher educators' practice. Second, teacher educators and their teacher education practice continue to be criticised in Indian education policies, research literature, and media reports for failing to implement policy reform. Meanwhile, very few studies represent the views and experiences of teacher educators, and their explanations of what education policies mean for their teacher education practice. For these reasons, the following overarching research question was formulated:

How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?

To address the existing gaps in the Indian teacher education research and answer the overarching research question, three sub-questions were articulated. Below, I revisit the sub-research questions, and outline the rationale for each:

(a) How do teacher educators understand 'quality education'?

Teacher educators in India are criticised in the Indian education policies, research literature, and media for failing to prepare teachers for quality education in schools. However, in Indian education policies, quality education has many meanings, each with attendant definitions of the role of the teacher and teaching, and thereby different implications for teacher educators' practice. Prior research in countries like the USA and UK has shown that teacher educators' practice is also mediated by their own views on quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. However, in India there is a dearth of similar evidence. Therefore, this question aimed to understand how teacher educators understand quality education, and

whether or how this is related to conceptions of quality education espoused in Indian education policies.

(b) Which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?

Much international literature demonstrates how teacher educators engage with education policies in different ways based on their unique personal and professional contexts. As in other countries, Indian education policies have aimed to regulate and reform teacher educators' practice through various prescriptions including mandating teacher educators' minimum qualifications, entry and exit requirements for student teachers, and teacher education curriculums and assessments. Yet, despite decades of education policy reform, there has been little reported improvement in teacher preparation (as evidenced by school students' low learning outcomes on standardised tests). Teacher educators are being held responsible – in the policies, research, and media – for failing to implement education policy reforms, and perpetuating the gap between education policy and their teacher education practice. However, within this narrative of crisis in teacher education, very few studies examine teacher educators' explanations of which Indian education policies are important for their practice, and why. This question was essential to investigate the assumption of linear causality between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice.

(c) How do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?

In Indian education policies, the teacher plays an important role in achieving the envisioned aims of quality education for individuals and society. For example, in the NEP teachers are held responsible for shaping 'the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation' (MHRD, 2020, p. 20). However, in the absence of mandated teacher standards and consensus on a professional knowledge base for teacher education, there is little clarity on the

expected characteristics, knowledge, and skills required from teachers for quality education, or how such teachers can be prepared through teacher educators' practice. Further, few qualitative studies in India document how teacher educators describe and explain their teacher education practice, and how this is related to Indian education policies and their personal understandings of quality education. Building on international research, this question aimed to highlight the myriad complexities and nuances of teacher education practice in India through the voices of teacher educators.

4.3 Research Design

This study aimed to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. To do so, it deployed an in-depth qualitative research design using the method of online interviews. A qualitative research design involves 'a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible…attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). In effect, this research design was well-suited to answer the research questions that aimed to investigate the relationship between education policy reform and teacher education practice through the voices and experiences of teacher educators in India.

Qualitative research designs have been used to investigate an array of aspects related to teacher educators. This includes their views and experiences, explanations of their teacher education practice, career trajectories, and identity development (e.g., Andreasen et al., 2019; Izadinia, 2012; Posti-Ahokas et al., 2022; Wolkenhauer & Hooser, 2021). Using methods such as interviews, focus groups, workshops and forums, and surveys, qualitative studies have offered insights into the professional knowledge base of teacher educators, the

complexity of their practice and its implications for student teachers' learning, and how this is related to the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies (e.g., Kazemi et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2018; Stillman et al., 2019). Further, the analysis and interpretation of data collected from qualitative research designs - as Brown & Weber (2016) illustrate – can 'shed light on how teacher educators can support practicing and preservice teachers in responding to the governmental, institutional, and local demands on their teaching while attempting to formulate learning experiences that reflect their students' sociocultural worlds' (p. 183).

In this light, I selected a qualitative research design for three reasons. First, teacher educators are unequivocally criticised in the Indian education policies, research, and media for failing to implement policy reforms. However, there is limited research that examines how teacher educators explain their engagement with Indian education policies and their teacher education practice. Thus, the necessity for a first-hand understanding of the complex relationships between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice in India. Secondly, there is a lack of qualitative research in teacher education in India that brings to the fore the voices and experiences of teacher educators. This is an important first step towards ensuring that teacher educators are represented in the policy debates surrounding quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. Thirdly, while several studies have criticised teacher educators' practice, few investigate how teacher educators explain their practice (why they do what they do) and how this is related to their personal and professional contexts. In this sense, a qualitative research design can deepen our understanding of the unique complexities, challenges, and opportunities for teacher educators' practice in India.

Qualitative research designs entail 'a number of philosophical presuppositions about the researcher (as observer, participant, creator, interventionist, etc.), about the world (as

dependent, independent, enacted, mute, etc.), and about the relation between them—and also about what can be known and about how it ought to be known' (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 7). The philosophical premises for this study are motivated by three of the five 'epistemological paradigms' outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) – constructivism, post-positivism, and critical theories. This means being sensitive to uncovering how teacher educators give meaning to Indian education policies and their teacher education practice while remaining alert to the possibilities of different realities of practice for teacher educators based on their unique historical, social, and cultural teaching-learning contexts. The epistemological focus centred around how teacher educators 'experience and interact with their social world, and the meaning it has for them' (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 4). This aligns with the overarching research aim to represent the voices and experiences of teacher educators in India, and their explanations of their engagement with Indian education policies. Through this threefold epistemological coalescence, the present study contributes to 'loosening the paradigmatic grip on qualitative inquiry to accommodate a broad range of philosophical and methodological amalgamations' (Pernecky, 2016, p. 20).

Several criteria have been proposed to ensure the quality of studies grounded in qualitative research designs (Cho, 2017). This includes 'transferability, generalisability, ontological authenticity, reciprocity, dependability, confirmability, reflexivity, fittingness, vitality and, even, sacredness and goodness' (Northcote, 2012, p. 99). While there is some disagreement over which criteria should be used for a given research design, or whether criteria are relevant at all, scholars are agreed that some steps must be taken to ensure quality in qualitative research designs (e.g., Faulkner, 2016). For this study, I used Tracy's (2010) 'Eight Big-Tent' criteria to ensure the 'qualitative quality' of the present research design (p. 837). The eight criteria are worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution,

ethics, and meaningful coherence (ibid, p. 840). I chose the eight big-tent criteria because they draw on and synthesise many of the existing criteria for ensuring quality in qualitative research, including those proposed by Creswell (2007), Denzin & Lincoln (2005), and Guba & Lincoln (2005).

In previous chapters, I rationalised the relevance and significance of the research questions (*worthy topic*). In this chapter, I detail and justify my data collection and analysis procedures to ensure *rich rigour*. I provide *sincerity* by remaining self-reflexive and being transparent about methodological decisions and challenges. *Credibility* is achieved by a combination of thick description and multivocality, and *resonance* through aesthetic, evocative writing that allows naturalistic generalisations (Hellström, 2008). Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the *ethical considerations* of the research process. In Chapter 8, I situate the present research within existing debates in the teacher education literature to achieve *meaningful coherence*, and draw out the key insights and implications of the study (*significant contribution*). While some scholars have critiqued the eight big-tent criteria for a lack of an overarching ethical framework, they conclude that 'Tracy's universal criteria have the potential to provide a framework to help the qualitative research community' (Gordon & Patterson, 2013, p. 694).

4.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are commonly associated with qualitative research designs because they are 'an effective way of soliciting and documenting, in their own words, an individual's or group's perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world' (Saldaña, 2011, p. 32). In several studies, semi-structured interviews have

been used to investigate teacher educators' explanations of their teacher education practice, and infer insights for their identity development, and professional knowledge base (e.g., Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Pereira et al., 2015; Williams, 2014). Data collected from semi-structured interviews with teacher educators have been analysed for their implications for conceiving the role and professional preparation of teacher educators in contextually-meaningful ways (Goodwin et al., 2014; Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014; Yamin-Ali, 2018), their professional development (MacPhail et al., 2019), and the ways in which their personal and professional contexts affect their teacher education practice (Gutman, 2022; Roumbanis Viberg et al., 2021). For, as Brinkmann (2020) puts it, 'compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee' (p. 437).

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher retains a general line of inquiry aligned with the research questions but remains sensitive to emerging lines of dialogue based on the participant's responses (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Specifically, I organised 'descriptive/divergent' semi-structured interviews to detect patterns of similarities and differences in teacher educators' perspectives and experiences (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). This kind of semi-structured interview is well-suited to the exploratory nature of the research questions because the 'elucidation of divergent perspectives, attitudes, and experiences regarding phenomena enables deeper insight into various ways that people negotiate the personal and social contexts that shape human choices and experiences' (ibid, p. 4). Accordingly, for this study, the interview protocol was divided into three themes in line with the sub-research questions, while allowing for teacher educators to talk about their engagement with Indian education policies in ways that are meaningful for them. In this way,

using semi-structured interviews enabled me to answer my specific research questions, while creating space for teacher educators to freely talk about their views and experiences of education policies, and explanations of their teacher education practice.

An important consideration for interviews is how data is co-constructed through the dialogue between the researcher and the interviewee. Some studies demonstrate how data is co-constructed through 'interview talk', especially by naming concepts and the relationships between them (Heron et al., 2018). Further, as Silverman (1986) asserts, it is 'naïve to assume that open-ended or non-directive interviewing is not in itself a form of social control which shapes what people say' (p. 162). This leads to considerations of how my positionality and questioning strategies influenced teacher educators' responses, and whether teacher educators were truly free to share their views and experiences. Despite these difficulties, scholars have shown that semi-structured interviews can enable teacher educators to reflect on and develop their narratives with greater freedom, clarity, and detail. For example, in their small-scale study of English language education policy reform in Japan, Weinmann et al. (2021) describe how 'detailed interviewing has provided an effective methodology for bringing to light the depth and breadth of educator perspectives and stances' (p. 123). Using semi-structured interviews, I was able to investigate and represent the views and experiences of teacher educators working in diverse institutional, social, and cultural settings across India. Examining how teacher educators explain their practice is an important step in understanding the complex relationships between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice in India.

Given that the pandemic precluded in-person interviews, I opted to organise online interviews with the teacher educators. Organising an online interview presents certain unique challenges

and opportunities (Pocock et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2021). On the one hand, this means that potential participants need to have access to stable internet and a video conferencing tool, an undisturbed space to attend the interview, and comfort with audio/video calls (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). On the other hand, doing online interviews offers greater logistical flexibility in scheduling interviews, and enables convenient, quicker access to a wider potential sample of teacher educators. Despite concerns surrounding this method – including rapport building and data quality – some scholars conclude that online interviews can facilitate the sharing of 'deeply personal' views and experiences (Jenner & Myers, 2019, p. 169). Weller (2017) writes that this is because 'the informality associated with mediated communication can counter the "pressure of presence" with remoteness and physical separation fostering a greater sense of ease' (p. 623). Given the geographical and cultural vastness of India, using online interviews is also an effective and cost-efficient way of widening (and accessing) a potential sample of teacher educators. In the following section, I elaborate further on how I navigated these challenges and opportunities of online interviewing to answer the research questions.

4.4 Organising Online Interviews

From 5th November 2020 to 4th February 2021, I organised online interviews with teacher educators grouped into three sub-samples: those working at universities, colleges, and NGOs. I note that 2 college-based teacher educators had now transitioned to working with the government. Though their government and policy-related work was part of the interview discussion, they spoke from their positions as teacher educators who have worked in teacher education colleges. Accordingly, I have included them in the sample of college-based teacher educators. In most cases, each interview had one teacher educator and each teacher educator

was interviewed once. However, three teacher educators (one university-based, and two college-based) agreed to a second interview. Only one interview simultaneously involved two (NGO-based) teacher educators representing their institution. Taken together, the final sample included 22 university-based teacher educators, 19 college-based teacher educators, and 9 NGO-based teacher educators (see Table 1). Thus, the fieldwork culminated in 52 interviews with 50 teacher educators. In the following sections, I explain and justify how I organised these online interviews including the sampling and recruitment strategies, and how the data were co-constructed through dialogue with the teacher educators.

Location	**Number of Teacher Educators**	**Number of Interviews**
University	22	23
College	19	21
NGO	9	8
Total	50	52

Table 1: Number of teacher educator interviews grouped by sub-sample

4.4.1 Sampling and Recruitment

To create a sample of teacher educators for the study, I followed the four steps outlined by Robinson (2014) - defining a sample universe, deciding a sample size, selecting a sampling strategy, and sourcing the sample. I decided to purposively sample teacher educators in India working in universities (20), colleges (20), and NGOs (10). Below I describe and rationalise this sampling strategy for the present study.

I selected 'stratified purposive sampling' (Patton, 2002, p. 240) with the goal of 'adequately capturing the heterogeneity in the population' (Maxwell, 1996, p. 71). This was to represent teacher educators' views and experiences in diverse geographical, institutional, social, and

cultural teaching-learning settings across the country. In this way, the research represents a range of teacher educators' voices, and ensures multivocality by including 'multiple and varied voices in the qualitative report and analysis' (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Based on a critical analysis of the relevant literature, I identified three sub-samples of teacher educators in India, namely those based in universities, colleges, and NGOs. I selected these sub-samples because while teacher education in India is located primarily in universities and colleges of teacher education, NGOs are now playing an increasing role in both pre- and in-service teacher education. The aim was to investigate how teacher educators in each of these three sub-samples engaged with Indian education policies.

First, I identified a nationwide organisation of university- and college-based teacher educators - the Indian Association of Teacher Educators (IATE). According to their website, the IATE is the 'oldest and leading professional body of teacher educators' in India and has 'made ventures in influencing policy decisions in shaping teacher education programmes in the country' (IATE, n.d.). This national character of the IATE aligned with my research aim (to represent the views and experiences of teacher educators across the country), and their purported policy work with my research questions (to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies). The IATE website contains a list of teacher educators who are 'life members', including their names, location, and email address. This database facilitated the process of reaching out to teacher educators to inform them about my research, and invite them to an interview. I selected to interview teacher educators who are members of the IATE for three reasons. The IATE is a recognised national professional body of teacher educators that is reportedly involved in influencing education policies, and whose life-members' contact details are available online.

Simultaneously, I identified NGOs in India that undertake teacher education programs based on the information on their websites and media reports. These NGOs primarily focused on in-service teacher education for teachers, often in poor or rural settings, though a few also organised pre-service teacher education. These NGOs are playing an increasing role in providing pre- and especially in-service teacher education in India, and work with teachers who serve the children of poor and marginalised populations to improve the quality of education in schools, and thereby contribute toward the transformation of social and economic inequalities. In this sense, NGO-based teacher educators were included in the sample because of their importance in shaping the policies and practices of teacher education in India.

NGOs fall outside the ambit of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) - the government regulatory body for teacher education - and thereby are not circumscribed by the mandates of teacher education policies. This means they can set their own curriculums, pedagogy, and assessment for teacher education drawing on their specific institutional visions of what counts as quality education, such as preparing teachers for foundational literacy and numeracy or empathy. However, NGOs are implicitly affected by school education policies because the teachers they work with are circumscribed by the policy expectations of their practice. Therefore, it is worth investigating how NGO-based teacher educators reconcile their institutional vision of quality education through specific conceptions of quality education and the role of the teacher, with the practical and policy constraints of schoolteachers' practice. Thus, including NGO-based teacher educators in the study enables us to investigate the relationship between conceptions of quality education between the policy and institutional levels, and how NGO-based teacher education practice is aimed at preparing teachers to work within the current contexts of education policies.

In short, the primary inclusion criterion for the study was teacher educators who were members of the IATE, or the identified list of NGOs that work in teacher education in India. Within this, I aimed for maximum variation, for example by representing teacher educators with a few years to several decades of professional experience located across the country.

Informed Consent

Drawing from the field of medicine (Eichner et al., 2021; Purcaru et al., 2014; Shemesh et al., 2019), I conceptualised informed consent as five elements: 'voluntarism, capacity, disclosure, understanding, and decision' (Falagas et al., 2009). Below, I describe how I ensured these five elements during the process of collecting informed consent for this study.

Of 2935 life-members named on the IATE website, I sent my CUREC-approved invitation letter to everyone whose email was listed. The invitation letter included some information about my background, and the information sheet outlined the rationale and methods for this project (see Appendix A and B). In all, this totalled over 1500 emails. For many, I received 'delivery failure' notifications, or did not elicit a reply. In 12 instances, I received the same cryptic one-line response, 'Sure, I'd be happy to chat', yet my subsequent emails went unheeded. One IATE life-member explained that they had transitioned to being a schoolteacher, and so did not meet the sample criteria. In all, 98 university- and college-based teacher educators replied to my initial invitation with interest.

Next, I emailed each teacher educator more details about the research including an elaboration of the purpose of the study. I also attached a list of questions for the proposed interview, and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. In some cases, the teacher educators asked follow-up questions about my background and the research. In these

email exchanges, I drew on my positionality as a former schoolteacher in rural, Himalayan India to establish my credibility, in addition to the self-evident legitimacy of Oxford University (see Appendix A). This aspect of my background was valued greatly, and served to both enable access to - and cultivate rapport - with teacher educators. Subsequently, if they decided to schedule an interview, I sent the teacher educator the consent form (Appendix C), reiterated that they could ask for further clarifications about the research, and exchanged further emails to decide on a date and time. Except in a few instances, I was able to accommodate the teacher educators' scheduling preferences. Once the interview was scheduled, I sent them a link to a meeting on MS Teams. Depending on the teacher educator, the process from invitation letter to organising an interview took from a few days to up to six weeks.

During the email recruitment process and in a few interviews, some university- and college-based teacher educators asked me why I had selected them for my project. After reiterating that I was writing to all IATE life-members listed on the website, I explained that I hoped their unique characteristics (e.g., type and geographic location of the institution, years of experience, programs/subjects taught, research interests) would enable me to represent a diversity of teacher educators' views and experiences in India. In this way, I respectfully curated a balance between my purposive sampling procedure, and an emphasis on the value of their unique perspectives and experiences as a teacher educator. Ultimately, the sample of teacher educators was self-selected. However, as Campbell et al. (2020) suggest, the voluntary nature of their participation can be seen as 'fitting not only the inclusion criteria of the study, but also being interested in the topic and motivated to take part out of this interest and their potential to contribute to the development of knowledge in this arena' (p. 658).

Simultaneously, I wrote to 16 NGOs working in the field of teacher education across the country. I followed the same email process described above to invite NGO-based teacher educators to participate in my research. The only difference was that my initial emails emphasised my interest in their specific work in teacher education based on the information I gleaned from their websites and media reports. In the interviews, I drew on my own professional experience working with NGOs in India and knowledge of the contexts of poor and marginalised people in urban and rural settings, to facilitate nuanced conversations about the uniqueness of NGO-based teacher educators' views and practices.

To create the purposive sample of NGO-based teacher educators, I first identified NGOs working in the teacher education domain. According to official statistics[14], there are over 86,000 NGOs in the education sector. Following Patton's (2002) purposive sampling strategy, I created 'specific criteria that are relevant to the research question or objectives' (p. 230) to narrow the list of NGOs. First, to meet the inclusion criterion for the study – and be defined as a teacher education NGO - the organisation had to be involved in either pre-service and/or in-service teacher education. I used the keywords – teachers, teacher training, teacher education – to review information from NGO websites and media reports to identify teacher education NGOs that fit the initial inclusion criteria.

Next, to further narrow the list, importance was given to teacher education NGOs that worked at scale, or were involved in influencing education policies. 'Scale' meant that preference was given to NGOs working at the national level (across multiple states) or the state level (across multiple districts). Two examples of NGOs working at scale are *Pratham* and Teach for India. The teacher education NGO *Pratham* is responsible for publishing the Annual

[14] https://ngodarpan.gov.in/index.php/home/sectorwise

Status of Education Report (ASER), evidence from which are oft-quoted in education policies, research, and media reports as evidence for the crisis in school education, and the rationale for the reform of teacher education. According to their website, *Pratham* uses a cascading approach to teacher training by preparing 'leaders of practice' – teachers who subsequently serve as exemplars and mentors to other teachers within the school. 'Teach for India' (TFI) - part of the global 'Teach for All' network – offers two-year fellowships for young graduates and professionals to 'serve as full-time teachers to children from low-income communities in under-resourced schools[15]' across the country. TFI has played a significant role for teacher education in India by introducing an alternative pathway into teaching for young graduates and individuals from other professions. Notably, the TFI website also explains the 'education crisis' by citing data from the ASER report that 'more than 50% of students in Grade 5 cannot read a Grade 2 text or solve a simple subtraction problem[16]'. One example of a teacher education NGO shaping education policies is the Bangalore-based 'Dream a Dream' that was enlisted by the Delhi government to design and implement a 'Happiness Curriculum' across 1024 government schools in the capital city including the requisite training and professional development for teachers. Taken together, this dual focus was critical in identifying teacher education NGOs in India working at scale, and shaping Indian education policies. Throughout this process, I remained cognisant to include NGOs based in major and minor cities across India to ensure the representation of diverse social and cultural contexts in the final NGO-based teacher educator sample.

In the first instance, the above search and refinement strategy resulted in a list of 50 teacher education NGOs in India. Given that my original sampling frame was designed to include 10

[15] https://www.teachforindia.org/our-model
[16] https://www.teachforindia.org/education-crisis

NGO-based teacher educators, I decided to write to 16 of the listed teacher education NGOs (roughly one-third). 11 out of the 16 NGOs replied to my initial invitation letter (that included details about the researcher and the research). This initial email emphasised my research interest in the NGO-based teacher educators' specific work based on the information gleaned from their organisation's websites and relevant media reports. The invitation letter also highlighted the research value of their unique view and experiences in understanding the diversity of teacher educators' contexts and practices across the country. Of these initial 11 teacher education NGOs, 8 agreed to an interview. Notably, one interview involved two teacher educators representing their organisation. Given my overall progress with the proposed sampling frame, it was decided to end the data collection from NGO-based teacher educators at this point. The final interview sub-sample included 9 NGO-based teacher educators representing 8 teacher education NGOs across the country. In all, the selected purposive sampling strategy enabled the identification of 'cases that are information-rich and represent important dimensions of the phenomenon being studied, with the goal of enhancing the understanding of the phenomenon' (Creswell, 2018, p. 186).

In addition to email, several teacher educators across the three institutional types responded and/or communicated with me via WhatsApp. Their reasons included to verify my identity, ask for more information about the research, send consent forms, schedule the interview, communicate during interview set-up, thank me for the interview, offer supplementary details to their responses, ask for resources, and wish me Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. In one fortuitous twist, I received a text from one teacher educator saying that another of my interviewees had been his student at a teacher education college. I note that WhatsApp correspondence with teacher educators was always upon their behest and initiation. Overall,

the majority of communication with the participants, both potential and eventual, was by email.

In most cases, the teacher educator sent me a signed consent form before the scheduled interview - either using an electronic signature, or scanning a hand-signed form. However, in a few cases, collecting formal consent was problematic. I highlight these instances to ensure methodological transparency, and illustrate the complexity and messiness of online research. This is important because – as Tracy (2010) testifies – 'transparent research is marked by disclosure of the study's challenges and unexpected twists and turns' (p. 842).

On one occasion, a teacher educator explained that he had no access to a printer or computer because he was working from home during the lockdown. He asked if he could give consent, by replying to my email that had the consent form attached. I did not want to exclude potential participants because of a lack of access to technology, so I agreed. In all other cases, the teacher educator sent me signed consent forms via email or WhatsApp.

In some cases, the teacher educator did not send me the signed consent form before the interview (Appendix C). Yet, they had confirmed the interview data and time. As I waited for each interview's appointed hour, I was nervous. I did not know if the teacher educator would send me the consent form in time, or even show up for the interview. In most of these instances, the teacher educator sent me the consent form just before arriving to the scheduled interview. However, in three cases the teacher educator did not send the consent form, but still arrived at the appointed hour. I explained that the CUREC ethics requirements precluded me from going ahead with the interview without a signed consent form, but they dismissed my apprehensions. They explained that their presence at the interview, and willingness to

share, was plenty proof of their consent. I reiterated my point. In each case, they promised to send me a signed consent form immediately after the interview. I did not want to offend them by refusing. Out of respect for their time and position - and recognition of their oral consent - I decided to go ahead with the interview. In two cases, the teacher educator emailed me the consent form directly after the interview. One teacher educator required several follow-up emails before he sent me the signed consent form, along with his apologies and best wishes for my research. In these three exceptional cases, I only used the interview data for the thesis after receiving their signed consent forms.

In essence, for each interview I followed the CUREC-approved protocols to collect informed consent (Appendix D). In a few cases, things did not go according to plan. In these cases, I strived to balance the 'procedural ethics' of the CUREC, with the 'practical ethics' of organising online interviews with teacher educators (see Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 263).

The Sample

The final sample consisted of 50 teacher educators working in universities, colleges, and NGOs across the country. This included 28 female and 22 male teacher educators. I note that I did not ask teacher educators to identify their gender, and acknowledge that the male-female binary in classifying gender is contested. The interviewed teacher educators worked in institutions across the country (see Figure 1), specifically in 10 states and 3 Union Territories (see Tables 2 & 3). This included cities and towns such as Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Pune, Lucknow, Banaras, and Gaya. No teacher educator in the sample worked in northeast India, though one teacher educator reported having taught in

the state of Tripura[17]. There are no official statistics for the number, distribution, or characteristics of teacher educators in India to which the present sample can be compared[18].

Among university- and college-based teacher educators, their positions included Dean, Head of Department, Principal, Vice Principal, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Senior Research Fellow. These two sub-samples reported teaching/having taught in an array of teacher education programs including D.Ed., D.El.Ed., B.Ed., B.El.Ed., M.Ed., B.A. Education, M.A. Education, and Ph.D. Education. Among NGO-based teacher educators, their positions included Co-founder, Associate Director, Strategic Partnerships Senior Manager, Training and Marketing Lead, and Programme Coordinator. This NGO-based sub-sample was markedly different from their university- and college-based peers, because they taught exclusively on in-service teacher education programs (rather than pre-service) designed by their organisations (rather than the NCTE). I acknowledge that this self-selected sample potentially excludes teacher educators for various reasons, such as the unattractiveness of my research questions and research design, and perceived language barriers. Despite this, the sample represents a snapshot of the diverse geographic, social, cultural, and institutional settings of teacher educators' practice in India.

[17] One of the seven sister states of northeast India.
[18] This is unlike plentiful statistics available concerning teachers in India. For example, the most recent Ministry of Education (2021) report noted a gender split of 49.5% female and 47.5% male teachers.

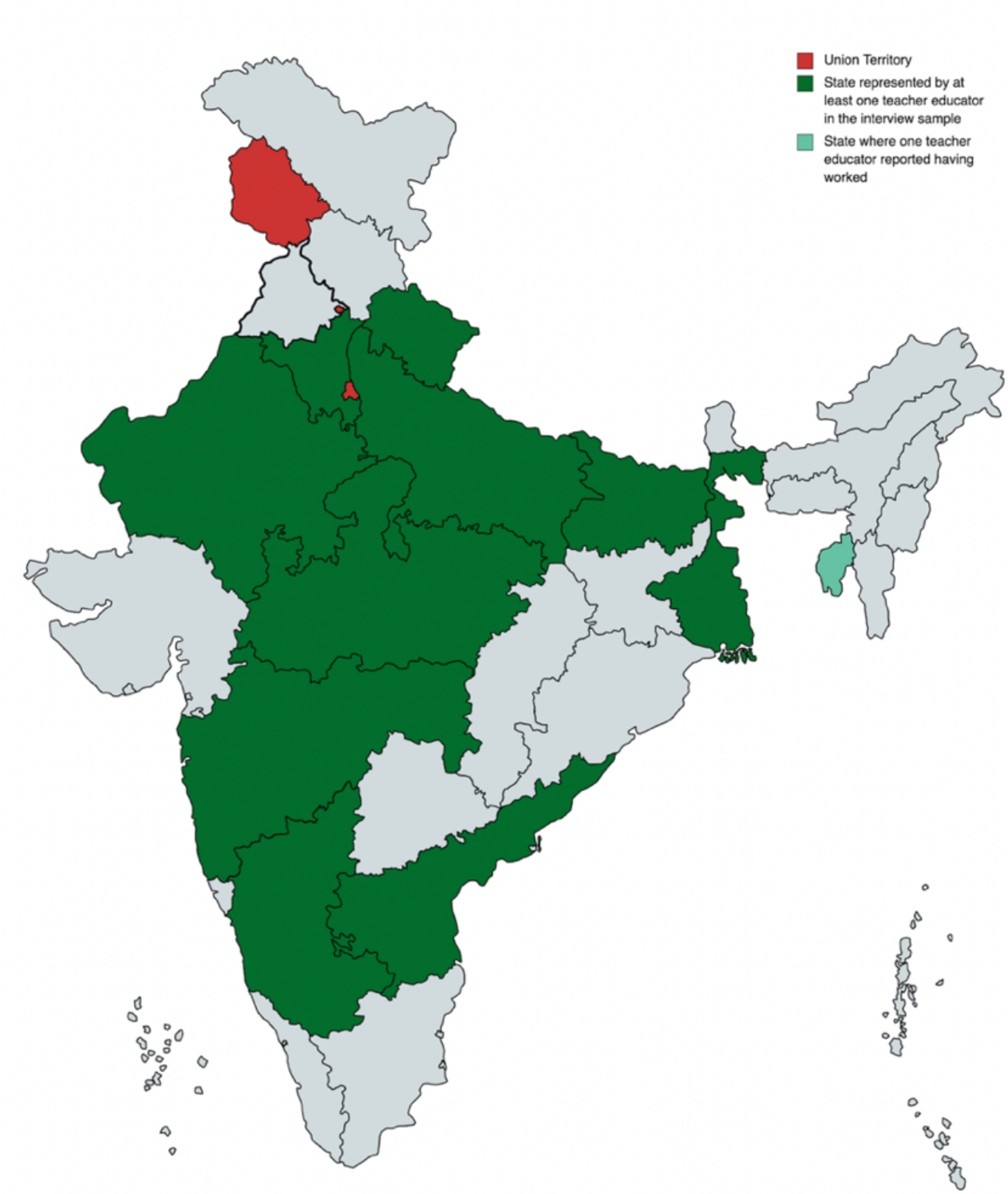


Figure 1: State-wise distribution of Interview Sample

State	Number of Teacher Educators in Sample
Andhra Pradesh	2
Bihar	2
Haryana	1
Karnataka	8
Madhya Pradesh	1
Maharashtra	9
Rajasthan	1
Uttar Pradesh	7
Uttarakhand	1
West Bengal	6
Total	*38*

Table 2: Distribution of interview sample across states

Union Territory	Number of Teacher Educators in Sample
Delhi	10
Chandigarh	1
Jammu and Kashmir	1
Total	*12*

Table 3: Distribution of interview sample across union territories

Motivations for Participation

Teacher educators' willingness to share their perspectives, practices, and experiences can be partly explained by their reported motivations for participating in this study. These motivations reflected their tumultuous experiences as Ph.D. students, and the perceived importance and relevance of my project. They explained their motivations at the beginning or end of the interview, often in response to my thanks for agreeing to participate or inquiry into their experience of the interview process.

A few teacher educators explained that they faced many difficulties collecting data for their own Ph.D. theses. In turn, they offered their support for my project so that I need not relive their rough experiences. Also, some teacher educators' previous experiences as a researcher influenced their willingness to participate in, and support my project. For example, Dr. Ashwini told me that she always helps Ph.D. researchers because she understands the 'barriers' involved in organising interviews. Similarly, Dr. Pari recounted:

> 'I had a very challenging time collecting data, getting my qualitative responses, triangulating it. So, anybody comes to me and says, "I am doing research"… I think it's a trigger because of my own experiences... So, I really wanted to make it smooth for everyone who was doing research.'

Other teacher educators highlighted the importance of doing research as their reason for agreeing to the interview. As Dr. U.B. underscored, research is an 'important duty…more so of a teacher educator', and Dr. Mythili noted 'as an academician…it is our duty to help upcoming scholars'. Parallelly, Mr. Prateek posited that 'as an educator, as an educationist, and as a teacher, we should help'. And Dr. B. explained, 'as a researcher, I believe that we are a part of the community, and that's how the community is going to be enriched and grow'. In these ways, many interviewed teacher educators emphasised the importance of research by drawing on their identities as a teacher educator, academic, educator, and researcher.

Some teacher educators emphasised the importance and relevance of my research questions and research design to explain their participation. For example, Ms. Avanti stated that she was 'happy to give the interview…because the research was based on teacher education and policy related to the Indian context'. Dr. Lakshmi 'agreed to the interview, when [she] saw the very nature of research to be a narrative approach'. And, Dr. Faiz hoped that the interview would contribute to his 'work for the betterment of the teacher education systems [in India]'.

In effect, the teacher educators' reported motivations for participation meant that they were willing to share their views and experiences freely during the interviews. This manifested in teacher educators' detailed and thoughtful answers, and their agreement to continue the interview past the scheduled hour. The resulting interviews enabled a deeper understanding of the ways and nuances in which teacher educators engage with Indian education policies, and 'complex specificity and circumstantiality of their data' (Tracy, 2010, p. 843).

4.4.2 Co-constructing data in the interview

This section elucidates how the data were co-constructed in the interviews to answer the research questions. Specifically, the interview dialogue allowed me to investigate how teacher educators understand quality education, describe important Indian education policies, and explain their teacher education practice. Below, I provide rationales for how these data were co-constructed through the interviews. I begin with considerations of interview time and (virtual) space, and then explain the interview design and process. I conclude with participants' feedback on the interviews.

Interview Time and Space

I organised all the online interviews from Oxford, UK. The time difference between UK time (GMT) and India time (IST) is five and a half hours. I allowed teacher educators to pick the time of their preference, including accommodating last-minute rescheduling. Often, I started the first interview at 5:30 am GMT, equivalent to 11:00 am IST. On some days I organised up to four interviews, beginning at 5:30 am, then at 7:30 am and 9:30 am, with the final interview at 11:30 am. I admit this was taxing, but I was highly determined and motivated to accommodate teacher educators' scheduling requirements. In three cases, interviews were

postponed because of a medical emergency (e.g., a teacher educator's family member testing positive for coronavirus). Unfortunately, these interviews were never rescheduled. Overall, I organised between 1-3 interviews per day, depending on the teacher educators' scheduling preferences.

Most interviews started on time, some late, and others not all. In a few cases, the teacher educator arrived between a few and fifteen minutes late for the interview (mostly without informing me). Still, I waited. In eight instances the teacher educator did not arrive for the interview. Each time, I waited for thirty minutes online, before declaring it a 'no show'. These no-shows were particularly painful when the interview was scheduled for early morning UK time. Regrettably, in one case I was the no-show. One teacher educator - having scheduled an interview via email – did not confirm the time, accept the meeting invite, or send me a consent form. Thus, I assumed the interview would not take place. To my dismay, I subsequently received an angry email from the teacher educator (including a screenshot of them in the lobby on MS Teams) saying that they had been waiting for me for 20 minutes. I apologised for my error and offered to reschedule the interview to another date and time of their preference. Unfortunately, this interview was never rescheduled.

The primary interview space was a video/audio call organised on MS Teams. Creating an online interview space conducive to dialogue was sometimes difficult because of technical difficulties or unexpected interruptions. On several occasions, the interview was disrupted by technical snags caused by slow or unreliable internet connectivity. In a few cases, the teacher educator and I circumvented this challenge by switching from video to audio. However, this meant that I could not gauge the teacher educators' body language, or know (for example) if they were pausing to think or awaiting the next question. This led to instances of overlapping

talk, which also occurred when there was a lag in the audio or video. Sometimes, the audio turned into garbled sounds. In each of these cases, I had to ask the teacher educator to repeat themselves (or vice-versa). While this was laborious, there was an implicit understanding between the teacher educator and me that these sorts of technical difficulties were to be expected during online interviews. Most of the online interviews were snag-free and technologically ease-filled. On a few occasions, however, the interview was subject to unexpected interruptions. This was especially the case when the teacher educator was attending the interview from their homes. Examples include disruptions caused by loud noises from the home/street/neighbourhood, the teacher educator receiving a text or call, or needing to attend to their children and/or pet. On one occasion, we paused the interview to respect the call of the Azan from a mosque near the teacher educator's home. On another occasion, the interview was interrupted because the teacher educator explained that the cleaners had arrived 'to sanitise the room'. Still, given the teacher educator's reported motivations for participating in the interview, we were able to navigate these technical difficulties and unexpected interruptions together.

In most interviews, the teacher educator and I both had our videos on, except in 2 interviews when the teacher educator did not turn on their video. Due to technical difficulties, especially poor internet connectivity, 10 interviews were primarily only audio with occasional bursts of video. In four of these cases, the interview began with both the teacher educator and me on video, but required switching to audio-only because of intermittent internet. In the other six cases, I had my video on while the teacher educator did not. I kept my video on to add greater legitimacy to the research process, and stimulate the teacher educator's willingness to share their views and experiences.

In sum, 46 interviews were conducted on MS Teams as per university guidelines, and 6 interviews on Google Meet or Zoom. The latter options were selected due to the teacher educators' explicit preferences, poor audio/video quality on Teams, or when the teacher educator attended the interview from their smartphones. The shortest interview was 34 minutes, and the longest was 1 hour 48 minutes. Forty-two interviews were longer than one hour, and the average interview time was 1 hour and 12 minutes. In total this led to over fifty hours of interview data.

Interview Design

At the outset, I note that the interview design also involved certain technological considerations. This was precipitated by a technologically tumultuous third interview. The internet connectivity was patchy, the call dropped a few times, and MS Teams was lagging. In her feedback after the interview, Ms. Alex suggested that I needed to sort out the 'tech stuff' and inform participants ahead of time about what will be done in case of technical difficulties. From the fourth interview onwards, I set up Google Meet and Zoom as backup platforms, and informed the teacher educator that I would communicate via the chat function or email if there were any technical difficulties. Thus, the interview design also involved decisions of including a range of platforms for communication, and pre-emptively explaining to participants what to do if there were any technological challenges. This ensured that dialogue during the online interview process flowed smoothly.

In many cases, the flow of the semi-structured interview protocol started with explanations of teacher educators' reported practice, shifted to their understanding of quality education, and ended with their descriptions of important Indian education policies. I began by asking about their journey to becoming a teacher educator, shifting subtly to stories of their teacher

education practice (RQ 3). Talking about something familiar and concrete at the start helped to set a conversational tone for the rest of the interview. Drawing on explanations of their teacher education practice, I transitioned to inquiring about the educators' understanding of quality education, including the notions of quality teacher and quality teaching (RQ 1). Finally, I asked about which education policies were important for their teacher education practice, and why (RQ 2). I connected teacher educators' responses throughout the interview, by (for example) asking follow-up questions that related their explanations of education policies to their reported teacher education practice and understandings of quality education.

In some cases, I switched the order. I started by addressing teacher educators' understanding of quality education (RQ 1) and their descriptions of important education policies (RQ 2) and finally moving to explanations of their teacher education practice (RQ 3). The order in which the themes – and thereby the research questions – were addressed depended on the teacher educator's response to my opening question: 'Could you share a little about your journey to becoming a teacher educator?'. However, once begun, I essayed to fully explore each theme before moving to the next.

In the initial interviews, the semi-structured interview protocol had a fourth part. This included four selected quotes from the National Education Policy 2020, with a follow-up question for each. I hoped that this would offer teacher educators' the opportunity to deepen their reflections on the first three themes of the interview, and bring their voices into dialogue with Indian education policy. However, after the first three interviews, I decided to skip this fourth part as I found it was redundant and time-consuming. Still, I retained the quotes in the final questionnaire to enable teacher educators to get a sense of the potential foci and trajectories of the interview (see Appendix E).

In some interviews, I shared an anecdote or two from my pilot ethnography relevant to the particular part of the discussion. The aim was to examine how the teacher educator analysed, and explained my experiences during the ethnography, and how this related to their own experiences of teacher education. At the end of each interview, I asked the teacher educator if I had missed anything or if they would like to add something to help me better understand their teacher education practice. Then, I asked how they would like to be quoted in my research, and offered them the option of their real name or a pseudonym (that they were free to choose themselves). Finally, I asked for their feedback on, and feelings during, the interview process. I closed the interview by expressing my deep gratitude for their time and willingness to share their perspectives, experiences, and practices in teacher education.

Interview Protocol

To address RQ 1, I asked teacher educators 'how would you describe quality education'? This open-ended question enabled teacher educators to approach their answers in a way that made sense to them. For example, some focused on the aims of quality education and others on the education 'system'. In follow-up questions, I delved deeper into teacher educators' understandings of quality education, focusing on the role of the teacher and teaching. In each interview, I used the same terms as the teacher educator – such as 'true education', 'ideal teacher' or 'good teacher' – to deepen their descriptions.

To address RQ 2, I asked teacher educators if any education policies were 'important for', or 'influenced' their teacher education practice. In response, teacher educators named specific policies, such as the RTE Act 2009 and NCFTE 2009. Or else, they implied specific policies by naming their prescriptions, for example, implying the NCTE Regulations 2014 by noting the shift from 1-year to 2-year B.Ed. In both cases, the teacher educator decided which

education policies to explain and discuss as important. Apart from asking follow-up questions about named or implied policies, in all the interviews I inquired into the teacher educator's views on the National Education Policy 2020 and what this might mean for their teacher education practice.

To address RQ 3, I asked teacher educators about their teacher education practice with variations of the following opening question – 'could you tell me a little about your practices as a teacher educator?'. Sometimes, I stacked the questions about teacher educators' practice to allow teacher educators to approach the answer in a way that made sense to them. The following example illustrates the point:

> **Anay:** Sir, could you tell me a little bit about your practice as a teacher educator? When you go into the classroom, what kind of approaches do you use? What kind of reasons do you pick? And has this changed from when you first started your teacher education career? Have there been any differences or similarities? Anything you would like to share about your practice?
>
> **Dr. Kaushal:** Yes. I will start with that the last part of the question.

In the initial interviews, my questions were long-winded and leading:

(From interview #1)

> **Anay:** …previously, both in the policy and in the media reports, they were very much talking about an education crisis. And per se, that same set of supporting evidence, has now been reframed into being talked about as a learning crisis…It almost suggests a kind of individualising reframing because an education crisis suggests a kind of systemic problem with systemic challenges and systemic solutions. But a crisis of learning almost suggests a kind of individual problem, individual teachers, individual students… So, I was wondering, if you see at all, any difference in these two phrases, even though they're describing the same thing, or would you see them as synonymous for example?

And multi/barrelled:

(From interview #9)

> **Anay:** If I could just pick up and follow up on one thing, this idea of contexts and certifications in Indian context and international certifications. Do you see the transferability of, for example, international certification in an Indian context? Do we require something that's more India-specific? Or similarly would an Indian-specific certification, do you think it would be transferable into an international context? How do you see the relationship between certifications and local versus international knowledge in the space?

Reflecting on these initial interviews, I recognised that my questioning style was unclear. Teacher educators often asked me to repeat the question or put them one at a time. I also realised the risk of biasing the teacher educators' responses with my own views. Subsequently, I was conscious of and intentional about asking short, precise questions with a single focus.

In the Hindi and bilingual interviews, my questions were in Hindi or Hindi/English depending on the teacher educator, and the specific question. However, I note that even for questions in Hindi, I always used English for technical/conceptual terms such as 'quality education' or 'holistic assessment' – a pattern mirrored by the teacher educators (English words are italicised, and translation is given below):

> **Anay:** '*ma'am,* aap thoda bata sakte hai agar hume *teacher* ko *holistic assessment* ke liye *prepare* karna hai, tho iska kya matlab ho sakta hai?'
>
> (*ma'am, could you tell me a bit about what it means to prepare teachers for holistic assessment?)*
>
> **Dr. Priyanka:** '*holistic assessment* ka matlab yeh hai ki humhe keval *theory*, keval *academic* ko nahi assess karna hai, unki humko dekhna hai *overall development* kitna hua hai.'
>
> (*holistic assessment means that we don't just assess theory and academic content, we also need to examine the level of students' overall development*)

In one instance, my question contained an error. I began the question, 'the B.El.Ed. programme at JNU has been cited as an example in previous education and teacher education policy documents…'. And Ms. Avanti interjected, 'one minute, let me correct you, there is no B.El.Ed programme at JNU, the B.El.Ed. program is at Delhi University'. I was rattled. Rather than acknowledging my mistake and rephrasing the question, I side-stepped and continued with another question about education policies. Relatedly, only Ms. Avanti - a linguistics scholar – inquired how I was differentiating the terms 'quality in education' and 'quality of education' as they both appeared in the semi-structured interview protocol. I explained that these terms were taken from Indian education policies, and I was interested in exploring how teacher educators understood them.

In all, my questioning style evolved over the course of the interviews. The questions went from long-winded and leading, to specific and thought-provoking. As Dr. Rupam remarked, 'your questions made me think' and 'instigated my mind'. And Dr. Sarita summarised, 'I must say as a teacher educator, your questions were very logical questions, very practical questions'.

Interview Feedback

At the end of each interview, I asked the teacher educator how they felt during the conversation, and if they had any feedback for me. Teacher educators' feedback on the interview enabled me to examine how they perceived my research design, interview protocol and technique. This helped me to understand the teacher educator's emotional experience of the interview, and ensure that I polished my interviewing skills.

Some teacher educators suggested amendments to my research design, especially the need for quantitative methods and participant observation. For example, Dr. Rajendra remarked that I needed 'some quantitative part… [because] mixed research method will increase the validity and reliability of the findings'. And, Dr. Sudarshan suggested that I should incorporate 'participant observation' to 'get some other true and bitter realities' of teacher education practice in India. I thanked these teacher educators for their feedback, but knew that I was too far along the research journey to incorporate either suggestion. Furthermore, universities and colleges were still shut, and participant observation was not even possible. Thus resigned, I acknowledged their recommendation, and swiftly moved on to the next question. In this regard, I highlight the significance and possibilities for mixed-methods research for teacher education in India in Chapter 9.

Several teacher educators praised the interview protocol. Dr. Abhijit noted that he was especially impressed with my information sheet (Appendix B) and consent form (Appendix C). He explained that collecting informed consent in this way was not part of their university practices. He told me that he had introduced these aspects in his 'research methodology coursework' and 'classroom teaching'. As for my interview technique, I received much positive feedback. For example:

> **Dr. Minoti:** 'It is a very comfortable situation because it is structured and unstructured... And I also feel that I had the opportunity to share my thinking, and visualise exactly what is the scenario right now in Indian society.'

Some teacher educators commented on and complimented the flow of the interview. For example, Dr. Ritesh appreciated that the interview was 'just in motion, not a very structured way…a kind of discussion', and Mr. Joseph noted, 'we went with the flow, based on how the conversation was going'. Going with the flow meant that I was sensitive to building on

teacher educators' responses rather than plodding orderly through a pre-determined list of questions.

> **Dr. Kaushal:** 'It was a very captivating interview and you conducted it very well. It was a well-planned structured interview, but you went with the flow, whenever there was a requirement to divert you did that well.'

I always remained alert to ensure this 'flow' during the interview. This facilitated an interview environment where teacher educators reported that they felt 'good', 'comfortable', and 'happy'. This was manifest in their openness and willingness to share their perspectives, and teacher education experiences and practices. As, Dr. Geetha T. noted, 'I think after a long time, I shared my heart with somebody'. Dr. U.B. summarised the point well:

> 'I felt liberated during the interview. I'll tell you why… being employed in a college with lots of these restrictions, always curtails. It's a situation where I can't really express myself openly and freely. And I have to be very careful with what I'm saying. Because I have to respect that. Today, I didn't have to do that.'

Conversely in this light, some teacher educators were reticent to respond to my questions during the interview. For example, Mr. Wan offered staccato answers, explaining that 'somebody else was supposed to come over here, so I was little hurried at the end part of it, and had to cut it short because of [his] webinar'. Likewise, Ms. Riya explained that she was reserved because 'there were some questions that [she] wasn't able to think about at that very moment'. In a few cases, the teacher educator chose not to respond to questions about certain issues, such as the relationship between education and politics.

> **Anay:** 'Sir, do you feel like there's been any relationship between politics and teacher education, and politics and education in your state?
>
> **Mr. Prateek:** Politics in teacher education is a very sensitive issue. I'm just skipping this if you don't mind.'

These exceptions aside, most teacher educators described the interview as an opportunity to revisit and reflect on their views, experiences, and practices in teacher education. For example, Ms. Deepti thanked me for 'bringing back 10 years of memories', and Mr. Vinay – who described his everyday teacher education practice as 'firefighting' – appreciated that the interview transcended the 'daily logistics' of being a teacher educator. Similarly, Dr. Shivani said the interview 'helped [her] reflect on a whole lot of things that [she] never thought about, how they [student teachers] think of criticality and what they know, what and how much attention they pay to what they do'. In a few cases, the teacher educator also requested a copy of the interview transcript and/or audio file. After each interview, I reflected on the teacher educators' reported experience of the interview, and their feedback about my research. This helped to refine my interview technique, and contextualise the process of co-constructing data during the interview.

4.5 Data Collected

The sources of data for the study primarily included the interview recordings and transcripts, along with my field notes. In one case, a teacher educator told me that he was not able to attend an online interview, and decided to answer the interview questions a bit at a time in Word documents attached to emails. In his email responses, he also asked me more about my background, professional experiences, research interests, and answers to the interview questions. Despite my intentions of maintaining a detailed correspondence, I soon became too busy organising other interviews to reply to his emails and answers in equal detail. Soon, he became frustrated with my sparse and intermittent responses, and our conversation swiftly trailed off. Though this teacher educator sent me detailed answers to some of the interview questions, he did not include a signed consent form. Thus, I did not use this data in the study.

In another case, a teacher educator answered some of the questions in a word document that she emailed to me before the interview. Since she had sent me a signed consent form, and alluded to her emailed response in the interview, this data was included in the thesis. In this section, I reflect on the data collected from the interviews through the attendant considerations of pseudonymisation, co-construction, transcription, and translation.

4.5.1 Pseudonymisation

Pseudonymisation is a 'functional separation technique which lowers the risk for data subjects by ensuring that they can only be re-identified through the use of additional information' (Verhenneman et al., 2020). This is important to reduce the risk from participants' identity disclosure, while preserving the integrity of the collected data to answer the research questions. A variety of approaches have been proposed for pseudonymisation (e.g., Aamot et al., 2013), including creating tailor-made software for automated pseudonymisation (Class et al., 2021) and cryptographic encryption (Pedrosa et al., 2021). For this research, I opted to create a linkage list between participants' real names and pseudonyms stored on a fingerprint-protected computer and password-protected hard drive. This was deemed suitable because the research data did not include any sensitive information, so participants were at low risk of harm from identity disclosure. In many studies, pseudonymisation is closely linked to the question of anonymity (e.g., de Haro-Olmo et al., 2020; Gerrard, 2020). Though most qualitative studies use pseudonyms for their participants, they often exclude two ethical considerations. There is no provision for participants to choose to be quoted by their real names if they wish. This is linked to questions of authenticity, and ownership of the research data. Further, pseudonyms are often researcher-assigned such that participants have little say about the names through which they

are represented. The pseudonymisation protocol of the present study addressed these two gaps.

At the end of each interview, I asked each teacher educator how they would like to be represented in my thesis. Teacher educators were offered the choice to be quoted either by their real name or a pseudonym, and (in the latter case) choose their own pseudonym or have one assigned by the researcher. In most cases, the teacher educator decided with ease, and their response was immediate and direct. In some cases, the teacher educator paused to reflect on their answers before deciding. For example, Mr. Vinay pondered, 'I'm just thinking. I think I did not mention anything that is politically incorrect… I'm okay with my first name being quoted'. In a few cases, the teacher educator said that I could quote them however I pleased, either using their real name or a pseudonym. I thanked them for their unequivocal support in the research, but insisted that they decide for themselves. This was motivated in equal parts by considerations of CUREC-approved procedures, and the intention of letting teacher educators choose how they are represented in my research.

In all, 28 teacher educators asked to be quoted by their real names. For example:

> **Anay:** 'How would you like to be quoted in my research? Would you prefer a pseudonym, or would you prefer your real name?'
>
> **Dr. Monoronjan**: 'Real name, no issues.'

6 teacher educators chose their own pseudonyms. For example:

> **Dr. J:** 'I think a pseudonym is good.'
>
> **Anay:** 'Would you like to pick a pseudonym for yourself, ma'am? Do you have something in mind?'
>
> **Dr. J:** 'Yeah, maybe just J.'

15 pseudonyms were allotted by me. Of these, 10 teacher educators asked me to pick a pseudonym for them. 2 pseudonyms were selected for the teacher educators for whom the second interview was scheduled but not completed, and 3 for the teacher educators who said they would revert to me about their pseudonyms but subsequently didn't.

> **Anay:** 'Would you care to pick a name for yourself? Is there anything that you have in mind?'
>
> **Dr. Shivani:** 'Go ahead and you can pick anything.'

In one notable instance early on, a teacher educator picked her initials as her pseudonym. However, at the time I wanted each participant to have a 'name' rather than just initials or a number in my research. I felt this would enhance the readability and relatability of the findings chapters. I superimposed this intention on the conversation, and asked the teacher educator if I could pick a name for her. During the transcription of this exchange, I realised that I had projected my own purposes onto the dialogue, and opted as reparation to use the teacher educator's stated pseudonym. However, on further reflection I realised that this was not what we had 'agreed' in the interview. And so, I picked a pseudonym for this teacher educator. However, in subsequent interviews I was mindful to be sensitive to how teacher educators wished to represent themselves.

4.5.2 Co-construction, Transcription, and Translation

The act of co-construction

I struggled with how to interpret the act of 'co-construction' of the data in the interviews. I had designed the short, open-ended interview questions to encourage the teacher educators to speak freely about their perspectives and practices. However, the resulting one-sided dialogue felt 'extractive'. This problem became more acute when teacher educators put my questions

back to me ('you tell me why we are getting education, why do we need to educate ourselves?' – Dr. Jyotsna), or asked if I agreed or disagreed with their responses ('do you agree?'/ 'don't you think so?'). In these instances, I responded honestly – yet, succinctly – to keep the conversation flowing, rather than engage in dialogue. In one extreme example, Dr. Mandeep prefaced her question to me with the premise – *imagine I am your supervisor*. I was startled, and unsure of how much to commit to the subsequent dialogue. I did not want to bias her responses to the interview questions. I tried valiantly yet unsuccessfully to parry the discussion. The following excerpt illustrates the point:

> **Dr. Mandeep:** 'Okay Anay, again my answer starts from a question to you. What values do you as a PhD student, what values do you admire the most?'
>
> **Anay:** 'Well, I can tell you what the policy is talking about things like constitutional values…'
>
> **Dr. Mandeep:** 'Don't talk about policy at the moment, you are a PhD student, I am a PhD research guide…Forget about the policy, I am asking you one question, what are the basic values in life?'
>
> **Anay:** '…I think to answer your question, I would frame it in this way…To me personally, if you ask me about my philosophy of education, education is very much to me about relationship. It's – at one level – learning to live with yourself and at another level learning to live with others and the environment…'
>
> **Dr. Mandeep:** 'Okay, I'm picking up the word from your answer only, you said relationships are to be maintained and one needs to understand the other person… What are the golden words which you can use to maintain your relationships?'

In practice, I doubted if the interviews were truly dialogic. I had learned more about the teacher educators' views, experiences, and practices than they had about mine. But, I also realised that the purpose of the interviews had been to answer the research questions through the voices of the teacher educators. That is what I had done. In essence, the act of co-constructing data in the interview focused on teacher educators' explanations of their engagement with Indian education policies.

Transcription

Transcription refers to the act of converting speech into text, for which there are two broad approaches. In naturalised transcription – prominent for studies in conversational analysis – all utterances are transcribed. In denaturalised transcription, transcription is tailored to the research questions, and 'accuracy concerns the substance of the interview, that is, the meanings and perceptions created and shared during a conversation' (Oliver et al., 2005, p. 1277). The distinction arises because transcription involves several methodological considerations such as whether to transcribe inaudible information and questionable text (e.g., McLellan et al., 2003), involuntary vocalisations, response tokens, facial expressions, body language, and silences (e.g., Wellard & McKenna, 2001). Researchers have disagreed about the necessity and relevance of verbatim interview transcriptions, or even if it is necessary at all (Clausen, 2012; Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

For this study, I transcribed only teacher educators' speech in the form of words. While I refrained from transcribing indeterminate sounds – such as 'ums' and 'ahs' – I included repeated words and grammatical errors. I selected denaturalised transcription for this study because this is not a linguistic analysis of how teacher educators speak about policy reform and their teacher education practice, but rather an investigation into how teacher educators explain their engagement with Indian education policies. Further, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) note, 'attempts at verbatim interview transcriptions produce hybrids, artificial constructs that may be adequate to neither the lived oral conversation nor the formal style of written texts' (p. 204). This is because 'the specific artistry of orality is often very difficult to convey in writing [and] perhaps most importantly, written transcriptions tend to obscure the meaning behind the words' (Tolgensbakk, 2020, p. 458). Thus, I always returned to the

interview recording while examining the transcripts to locate specific responses and dialogues within the broader discussion from which they emerged.

To create the interview transcripts, I followed a two-step process. I began by uploading the interview recording to a paid subscription of the platform 'otter.ai'. This software uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to convert speech to text. Voice recognition software-assisted transcription has played an increasing role in qualitative research in the last two decades (Matheson, 2007; Parl & Zeanah, 2005). For this study, the accuracy of the software-generated transcript was dependent on several factors, especially the teacher educators' English accent/language proficiency, and whether they used a microphone. Though there were several errors – and the software did not transcribe Hindi – the transcript generated by 'otter.ai' was enormously timesaving. Despite significant advancements in the field, most researchers recommend an iterative process of creating and manually reviewing software-generated transcripts to ensure completeness and accuracy (Wardell et al., 2021). Accordingly, I relistened to each interview recording, and manually edited the software-generated transcript. This involved correcting words and phrases, adding punctuation, and especially transliterating Hindi speech into English. This two-step process resulted in 52 complete interview transcripts.

Translation

Some of the interviews – and thereby transcripts – required translation. Though most of the interviews were in English, two were organised in Hindi, and a few in bilingual Hindi and English (the dominant language depending on the teacher educator). Among these, one teacher educator asked for the interview to be in Hindi during our initial email correspondence, another requested a shift during the interview, and a third alternated between

English and Hindi. In the Hindi/bilingual interviews, the teacher educator interspersed their Hindi with English words (or vice versa), often preferring English for technical or conceptual terms. The Hindi speech was transliterated into English in the transcript. The following two examples are illustrative (the Hindi words are italicised):

> **Dr. Shivam:** '*Jo* policies *hai, uska asar* teacher education *par bahut padhta bhi hai, aur padha bhi hai, jo hamari* teachers appointment *ka* system *hai pura, uss* policy *ko mein bahut acha nahi manta hoon, aur mujhe lagta hai ki* teacher *ka jo* selection *hai voh bahut hi savdhani se karni ki zaroorat hai…'*
>
> **Dr. Priyanka:** 'values *ka matlab* respect *zyadatar aata hai yaha pe, ek* student teacher *ka jo* relationship *hota hai usme* respect *honi chahiye…'*

Translating interview data requires acts of interpretation on the part of the researcher, especially in matters of metaphors, terminology, and verbatim quotes (Al-Amer et al., 2015). The challenge for translators is 'how to convey the meaning of the experience rather than conveying a concrete written text' (ibid, 156). Here, I explain and justify my translation process to ensure methodological rigour (Abfalter et al., 2021).

Two traditional methods for translation include back translation and forward translation (Upsing & Rittberger, 2018). In back translation, data is translated from the source language to the target language by one individual, before a second individual translates the resulting data back into the source language (Chen & Boore, 2010). The two transcripts are compared to create the final translation. However, back translation was criticised for its outdated assumptions of equivalent, objective meaning between the source and target language (ibid, p. 59). In forward translation, the data is translated from source to target language, often by multiple individuals. Each of these forward transcripts are compared to each other and the source data to create the final transcript (Lopez et al., 2008). Meanwhile, some scholars have criticised both back and forward translation protocols for weak equivalence and have

proposed a 'multicentric approach offers a range of conceptual options and choices' (Larkin et al., 2007, p. 473). For this study, I opted to forward-translate the interviews myself. Having organised the interviews, I believed I had the language proficiency to translate them. I also had access to Hindi-English language dictionaries and native Hindi speakers in case of any difficulties. Further, there were only a few – and therefore manageable number of – Hindi/bilingual interviews that required translation.

For the Hindi/bilingual interviews, I created a transcript in the following steps. First, I transliterated the Hindi speech into English (for ease and expediency), retaining the English words in-situ. In this way, I preserved the original language throughout the analysis process. The timing of the translation is important and has implications for the research and analysis process (Santos et al., 2015). I only translated quotes from Hindi to English if/when I decided to use the dialogue in my thesis. For this, I relied on my knowledge of Hindi. Though some studies use multiple translators to check for consistency (e.g., Arunasalam, 2019), others suggest that a single translator can help to maintain consistency in the translation work.
In practice, I had no difficulties translating the quotes I needed. Below is an example of the original Hindi dialogue, followed by my English translation:

Original Speech

> **Dr. Priyanka:** '*hum log* normally *padathe hai tho hum dimag se, apne* proficiency *se hum padhate hai, lekin* special education *mein hum bolte hai ki, hum dil se padhate hai, unke saath hum* feel *kar ke padathe hai.'*

Translated Speech

> **Dr. Priyanka:** 'normally when we teach, we teach using our brains, we teach using our proficiencies, but in special education, we say that we teach from our heart, we feel the students' feelings and teach.'

I recognise that translation is a difficult and nuanced process, that involves judgements of interpretation, vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic aesthetics. Some scholars assert that the

meaning of the message is lost through translation, with a few explaining translation as an act of 'violence' (Venuti, 1993). Accordingly, during the translation process for this study, I remained cognisant of concerns about preserving meaning in the translated texts, and the implicit power relations among speakers of different languages. I believe that translating these interviews is an important way to make the present study accessible to a wider audience, and bring teacher educators, researchers, and policymakers in dialogue with each other.

I acknowledge that the interview data is deeply imprinted by the dominant language of most of the interviews – English. In a sense, the English language proficiency of the teacher educator sample might serve as a proxy for their socio-economic status (see Giri et al., 2020), and thereby exclude certain views and experiences. Further, though some teacher educators chose to have Hindi interviews, speakers of other languages were possibly excluded by self-selection – a possibility compounded by my initial emails in English. However, I note that most of the interviewed teacher educators also speak their native languages. In this sense, though most interviews were in English, they do not necessarily reflect only the view of English-speaking teacher educators.

4.6 Data Analysis

I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2012, 2019) process of Reflexive Thematic Analysis to analyse to the data from the interviews. Specifically, I adopt their emphasis on the researcher's 'reflexivity' and adapt their conceptualisation of 'themes' to answer the research questions. This section introduces the analytic method and the rationale for its adaptation, and explains how it was used in this research. Specifically, it explains how I organised and

became familiar with the data, followed an iterative coding process to construct themes, and subsequently reported the findings.

4.6.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis can be used to 'describe the "lived experiences" of particular social groups…examine the "factors" that influence, underpin, or contextualize particular processes or phenomena…identify views about particular phenomena…[and] interrogate dominant patterns of meaning surrounding particular phenomena' (Braun et al., 2019, p. 850). These reported uses of Reflexive Thematic Analysis align with the research questions of the study aimed at investigating teacher educators' engagement with Indian education policies through their understandings of quality education, descriptions of important policies, and explanations of their teacher education practice. Having selected Reflexive Thematic Analysis for its suitability to investigate the research questions, I both adopted and adapted the Braun and Clarke's (2012, 2019) process to tailor the analytic strategy for the present study.

From Reflexive Thematic Analysis, I adopted the emphasis on the importance of researcher's reflexivity during the analytic process. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), Reflexive Thematic Analysis involves reframing the researcher's positionality in the research as both valid and a resource. This framing involves acknowledging how the researchers' background and expertise influence the act of constructing research data, and its subsequent analysis and reporting. To highlight my reflexivity, throughout the methodology chapter I acknowledge how my various identities (for e.g., as young, male, Oxford scholar, and former schoolteacher) influenced the research process, and how I am situated within the act of co-

constructing the interview data and its subsequent analysis (see also Section 4.7). In doing so, I recognise how my personal and professional views and experiences have shaped this project, thus enabling me to meaningfully interpret the data. Being reflexive in this way allows me to be transparent about my methods, analysis, and findings. As Braun et al., (2019) put it:

> 'The aim is to provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data. The researcher is a storyteller, actively engaged in interpreting data through the lens of their own cultural membership and social positionings, their theoretical assumptions and ideological commitments, as well as their scholarly knowledge' (p. 848-849)

While adopting their emphasis on reflexivity, I adapt Braun and Clarke's conception of themes. Braun et al., (2019) explain that there are two main ways of conceptualising themes in qualitative data analysis – 'domain summaries' or 'patterns of shared meaning'. They reject the notion of themes as domain summaries as a 'data reduction activity' that merely '*summarizes* what participants said in relation to a topic or issue, typically at the *semantic* or surface level of meaning' (p. 849, original emphasis). Instead, they argue for themes as 'patterns of shared meaning' that are organised around a core concept and 'capture the essence and spread of meaning; they unite data that might otherwise appear disparate, or meaning that occurs in multiple and varied contexts' (ibid, p. 845). In this sense, Braun and Clarke stress the significance of themes as abstract entities that capture underlying ideas implicit across the data set. In effect, they eschew themes as 'domain summaries', and advocate for themes as 'patterns of shared meaning'.

I adapted Braun and Clarke's conceptualisation of themes by dissolving the apparent dichotomy between themes as 'domain summaries' and 'patterns of shared meaning'. In the act of organising data into 'domain summaries', the researcher is also engaged in creating a

unique pattern of shared meaning in light of the specific research questions, and their own background and expertise. Similarly, organising data into 'patterns of shared meaning' also implies the conceiving of a domain (in this case, labelled 'organising concept') and categorising and summarising data around this core concept. Thus, rather than eschewing themes as 'domain summaries' and valorising themes as 'patterns of shared meaning', I focused on how these two kinds of themes are constructed, for what purpose, and how they can be used to answer the research questions.

For this research, I constructed themes as both domain summaries and patterns of shared meaning. Creating themes as domain summaries was useful in organising and making sense of the vast amounts of interview data, as well as an important first step in parsing the data to identify patterns of shared meaning between teacher educators' reported views and experiences. For example, take the theme 'curriculum' that can be seen as a domain summary in that it contained all data pertaining to teacher educators' explanations of the teacher education curriculum. This theme served the function of collecting and organising vast amounts of related data spread over 50 interview transcripts into a single meaningful unit. Constructing the theme in this way allowed me to engage deeply with, and make sense of the data pertaining to teacher educators' explanations of the curriculum in a focused manner. Having collected all the data pertaining to the teacher education curriculum, I further analysed the theme 'curriculum' to identify patterns of shared meaning between the teacher educators, and found that the teacher education curriculum was explained as either relevant, or requiring recontextualisation and transformation. In this way, the theme 'curriculum' can be seen as a domain summary that facilitated the representation of the diversity of teacher educators' views on the teacher education curriculum, while also enabling the identification of patterns of shared meaning between teacher educators. In this way, I conceptualised

themes for this research as simultaneously representing 'domain summaries' and 'patterns of shared meaning'.

In short, I adopted and adapted Braun and Clarke's (2012, 2019) Reflexive Thematic Analysis to analyse the research data. Specifically, I adopted Braun and Clarke's emphasis on the significance and role of researcher reflexivity in data analysis, while adapting their conception of themes to tailor the analytic method to answer my research questions. Specifically, Braun and Clarke conceive of themes as patterns of shared meaning united by a core concept, that are developed through an inductive coding process. They eschew the idea of themes as 'domain summaries' that serve to merely summarise participants' responses. However, I found that creating themes as domain summaries was a useful analytic step in organising the data to answer the research questions. Through organising teacher educators' responses into three domains, I was able to explore patterns of shared meaning amidst the diverse ways in which teacher educators understand quality education, describe education policies, and explain their teacher education practice. Importantly, by remaining reflexive throughout the analytic process, I acknowledge that these themes represent 'creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594). In these ways, my analytic method is both similar to, and different from, Braun and Clarke's (2012) Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

In the following sections, I make the research 'retroductable' (Wodak, 2011) by making the analysis process 'explicit and transparent enough so that other researchers are able to understand and replicate it' (Chilton et al., 2012, p. 6).

4.6.2 Data organisation

I organised the data using Excel, Otter.ai, and Nvivo. First, I recorded the details for each interview on an Excel spreadsheet – including participants' names (based on their choice: real or pseudonym), designations, name and location of institution, date and length of the interview, interview platform, gender, and years of experience. This enabled me to have an overview of the characteristics of the sample and the interviews. The Excel sheet (that included personal data of participants) was viewed only by me, and stored on a password- and fingerprint-protected computer.

Next, I uploaded the interview recordings to a paid, password-protected subscription of the transcription software Otter.ai. I used Otter.ai to generate the first draft of the transcripts and re-listen to the interviews throughout the analysis and writing process. The latter was facilitated by the timestamps on the transcripts that enabled me to revisit specific parts of the interview recording with ease. Finally, I imported the completed PDF interview transcripts into an Nvivo project. I used Nvivo to organise the study data and analyse the interview transcripts (see Section 4.6.4). Scholars have shown how using Nvivo can facilitate data management and analysis, and 'can enable a logical and systematic approach, without constraining the emergent nature of qualitative data collection and analysis' (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012, p. 838). All recordings and transcripts were stored on a password- and fingerprint-protected computer, and backed up on a password-protected hard disk. Once the data was organised, and informed by Braun and Clarke's (2012) steps, I started with data familiarisation, followed by generating codes, constructing themes, and writing the findings.

4.6.3 Data Familiarisation

Data familiarisation involves a process of reading the research data and notetaking, while keeping in mind the research questions of the study. This 'provides the researcher with an initial, purposeful understanding of the data…including the breadth of variation within the data' (Goldsmith, 2021, p. 2063). To familiarise myself with the data collected during the interviews, I used the following steps:

I listened to each interview recording, noting poignant parts of each interview and their potential relationship with the research questions. Next, I relistened to the recording while simultaneously reading its corresponding transcript. This allowed me – in subsequent readings of the transcripts – to relate the text to the audio. Intermittently during this process, I paused the recording to highlight pertinent points in the transcripts, pen preliminary memos to myself such as a particular thought, question, or line of reasoning that seemed important. This included relevance to specific research questions, reflections on my role in co-constructing the data, and points for future analysis. These memos to myself were focused on noticing patterns of meaning within and across interviews, guided by the research questions and informed by key debates in the wider teacher education literature. In this way, I immersed myself in the data, becoming familiar with each interview recording and transcript. Simultaneously, I scrutinised the research literature related to quality education, education policies, and teacher educators' practice to develop 'sensitising concepts' to guide the analysis process (Blumer, 1954). These 'sensitizing, data generated concepts offer ways of seeing, organizing and understanding experiences of respondents in a way that they make sense' (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2012, p. 369). The data familiarisation process set the groundwork for my next analytic step – generating codes and constructing themes.

4.6.4 Generating Codes and Constructing Themes

Generating codes and constructing themes were important to meaningfully organise the interview data and thereby investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies. Though this overarching research question and its attendant sub-questions were informed by specific foci, they were also open-ended. Thus, I used both inductive and deductive coding to analyse the interview data. This analytical combination allowed me to answer the research question and sub-questions, while remaining alert to the authenticity of how teacher educators explain their engagement with Indian education policies. Akin to Charmaz (2006), this study positioned coding as 'the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations' (p. 43). Specifically, I used a tripartite coding strategy to distil the data from the 52 interview transcripts into meaningful units, and illustrate the diverse and complex ways in which teacher educators engage with Indian education policies.

To operationalise my adapted version of Reflexive Thematic Analysis, I drew on Richards' (2021) distinctions between three types of codes: descriptive, topic, and analytic. I used descriptive codes to label the data, topic codes to organise the data according to the three sub-research questions, and analytic codes to highlight patterns of shared meaning across participants. Specifically, the topic codes functioned as Braun and Clarke's (2019) definition of themes as 'domain summaries', while the analytic codes served as 'patterns of shared meaning'. Below, I explain how this iterative, tripartite coding process was used to investigate how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies.

First, I read through the interview transcripts and created a list of 'descriptive codes'. A code is 'a short, descriptive word or phrase that assigns meaning to the data related to the researcher's analytic interests' (Lester et al., 2020, p. 100). These descriptive codes allowed me to transform the meandering interview dialogue into meaningful units, and thereby examine and complexity and nuances in the interviewed teacher educators' explanations of their perspectives and practices. Examples of such descriptive codes include 'defining a quality teacher', 'preparing teachers as reflective practitioners', and 'need for increased public expenditure in education'. Tagging the data in this way with descriptive codes served two purposes. First, it allowed me to distil a vast amount of qualitative data into manageable sizes for subsequent analysis (with roughly 350 descriptive codes representing the entire data set). Secondly, the descriptive codes enabled the first steps in connecting different teacher educators' views and experiences, for example their varied explanations of – and rationales for – defining the quality teacher. In this way, creating descriptive codes was the first step in making meaning within and across the interview data.

Creating descriptive codes was the first step in the bottom-up, inductive analysis process. The descriptive codes aimed to label the data according to the array of topics covered by the teacher educators. These descriptive codes took the form of a word or short phrase, if possible in participants' own words, to identify what the data interview data pertained to (e.g., 'critical pedagogy'). Using participants' language for the descriptive codes contributed to preserving the authentic representation of teacher educators' voices throughout the analysis process. The shortest segment of data coded was two words, as in the case of key phrases like 'ideal teacher' and 'good teacher'. Most of the data was coded at the sentence level, ranging from a part to the whole of the teacher educator's response to a particular question. This process led to over 350 codes. Creating this list of descriptive codes enabled a detailed and

nuanced organisation of the data. In short, this bottom-up, inductive coding strategy using descriptive codes was important to create an authentic representation of teacher educators' views, experiences, and reported practices (see Appendix F).

Next, I reread the transcripts with the descriptive codes highlighted to identify how the data answered my research questions. In the process of rereading the transcripts, I 'promoted' some of the descriptive codes to 'themes' if I found that they implied a category that could subsume several codes within it. For example, the descriptive code 'methods' was promoted to a theme that subsumed within itself an array of descriptive codes pertaining to teacher educators' reported pedagogic practices including lecture, discussion, and role-modelling. In some instances, I created a new theme by organising and arranging together related sets of descriptive codes. For example, the theme 'pandemic' was created to subsume several descriptive codes pertaining to teacher educators' explanations of COVID-19 on their perspectives and practices (e.g., 'shift to online teaching-learning'). Throughout, I remained alert for counter-instances in the data that might lead me to reconsider my original codes and themes. In a few instances, I inadvertently elided between inductive and deductive labels for the descriptive codes and themes. For example, I initially labelled a descriptive code 'communities of practice' even though the phrase was only used by one teacher educator. I realised that my label was informed by my knowledge of certain academic research (Lave & Wenger, 1991). On subsequent reflection, I renamed the code 'professional relationships among teacher educators' as this was more aligned with what the teacher educators were talking about. In practice – as Elliot (2018) emphasised – I learned that coding is a 'decision-making process' (p. 2860). At the end of this analytic stage, the interview data was transformed and organised into a set of themes, i.e., agglomerations of descriptive codes.

To create the topic codes, I arranged the descriptive codes (and their subsequent organisation into themes) based on their relationship with the sub-research questions. In this sense, the topic codes were deductive inasmuch that they existed *a priori* to the coding process. Specifically, all the descriptive codes and themes were grouped into three overarching topic codes in alignment with the research foci – teacher educators' views of quality education, teacher educators' practice, and the relationship between teacher educators' practice and education policies. For example, the topic code 'teacher educators' views of quality education' subsumed several themes including quality teacher, quality teaching, quality teacher education, and quality teacher educator. In turn, each theme subsumed some descriptive codes, as in the case of 'quality teacher' subsuming the descriptive codes 'definition', 'dispositions', and 'relationship' among others. Each of the three topic codes contained all the data about a particular sub-research question. In effect, the topic codes functioned as Braun and Clarke's conception of themes as 'domain summaries'. thus, the topic codes were designed to align with – and contribute to answering – the specific research questions of the study.

In addition to the three topic codes aligned with the research questions, I constructed two more topic codes. The first was titled 'constructing knowledge in the interview' and pertained to the nature of the dynamics and dialogue between the teacher educator and researcher in the interviews. The second was titled 'context of teacher educators' practice' and pertained to teacher educators' explanations of the personal and professional contexts of their teacher education practice. These former enabled me to document the implications of the researcher's positionalities and interview method on the research data, and latter to situate teacher educators' responses to the research questions in relation to their unique life histories and

experiences. Taken together, I constructed five topic codes to investigate the research questions (see Appendix G).

To create the analytic codes, I critically examined each topic code to investigate potential patterns of similarities and difference, contestations, and outlier cases. Creating analytic codes was important to investigate the underlying organising principles and thereby meaningfully interpret the interview data. For example, the analytic code 'relevance of western theories' enabled me to examine how the policy-mandated teacher education curriculum was interpreted differently by teacher educators based on their unique personal and professional contexts (see Section 7.2). In this sense, the 'analytic codes' functioned as Braun and Clarke's conception of themes as 'patterns of shared meaning'. In practice, by iteratively examining the descriptive, topic, and analytic codes, I was able to organise the interview data to answer the research questions, as well as uncover and represent the diversity and patterns of shared meaning within teacher educators' voices.

Using the above tripartite coding strategy, I iterated between in-case analysis (individual teacher educators) and cross-case analysis (across teacher educators) (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2022). For in-case analysis, I started by coding each of the 52 interview transcripts to identify emerging themes unique to each case. Next, I moved to cross-case analysis by comparing the codes across all 52 transcripts to identify patterns and similarities and differences across the teacher educator sample. In practice, I used the in-case analysis to build a deep understanding of each case, and 'then use[d] this understanding to identify patterns and themes that transcend the individual cases' (Saldana, 2016, p.4). This iterative process of in-case and cross-case analysis – using descriptive, topic, and analytic codes – enabled me to

identify patterns of shared meaning across the sample, while also representing the breadth, depth, and nuances in teacher educators' reported perspectives and practices.

In sum, the tripartite coding strategy – creating descriptive, topic, and analytic codes - enabled me to operationalise and dissolve Braun and Clarke's (2019) dichotomy between themes as domain summaries and patterns of shared meaning. Descriptive codes were created to label the data, topic codes to organise the descriptive codes (and attendant themes) to align the data with the sub-research questions, and analytic codes to critically examine the underlying organising principles that meaningfully interpret the data. In this sense, the topic codes functioned as 'domain summaries' and analytic codes as 'patterns of shared meaning'. This tripartite coding strategy allowed me to organise the data in ways that answer the research questions through the authentic representations of teacher educators' reported engagement with Indian education policies.

4.6.5 Reporting the Findings

When writing about the personal and professional contexts of teacher educators, I was always cognisant of whether I was using the teacher educator's real name or pseudonym. To protect the privacy of the pseudonymised participants, I did not include the names of institutions (whether universities, colleges, or schools), specific locations, or any identifiable data apart from their gender (implicit in my use of binary pronouns). In this way, I respected the confidentiality and pseudonymisation/anonymisation protocols, thereby safeguarding against the risk of disclosing identifiable information. To facilitate the reader's familiarity with the participants, the below participant table shows the teacher educator sample organised according to whether they are based in universities, colleges, or NGOs. Furthermore, this

participant table honours how the teacher educators in the sample chose to be represented in this thesis (Table 5).

Number	University	College	NGO
1	Prof. Dhananjay Joshi	Dr. Abhijit	Dr. Sreehari Ravindranath
2	Ms. Deepti Madhura	Dr. Hans Raj Kushwaha	Ms. Swetha Guhan
3	Dr. Kaushal Kishore	Dr. Rupam Priya	Ms. Namratha
4	Mandeep Kaur Kochar	Dr. Perveen Kumar	Mr. Vinay R.
5	Dr. Ashwini Wadegaonkar	Dr. Geetha Thakur	Mr. Joseph Matthews
6	Dr. Rajendra Prasad	Dr. Sheojee Singh	Ms. Alex
7	Dr. Sushanta Kumar Panda	Dr. Shivam Srivastava	Ms. Riya
8	Ms. Nahid Ashraf	Dr. Shamayel Rezwana	Mr. Bharath
9	Dr. Bhaskar Chaudhary	Dr. Monoronjan Bhowmik	Dr. Pari
10	Dr. Md. Faiz Ahmed	Dr. Sudhindra Roy	
11	Dr. Sarita Anand	Dr. Minoti Srivastava	
12	Dr. Priyanka Srivastava	Dr. Letha Ram Mohan	
13	Dr. Geetha Gopinath	Dr. Jyotsna Sharma	
14	Mr. Prateek	Dr. Ritesh	
15	Dr. B	Mr. Wan	
16	Dr. Sudarshan	Dr. J	
17	Dr. Om Puri	Dr.U.B	
18	Ms. Avanti	Dr. Lakshmi Devi	
19	Dr. Mythili	Dr. Priyanka G	
20	Ms. Aparna Trivedi		
21	Dr. S.S		
22	Dr. Shivani R		

Legend
Opted for no pseudonym
Self-chosen pseudonym
Researcher given pseudonym

Table 4: List of participating teacher educators organised by institutional affiliation

In the findings chapters, some interviewed teacher educators are quoted more than others. In practice, some teacher educators are represented across the findings through many short quotes, while others are represented through a few lengthy quotes. These two strategies were selected to illustrate and support the diverse reported perspectives and practices, and

attendant analytic insights. This writing strategy also enabled the representation of outlier ideas and perspectives detailed by individual teacher educators. In this sense, data saturation was considered at the level of ideas rather than individuals. To facilitate the reader's engagement with quotes from 50 teacher educators across 52 interviews, the below table ranks – in descending order – the number of times each teacher educator was quoted in the findings chapters.

Number	University	College	NGO
1	Prof. Dhananjay Joshi	Dr. J	Dr. Pari
2	Ms. Aparna Trivedi	Dr. Abhijit	Ms. Alex
3	Dr. Om Puri	Dr. Lakshmi Devi	Ms. Swetha Guhan
4	Dr. Shivani R	Dr. U.B	Dr. Sreehari Ravindranath
5	Dr. Sudarshan	Dr. Letha Ram Mohan	Mr. Joseph Matthews
6	Dr. Ashwini Wadegaonkar	Dr. Priyanka G	Mr. Vinay R.
7	Dr. B	Dr. Sudhindra Roy	Mr. Bharath
8	Ms. Deepti Madhura	Dr. Jyotsna Sharma	Ms. Namratha
9	Ms. Avanti	Dr. Sheojee Singh	Ms. Riya
10	Dr. Kaushal Kishore	Dr. Geetha Thakur	
11	Dr. Md. Faiz Ahmed	Dr. Monoronjan Bhowmik	
12	Dr. S.S	Dr. Ritesh	
13	Dr. Sarita Anand	Dr. Minoti Srivastava	
14	Dr. Rajendra Prasad	Dr. Hans Raj Kushwaha	
15	Dr. Bhaskar Chaudhary	Dr. Shamayel Rezwana	
16	Dr. Geetha Gopinath	Dr. Rupam Priya	
17	Dr. Mythili	Dr. Perveen Kumar	
18	Ms. Nahid Ashraf	Mr. Wan	
19	Mandeep Kaur Kochar	Dr. Shivam Srivastava	
20	Dr. Sushanta Kumar Panda		
21	Mr. Prateek		
22	Dr. Priyanka Srivastava		

Table 5: List of teacher educators arranged in order of their representation in the findings

To set the scene for the findings chapters, this section highlights three writing-related methodological decisions – titles, quotes, and quantifiers. If the teacher educator had a Ph.D., I refer to them as 'Dr.'. If not, I use 'Mr.' and 'Ms.' – rather than only their first names. The

former is in recognition of their professional qualification, and the latter is an expression of respect. Upon deciding to use a quote from a teacher educator in the thesis, I edited the quotes for grammar, including deleting repeating words/phrases and 'ums' and 'ahs'. This was to be respectful and sensitive to how the teacher educators were being represented in my research. And finally, in writing the findings chapters, I used the following definitions of quantifiers for clarity and consistency (Table 4).

Quantifier	**Range**
Few	0-5
Some	5-15
Several	15-25
Many	25-35
Most	35-45

Table 6: Definition of Quantifiers

Taken together, the reporting of the findings was guided by two of Tracy's (2010) recommended practices to ensure credibility: multivocality and thick description. Multivocality involved representing the multiple and diverse voices of the teacher educators across the three institutional types, and highlighting cases of consensus and contestation. Thick description implied providing rich and detailed explanations of the interviewed teacher educators' views and experiences, and how this was reportedly related to their personal and professional contexts. In all, writing the findings chapters with multivocality and thick descriptions in mind enabled me to represent the complex and unique ways in which teacher educators explain their engagement with Indian education policies.

4.6.6 Summary

While I *adopted* Braun and Clarke's (2019) framing of the role of reflexivity in the analytic process, I *adapted* their conceptualisation of themes by developing 'domain summaries' of the data that also represent 'patterns of shared meaning' among the teacher educators. In practice, I used an iterative process of inductive and deductive coding to construct three topic codes (i.e., *domain summaries*) to answer the research questions – teacher educators' understandings of quality education, explanations of Indian education policies, and explanations of teacher education policies. Each topic code represented a diversity of teacher educators' views and experiences pertaining to a specific sub-research question. In addition, I created two more topic codes to contextualise teacher educators' views and experiences in accordance with their unique life-histories and contexts, and the interviews in which these data were co-constructed. Analytic codes were subsequently created by examining the descriptive and topic codes to enable the representation of *patterns of shared meaning* within the complex and nuanced ways in which teacher educators explained their engagement with Indian education policies Throughout this process, I remained reflexive by staying sensitive to, and acknowledging, how my views and experiences influenced the act of co-constructing data through the interviews and the subsequent process of data analysis.

4.7 Positionality

My various positionalities had important implications for the recruitment of the sample, teacher educators' willingness and enthusiasm to participate in the research, and the act of co-constructing the data in the online interviews. In some instances, these positionalities also led

to certain ethical quandaries. This section considers the epistemological consequences of my positionality, and concurrent ethical conundrums during the research.

Gender played a tangential, yet possibly important, role in the recruitment process. I received a few responses to my initial invitation letter from teacher educators addressing me as 'Ms.' instead of 'Mr.'. I was unsure how to correct this mistaken gender assumption, and wondered if it impacted how the teacher educator perceived the research, or me as a researcher. I chose to ignore the matter. However, before the interview, I was nervous about how the teacher educator might react when they realised that I was not female. Ultimately, this proved to be a non-issue. If the teacher educators were surprised or displeased when they realised, they did not show it. In hindsight, I realise I could have easily corrected their assumption by adding the title 'Mr.' in an initial email reply, likely with little consequence.

I was 31 years old when I organised the interviews, but was told that I looked younger. Perhaps this was why a few teacher educators explained that they saw me as their 'student'. These teacher educators took kindly to me, and extended their unequivocal support to my project. As Dr. Geetha T. explained, 'even though you interviewed me, I still consider you as my student, so in future research also if you want any help, I will definitely do that'. I realised that though I attempted to engage as a 'researcher', positioning myself simultaneously as a 'student' could be advantageous for the data collection. In this sense, I conveniently let my perceived youth serve the function of establishing rapport with the teacher educators, and reinforcing their willingness to 'help' by sharing their time, views, and experiences.

I believe my positionality as a 'student' and 'scholar' at Oxford University greatly enabled my research. My initial strategy was to leverage the social capital of Oxford University to facilitate access to, and recruitment of, teacher educators for the interviews. To emphasise the point, the subject of my first email to teacher educators was 'Greetings from the University of Oxford'. I felt this added credibility to my person, and gravity to the project. Some teacher educators explained that me being a student at Oxford partly explained their willingness and enthusiasm to participate in the interview. In this sense, the strategy worked. The following two examples illustrate the point:

> **Dr. Om:** 'This is my first experience wherein I have been interviewed by a student who is from Oxford. I'm honoured and privileged, that you have chosen me.'
>
> **Dr. Minoti:** 'And it's a great pleasure for me to provide such information to you, as a research scholar you are associated with a great university.'

Conversely, in one case being a student at Oxford proved counterproductive. A teacher educator with whom I had exchanged a few emails and was about to schedule an interview, suddenly changed their mind. They emailed me a link to a news article explaining how a reputed Indian journalist was tricked into thinking they had been offered a job at another prestigious institution – Harvard University (Nair and Wang, 2021). Perhaps, they thought my research invitation letter was a similar scam. That was the last email I received from them, and the interview never materialised. Relatedly, Dr. Abhijit also explained that when he received my invitation letter, he initially thought it was a 'scam mail'. However, his doubts were allayed after he texted me on WhatsApp as my phone number was on the invitation letter. Thus, in two cases being invited to an interview by a student at Oxford was perceived as a possible 'scam'. In one case, it meant an interview that could have been, was not.

During the recruitment process, I emphasised my identity as a former schoolteacher in India (see section 4.4). I strategically played the schoolteacher identity to distance myself from the potential perceived social distance of being an Oxford scholar, and establish trust through shared experiences with the participants. Thus, as Dr. Faiz noted, after some initial excitement he 'forgot the Oxford University name', and became interested in the study because of my background as a schoolteacher, and my intention to investigate the views, experiences, and practices of teacher educators in India. In effect, my positionality as a former schoolteacher in India enabled me to establish personal credibility and research legitimacy, all while cultivating rapport with the participants. Thus, my positionality as an Oxford University student only partly explained teacher educators' willingness and enthusiasm to participate in the research.

Tangentially, three other issues related to my Oxford positionality proved problematic – the question of how I was funding my DPhil, the perceived influence I wielded in the department, and whether I would return to India upon completion. I was hesitant to tell the few teacher educators that asked that I was self-funding the DPhil because I felt it would create a distance/hierarchy based on my perceived socio-economic status. Thus, I always skirted around the question. For example, when Prof. Dhananjay asked me about funding, I replied nervously, 'well, I'm self-funding for the moment, and hopefully, I will get a scholarship to complete it'. This skirting strategy allowed me to keep the focus on the teacher educator and their experiences, rather than mine. Meanwhile, a few teacher educators asked if I could organise a post-doc for them, or collaborations between their organisations and the Department. I replied hesitantly that I would speak to my supervisors or let them know if anything came up. In both instances – questions of funding and perceived influence at the

Department – I did not lie, but did not tell the whole truth either. In these ways, I may have overplayed my positionality as an Oxford scholar.

My identity as an Oxford student was also juxtaposed against my identity as an Indian citizen by teacher educators who asked if I planned to return to work in/for India. For example, Dr. Monoronjan told me 'come back to India, and serve our India, your India; come and we will try to change our Indian system'. Considering the historical debates surrounding the 'brain drain' (e.g., Khadria, 1999), I was aware of the social desirability of my expected response. In these instances, I assured them that I would return to India – though I felt ambivalent about my stated commitment. These questions did make me reflect on my roots as a schoolteacher in the rural Himalayas, remember my passion for teaching in the villages, wonder if I would go back, and question what my contribution to the field of education could be. I felt distinctively committed to India and its people, but also curious about newly discovered academic and professional horizons. I felt simultaneously Indian, and not.

This research was reviewed by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) (see Appendix D), and in most instances, I followed the CUREC approved protocol (see also Sections 4.4.1 and 4.5.1). However, there were also some unforeseen ethical conundrums that resulted from conducting online interviews where I had to rely on my personal judgement. For example, one interview was interrupted by an unexpected interjection by the teacher educator. He paused our discussion to tell me that 'some bad pictures' were appearing 'again and again' on his screen. I panicked. I hurriedly apologised and assured him that this had never happened on MS Teams before. He asked if I could see his screen, and if I was recording the video. My heart was racing. I told him that I was only recording audio, and that his video had been frozen for the past few minutes. After a few minutes, he told me that he

was ‘okay to continue’. And so, I continued as if nothing had happened. In another case, during a pre-interview rapport cultivating call with one teacher educator, she invited her college-age son to talk to me on video and ask for advice on whether and where he should apply for a master’s program or get a job. In the subsequent dialogue, I inquired about his interests and Socratically essayed to help him arrive at his own conclusion. I speculate that my positionality as a young, male Oxford scholar influenced the teacher educator’s decision to ask her son to speak with me. In these ways, I navigated the nuanced ethical quandaries that arose from my various positionalities during the research process.

Looking back, there are some things I feel I could have done better. Specifically, I feel like I exited the ‘research field’ poorly during this research. Initially, I had idealistic imaginations of cultivating meaningful relationships with each of the interviewed teacher educators, both during the process of writing the thesis and thereafter. For some time, I was on track. In the weeks following the interviews, I exchanged brief emails with some of the interviewed teacher educators – updating them on my progress, and inquiring about their work and well-being. Unfortunately, as the months drifted by, these correspondences trickled to a pause. This experience has taught me the importance of (re)considering the ethics of exiting the field, and respecting relationships with individuals who choose to contribute their time and willingness to research projects.

In all, this research was permeated with persistent questions concerning the epistemological consequences of my positionality, and both attendant and unexpected ethical conundrums.

4.8 Overview

Taken together, this chapter justifies the selection of an in-depth qualitative research design along with virtual interviews to answer the research questions. It explains how I organised 52 semi-structured interviews with 50 teacher educators working in universities, colleges, and NGOs, and used an adapted form of Reflexive Thematic Analysis to answer the research questions. Throughout, it acknowledges the implications of my positionalities on the research process, from recruitment to data collection and analysis. It concludes with considerations of the epistemological consequences of my positionalities, and how I navigated attendant ethical quandaries during the research. In essence, this chapter defends the methodological choices made during this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW DO TEACHER EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND QUALITY EDUCATION?

5.1 Overview

The first findings chapter begins the investigation of how teacher educators engage with Indian education policies through examining their understanding of quality education. This is important because teacher educators are expected to prepare teachers for quality education, yet in Indian education policies 'quality education' has diverse meanings each with attendant implications for defining the role of the teacher and thereby teacher educators' practice. Given this ambiguity, this chapter answers the first sub-research question: *How do teacher educators understand quality education?*

Though the interviewed teacher educators talked about quality education in different ways, they collectively confirmed and contested the causal relationship between the aims and means of quality education. Accordingly, this chapter begins by exploring how the interviewed teacher educators used the term 'quality education'. Specifically, the teacher educators across the three institutional types emphasised an array of aims of quality education for the individual school learner and society, and stressed the significance of the quality teacher and teaching set within a supportive system as the means to achieve the envisioned aims. Within this wider consensus of aims and means, each teacher educator rationalised their understanding of quality education in different ways by drawing on their unique life histories, professional trajectories, and aspects of the historical and contemporary Indian context. Taken together, the interviewed teacher educators' understanding of quality education was

important because it reportedly shapes the purpose and process of their teacher education practice.

5.2 Using the term 'quality education'

The teacher educators used the terms 'quality education', 'quality *in* education' and 'quality *of* education' sometimes synonymously, and at other times with distinct meanings. Specifically, the terms were used to refer to both an *aim* and a *means*. Take the example of 'quality *in* education'. For NGO-based Ms. Alex, quality *in* education is related to the *aim* of universal access. In her words, 'quality *in* education would mean when every single child in our country, irrespective of their demographic, has access to opportunities equally'. Ms. Alex - inspired by her mother who was a schoolteacher for almost four decades – explained that she knew 'quite early on that [she] wanted to be in the education space'. After completing an undergraduate degree in psychology and English literature, Ms. Alex chose to pursue an M.A. in Education because she thought it would be 'above and beyond the B.Ed.'. However, she highlighted that the M.A. curriculum was 'very theoretical' and separated from the ground realities of teaching-learning settings in India. She sighed, 'we were exposed to western schools of thought that were 70-80 years behind us, there was very little exposure [in the teacher education curriculum] to the Indian context'. After her M.A. in Education, Ms. Alex became a schoolteacher at a low-income public school via a Teach for India (TFI) fellowship. Subsequently, she juxtaposed her experiences as a student teacher in university-based teacher education programs and alternative routes like TFI saying that the latter involved 'a lot of experiential learning, a lot of understanding by doing…with exposure to go and experience what's happening on the ground'. Furthermore, Ms. Alex emphasised the importance of the role of the teacher to 'bridge the learning gaps' in the classroom once the

aim of universal access is achieved. Moreover, she noted that her perspectives of two aims of quality education – universal access and foundational literacy and numeracy – were deeply imprinted by her latter experiences of entering the teaching profession via the TFI program. Similarly, how the interviewed teacher educators explained the aims of 'quality education' was partly related to their unique professional experiences.

Quality education was also understood as a process or means to achieve its envisioned aims. For example, NGO-based Dr. Pari posited that quality *in* education is a *means* that enables the achievement of the envisioned outcomes of quality education. She explained that the aim of quality education is for school students 'to enhance themselves as individuals and become contributing members of the society'. And, as she put it, 'when [she] say[s] quality *in* education, it is a process that would enable this to happen'. As an NGO-based teacher educator, Dr. Pari is presently engaged in preparing teachers to enable individual and social transformation by designing professional development programs for in-service teachers based on 'life skills'. The examples of these two NGO-based teacher educators illustrate how quality education – and its attendant terms – are used to refer to the envisioned aims and means for school education, albeit explained and rationalised in different ways.

At the outset, it must be noted that teacher educators' understanding of quality education is subjective and relative. This is evidenced by their use of language, and references to the local teaching-learning context. In the interviews, many university and college-based teacher educators introduced their understanding of quality education with clauses such as 'according to me' (Dr. Ashwini) and 'in my opinion' (Dr. Abhijit). For example, Dr. Priyanka S prefaced her comments with '*I believe* that personality development is quality education' (emphasis added). These introductory caveats suggest the continuing lack of consensus among teacher

educators on the meaning of quality education. Similarly, NGO-based teacher educators like Mr. Bharath began, 'there will be lots of argument on quality education, but *I believe* that quality education means enabling children to figure out their passions' (emphasis added). Further, references to the prevalent local and national contexts for schools and teachers also served as a rationale for certain conceptualisations of quality education. For example, Dr. Rajendra stressed the unique diversity of culture, religion, demography, and geography in India; this then became the rationale for his understanding of quality education as a tool for cultural transmission. In his words, 'education is the best tool to transfer your cultural heritage to the next generation, in light of this we must set the goal of the education, the goal of the teacher education'. In effect, Dr. Rajendra – a university-based teacher educator – drew on the unique history, culture, and contexts of India to understand quality education. In these ways, the interviewed teacher educators qualified their understanding of quality education as both subjective and relative.

In addition to quality education, two other terms were used by a few teacher educators in the interviews – true education and right education. Two university-based teacher educators used the term 'true education'. Drawing on international and Indian education philosophers like Dewey, Krishnamurti, and Swami Vivekananda, Mr. Prateek suggested that true education is integrally linked to the learner's moral and spiritual development. Echoing this holistic purpose, Dr. Sudarshan explained that true education is the 'transformation of the entire personality…from a mass of cells into a virtuous human being'. Notably, Dr. Sudarshan works at the Department of Education at a prominent public university rooted in the philosophy of a famous Indian freedom fighter and educationist. In this regard, Dr. Sudarshan pointed to the continued relevance of the historical *Vedic* legacy – i.e., the *guru* tradition aimed at enabling students' holistic development and self-realisation – to explain his

understanding of quality education (see Section 5.4.2). In parallel, Dr. Sheojee – a college-based teacher educator – used the term 'right education', popularised by the philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti. Subsequently, he based his understanding of quality education on the Krishnamurtian philosophy that 'education is the process of inward planning of intelligence' that results in the 'mutation' or 'transformation' of the mind. Dr. Sheojee explained that this understanding of quality education stems from his experiences as a teacher in a school run by the Krishnamurti Foundation of India (KFI). Embedded in the Krishnamurtian vision for quality education, Dr. Sheojee discovered the 'beauty and nobility of teaching [at the KFI school] and that was [his] initiation into the profession of teaching and being a teacher educator'. In effect, Dr. Sheojee's understanding of quality education (i.e., 'right education') was rooted in his personal beliefs and experiences as a schoolteacher, rather than his professional preparation as a teacher educator. Though rationalised in these different ways, the terms right education and true education were used interchangeably with quality education.

In short, the interviewed teacher educators used the term 'quality education' – and attendant terms like 'quality *in* education', 'quality *of* education', and 'right education' – to signify the expected aims and means for school education. Importantly, the teacher educators' understanding of quality education was reported as both subjective and relative. This meant that the teacher educators understood quality education in different ways based on their unique knowledge, experiences, and contexts. These diverse understandings of quality education, including the role of the teacher and their teaching, reportedly served to orient the teacher educator's practice.

Quality education and the logic of causality

In the interviews, teacher educators across the three institutional types explained the aims of quality education in reference to what this means for individual school students, and thereby cumulatively the wider society. The rationale for this framing is found in teacher educators' explanations of the logic of causality between teacher education, school education, and society.

In Indian education policies, teacher education is positioned within a narrative of causality that links education policies to the envisioned outcomes for quality education in four causal steps, from:

(i) education policies to teacher educators' practice,

(ii) teacher educators' practice to student teachers' learning,

(iii) student teachers' learning to their teaching practice in schools, and

(iv) teachers' teaching practice in schools to the envisioned array of positive outcomes of quality education.

The interviewed teacher educators – across universities, colleges, and NGOs – both confirmed and challenged this prevailing logic of causality that links the aims and means of education policies. Specifically, two steps of this logic of causality were emphasised in the interviews to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education – teacher educators' practice and teachers' teaching. Dr. Letha – drawing on her experience as Chief Consultant at the Ministry of Education – explained that the meaning of quality education has shifted, 'the definition is on now the process and the output, in the process the teacher educators' role comes, the teachers' role comes'. In agreement, Ms. Alex – an NGO-based teacher educator and former TFI fellow – emphasised the point:

> ‘The cascading effect of shaping the future has always been teachers educators for schoolteachers, and schoolteachers for children. I don’t think this will change very largely because this has been the narrative all along. The onus has always remained on schoolteachers and therefore all teacher educators.’

Teacher education programs were explained as integral for preparing quality teachers. As college-based Dr. Abhijit explained, ‘when teacher education is flawless, then it can make a teacher flawless’. Dr. Abhijit’s ‘intention was to be a doctor’ but he was inspired by his undergraduate college lecturers to join the teaching profession. As opposed to the *school teaching route*, Dr. Abhijit directly became a teacher educator via the *academic route*, i.e., acquiring the requisite professional qualifications and certifications. In this regard, the interviewed teacher educators understanding of quality education – and their subsequent teacher education practice – was also reportedly shaped by their pathways into the profession.

Importantly, the quality of teacher education programs was explained as dependent on teacher educators and their practice. As university-based Dr. Kaushal – who also opted for the academic route into the profession – noted, ‘the quality of [school] education cannot go above the quality of teachers, and the quality of teachers cannot go above the quality of teacher educators’. Moreover, in the interviews, the teacher educator was positioned as a crucial link between the expectations of education policies and their implementation in schools through teachers. University-based Ms. Deepti – who entered the profession via the school teaching route – pointed out that ‘the NEP 2020 expects the teachers to train the students in critical analysis, on creativity, in so many things…but a teacher can train only once she’s trained in all those, and who will train her? We need teacher educators for that’. In this sense, most interviewees agreed on the significance of teacher educators and teachers in achieving the envisioned aims of

quality education, regardless of whether they joined the profession via the academic or school teaching routes.

Prepared through teacher educators' practice, quality teachers and quality teaching were positioned as integral to achieving the aims of economic development, social transformation, and national prosperity. College-based Dr. Shamayel illustrated this logic noting that 'if the individual is educated, his family gets educated, that affects the society, society becomes good, society will become a better place to live in, then comes your nation, the nation will develop'. And, drawing on her school teaching experience, she also highlighted the role of the teacher stating that 'the destiny of nation is shaped in her classroom'. Meanwhile, university-based Dr. Bhaskar took the example of the 'education system of Singapore' to reflect how 'education is directly related to the progress and standard of living of a particular nation, it is directly related to the national and the international reputation of a particular country'. And Dr. Letha - Chief Consultant at the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the NEP – stressed, 'if the teacher quality improved, obviously education would improve, that is for sure, so everything starts with a teacher as the focal point…and once this quality improves, it will affect the nation in all aspects'. Similarly, many interviewed teacher educators highlighted different causal links between education and society based on their understanding of the aims of quality education.

Though confirmed in these ways, the interviewed teacher educators also complicated this linear logic of causality between teacher education, education, and society. For example, many teacher educators talked about factors related to *teacher education* (e.g., privatisation of TEIs, lack of accountability, lack of adequate infrastructure and resources, high pupil-teacher educator ratios, student teachers' backgrounds and motivations), and *school*

education (e.g., low status and salaries for teachers, inadequate infrastructure and resources, high pupil-teacher ratios, students' backgrounds) that affect teacher educators' practice, student teachers' learning and their subsequent teaching in schools, and finally school students' learning outcomes. For example, college-based Dr. Lakshmi mentioned that we must recognise the implications of children's different socio-economic backgrounds on their learning in schools. She explained that 'the performance of the student is also largely dependent on their background and we [teacher educators] fail somewhere to realise that every child that comes to the classroom with a very different kind of life world'. Notably, Dr. Lakshmi works at an institution that draws on JP Naik's philosophy of education, and promotes interdisciplinary and decolonial approaches to teacher education. Dr. Lakshmi traced many of her critical perspectives in teacher education to her work in this institution, and explained the importance of preparing teachers to personalise teaching-learning to the needs to specific children and contexts.

To mitigate these complicating factors, the interviewed teacher educators pointed to four other necessary conditions for quality education – appropriate level of public expenditure, adequate infrastructure and resources, nurturing environment, and accountability – together explained under the umbrella of a supportive 'education system'. Based on the above premises, the rest of this chapter explores teacher educators' understanding of (a) the *aims* of quality education for individuals and the society, (b) its *means* through their explanations of the quality teacher, quality teaching, and (c) the necessary conditions of the education system.

5.3 The Aims of Quality Education

In the interviews, teacher educators explained the aims of quality education in reference to what this means for individual school students, and cumulatively – through the logic of causality – for the wider society.

5.3.1 For Individuals

Two aims of quality education for the individual school learner were highlighted in the interviews – achieving mandated learning outcomes, and the learners' holistic development.

Achieving Learning Outcomes

In the last five years, the NCERT[19] released two policies outlining the expected learning outcomes for children at the elementary and secondary levels (NCERT, 2017, 2019). These learning outcomes were explained as important to 'help all stakeholders make their efforts in the right direction to ensure learning among students, and help provide quality education' (NCERT, 2017, p. vii). In these policies, mandated learning outcomes were rationalised because of the significance of quality education as a 'force multiplier which enables self-reliance, boosts economic growth by enhancing skills and improves people's lives by opening up opportunities for better livelihood' (NCERT, 2019, p. vii).

In alignment with the education policies, a few teacher educators across the three institutional types understood quality education through the lens of 'learning outcomes'. Dr. Letha, drawing on her position at the Ministry of Education, noted that 'we have defined learning

[19] National Council of Educational Research and Training

outcomes through the NCERT and have distributed the learning outcomes for each class, each stage to all the schools…even to the community, and the parents'. University-based Dr. Geetha G explained that the UGC[20] is now following the successful precedent of 'outcome-based education first introduced in Canada and Australia'. Dr. Faiz – Dean of a university Department of Education – explained learning outcomes as 'the minimum level of learning, a minimum understanding up to that class, that should be there so that we can compete at an international level of understanding'. Notably, Dr. Faiz pointed to his home state of Bihar where less than 40% of school students had reportedly achieved the mandated minimum levels of learning. This learning gap in the social context of his teacher education practice served to rationalise his understanding of quality education as minimum learning level outcomes.

The main learning outcome noted by a few teacher educators was 'foundational literacy and numeracy' (FLN). Notably, most of the teacher educators that emphasised foundational literacy and numeracy were based in NGOs, and work with children of the urban poor in government schools. For example, Ms. Alex – drawing on her experience as a TFI schoolteacher and work as an NGO-based teacher educator – elaborated on the rationale for FLN saying that 'there's absolutely no foundational literacy, numeracy skills' in low-income schools, and alluding to the findings of the ASER report she continued, 'there's at least a three-grade gap in terms of skill level'. Similarly, Mr. Joseph – also an NGO-based teacher educator and former TFI fellow – proposed that teacher education programs need to prepare student teachers with a 'very detailed understanding of student learning outcomes, or student development goals' including certain 'personality traits' like teamwork and resilience. Meanwhile, taking the example of foundational literacy and numeracy, NGO-based Ms.

[20] University Grants Commission

Swetha – Co-Founder of a teacher education NGO - also pointed to the tension between achieving the aims of mandated learning outcomes and the holistic development of the school learner. She explained that:

> 'The biggest concern more than FLN skills, which are really beautifully broken down, is that assessment might become the focus – in my opinion – of schools…This might further deteriorate the focus on the social-emotional development of children, and has been one fear that we've been considering.'

A few university- and college-based teacher educators, extrapolated learning outcomes from popular international assessments in education. For example, Dr. Bhaskar – who works in a rural university located in a Himalayan state – explained that one aim of his teacher education practice is to prepare teachers 'so that learners at the school level may perform well on international assessments like PISA and TISS'. He justified his view by pointing to the present scenario of low and differential learning outcomes for schoolchildren in the villages and districts surrounding his university. This focus on international assessments equates school students' performance on high-stakes standardised tests as a measure of quality education, and accordingly aligns the practice and preparation of teachers in teacher education programs.

Despite the reported focus on learning outcomes and international standardised assessments, none of the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs mentioned the high-stakes, state-mandated examinations for high school students as part of expected learning outcomes for quality education. This is significant because these 'board exams' – taken at the end of 10th and 12th grade – have been consistently blamed in the media and academic literature for inducing anxiety and depression among school students, and leading to a crisis of student suicides (e.g., Sharma, 2022; Nanisett, 2021; Sarveswar and Thomas,

2020). According to the interviewed teacher educators, the reported aim of quality education is for learners to achieve the envisioned learning outcomes rather than only do well on the test, with the latter not necessarily indicative of the former. However, these views raise questions about who sets the learning outcomes, how desirable outcomes are selected, and what potential learning outcomes are neglected.

Learners' Holistic Development

Several teacher educators across the three institutional types used the terms 'holistic education' or 'holistic development' to signify an integral aim of quality education for the school learner. However, this was defined in diverse ways. For university-based Ms. Deepti, holistic education meant 'training in the life skills, which is very important, and making or building up his or her [the learner's] personality'. This emphasis on quality education as life skills harkens to the institutional emphasis of certain teacher education NGOs – and thereby, NGO-based teacher educators like Dr. Pari – in preparing teachers to teach life skills in schools. Meanwhile, Ms. Swetha – cofounder of a teacher education NGO – explained that holistic development at her NGO is conceptualised through 'five domains – language, cognition, social-emotional development, physical development, and an innate creativity and curiosity towards learning'. Though with varying emphases, the teacher educators collectively used the term holistic development – and related concepts like fulfilment of learners' potential and all-around development – to signify the aim of preparing 'good human beings'.

Six teacher educators representing the three institutional types highlighted how quality education leads to the fulfilment of learners' 'potential'. Drawing on 'the school of thought of Rousseau', NGO-based Dr. Pari noted that the purpose of quality education is 'to draw your own innate potential'. Similarly, college-based Dr. Shamayel suggested that quality education

involves drawing out of the innate God-given potential of the learner. Drawing on a Gandhian philosophy of education, she pointed out that 'Gandhiji said education is drawing the very best that is there in man's body and soul…God has already given them strength and potential, teachers streamline that and put it on the right track'. In effect, the same aim of quality education – holistic development – was rationalised by drawing on both international and Indian philosophers and scholars. Furthermore, Dr. Shivani – who works at a large, public university reputed according to her for its 'wider discourses of social transformation' – suggested that a quality teacher can 'sometimes makes up for the lack of infrastructure that's there'. In this way, the quality teacher and their teaching were explained as critical to achieving the important aim of learner's holistic development.

Four teacher educators understood holistic education through the lens of the 'all-round development' of the learner. In college-based Mr. Wan's words, quality education means 'focusing more on holistic development, not only intellectual capabilities, not only scholastic areas, but also co-scholastic areas of the student'. Mr. Wan joined the profession via the academic route. He decided to shift from the corporate sector to teacher education 'to acquire more stability'. Mr. Wan explained that the profession seemed like the right fit because when he was younger, he enjoyed playing 'teacher teacher' with his cousin sister. After completing his B.Ed. and M.Ed. in quick succession, he joined the profession as a private college-based teacher educator. Reflecting on his professional trajectory, he noted that though becoming a teacher educator was 'something that accidentally happened, it might be that something that was already present inside naturally came out'. This narrative reinforces the view – akin to Dr. Pari and Dr. Shamayel – that each individual has some intrinsic potential to be drawn out.

The reported notion of holistic development as 'all-around development' was also linked with preparing learners with a particular set of 'skills'. This includes 'vocational skills', 'soft skills', 'life skills', '21st century skills', and '21st century life skills'. As university-based Ms. Aparna asserted, 21st century skills include 'analytical skills, reasoning skills, recall and recognition, all that we study in Bloom's that has to be put into practice'. These diverse meanings of holistic development across university-, college-, and NGO-based teacher educators allude to the importance of investigating the origin and rationale for teacher educators' understanding of holistic education.

Notably, a few university- and college-based teacher educators explained their understanding of holistic development by linking Bloom's three domains of knowledge to Gandhi's '3H' formula for quality education – head, hands, heart. For example, college-based Dr. Sheojee – who described Krishnamurti as 'a unique *guru*'– suggested that 'when Gandhiji talks about education, he talks about drawing out the all-around development in the child – mind, body, hands, and feet'. And, Dr. Priyanka G – who works at a university grounded in the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak[21] – explained that 'in order for the development of everything, like the "three H" formula of Mahatma Gandhi in Nai Talim – the head, heart, and hands – we are integrating each and every domain in that'. In effect, these teacher educators understood quality education by tracing underlying similarities between the educational philosophies grounded in both international (i.e., Bloom) and Indian (i.e., Gandhi) contexts. Notably in this regard, a few teacher educators derided the lack of attention to the affective domain in teacher education, resulting in teachers who are under-prepared to attend to the emotional development of the school learner. College-based Dr. Priyanka G– who worked at an education NGO before entering university teacher education via the academic route –

[21] Founder of the Sikhism, and first of ten revered Sikh *gurus*.

explained this causal relationship between teacher educators' practice and teachers' teaching in schools:

> 'If we talk about the domains of knowledge – we have the cognitive domain, psychomotor domain, and affective domain. The affective domain is the least touched domain in teacher education as well as in school teaching. That's what I feel. Because we [teacher educators] don't prepare our [student] teachers to be emotionally strong or emotionally aware of the needs of the students. And the same we are passing on to the [school] students as well.'

Bloom's taxonomy was positioned as notably important by some university- and college-based teacher educators in the preparation of teachers for quality education. As university-based Ms. Aparna – who also joined the profession via the academic route – put it, 'Bloom's is something like the Bible in our teacher education field'. However, Dr. Sheojee questioned the assumption that quality education (and preparing teachers for quality education) can be based on Bloom's taxonomy. Instead harkening back to Krishnamurti's own life experiences and personal charisma, he alluded to the intrinsic characteristics of a quality teacher that are independent of their learning in teacher education programs. He argued, 'the very first question is "why is there a need for a taxonomy?", because all teachers teach, and great teachers are always great, whether they teach with Bloom's taxonomy or not'. In effect, the interviewed teacher educators confirmed or contested the significance of Bloom's taxonomy in their teacher education practice based on their unique understanding of quality education.

Notably, Dr. Sudarshan – who works at a university founded by, and based on the philosophy of, a famous Indian freedom fighter and educationist – suggested that the origin of holistic education lies in the *guru-shishya* tradition of the Vedic period. He lamented how modern education is aimed at preparing students only for degrees and jobs. In his view, the current commercialisation of education has implications for shifting the role of the teacher and teaching away from learners' holistic development and self-knowledge, and towards a

business transaction between a producer and consumer. Dr. Sudarshan explained that the *guru-shishya* tradition was a 'very refined concept of education' aimed at leading the learner to 'self-realisation', while in present-day India the teacher is merely a 'salaried professional'. In this light, he asserted that 'the *Guru-Shishya Parampara* was more holistic education', while in modern education 'the teacher has become the service provider, and the student has become a customer'. Thus, Dr. Sudarshan traced the roots of holistic education to the *Vedic* system of education, and advocated a return to the quality teacher as *guru*. Despite their agreement on the importance of quality education for the holistic development of the learner (albeit rationalised differently), the interviewed teacher educators were divided concerning the continued relevance of the image of the *guru* for teachers in the 21st century (see section 5.4.1).

Bringing together the aims of holistic development and cultivating learners' potential, eleven teacher educators across institutional types explained that an important aim of quality education is to prepare a 'good human being'. For example, college-based Dr. Shamayel noted that quality education will 'shape the individual, make his life, make him human…we want to make human beings, complete human beings'. As college-based Dr. U.B. explained, when 'talking about being a good human being and being sensitive, it means being sensitive to everyone around you'. Notably, each teacher educator drew on different sources to rationalise their understanding of quality education as preparing good human beings. For example, Dr. J – principal of a teacher education college – rationalised her understanding of preparing good human beings through her belief in Buddhism. She reflected, 'I am deeply influenced by Buddhism, and therefore, I believe that everybody has the inherent potential to do well'. Notably, Dr. J proposed that this focus on preparing good human beings is true for

quality education around the world because ‘across the globe, the definition of human being remains the same’.

The notion of a ‘good human being’ was importantly connected to qualities of sensitivity and empathy. University-based Dr. Faiz elaborated that his ‘personal understanding of good human beings means that we should understand others, we should understand our neighbours, we should understand the larger interest of the society, not simply the individualistic approach’. He justified this view by pointing to how preparing good human beings is critical to address the many challenges of Indian society (e.g., ‘inequality, communalism, casteism, regionalism’), and ‘act for the betterment of society’. Relatedly, as Head of a university Department of Education, Dr. Faiz drew on ‘diplomatic theory which works more than the university’s laws and regulations’ to align his teacher educators’ practice with the TEI’s vision of quality education (and quality teachers) for social transformation. In this sense, teacher educators drew on their unique knowledge and beliefs, and aspects of historical and contemporary Indian society to explain the preparation of ‘good human beings’ as a universal aim of quality education equally relevant for India, and countries around the world.

In sum, teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained two aims of quality education for the individual school learner – achieving learning outcomes, enabling holistic development. Importantly, while the aim of learning outcomes was specific to the Indian context, the aim of learners’ holistic development (and preparing good human beings) was explained as universal, i.e., relevant for quality education around the world.

5.3.2 For Society

The interviewed teacher educators explained that if quality education achieved its aims for individual school learners, this will in turn lead to positive outcomes for the economy, society, and nation. These envisioned outcomes become part of the reported aims of quality education.

For a few teacher educators, quality education leads to the economic development of the nation by increasing learners' skills and employability. University-based Dr. Bhaskar – drawing on the relative poverty and lack of access to education and resources in his rural Himalayan home-state – noted that if the quality of education is 'maintained at a certain standard' it will bring 'some positive changes' to the 'economic strength of a particular nation'. Similarly, university-based Dr. Rajendra – who previously explained quality education as a tool for cultural transmission – elaborated:

> 'National goals largely depend on the teachers. How the teacher develops the mindset of the student, how the teachers develop the skills among the students. Then after that, those students will go to the market. That will continue to the economy, and directly to the nation. In that way, there is a great role of teachers and teacher educators in the economic development of the country.'

For other teacher educators, quality education leads to social transformation by unravelling entrenched assumptions and biases. University-based Ms. Nahid's views on the positive relationship between quality education and social transformation was rationalised through an example from her own life. She recounted:

> 'If the students are educated very well, by very qualified teachers, and they will get quality education. They will be an asset to society. Alone they can change to a great extent the thinking of society…I come from a very poor and backward village in Bihar…People told me and my family that you don't need to teach your daughters because finally they have to do the cooking and all these things. My mother didn't

> listen to them. And now I have completed my B.Ed., M.Ed., and now I'm doing a PhD. I'm now self-dependent…Now the perception of these people that are around the village has changed. Now they think that girls can also do better than the boys.'

In some cases, the teacher educators' understanding of quality education was interwoven with their TEI's vision and mission. For example, university-based Dr. Mythili explained how her TEI's emphasis on (preparing teachers for) quality education as social transformation has been shaped by the founding family's legacy. Their founder – an industrialist and philanthropist – 'who valued education' established this university as a way of giving back to society. Dr. Mythili explained that 'his [the founder's] motto of "giving back multifold to society whatever society has given to you" has become interwoven into our vision and mission'. This explained her TEI's emphasis on preparing teachers who will contribute the transformation of socio-economic inequalities in Indian society. Relatedly Dr. Mythili explained that the university's current vision and mission are being importantly shaped by the ideals and ambitions of its present president. This president attended a reputable foreign university, and 'since he took over, the university has been working towards international standards'. She explained that the president 'is trying to incorporate his learnings and make this institution of comparable standards to developed countries like the UK and US'. Notably, the present president – Dr. Mythili noted – has degrees in engineering and management, but none in education. This anecdote highlights the indelible ways in which a TEI's management shapes its vision and mission, which in turn defines the aims and its means of its teacher education program and teacher educators' practice (in this case, preparing teachers for quality education as social transformation).

Related to the aim of social transformation, fifteen teacher educators – primarily based in universities and colleges – understood quality education through the concept of 'critical education'. Critical education was explained as aimed at preparing 'critical thinkers' and

developing students' 'critical thinking', and is reportedly dependent on 'critical pedagogy' - the preparation for which emphasises the role of the teacher educator. Specifically, critical education was explained as inextricably important to achieving the envisioned aim of social transformation. Notably, Dr. S.S. traced her emphasis on the significance of critical education to the university where she works, and the education philosophy of Paulo Freire (whom she discovered while working at her current department of education). In essence, as university-based Dr. Om's opined, 'once you generate a group of people or generation where you have critical thinkers, creative thinkers, then definitely you will be a game changer.'

Tangential to the aim of social transformation, two teacher educators understood quality education as 'peace education'. NGO-based Dr. Pari – drawing on her Ph.D. thesis based in the domain of peace education – elaborated that this includes the concept of 'peace efficacy' that enables learners to 'practice peace each day and out…and choose to be at peace'. In this regard, university-based Dr. Sudarshan explained that 'peace is a state of mind…and peace education should be how you can make your child free from conflict'. Importantly, both emphasised the role of the teacher in ensuring peace education. Harkening to his stated significance of the continued relevance of the image of teacher as *guru*, Dr. Sudarshan noted that the teacher must first be at peace, saying 'if you are living in peace, you will nurture peace'. But this is difficult for teachers because – as Dr. Pari suggested – teachers 'themselves also have a lot of unrest in their own life as well'. In these cases, the interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique experiences and views – rather than their institutional affiliation – to explain their understanding of quality education as peace education.

By ensuring economic development and social transformation, quality education will reportedly lead to the prosperity of the nation. In this understanding, the aim of quality

education was reframed from preparing ‘good human beings’ to ‘good citizens’. College-based Dr. Sudhindra – drawing on Tagore’s philosophy of education – suggested that quality education ‘is not making a learner only literate, but a self-reliant, value-ridden citizen’. In this sense, the conception of quality education must align with the country’s national, and political goals. As college-based Dr. Abhijit declared, ‘quality education is that type of education which prepares the students with respect to the philosophy of the society, the nation’s philosophy, the nation's intention of what it wants to make its citizens’. And, Dr. Monoronjon – drawing on his teacher education college’s vision to ‘prepare teachers for one world and the enrichment of the mind and spirit’ – rationalised this understanding of quality education as important because ‘today's students will be great citizens in the near future’.

In short, the interviewed teacher educators across institutional types explained three aims of quality education for the society (economic development, social transformation, and national prosperity) precipitated by achieving the two aims of quality education for the school learner (mandated learning outcomes, and holistic development). Importantly, the interviewed teacher educators drew on their own knowledge and experiences to explain their understanding of the aims of quality education. Though the teacher educators did not draw on Indian education policies to explain the aims of quality education, the two are similar in many ways. For example, in the National Education Policy 2020, quality education is positioned as the ‘key to India’s continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation’ (MHRD, 2020, p. 3). In effect, the interviewed teacher educators reiterated and reinforced the causal logic in education through their understanding of the aims of quality education for individuals and the society.

5.4 The Means of Quality Education

To achieve the envisioned aims of quality education for individuals and society, the teacher educators emphasised the need for a particular kind of teacher and teaching, set within an education system with specific features. Accordingly, this section examines teacher educators' understanding of the quality teacher, quality teaching, and education system that serve as the means for quality education.

5.4.1 Quality Teacher

Across the 52 interviews, the teacher educators used an array of terms to explain their understanding of teachers for quality education. This included quality teacher, good teacher, reflective teacher, excellent teacher, emotionally developed teacher, emotionally inclined teacher, holistic teacher, specialist teacher, successful teacher, great teacher, effective teacher, master teacher, and ideal teacher. For analytic simplicity, I capture this kaleidoscope within the single term – quality teacher. In short, the quality teacher was explained as a person with a particular set of characteristics and skills required for quality education.

Two interviewed teacher educators outlined succinct conceptual models to explain the quality teacher. NGO-based Dr. Pari pointed to her personal resonance with Tagore's philosophy of education and her institution's focus on 'joyful learning' to propose that for quality education there must be an 'effective, affective, and reflective teacher'. Meanwhile, university-based Dr. Mandeep – who entered the profession via the academic route – drew on over two decades of professional experience to explain that the quality teacher must have *content* (knowledge), *communication* (skills), and *concern* (for their students and society). These examples illustrate

the unique and diverse conceptualisations of the characteristics of a quality teacher in India, rationalised through each teacher educators' personal views and experiences rather than Indian education policies or professional standards. Apart from these two examples, most teacher educators explained their understanding by pointing to desirable personality traits and characteristics of the quality teacher.

The interviewed teacher educators across institutional types emphasised that the quality teacher must be open, patient, polite, reflective, inspiring, motivated, empathetic, and loving. For example, university-based Dr. Ashwini explained that teachers must have an 'openness for expressions, openness for putting forward their viewpoints, openness for interaction, and openness for working together based on their students' choices'. Four teacher educators noted that quality teachers must be inspiring. College-based Dr. Sudhindra explained that the teacher needs 'to inspire you, to influence you, maybe you have the potential, or maybe you don't have the potential, he is able to judge that, and influence you in the positive direction'. As Prof. Dhananjay – Dean of a Department of Education – described, 'every teacher teaches, the better one demonstrates, the great teacher inspires'. As an example, university-based Ms. Deepti highlighted how she 'loved [her] schoolteachers' and joined the profession of teaching because 'she wanted to become like them'. Similarly, NGO-based Dr. Pari explained that 'what inspired me to become a teacher was my own teacher…who made a huge difference in my life…and gave me this career path'. Thus, the inspirational characteristic of quality teachers is integrally linked to the reported aim of quality education of drawing out the learner's inner potential.

Several interviewed teacher educators also noted that the quality teacher must be highly motivated. In other words, they need to have 'passion' for the profession or a 'genuine

interest in teaching' (Dr. Ashwini). Motivated by the 'noble profession' of teaching, Dr. Pari explained that a quality teacher is 'self-sacrificing' and 'selfless'. Thus, Prof. Dhananjay deigned that 'a degree does not make a great teacher, a degree is not the guarantee of quality, the first quality for a teacher is he must be self-charged'. For a few teacher educators, this motivation is reportedly an intrinsic quality of an individual, while for others it can be taught and cultivated. Thus, while the teacher educators agreed on the importance of the quality teachers' intrinsic motivation for the profession, they had different views on whether this motivation can be cultivated through teacher educators' practice.

Thirteen teacher educators across institutional types emphasised that quality teachers must be empathetic, or have empathy. College-based Dr. Letha stressed that 'empathy and compassion is what matters, not just the teaching'. While NGO-based teacher educator Dr. Sreehari offered this research-based rationale, 'we do have literature available that talks about why empathy is important, or student-teacher relationship is important'. For a few teacher educators, the notion of teacher empathy was deeply linked with 'love'. For example, university-based Dr. Om – drawing on his high school English teacher as his role model and inspiration–- explained that 'love for students is very essential'. In elaborating on this love, university-based Dr. Sushanta said that the 'teacher loves the students like son and daughter… the teacher should treat their students like their child, and the students should also feel that the teachers are like their parents'. Notably, Dr. Sushanta rationalised this familial love as an integral characteristic of the quality teacher by pointing to the continued relevance of the model relationship between the *guru* (teacher) and *shishya* (student) in the *Vedic* tradition of education. Meanwhile drawing on Krishnamurti, Dr. Sheojee emphasised that this kind of love between teacher and student is important because 'limitless loving is limitless human development'. As Mr. Vinay – an NGO-based teacher educator who designs

professional development programs for public school teachers - framed it, 'a strong deeper compassion and unconditional love towards the student is something that will transform all of those complexities that are there in education'. Building on this love-infused premise, he suggested that the first step for the quality teacher is to develop a 'sense and understanding of where the child comes from…[because] creating awareness is step one for creating empathy'. And as another NGO-based teacher educator Mr. Bharath put it, 'this is what the teaching profession requires, a lot of empathy, one has to love the student, one has to love the children'. Notably, Mr. Bharath rationalised his views through his experiences of working with in-service teachers in rural Rajasthan[22] where he had noticed that village children have 'less advantages and access to resources in schools than children in cities'. Accordingly, he explained that it is the quality teacher who is responsible for addressing these resource gaps through their empathy and love. Drawing on his professional experiences as an NGO-based teacher educator, Mr. Bharath concluded that the quality teacher must 'understand the culture and practices of children in rural areas', and teach with the goals of individual and social transformation. In effect, these teacher educators drew on their personal and professional experiences to stress the significance of love and empathy as essential traits for quality teachers. Thus, according to several teacher educators across institutional types, empathy and love toward school students enable the quality teacher to nurture each learner's holistic development.

Taken together, the interviewed teacher educators' explanations point to a converging consensus on the (significance of the) personality and dispositions of a quality teacher. Still, the teacher educators' diverse explanations and rationalisations raise questions about how the

[22] Desert state in north-west India

expected characteristics and personality of the quality teacher are selected, and if/how they can be cultivated through teacher educators' practice.

The Teacher and the Guru

In education policies, academic literature, and media reports, the *guru* is primarily portrayed as an ideal teacher who is valued and supported by society. For example, the NEP states that 'society gave teachers, or gurus, what they needed to pass on their knowledge, skills, and ethics optimally to students' (MHRD, 2020, p. 20). This representation of the *guru* – with its *Vedic* roots–- is associated with a particular conception of quality education, and the kind of teacher required to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education. Given the continued primacy of this narrative, it was important to investigate how the teacher educators interpreted the significance and relevance of the image of the *guru* in the context of 21st century India.

The interviewed teacher educators offered nuanced views on the continued relevance of the teacher as a *guru* for quality education in the present Indian context. For some teacher educators, the representation of the teacher as a *guru* is, and has always been, important for quality education in India. Pointing to the low status of teachers in Indian society, Dr. Letha commented that if quality teachers are given the status and respect of *gurus*, then we can bring back the 'lost glory' of Indian education. Three university-based teacher educators explained that the tradition of the *guru* never disappeared, and is now more relevant than ever. Dr. Om opined that the '*guru shishya* tradition was never separated from our education system' especially in rural schools. Dr. Kaushal – Dean of a Department of Education - concurred saying that we if examine the relevance of the *guru* tradition 'without any political lens, then it has never changed, it will never change, the role of a teacher is actually that of

the ancient guru, this is how it should be'. Dr. Kaushal rationalised this proposition by noting how 'before the present British educational system', teachers were revered for their intelligence, skill, and tailored teaching methods. In all, several aspects of the *guru* tradition were reported as relevant for the teachers in the 21st century, primarily by teacher educators based in universities and colleges. As university-based Dr. Ashwini elaborated:

> 'I think we are again going back to our roots. We are again opting for the methods we need to have. I really follow this system. Because the *gurus* used to give them a fair chance to get admitted to their schools. They used to give education depending on the interest of the child. They used to provide lots of opportunities, real-life experiences, and activity-based learning, this all was there.'

While for some teacher educators it is the characteristics of the *guru* that are important, for others it is the *guru's* pedagogic strategies. Dr. Kaushal – elaborating on his understanding of the quality teacher - spoke of the exemplar *guru* Dronacharya, who taught his five princely students different martial arts and crafts according to their individual abilities and interests. In questioning his explanation of the *guru's* teaching as ideal, I brought up the story of Eklavya. In the Mahabharata (one of two Hindu sacred texts), Eklavya was the son of a poor hunter whom the *guru* Dronacharya refused to teach archery because of his low caste. Subsequently, Eklavya taught himself archery under the auspices of a clay idol of Dronacharya that he made, and accepted as his *guru*. In time, Eklavya honed his skills and showed the potential to exceed even the great Arjuna – one of Dronacharya's five princely students. When Dronacharya found out that Eklavya regarded him as *guru*, he asked for Eklavaya's right thumb as an offering (*guru dakshina*) so that he would never be able to draw a bow string again. This was to ensure that no one would ever exceed Arjuna in skill. Immediately and respectfully, Eklavya complied without hesitation. This story of Eklavya is often used to highlight the authoritarianism and caste-based discrimination of the *guru* tradition. In response to the story of Eklavya, Dr. Kaushal responded, 'look, I didn't say that Dronacharya

was an ideal teacher. I said his pedagogical approach was ideal.' Put succinctly, Dr. Kaushal concluded that the system of caste-based discrimination in *Vedic* education 'does not negate the concept of the *Guru*'. In this sense, only certain aspects and abstractions of the *guru* tradition were reportedly valued, such as the culturally-rooted role of the teacher (especially, the teacher-student relationship) and the *guru's* personalised pedagogic strategies.

More specifically, university-based Dr. Mandeep highlighted three relevant aspects of the *guru's* pedagogy: indulging students in their play and mischief, teaching children in accordance with their interests and dispositions without dividing the day into 'periods', and integrating value education into pedagogic practices. But, she added that we should not return to the tradition of absolute deference to the teacher as manifested (for example) in the expectation of students to touch their teachers' feet. Pointing to its equal relevance 'for the ancient era and technological era', university-based Ms. Nahid noted that 'the image of Guru cannot be denied, because indirectly the teacher inspires the students'. In effect, aspects of the *guru* tradition were explained as relevant especially of the *guru*'s love for the students, his mentoring orientation, individualised pedagogic strategies aimed at the learner's holistic development, and ability to inspire his students.

Not all interviewed teacher educators, however, were equally convinced about the significance and relevance of the *guru* for quality education in the present Indian context. For college-based Dr. Hans, in the Vedic period 'students followed their teachers without logic, without rationality' but 'in modern India logic is first, rationality is first'. Echoing this view, Dr. Perveen pointed out that this is because the current context of school education in India has changed from the (caste-based) 'prerogative of the few' to a 'necessity of the society of the masses'. He posited that the 'centuries-old model' of the *guru* has been transformed by

the current capitalist system where 'nowadays, students are treated as consumers, teachers are being treated as the developers delivery-wise of a particular kind of knowledge'. In this light, college-based Dr. Shivam rationalised his view by pointing to the contemporary Indian context, and outlining the tension between two images of the quality teacher in India in the 21st century – the technician and the *guru*. He explained that in modern education the teacher has become a *technician* whose role is 'like the relationship between a computer and a learner'. Eschewing the image of the teacher as a technician, he advocated for a return to the *guru* tradition saying that 'I truly want that the teacher does not become a technician, I want the *guru shishya* tradition to come alive again'. In effect, aspects of contemporary Indian society and teaching-learning settings were used to rationalise both the irrelevance and continued relevance of the image of the quality teacher as *guru* in 21st century India.

According to many teacher educators, the status and prestige associated with teachers and teaching has greatly diminished in 21st century India. Drawing on the present Indian socio-economic context, Dr. Sudhindra explained this situation by juxtaposing the 'population control in Europe [i.e., low population levels]' with the 'overpopulation in India' that has led to teachers with 'Master's and even Ph.D. degrees applying for menial cleaning jobs'. NGO-based Dr. Pari explained how in the *Vedic* tradition a guru was 'entitled to get respect', but 'now respect is something that teachers have to earn'. However, she noted that in the present era a teacher might get '10-20% basic respect because it's embedded in our culture', but for more than that a teacher must 'get off their own pedestal' and nurture equal relationships with the students. In this regard, college-based Dr. Rupam reported that for teachers in 21st century India, social status and prestige must be complemented with appropriate salaries. Pointing to the practical challenges of being a teacher in 21st century India, she noted that 'you can't ignore that monetary benefits are equally important, you have to make yourself self-reliant

first, self-sustained first'. Meanwhile, Dr. Lakshmi–- while asserting a shift towards decolonial teacher education based on culturally-rooted Indian education philosophies–- also warned there is a deeper danger lurking in policymakers' proposals to return to the *guru* tradition implying a return to a teacher-centric, authoritarian system of education:

> 'They claim it to be a decolonising tendency, but by and large it they're trying to back this whole tradition of the subordinate…And it's quite possible we're trying to advocate for a teacher-centred education. This also reflects the need that politics expresses for the authoritarian kind of system application.'

Meanwhile, a few teacher educators explained that it is important to reconcile international and culturally-rooted conceptions of quality education. As Prof. Dhananjay described, 'we have to think globally, but our rules must be local'. He explained that thinking locally about quality education means rejecting 'whatever has happened in the far west' and asserting 'our traditions, our indigenous knowledge, our ethos, our virtues, [and] our value system'. However, Prof. Dhananjay also pointed to the education systems of Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam for their emphasis on vocational education and access to higher education as exemplars for Indian education policies. Building on this, he rationalised the return to the *Vedic* 'roots of indigenous wisdom-oriented education' in balance with lessons from international education policies and practice, which in turn will require 'complete and holistic teachers' akin to the *guru*. Meanwhile, Dr. Sheojee – drawing on the Krishnamurtian aims of education for self-realisation and social harmony–- suggested that we need to dissolve the apparent tension between international and national conceptions of quality education. This is reportedly because all countries should be united by the same aims for quality education - human development and the fulfilment of human aspirations.

> **Dr. Sheojee:** 'We are all moving to one particular thing, that human beings need to be progressing. Progress is the one way of human beings. And in that progress, we have to be more and more global…There is one state, moving in one direction for human development. If we understand this, all policies will be helpful. At the same

> time, we must understand that the policies must be geared toward our unification of human aspirations to create optimum conditions for human development despite all challenges that humanity faces today.'

While most interviewed teacher educators highlighted the importance of the quality teacher, they were divided over whether quality teachers can be prepared through teacher educators' practice. In this regard, six teacher educators based in universities and colleges referenced the debate surrounding whether quality teachers are *born* or *made*. As Dr. S.S. suggested, 'teachers in India are in two dimensions, one teacher is born, and the other teacher is made'. And, Dr. Kaushal – harkening to his emphasis on the quality teacher as *guru* – explained, 'everybody is not born to be a teacher, so there is a need to differentiate who actually deserves to be a teacher and who is simply coming to get a job'. Addressing this debate is significant because if quality teachers are *born* and are not *made*, then teacher education programs and teacher educators' practice are both futile.

For a few teacher educators, a quality teacher is born. For example, university-based Ms. Deepti described how some people are born to be teachers, and do not need to attend a teacher education program. Drawing on her experiences as a schoolteacher, she explained that some teacher colleagues 'were very good, even without training in B.Ed. the programme they were excellent'. Relatedly, Ms. Deepti candidly recounted how as a high-school teacher she 'realised that it is a difficult task for a young, unmarried teacher to interact with boys of those classes[23]'. Thus, she felt 'it's better that [she] should teach the postgraduates or graduates'. And so, in 2011 after her M.Ed., Ms. Deepti transitioned from schoolteacher to teacher educator. As a counterpoint, Dr. B. drew on her school teaching experience to stress the need to defend the significance of formal teacher education programs. Relatedly, Dr. B

[23] 10th-12th grade; final three years of high school; Ages 16-18 approximately.

also reflected on how being a young teacher educator was a challenge when working with older student teachers. In her late twenties, Dr. B shifted from being a science teacher in a secondary school to becoming a teacher educator. However, she found herself teaching in-service teachers who came with 'the attitude of we have been in schools for the last twenty years, what can you teach us?'. Drawing on these experiences, Dr. B – Dean of a university Department of Education–- justified the importance of university/college-based teacher education:

> 'In our faculty rooms, there used to be a lot of discussions about why teaching is one profession where there is a belief that even if you are not formally educated to be a teacher, you can be a teacher. So, a debate of 'teachers are born versus made' became a discussion. I said that unless we, as teacher educators, are convinced that the teachers can be made through the right kind of training and practice, only then we will be able to bring a lot more respect to the teacher education programmes.'

In sum, the interviewed teacher educators explained the quality teacher as an individual with a particular set of characteristics including empathy and love. While the relevance of the image of the *guru* for quality teachers in 21st century India was contested, the representation of the quality teacher as an exemplar of character and virtue (and the focus on holistic development of the learner through familial teacher-student relationships) harkens back to the *guru* tradition. Notably, the teacher educators emphasised diverse conceptions of the quality teacher based on their unique perspectives and professional experiences. Taken together, the reported emphasis on the quality teacher in India is significant because in international teacher education scholars have recently called for a shift in conceptual focus for teacher education from quality teacher to quality teaching.

5.4.2 Quality Teaching

In the interviews, the teacher educators' explained quality teaching in terms of what a teacher knows and is able to do. For some teacher educators, a teacher must have (at least) two kinds of knowledge. As college-based Dr. Abhijit stated, 'the first and foremost criteria of the teacher should be, he should have sound knowledge related to his content, he should have sound knowledge related to pedagogy'. Drawing on his Ph.D. thesis based on the theoretical framework of Shulman (1986), Dr. Sudhindra explained the significance of the quality teacher's pedagogical content knowledge:

> 'It is the knowledge that makes a teacher a teacher, not a subject-matter expert or scientist. This means teachers are different from biologists. Teachers are different from chemists. Teachers are different from subject-area experts. Teachers are different from academic researchers. Teachers are different from scientists. Why? Because a teacher always thinks in the context of teaching, and the scientist always thinks in the context of research. So, what is pedagogical content knowledge, it is a process of transforming the subject-matter knowledge into a certain level that can be comprehended by your learner.'

For a few teacher educators, this knowledge includes the ability of the quality teacher to go 'beyond the content'. This involves contextualising the prescribed school curriculum to the specific social and cultural context, and the unique needs of each learner. Importantly, to go beyond the content, the quality teacher must be attentive and reflective. As college-based Dr. U.B underscored, 'quality education goes beyond what the books tell you…if the teaching is effective, so what if he [the teacher] digresses a little bit from the lesson plan, still that is quality'. In this regard, college-based Dr. U.B. emphasised the need for quality teaching to be 'spontaneous' and 'adaptable', and justified this view by pointing to the complex and diverse demands of teaching in present-day Indian classrooms (e.g., large class sizes, students' myriad socio-economic backgrounds). Analogously, university-based Dr. Sudarshan asserted

that ‘teachers should teach beyond the content…and that comes through self-introspection, thinking, alertness of mind, and real observation of your environment’. Dr. Sudarshan also noted that ‘our own experiences are the best ideas…[and] ideas help you go beyond the content’. In this sense, teaching ‘beyond the content’ requires teachers to be sensitive to the unique needs and contexts of each learner, while drawing on their own experiences for teaching. In practice, to contextualise their teaching, the quality teacher might need to digress from the mandated content by drawing on their own experiences, knowledge of the subject, the learner, and the local context.

Thirteen teacher educators – primarily based in universities and colleges–- explained quality teaching by using the lens of ‘competencies’. For example, university-based Dr. Mandeep explained that teacher ‘competency has to be raised to maintain both aspects–- the social aspect as well as the psychological aspect of being a teacher–- which is very, very important for the teacher of the 21st century’. In this sense, teacher competencies refer to a specific set of strategies for teaching and learning. College-based Dr. Hans referred to this array as ‘pedagogic approaches’. However, the nature and significance of teacher competencies were understood differently. For example, university-based Dr. Sudarshan highlighted some ‘ideal teaching competencies for an ideal and efficient teacher’:

> ‘How to design the teaching method in the classroom, how to develop teaching aids, how to do blackboard work. How to be a just teacher in the classroom, attending to everyone’s needs. How to attend to the diversities – cognitively, culturally, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually’.

Conversely, the relevance of certain teacher competencies was contested. For example, twelve teacher educators highlighted the teacher competence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) based teaching. However, college-based Dr. Geeta T cautioned against ICT-based teaching because it has become reduced to ‘using traditional

methods of teaching using modern devices, though considered as an innovative and modern technique of teaching'. Similarly, college-based Dr. Lakshmi – who advocated for critical and decolonial approaches to teacher education in India–- pointed to the uneven distribution of electricity and internet access across the country, and how this disproportionately affects students from rural and marginalised backgrounds. Given the vast rural-urban and socio-economic inequalities in access to school education in India, Dr. Lakshmi warned that we should 'not romanticise ICT at least in an Indian context'. In this sense, viewing quality teaching through the lens of teacher competencies was positioned as both pertinent and problematic.

In relation to what a quality teacher knows and can do, a few teacher educators highlighted specific conceptualisations of teaching-learning for quality education: transference and application. As university-based Dr. Rajendra – echoing his view of quality education as cultural transmission–- reported, 'if you are able to transfer your knowledge in the mind of the student effectively, in that case, you are a good teacher'. He continued, 'because what is the basic aim of the teacher? what is the basic work of the teacher? the basic work of the teacher to see total learning, not teaching'. In this light, some teacher educators explain learning as the 'application of knowledge'. As Dr. Geetha T put it, quality teaching means that 'the teacher should be able to at least make the student able to apply that knowledge in real scenario'.

Cultivating Relationships with Student Teachers

Most interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs highlighted how nurturing relationships with their students is an integral aspect of what a quality teacher does. This relationship between teacher and student was positioned as particularly important for

quality education in the 21st century. College-based Dr. U.B. explained that this is important because schoolchildren in present-day India now have several avenues to access content and information. For this reason, she continued, 'they [school students] are not looking out for that regular content teacher, they're looking out for somebody to listen to their point of view, their ideas'.

While the teacher educators agreed on the centrality of personalised and nurturing teacher-student relationships for quality education, they defined the boundaries of this relationship differently. For a few teacher educators, the boundaries were rigid. For example, university-based Ms. Aparna – drawing on the 'ethics of the *gurukul* and Nalanda[24]'– asserted the need for 'good teacher-student relationships, along with very strong boundaries, because as an educator, *there is a line* which you need to draw somewhere…they [students] have to know what is acceptable, and what is unacceptable'. For some, the boundaries between teacher and student were fluid, though based on a minimum level of respect. As university-based Ms. Deepti indicated, there has to be 'a *very thin line of difference* in between how we interact with the students, we cannot afford to be those strict teachers in the classroom like earlier times…at the same time, we have to create that respect in their minds, that *there is a thin line* between me and you'. In one case, this notion of the 'thin line of difference' was traced back to the *guru-shishya* tradition. College-based Dr. Rupam stressed the significance of a culturally-rooted understanding of teachers and teaching by suggesting that students need to maintain a certain level of respect and deference for teachers. She explained that:

> 'the divide between the *guru* and *shishya*, *that thin line divide*, that has to be there, only then one can move forward. Now western thought in many universities says that you can call the professors by name. This lack of difference between the teacher and taught, that we are at par with each other, that idea is very welcome. But at the same time, we cannot negate our own traditional roots'.

[24] Renowned Buddhist university from 5th – 12 century CE

Paradoxically, a few teacher educators drew on the *guru* model to imply that there are no boundaries in the teacher-student relationship. University-based Dr. Om explained that for a quality teacher 'the job does not end in the classroom, you have to motivate and inspire your students, you have to inspire your students to realise their potential, to realise their dreams'. Simply put, a teacher is always a teacher whether in a classroom or not. College-based Dr. Rupam summarised this emphasis on being a teacher as an identity rather than a profession (as in the *guru* tradition):

> 'In today's times, a quality teacher has no boundaries. Whether they are in the classroom or outside it, they are always a teacher. And the person who is not a quality teacher, they are only teachers inside the classroom.'

In sum, teacher educators' explanations of quality teaching to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education emphasise what the quality teacher knows and can do. Most teacher educators stressed the significance of cultivating relationships with each student as an integral part of the role of the quality teacher and the work of quality teaching (albeit defined differently). Importantly, the interviewed teacher educators rationalised their views of quality teaching by pointing to both international academic literature, and aspects of India's historical and contemporary education contexts.

5.4.3 The Education System

A majority of teacher educators across the three institutional types emphasised the importance of the 'education system' in ensuring the aims of quality education. By 'education system', these teacher educators were directly referring to schools and TEIs referenced in phrases like 'the system', 'system of education', 'school system', 'teacher education system', and 'Indian education system'. To enable the quality teacher and quality teaching, the teacher

educators outlined four necessary conditions of a supportive education system. These are–- appropriate level of public expenditure, adequate infrastructure and resources, nurturing environment, and accountability.

The Report of the Kothari Commission recommended that the government should 'gradually increase the investment in education so as to reach a level of expenditure of 6 percent' (MHRD, 1966, p. xvii). Noting this, Dr. Bhaskar – who works at a rural Himalayan university and previously lamented the lack of access to education, and educational infrastructure in home state - remarked that 'we always talk about 6% of GDP, we talk about 4% of GDP, but we still roam about only in between 2 or 3%'. Echoing these concerns, Dr. Priyanka S – who works at an urban public university in Central India–- stressed that the government must 'increase the GDP of our education sector'. However, it is not only about increasing the level of public expenditure, but also tracking the distribution of funds from the central government through the state governments into schools. Drawing on her experience as an NGO-based teacher educator working with teachers in under-resourced, low-income schools, Ms. Alex asserted that 'the question comes down to where is this money going? And how are we using this to equip our teachers and students?'.

As examples of required infrastructure and resources for schools, a few teacher educators mentioned language and science labs, libraries, sports and recreation facilities, and access to the internet and ICT tools. Dr. Letha – in her role as Chief Consultant at the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the NEP – explained that the government was 'taking help from NGOs, the World Bank, and UNICEF' to rank states according to their education infrastructure, and accordingly allocate funding and resources, thereby increasing public expenditure in education. Notably, the interviewed teacher educators were divided on

whether a quality teacher can surmount such obstacles as high pupil-teacher ratios and under-resourced classrooms. On the one hand, college-based Dr. Monoronjan pointed to the tremendous logistical and practical challenges for teachers and teaching. Pointing to the realities of teaching Geography in schools in his home state of West Bengal, he lamented that 'in the school, there is no globe, no map, no teaching aids…teachers are taking their class without teaching aids, without chalk and duster.' On the other hand, university-based Dr. Shivani – who entered the profession via the academic route - suggested that a teacher who is committed to providing quality education can sometimes overcome these obstacles of inadequate resources:

> **Dr. Shivani:** 'For me, quality would definitely start from the kind of teacher that's there. I need not have a table and chair - those are important things to have - I would need access to a computer, and these infrastructure facilities will help me to fit into the global environment that's there. But I can have all of these facilities and still have the worst kind of teacher in the classroom, and it won't take me far. But if I have a teacher who's sensitive and recognises my potential, and is able to support me to reach that potential, that will sometimes make up for the lack of infrastructure that's there.'

Some teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs highlighted the importance of the 'environment' to ensure quality education. This was referenced in terms such as 'school environment' (Dr. Sudarshan), 'academic environment' (Dr. Jyotsna), 'classroom environment' (Dr. U.B), 'teaching environment' (Ms. Aparna), and 'learning environment'. The school and classroom environment for quality education must be 'safe' (Ms. Swetha), 'child-friendly' (Dr. Priyanka G), 'free' and 'open' (Dr. Pari), 'friendly', 'safe and secure' (Ms. Nahid), and 'cordial' (Dr. Jyotsna). As Dr. Jyotsna phrased it, the 'environment matters a lot, we should create a very good academic environment where a student can easily share their ideas with the teachers'. Taken together, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types stressed the importance of appropriate public expenditure, adequate

infrastructure and resources, and a nurturing environment to enable the work of quality teachers and quality teaching.

Accountability

In most interviews, the accountability of teachers, teacher education institutes, and teacher educators were highlighted as integral for ensuring quality education in India. These descriptions are important because of their connections with policy prescriptions for accountability. The interviewed teacher educators across institutional types paradoxically pointed to the lack and rise of accountability in teacher education in India, both with detrimental effects for quality education and preparing teachers for quality education in India.

As NGO-based Ms. Alex explained, 'teacher educators and schoolteachers should start feeling that pressure and accountability, because there's a large part of accountability that's missing within our systems'. The interviewed teacher educators' explanations of accountability in teacher education correspond with the reported logic of causality that links policy reform and teacher educators' practice, to the achievement of the envisioned outcomes of quality education through quality teachers and teaching (see Section 3.3.3). However, while most teacher educators agreed on the importance of accountability in teacher education, there were differences in their explanations of *who* is accountable *for what* and *by whom*.

Teachers were positioned as accountable *to* education policies, students, schools, and society, *for* the array of envisioned aims of quality education for the individual, economy, society, and nation. For example, college-based Dr. Abhijit advocated that 'the teacher should be very accountable and responsible to contribute for the betterment of today'. Notably, a few teacher educators explained that teachers are also accountable *to* themselves for ensuring quality

education through their teaching. University-based Ms. Aparna asserted that this self-accountability means that teachers must 'have a sincere attitude towards this profession, that they're actually changing the lives of students, that their impact is immense'. In effect, the teacher educators' reported understandings of accountability reinforce the causal connection between teachers' teaching in schools and the envisioned outcomes of quality education. Moreover, the reported emphasis on the quality teacher's sense of self-accountability suggests that teachers must take personal responsibility for ensuring individual and social transformation.

Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) were described as primarily accountable to the NCTE for adhering to the prescribed norms and standards. In addition, teacher education institutions were also framed as increasingly accountable *to* three higher education government regulatory authorities: NAAC[25], UGC[26], and QCI[27]. These government organisations were explained as responsible for the accreditation and monitoring of TEIs (NCTE, NAAC, and QCI), and for determining who can be a teacher educator through the National Eligibility Test that teacher educators must pass to qualify to work in higher education in India (UGC). In effect, TEIs were explained as accountable *to* these four authorities *for* preparing quality teachers to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education.

Some teacher educators also pointed to the inherent tensions between institutional accountability and autonomy. For example, college-based Dr. Abhijit noted that his TEI has an 'A' rating and is 'NAAC accredited', and thus sets its own teacher education curriculum in line with its unique vision and mission drawing on Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of

[25] National Assessment and Accreditation Council
[26] University Grants Commission
[27] Quality Council of India

education. However, Dr. Abhijit – drawing on the *guru* tradition – also alluded to the personal responsibility of teacher educators in his TEI to be exemplary role-models who follow the 'basic principles' of 'knowledge, accountability, responsibility, and love'. This is because ultimately student teachers' learning is reportedly dependent on 'observing real practice, as well as learning theoretical perspectives of the principal philosophy'. In short, Dr. Abhijit asserted that the teacher education curriculum is decided at the intersection of accountability and autonomy, based on the institution's vision and dependent on teacher educators' practice. In effect, the TEI's relative autonomy is reportedly contingent on its position within external accountability frameworks.

While the university- and college-based teacher educators explained the rise of TEI accountability especially through the NCTE and NAAC accreditation processes, they also pointed to the widespread lack of institutional accountability. Several teacher educators lamented the inability of the NCTE to hold TEIs accountable for ensuring the preparation of teachers for quality education. College-based Dr. Monoronjon illustrated this lack of institutional accountability by drawing on his personal experiences as a member of the NCTE Visiting Team responsible for assessing a TEI's accreditation application. He recounted:

> **Dr. Monoronjon:** 'I am proud that I have visited several states - almost 35 colleges - for giving their recognition. During the recognition process there are so many formalities - on-the-spot visits, video camera recordings, and tracking of the number of books, library, infrastructure etc. Out of 35 colleges, I disagreed to give the recognition or affiliation of NCTE to almost 12 to 15 colleges. I recommended that there are so many gaps, there are so many deficiencies. So right now, it is not in a position to get the recognition. But even after my report, they got the recognition. Do you understand the malpractices?'

In effect, the NCTE's reported inability to hold TEIs accountable is explained as importantly responsible for the poor state of teacher education in India. University-based Ms. Deepti summarised the point:

> **Ms. Deepti:** 'If the NCTE would have done their work more sincerely, or if they would have taken care of teacher education more, it would have been a success. They should have made every institution, every teacher education institution accountable.'

Part of the blame for the NCTE's inability to hold TEIs accountable is placed on the NCTE's leadership (who are reportedly not experts or professionals in teacher education), and the lack of transparency in NCTE operations. College-based Dr. Ritesh elaborated:

> 'If you go through the NCTE, you will see in most of the cases, who is in the chair? Maybe an IAS officer? Or someone else who has no idea about teacher education. Just think about that. In the Medical Council, can you imagine someone who is not a doctor in the chair? So, why in teacher education? People should be there who are from this teacher education, only then there is a future for us. At the same time, they should be transparent. And I am saying that on record because the transparency of NCTE is very questionable now.

In the interviews, teacher educators were described as accountable in three ways. First, teacher educators are accountable *to* the NCTE *for* having the required minimum qualifications and certifications. Secondly, teacher educators are accountable *to* their institution and student teachers *for* aligning with the institutional mission and vision, and completing contractual duties including teaching mandated curriculums. Teacher educator accountability was explained as important because of its implications for their teacher education practice and student teachers' learning. For example, college-based Dr. Abhijit stated that teacher educators 'should also be made responsible, accountable, punctual in giving training to the students, and it should be practised in the educational institutions also, so that the student teachers can learn these things from their teacher educators'. Thirdly, teacher educators (like teachers) were explained as accountable *to* themselves *for* ensuring quality teacher education practice. College-based Dr. U.B. underlined the point by saying 'it's my responsibility, it's my accountability, nobody can see, nobody will know what happens in my classroom, but the student teachers will know'. Dr. U.B. rationalised the importance of

this self-accountability through her personal understanding of 'sensitivity' which is to respect the 'time and efforts of adult learners [i.e., student teachers] who also have social and family responsibilities'. And, as university-based Ms. Aparna asserted of teacher educators especially in the private sector, 'you are accountable for your actions, you are accountable for your productivity, you are accountable for your results'. In these ways, teacher educators were explained as accountable – albeit for different reasons and rationalised in diverse ways–- for preparing teachers for quality education. Notably, these consensus views on the critical importance of teacher educators' self-accountability are interesting given the diverse routes into the profession taken by the teacher educators.

Taken together, teacher educators described how Indian education policies have created certain forms of accountability for, while at the same time lamenting the lack of accountability in, teacher education. On the one hand, there is a reported increase in accountability through policy prescriptions, especially for institutional accreditation and teacher education curriculums. On the other hand, several teacher educators asserted a lack of institutional accountability in teacher education. Their suggested solution to this paradox of institutional accountability is to spotlight the self-accountability of teacher educators, i.e., each teacher educator holds themselves accountable for their own practice in preparing teachers for quality education.

In all, teacher educators' explanations of accountability reinforce the logic of causality that traces the relationship between education policies, teacher education, school education, and society. In this sense, teacher education institutes and teacher educators are accountable for preparing quality teachers, and quality teachers are accountable for achieving the envisioned outcomes of quality education. Importantly, teacher educators (and teachers) are positioned

as accountable to themselves, thereby highlighting the significance of an intrinsic sense of purpose and motivation for the profession of teaching and teacher education.

5.5 Tracing Teacher Educators' Understanding of Quality Education

This chapter, thus far, has examined the interviewed teacher educators' diverse understanding of the aims and means quality education. While there were patterns of shared meaning in the participants' responses, each teacher educator drew on a unique array of factors to rationalise their understanding of quality education. This section teases out these different factors to investigate what this means for the teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education.

Given the difficulty of engaging with the quotations from 50 teacher educators, it is worth highlighting a few notable interviews because of the teacher educator's detailed explanations of – and rationales for – their understanding of quality education. For example, college-based Dr. Sheojee–- who entered the profession via the school teaching route–- drew on his experiences as a schoolteacher in a Krishnamurti Foundation school, and his personal resonance with Krishnamurti's philosophy of education. And college-based Dr. Lakshmi – who entered the profession via the academic route–- traced her critical and decolonial understanding of quality education to the culture of her private TEI that is based on the philosophy of a famous Indian educationist - JP Naik. Meanwhile, NGO-based Ms. Alex drew largely on her experiences as a TFI fellow and current work with low-income schools to explain her understanding of quality education (especially, the positive logic of causality in education). These three cases – Dr. Sheojee, Dr. Lakshmi, and Ms. Alex–- exemplify how the

interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique life histories, perspectives, professional trajectories, and specific teaching-learning contexts to understand quality education.

Many teacher educators across the three institutional types highlighted the importance of the Indian context to rationalise and justify their understanding of quality education. Some teacher educators – like university-based Dr. Kaushal–- traced the *guru* tradition through Indian history to the pre-British period, and suggested a return to an era where teachers – like *gurus*–- were revered for their intelligence and character. Meanwhile, a few teacher educators noted the need for a more 'practical approach' for ensuring quality teachers, for example through higher teacher salaries. Notably, while university-based Prof. Dhananjay advocated a return to the 'wisdom-oriented education' of the *guru* tradition, he also pointed to lessons that can be learnt from the education policies and practices of other countries like Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam. In this sense, aspects of quality education from international contexts were explained as relevant for India as well.

Several teacher educators across the three institutional types stressed the uniqueness of the Indian context in explaining their understanding of the aims and means of quality education. Dr. Monoronjon emphasised preparing teachers to work in under-resourced schools by taking the case of Geography teachers in the state of Bengal. Dr. Rajendra drew on India's vast history to understand quality education as 'cultural transmission', while Mr. Bharath drew on his experiences as an NGO-based teacher educator in rural Rajasthan to justify the aims of quality education as individual and social transformation. Dr. U.B. rationalised spontaneity and adaptability as key features of quality teaching by highlighting the unique challenges of being a schoolteacher in present-day India (e.g., large class sizes, lack of resources, students' diverse socio-economics backgrounds). Taken together, these examples illustrate the many

ways in which teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education is rooted in the historical and current contexts of India.

While the interviewed teacher educators reported a broad consensus around the envisioned aims and means for quality education, they rationalised their views in different ways. For example, we saw that several teacher educators stressed their understanding of quality education as 'holistic education'. However, they drew on different rationales for its significance including an array of philosophers of education such as Rousseau, Gandhi, and Krishnamurti. The two tables below illustrate a list of scholars, scientists, and philosophers – from India and other countries – that the interviewed teacher educators drew on to rationalise their diverse understandings of quality education. The reported Indian and international consensus in understanding of quality education – combined with the diverse rationalisations for their views – is significant given the teacher educators' diverse personal and professional experiences.

A key thread that partly explains teacher educators' understanding of quality education is their different routes into the profession. The university- and college-based teacher educators followed one of two main routes into the profession: the academic route, or the school teaching route. Teacher educators from each of these two routes brought a unique set of experiences and knowledge to their professional role. For example, teacher educators who were formerly schoolteachers drew on their school teaching experiences to contextualise and rationalise their views of quality education. These two routes into the profession played an important role in influencing teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education. In subsequent chapters, we will see how these different entry routes into the profession also

have implications for teacher educators' description of important Indian education policies and explanations of their teacher education practice.

Reason	Person	Teacher Educator	Example quote
	APJ Abdul Kalam	Dr. Om, Dr. Sudarshan, Prof. Dhananjay	*All teachers cannot be like Abdul Kalam.* - Dr. Sudarshan
Example of quality teacher	Chanakya, Kabir, Raidas, and Guru Nanak	Prof. Dhananjay	*We have great teachers like Chanakya...we have Kabir Sahab who was an illiterate, but he was a great teacher, we have a blind teacher called Surdas, we have the semi-literate Guru Nanak Ji who was the was the founder of a one religion and we have Raidas.* - Prof. Dhananjay
	Vivekananda	Dr. Perveen	*For me an ideal teacher is Swami Vivekananda.* - Dr. Perveen
	Dr. Radhakrishna	Dr. Om	*When we talk about good teachers, we always talk about Dr. Radhakrishna or Abdul Kalam.* - Dr. Om
	Sri Aurobindo	Dr. Jyotsna, Dr. S.S., Prof. Dhananjay, Ms. Avanti, Dr. Sheojee	*The education thinkers are all there. Sri Aurobindo is there.* - Ms. Avanti
	Jiddu Krishnamurti	Dr. Jyotsna Dr. Sudhindra, Dr.Sheojee, Mr. Prateek	*The Krishnamurti philosophy is a kind of philosophy which encompasses a new way of living. He (Krishnamurti) talks of a mutation of the mind, a term meaning that teaching is not just transferring of information, but he talks of transforming the mind.* - Dr. Sheojee
Education Philosophy	JP Naik	Dr. Lakshmi	*Because JP Naik definitely always insisted on interdisciplinarity, so that is what we insisted on - bring in the revolution with a revolution.* - Dr. Lakshmi
	Gandhi	Dr. Sudarshan, Prof. Dhananjay, Dr. Sheojee, Dr. Priyanka, Dr. Ritesh, Mr. Wan	*I found a book written by Gandhi, the name of the book was 'Nai Talim'. It talks of the fact that when one becomes one's own leader or own teacher, then their education becomes complete.* - Dr. Sheojee
	Swami Vivekananda	Mr. Prateek, Ms. Avanti, Mr. Wan, Dr. Sudarshan, Dr. S.S., Dr. Sheojee, Dr. Abhijit, Dr. Ritesh, Dr. Mandeep	*If we really follow in the (educational) path of Swami Vivekananda, maybe we would not see this kind of extremism in society.* - Dr. Ritesh
	Rabindranath Tagore	Dr. Jyotsna, Dr. Sarita, Dr. Sudhindra, Dr. Ritesh, Dr. Mandeep, Dr. Pari	*We should provide proper opportunities to raise them [students] in natural settings, like Rabindranath Tagore who has given such a wonderful concept of education.* - Dr. Jyotsna
Ideas from people	Poonam Batra	Dr. Lakshmi	*You can get Poonam Batra's framework for teacher education 2016. That was rejected...they refuse to have interdisciplinary professionals teaching in teacher education programmes.* - Dr. Lakshmi
	Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Devesh Kapur	Dr. Perveen	*You know about Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Devesh Kapoor, particularly in education we have moved from half-baked socialism to half-baked capitalism.* - Dr. Perveen

Table 7: List of Indian philosophers and thinkers referenced by the teacher educators

Reason	Person	Teacher Educator	Example quote
	Allport	Dr. Geetha, Dr. Sarita	*I have to relate intelligence concepts with the real life and with ancient india also, these kind of things are definitely missing in our [teacher education] class, we always talk about the Allport, but Tagore's theory we forget, so I prefer that both types of knowledge should be there.* - Dr. Sarita
	Erickson	Ms. Avanti, Dr. Priyanka, Dr. Hans, Dr. Abhijit, Dr. Geetha, Dr. Lakshmi, Dr. Sarita, Dr. Ashwini, Dr. B, Ms. Aparna, Dr. Sreehari	*As well as the Erickson's and Kohlberg's theories, though the development of these theories is outside India but the concepts is also applicable to Indian citizens and Indian students.* - Dr. Abhijit
Noted Psychologist	Freud	Ms. Aparna, Dr. Jyotsna, Dr. Sarita, Dr. Letha	*It is my responsibility that at the time of teaching Kohlberg and Freud and Piaget, I have to add Indian theories also.* - Dr. Sarita
	Kohlberg	Dr. Pari, Dr. Hans, Ms, Avanti, Dr. Abhijit, Dr. Geetha, Dr. Sarita, Dr. Ashwini, Mr. Wan, Dr. Lakshmi, Dr. Priyanka, Dr. J, Dr. B, Ms. Aparna, Dr. Sreehari	*For example Kohlberg's theory of development, when we've asked the children who are passing through that particular stage, if the teacher is dedicated, all these theories are relevant i think, one aspect or the other of all these theories are relevant in Indian classrooms also.* - Dr. Geetha
	Piaget	Dr. Sarita, Dr. Ashwini, Dr. Abhijit, Dr. Aparna, Dr. Sreehari, Dr. Pari, Dr. Letha, Dr. Avanti, Mr. Wan, Dr. Lakshmi, Dr. Priyanka, Dr. Hans, Dr. B, Dr. Geetha	*Piaget talks beautifully about observing a child, I think a better way to do Piaget in B.Ed. would be you the student [teacher] to go and observe a child for a month...And then when you teach that person, the theory of Piaget, the student himself will be able to draw out how well it is connected to our own environment.* - Dr. Pari
	Dewey	Mr. Prateek, Ms. Avanti, Dr. J, Dr. Sudarshan	*So many ways to do, so many thinkers I like, such as John Dewey's project technique method, which I prefer sometimes.* - Mr. Prateek
	Hilda Taba	Dr. Perveen, Mr. Wan	*For example, I have to teach the Hilda Taba model on curriculum in the classroom.* - Dr. Perveen
Philosophy (Education)	Maria Montessori	Prof. Dhananjay	*And for that, we have to start from the scratch and some basic techniques we prescribe them [student teachers] like those suggested by Maria Montessori.* - Prof. Dhananjay
	Paulo Friere	Dr. S.S., Dr. Shivani, Prof. Dhananjay, Mr. Vinay, Ms. Avanti	*Paulo Friere is important, Friere is important and the Freirean pedagogy.* - Dr. S.S.
	Rousseau	Dr. Pari, Dr. Letha	*The purpose of quality education is something that helps you to draw your own innate potential. So whatever the learner is good at, you help them to realise that... your own natural tendencies, it comes from the school of thought of Rousseau basically.* - Dr. Pari
	Vygotsky	Dr. Letha, Dr. U.B., Ms. Avanti, Dr. B	*You must have read about social constructivism and Vygotsky. We put it in practice, we put it in practice with everything.* - Dr. U.B.
Philosophy (General)	Gramsci	Dr. Lakshmi	*And look also to Gramsci's concept of hegemony. I think this is all very important and really needs to be thought about.* - Dr. Lakshmi
	Marx	Dr. S.S.	*It is important to understand the Marxist ideology also.* Dr. S.S.

Table 8: List of international philosophers and thinkers referenced by the teacher educators

Notably, most NGO-based teacher educators had academic (rather than professional) degrees in education (such as a B.A. or M.A. in Education), and drew on their professional backgrounds to understand quality education. For example, NGO-based Dr. Sreehari – Associate Director of Research and Impact - rationalised his understanding of quality education (e.g., the importance of teacher's empathy) by pointing to 'research'. Notably, he traced his grounding in evidence to his personal background as a clinical psychologist 'coming from the research domain'. Other NGO-based teacher educators - Ms. Alex and Mr. Joseph - drew on their Teach for India fellowship in several instances to explain or rationalise their understanding of quality education through for example foundational literacy and numeracy and mandated learning outcomes. For example, Ms. Alex drew on her experiences as a TFI fellow working in a low-income, under-resourced school to rationalise her understanding of quality education through the lenses of 'universal access' and foundational literacy and numeracy, along with attendant emphases on the role of the teacher and their professional development for ensuring quality education:

> 'Imagine a classroom where someone whose parents earn 20 lakhs a month is sitting next to someone whose parents earn 20 rupees a day. Obviously, the exposure is very different which means that it is up to the teachers to bridge that gap as much as possible.'

Some teacher educators also drew on their personal life experiences to understand quality education. For example, NGO-based Mr. Joseph credited his mother as a primary influence for his motivation for teaching and teacher education. His mother worked with NGOs, churches, and local organisations to support schoolchildren's learning by serving as a volunteer teacher. However, it was only after his own experience as a schoolteacher as a Teach for India fellow that he realised 'how much of an impact this position can make for the child'. After having 'seen teachers struggle', he became an NGO-based teacher educator 'to

work with, and support schoolteachers'. It is notable that the interviewed teacher educators drew on their personal – rather than professional – experiences or Indian education policies to explain their understanding of quality education.

Overall, there were patterns of similarities between university-, college-, and NGO-based teacher educators' understanding of quality education. This is exemplified by the shared emphases on the causal logic of quality education, and the significance of the quality teachers and quality teaching in achieving the envisioned outcomes for individuals and society. While teacher educators across institutional types had an overarching consensus in many instances, there were deeper nuances manifesting in diverse explanations of quality education. In essence, the interviewed teacher educators reported a broad consensus converging around the aims and means of quality education, but rationalised their understanding in divergent ways based on their unique life histories and professional trajectories.

5.6 Summary

This chapter illustrated the patterns of similarities and differences in how the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types understand the aims and means of quality education. The envisioned aims of quality education include the achievement of learning outcomes and holistic development of the learner, eventually leading – through the logic of causality – to economic development, social transformation, and national prosperity. To achieve these aims, the teacher educators emphasised the need for a particular kind of teacher with specific characteristics, knowledge, and teaching skills. Importantly, they explained that the quality teacher and their teaching must be embedded within an education system to ensure quality education. In this regard, teacher educators further emphasised four

preconditions of the education system to ensure quality education in schools: an appropriate level of public expenditure, adequate infrastructure and resources, nurturing environment, and accountability.

Though similar to the views espoused in Indian education policies, the interviewed teacher educators did not draw on the policies to explain their understanding of quality education. Instead, the interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique life histories and professional trajectories - rather than Indian education policies or their professional preparation - to rationalise their understanding of quality education. The reported consensus surrounding the aims and means of quality education juxtaposed against its multiple rationalisations draws attention to the implications of the different entry routes into the profession, and the potential 'washout effect' of teacher educators' professional preparation. In the next two chapters, I carry forward these insights to foreground how the teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education – and their personal and professional contexts–- are related to their descriptions of important Indian education policies, and subsequently to explanations of their teacher education practice.

CHAPTER SIX

WHICH INDIAN EDUCATION POLICIES DO TEACHER EDUCATORS DESCRIBE AS IMPORTANT, AND WHY?

6.1 Overview

The previous chapter explored teacher educators' understanding of the aims of education for individuals and society, and its envisioned means through the quality teacher and their teaching embedded within a supportive education system. Notably, the teacher educators drew on their unique perspectives, experiences, and contexts to understand quality education, rather than Indian education policies. However, they did note specific aspects of certain policies as important because of their impacts and implications for their teacher education practice. This chapter delves deeper to answer the second sub-research question – which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?

This chapter begins by examining the interviewed teacher educators' diverse views on the creation and flow of Indian education policies. Next, it explores why certain school and teacher education were described as important for different reasons. Then, it investigates the teacher educators' diverse perspectives on the recent National Education Policy 2020, and its potential impacts and implications for teacher educators' future practice. In all, this chapter highlights how the interviewed teacher educators described different aspects of specific Indian education policies as important based on their unique personal and professional experiences, and institutional contexts.

6.2 Talking about Indian Education Policies

The interviewed teacher educators talked about the importance of Indian education policies through their 'impacts' and 'implications'. Impact refers to first-order changes in teacher educators' practice resulting from policy prescriptions and recommendations, and implications refer to second-order changes in teacher educators' practice brought about by the impacts of Indian education policies. For example, many teacher educators noted that the one key impact of the NCTE Regulations 2014 was the shift to the two-year B.Ed. degree. Some university- and college-based teacher educators explained that an important implication of this shift to a two-year B.Ed. was the change in the demographics, motivations, knowledge, and experiences of students applying to the profession. University-based Ms. Aparna – drawing on two decades of professional experience as a teacher educator – illustrated the point saying that 'student teachers in 2004 considered teaching as the backup plan, but in the last five years very serious candidates have joined the profession'. In this sense, the shift to the two-year B.Ed. (impact) led to a change in student-teacher profiles (implications). This distinction between impacts and implications is important to explore the nuanced ways in which teacher educators describe Indian education policies as important and why. But first, it is vital to explore how teacher educators explain the creation and flow of Indian education policies.

Creation of Education Policies

In the interviews, the teacher educators highlighted differing views of the process of the creation of Indian education policies. For a few, there is a reported gulf between the privileged socio-economic spaces in which policies are created and the 'ground' realities of teacher educators' practice. Specifically, these few university- and college-based teacher

educators explained that the policymakers' lack of understanding of the everyday challenges and opportunities for teacher education practice has resulted in idealistic education policies shaped by the government's ideological agendas. In turn, these idealistic policies were explained as doomed to fail in light of the ground realities of teacher education. For example, four teacher educators used the metaphor of the airconditioned room (AC room) to signify this separation between the sites of policy creation and practice. This view reinforces the narrative of the separation between policy and (teacher education) practice. For example, Dr. Abhijit – whose works at a college grounded in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy – asserted that policymakers with their 'foreign degrees…sit in the AC room and prepare a policy, but what should be in the policy has to be come out from the base level of the nation'. The reported separation between the sites of policy creation and teacher educators' practice has several implications. Dr. S.S. – who works at a reputed public university – stated that this separation has important implications for the implementation of Indian education policies:

> **Dr. S.S:** 'You are developing the policies in an AC room. But you do not have a sense of field visit. There is a need to develop the policy based on field observation, based on that understanding. The policies have no local understanding, there is no local participation. That's why the implementation of policy fails.'

Notably, several university- and college-based teacher educators lamented the lack of professional development programs and/or infrastructural support to enable them to implement the idealistic prescriptions and recommendations of education policies. In this regard, professional development programs were explained as a medium to enable the implementation of education policies, albeit in contextually relevant ways. Thus, as university-based Dr. Shivani explained, policymakers are:

> 'sitting in AC rooms, they have no connection to what's really there in the ground. And they make policies, and they dictate things to us. But many times, we can't really do them because we don't have the infrastructure for it, or we don't have the training for it. We're not equipped to be doing it.'

Conversely, a few university- and college-based teacher educators explained that policymakers are actively and intentionally connecting with the ground realities of teacher education practice, and are highly motivated about ensuring quality education. For example, Prof. Dhananjay – dean of the Department of Education at a large, private university–- described how the creation of the NEP 2020 involved 'more than 5000 deliberations all over India including at state universities and central universities, and delegations from the masses and common people'. This view echoes the Preamble of the Draft NEP (MHRD, 2019) that noted that the committee had consulted 'individuals, institutions, organisations, and groups of people…representing different educational ideologies and ideas, different cultural and social backgrounds, and from different regions of the country, a range truly reflective of the diversity of our nation' (p. 23). Echoing this view, Dr. Letha – drawing on her position as Chief Consultant at the Ministry of Education–- noted how policymakers are intentionally seeking collaboration and feedback from an array of stakeholders in education. Similarly, Dr. Jyotsna – a former college-based teacher educator who now works for the Ministry of Home Affairs – explained that 'when you enter into the government, then you come to know how government works, and I'm so happy to know that the government is working in the right direction, they are very stable people and work for the mass of this country. There is a selfless feeling for the work'. In short, while several university- and college-based teacher educators espoused a gulf between education policies and teacher education practice, others spoke favourably of the sites and process of education policy creation. Notably among those in support, two former college-based teacher educators - Dr. Letha and Dr. Jyotsna - defended their views by drawing on their professional roles and experience working in the government.

While not equally true for all the interviewed teacher educators, the separation between policy creation and teacher education practice implied by the metaphor of the AC room is significant. It emphasises and juxtaposes idealistic policy expectations against the realities of teacher education practice, and foreshadows the reported need for teacher educators to draw on their own knowledge and experiences to explain their teacher education practice. In this sense, the AC room metaphor points to the need for teacher educators to contextualise their practice to the unique needs of their student teachers, and the local teaching-learning context.

The Flow of Education Policies

In the interviews, teacher educators – primarily based in universities and colleges - named most education policies in independent[28] India. For example, university-based Dr. Bhaskar chronologically listed the following education policies:

> **Dr. Bhaskar:** 'After independence, we have a lot of commissions. In 1948, it was the Radhakrishnan Commission. Then in 1952-53, it was the Mudaliar commission. In 1964 it was the Kothari Commission. Then in 1986, we had the National Policy in Education. In 1992, it was the Ramamurthy Committee, and the revised National Policy in Education. The National Knowledge Commission was also there in 2007. And last year, in 2020 the New Education Policy was released.'

The chronological listing is significant because several teacher educators traced patterns of similarities in the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies over time. For example, college-based Dr. Hans explained 'the National Education Policy 2020 has not improved much since the 1986 policy, more than 80% of the aspects or areas and dimensions of the NEP are covered in the 1986 policy'. Similarly, university-based Dr. Priyanka G pointed out that 'in the NEP 2020, most of the content and the idea is very similar to the

[28] Only one pre-independence education policy under British rule was listed. Specifically, two teacher educators mentioned Macaulay's Minute 1835, a colonial-era policy reported as significant because it led to the introduction of English education in India.

Kothari Commission'. In this sense, as university-based Dr. Sudarshan stated, 'every policy gives new wordings to the same goal'.

This reported continuity in the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies is notable given that the previous two decades have witnessed ruling governments from across the political spectrum, including the Congress and the BJP. On the other hand, a few teacher educators based in colleges and universities - like Dr. Lakshmi and Ms. Avanti - explained that the NEP 2020 was deeply imprinted by an increasingly right-wing, Hindutva ideology within the present BJP government. Despite these contestations, the reported continuity in education policies is striking given that India transitioned from a primarily insular, socialist nation in the 1960s to its modern avatar based in post-1990 liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation reforms mandated by the World Bank. In all, the chronological listing of the flow of policies served to highlight the historical policy focus on education reform, and trace a sense of continuity in policy prescriptions and recommendations.

There was also a tension reported by the teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs between the continuous flow of education policies and their implementation in teacher education (related to the AC room metaphor). Prof. Dhananjay - drawing on two decades of experience as a teacher educator and five years as Dean of a university department of education - described this separation between reportedly idealistic policies and the ground realities of teacher education by saying 'we have a lot of policies, but we are poor in implementation, the policies are a very good kind of a thing but when it comes to the reality…once the question comes to implementation, we have miserably failed'. Meanwhile, Ms. Alex drew on her experiences as a TFI fellow and NGO-based teacher educator working with low-income schools to explain that 'on documents, we have beautiful, elaborate things

written, but something is falling between the cracks when it comes to the implementation level'. As a TFI fellow, Ms. Alex taught for two years in a low-income government school in a major south Indian city. During the fellowship, she realised 'the ground realities and the massive gaps' between the experiences of schoolchildren studying in government and elite private schools. She also 'saw that teachers were not teaching to their full potential which was limiting the children from getting the education that they had to get'. The gap was that there were not enough 'good teachers' or 'systems and processes that empower teachers' skills, mindsets, and knowledge which holds them back 30 or 40 years with respect to how they could be teaching in classrooms'. Thus, NGO-based Ms. Alex traced her motivation, perspectives, and practices for teacher education to these experiences of being a TFI schoolteacher. So also, Mr. Vinay drew on his experiences as an NGO-based teacher educator working with public school teachers in one south Indian state to suggest that in 'the actual translation or implementation at the ground level, there is definitely a lack of understanding about the spirit and the philosophy of it [education policies] while it is getting implemented'. University-based teacher educator Dr. Perveen, who entered the profession via the academic route, postulated that this is because 'rather than focusing on the implementation aspect, we just focus on the philosophical aspect of the policy'. As college-based teacher educator Dr. Monoronjan succinctly put it, 'till today, all the policies have touched the teacher education, but theoretically is one thing and practically is one thing'.

The reported lack of implementation of Indian education policies served to highlight the failure of the government (and their idealistic policies), but also implicitly emphasised the role of teacher educators and teachers in translating the prescriptions and recommendations of the policies into practice. Taken tougher, in addition to emphasising the perpetual policy

focus on education reform, university-, college-, and NGO- based teacher educators juxtaposed the steady flow of education policies against their lack of implementation.

6.3 School and Teacher Education Policies

While teacher educators listed most major education policies in independent India, only certain aspects of specific policies were described as important. Further, they noted that each *type* of policy - Acts, Regulations, National/State Policies, and Reports (see Section 3.3) – had different impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. Specifically, the teacher educators' descriptions included specific school education policies and teacher education policies, and the National Education Policy 2020. In the interviews, these selected policies were highlighted as important because they defined the expectations of quality education – including the role of the teacher and their teaching – and were reportedly aimed at reforming and regulating the teacher educators' practice. Accordingly, this section explores how the interviewed teacher educators described the importance of school and teacher education policies in India.

6.3.1 School Education Policies

Three school education policies were reported as important for teacher educators' practice - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (MHRD, 2002), National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005), and Right to Education Act (MHRD, 2009). Their importance was inferred from the diverse reported impacts and implications of these policies for schoolteachers' expected role, status, professionalism, and conditions of work.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2002 (SSA)

Ten teacher educators – primarily based in universities and colleges - highlighted the significance of the SSA policy and noted an array of implications for their practice. The SSA policy was focused on the universalisation of elementary education, especially its flagship program of providing free school meals for students. This has reportedly had important implications for student teachers' school teaching internships. Based in her experiences observing student teachers' internships in the last decade, Dr. Shamayel stated that after the SSA-provided midday meal, school students are 'so relaxed, and they just come back and then they attend to the classes, so say policies are good'. Meanwhile, Dr. Lakshmi - whose critical and decolonial approaches perspectives were reportedly rooted in her teacher education college's culture - linked SSA funding from the World Bank to the 'whole tradition of surveillance and monitoring and documentation' of schools and teachers. In this sense, the SSA policy reportedly had both positive and negative implications for the conditions and expectations of teachers' work.

A few teacher educators explained how the SSA push towards the universalisation of elementary education led to important implications for the motivation and recruitment of teachers, and affected admission into teacher education programs. Dr. Faiz - drawing on over two decades of professional experience as a teacher educator - explained that low teacher salaries offered under the SSA policy negatively affected the calibre and motivation of students entering teacher education programs because 'their passion and interest is highly correlated with their job'. Further, university-based Dr. Om opined that because of the SSA policy, 'irrespective of their qualifications, teachers were appointed'. This view implicitly indicated an emphasis on student teachers' entry profiles as an important factor in

determining their potential to become quality teachers. In this sense, teacher education outcomes are reportedly influenced in important ways by student teachers' entry background and characteristics. Meanwhile, while decrying the SSA policy for enabling the recruitment of unqualified teachers, Dr. Om credited two subsequent education policies – the NCF 2005 and NCFTE 2009 – with re-emphasising the importance of formally-qualified teachers. In effect, the SSA policy reportedly led to important implications for the wider context of teacher educators' practice, including affecting the conditions and expectations of teachers' work, teacher professionalism and status, and student teachers' school internships, and diminishing the importance and relevance of teacher education programs.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF)

While teacher educators did not draw on the NCF 2005 to understand quality education, they highlighted its significance in defining the policy expectations of quality education, teachers, and teacher educators. Specifically, several aspects of the NCF's vision of quality education were highlighted.

The NCF was credited with introducing the philosophy of constructivism to conceptualise quality education. As Dr. Faiz – who entered the profession via the academic route - stated, the 'the NCF 2005 focuses on the constructivism'. For some teacher educators, constructivism is linked to the concepts of child-centric or student-centric education. For example, Dr. Sarita – who also entered the profession via the academic route – pointed out that 'the NCF says that education must be student-centric, activity based, have lively classes, and ensure that students are engaged, so I believe that this policy is very good'. Notably, each teacher educator reported different and diverse understandings of constructivism drawing on their unique beliefs, knowledge, and experiences. For example, Dr. J traced her

understanding of constructivism to the 'philosophies of Dewey', which in turn in was rooted in her Buddhist 'belief that everyone has the inherent potential to do well'. In effect, Dr. J explained that 'constructivist approaches in teaching align with [her] view in life'. In this sense, the majority of interviewed teacher educators resonated with and valued the NCF's constructivist definition of quality education, albeit explained through different theoretical and practical lenses.

Specific expectations of teachers and teaching suggested in the NCF 2005 have also had implications for teacher educators' practice. Following the rapid privatisation and commercialisation of teacher education in the 90s, university-based Dr. Om explained that the NCF 2005 led to 'a new paradigm shift in teacher education programmes and teacher education institutions' by defining the expectations of quality education, teachers and the educators who prepare them. As university-based Ms. Aparna affirmed, the 'NCF 2005 was also a big influence in changing the styles of our teaching'. Building on this, university-based Dr. Ashwini articulated the implications for her teacher education practice saying that the 'NCF 2005 suggests connecting knowledge of life outside the school, or connecting teaching with the real-life experiences, so I'm following that a lot'. Notably, Dr. Ashwini noted that her constructivist teaching methods are importantly influenced by institutional factors - such as large class sizes (40-50 student teachers per class) and length of each period (60 minutes) – and socio-cultural considerations especially the low attention span of the present generation of student teachers. In effect, the NCF 2005 reportedly had different implications for teacher education practice based on each teacher educators' unique professional and institutional contexts.

Meanwhile, a few teacher educators explained that the NCF's constructivist vision of quality education is idealistic and impractical. Dr. S.S - drawing on two decades of professional experience as a teacher educator - stated that this is because of inadequate and low-quality teacher education, student teachers' rigid pre-existing beliefs about education, practical challenges such as large pupil-teacher ratios and limited time, and the gap between teachers' expected constructivist pedagogy and standardised assessment. For these reasons she asserted that 'there is no space for constructivism in schools', thereby alluding to the futility of preparing teachers for constructivist education as outlined in the NCF 2005. This view echoes the purported idealistic expectations of education policies, and its juxtaposition against the 'ground realities' of teachers' and teacher educators' practice. Though the NCF 2005 was heralded as a paradigm shift for defining the role of teachers and teachers, its lofty goals are reportedly yet to be implemented at scale because teachers are not being prepared for constructivist quality education. As NGO-based Mr. Vinay – whose work involves preparing professional development programs for in-service teachers through engaging with their lived experiences - put it, the NCF 2005 is both a 'brilliant, philosophical document' and 'a beautiful example of how it is how the spirit is lost from policy to implementation'.

Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE)

Seventeen teacher educators across the three institutional types highlighted the significance of the Right to Education Act 2009. Notably, the RTE Act was reported as important because of its emphasis on defining quality education through the lens of 'inclusion'. Prof. Dhananjay - reflecting on over two decades in the profession - noted that 'after the Right to Education, we are now talking about inclusion, earlier inclusion was missing'. This inclusive vision of quality education has led to implications for teacher educators' practice through the reported pedagogic strategies of providing a strong theoretical foundation for inclusion during teacher

education programs, and opportunities for student teachers to practice specialised teaching skills in school internships dedicated to teaching in inclusive classrooms. In this sense, the RTE Act reportedly led to changes in teacher education practice through its definition of quality education and expectations of the role of the teacher and teaching.

Meanwhile, the RTE Act was also used to illustrate the tension inherent in borrowing policy prescriptions from international contexts in India. University-based Dr. Sushanta highlighted this universal-contextual tension by taking the example of the policy prescription of Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment (CCE) introduced by the RTE Act. Stressing the uniqueness of India's cultural and historical contexts, Dr. Sushanta pointed out that aspects of quality education valued in international contexts - like CCE - do not work in the same way in India because 'our condition is totally different from other countries, in the aspect of culture, religion, caste, and gender also'. In his words, the difference between the 'international standard' and the 'national standard' is 'that quality is sometimes related to our national interests…and may not be in the international interest'.

The RTE Act also had reportedly delayed and limited implications for transforming subsequent teacher education policies and practices to meet its expectations. While the inclusionary ideals of the RTE Act were lauded, a few teacher educators highlighted the lack of concordant changes in teacher education curriculums, pedagogies, and assessments. For example, university-based Dr. Shivani – who entered the profession via the academic route and for whom inclusion is 'a core area of [her] work'–- described the RTE Act as a 'good step' for initially including children from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds in 2009, and subsequently children with disabilities in 2012. But, she pointed out that the first new courses on inclusion in teacher education programs were only launched in 2015-16. Thus, she

sighed, ‘you can’t have changes happening without equipping teachers’ through changes in teacher education programs and practice.

In short, the implementation of the RTE’s emphasis on quality education as inclusion was limited because there were no subsequent policies to guide teacher education programs and teacher educators’ practice in preparing teachers for inclusion. These views emphasised the importance of teacher educators’ professional development, notably positioning it as a medium to enable the implementation of education policies. In response to the lack of policy guidance on updating the teacher education curriculum, Dr. Shivani explained that she drew on her unique experiences as a teacher educator working at a university committed to social transformation to shape her teacher education practice such that inclusion is not a ‘separate component’ but an ‘everyday thing that is part of the regular classroom discourse’. In effect, how teachers are prepared for inclusive education reportedly depends on the personal motivations and initiative of individual teacher educators, and the institutional culture in which their practice is embedded.

In sum, the interviewed teacher educators explained how three school education policies have had several important implications for their teacher education practice. This includes affecting the conditions of teachers’ work, teacher status, professionalism, and recruitment, defining the expectations of quality education, teachers, and teaching, and shaping teacher educators’ practice. Despite noting the importance of these school education policies, and resonating with certain prescriptions and recommendations, the interviewed teacher educators lamented the lack of policy guidance and professional development to support the preparation of teachers to meet the expectations of school education policies.

6.3.2 Teacher Education Policies

Three teacher education policies were described as important by teacher educators – the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009), Report of the Justice Verma Commission (MHRD, 2012), and the NCTE (2014) Regulations. These were described as important for their assertions of the need for reform and regulation in teacher education, and their prescriptions and recommendations for teacher educators' practice.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009

The NCFTE 2009 was explained as aimed at reforming teacher education in alignment with the vision of quality education envisioned in the NCF 2005. As suggested the chronological listing of education policies (see Section 6.2), this view confirms the tendency of (teacher) education policies in India to be based in – and borrow from – the policy precedents. In the interviews, the NCFTE – in alignment with the NCF 2005 - was heralded as a landmark policy for its introduction of constructivist principles in teacher education. In this light, Dr. Om described the NCF 2005 and NCFTE 2009 as 'revolutionary documents for the Indian teacher education system'.

Though many teacher educators explained the importance of constructivism for their teacher education practice, this was interpreted by teacher educators through different theoretical and practical lenses. For example, Dr. Minoti–- who shifted from an NGO-based to a college-based teacher educator–- opined that 'there are five Es in constructivism' in reference to Rodger Bybee's (2015) five 'E's framework–- engage, explore, explain, extend, and evaluate. Dr. J connected 'constructivist approaches in teaching' to the works of Dewey, and Dr. U.B. linked 'social constructivism' to the writings of Vygotsky. Meanwhile, Dr. Sudhindra

connected constructivism to the philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore. Specifically, the reported 'Tagorean philosophy' was premised on the ideal teacher-student relationship which Dr. Sudhindra explained is akin to 'the connection of a mother to her child through the umbilical cord'. Notably, Dr. Sudhindra drew on his childhood experiences as a student at a school established by – and guided by the education philosophy – of Tagore, where he said that he had 'already experienced' the constructivist vision of quality education espoused in the policies. Similarly, the interviewed teacher educators drew on diverse scholars and philosophers–- both from other countries and India – in addition to their unique life histories to highlight the NCFTE's emphasis on constructivism.

In many interviews, the NCFTE was described as important because of its expectations of the kind of teacher required for quality education and therefore reportedly served to orient teacher educators' practice. In this sense, the NCFTE played roles that might have fallen to either mandated teaching standards or a consensus professional knowledge base for teacher education. Dr. Priyanka G's highlighted alluded to these two roles by noting that her practice is oriented towards 'preparing professional and humane teachers', the same phrase used in the sub-title of the NCFTE (NCTE, 2009). Moreover, she explained that the policy was a 'very good thing because we understood what kind of teacher educators we should be and what is expected from us'. In a rare reference to drawing on their professional preparation, Dr. Priyanka G explained that her alignment with the policy stemmed from her understanding of the importance of teacher professionalism, that she in turn traced to lectures and discussions during her M.Ed. program. Meanwhile, in alignment with the NCFTE's emphasis on reflective practice, several teacher educators reported that they oriented their teacher education practice towards preparing reflective teachers.

In a few cases, the NCFTE had reportedly direct impacts for teacher educators' practice. Dr. U.B.'s candid reflection on over two decades of experience as a teacher educator illustrated how the NCFTE served to coalesce disparate aspects of her practice under the umbrella of preparing teachers as 'reflective practitioners':

> 'Earlier, it was nowhere in our teacher education practices or transaction of the curriculum. It was completely brought in when it was suggested in the NCFTE. I would say I was 100% influenced by it. Though I was doing it in a haphazard manner for myself, but then it has come in a very systematic and organised manner only after NCFTE 2009.'

Not all the university- and college-based teacher educators, however, were equally convinced that the NCFTE has been translated into teacher education practice. Dr. Bhaskar drew on his unique professional experiences to suggest that among teacher educators, only 'a small section was familiar with NCFTE 2009'. For this group, he said that the policy 'caused some dramatic changes'. Meanwhile, drawing on the unique context of his rural and remote Himalayan home state, Dr. Bhaskar noted that many teacher educators especially those in rural and tribal areas 'were not benefited from that particular episode, that particular change'.

For a few, constructivist education in teacher preparation programs was explained as being reduced from a guiding philosophy to mere curricular content. Thus, Dr. Perveen – who previously linked constructivism to Vygotsky - posited that the 'constructivist approach…has not been pursued in our teacher education programmes, and constructivism is simply a theory like many other theories'. These views highlight the continued emphasis on mastering content knowledge - and reiterates the purported gap between theory and practice – in teacher education in India. Meanwhile, Dr. Faiz - reflecting on two decades of experience - highlighted how there were no professional development programs for teacher educators to

learn to implement and translate the recommendations of the NCFTE 2009 in practice. He explained:

> 'The translation and transactions of the NCFTE - as a teacher educator - I should say that not as much done as it should be in the (teacher education) classroom. The syllabus, philosophy, time duration, and all things were there. But how to implement it? How to translate it? How to transact it in the classroom? For that purpose, there was not so much. Every teacher educator formed his or her own way, translated it, taught it, and completed it.'

In all, the interviewed teacher educators' descriptions of the NCFTE 2009 demonstrate that they agreed with certain aspects of the policies, such as the importance of constructivism or preparing teachers as reflective practitioners, but they translated this into practice in different ways based on their unique knowledge, experiences, and professional context.

Report of the Justice Verma Commission 2012

A key finding of the Report of the Justice Verma Commission (henceforth, JVC Report) reported in the interviews – oft-quoted in the media and academic literature – was that almost 90% of TEIs were located in the private sector, and many of these did not meet the NCTE's norms and standards (MHRD, 2012). The JVC Report reportedly played an important role in establishing the narrative of crisis in teacher education in India, which in turn served as the rationale for the subsequent reform and regulation of the teacher education system. In the interviews, several teacher educators echoed this narrative of crisis in private teacher education institutions. University-based Dr. Om - who previously extolled the significance of the NCF 2005 and NCFTE 2009 - explained that the JVC Report was an 'eye opener' for the government, and concluded that the 'reality check that the JVC Report actually put forth is that the weakest link in the school education system is teacher education and the teacher.'

Many of the interviewed teacher educators across the universities, colleges, and NGOs confirmed the narrative of crisis and corruption in the JVC Report. These teacher educators drew on their own professional experiences to explain that many private TEIs are functioning without adequate infrastructure or resources, and that it is possible to buy B.Ed. degrees without attending any classes. For example, college-based Dr. Sudhindra recounted, 'in private institutions, there are no students, they're all doing their B.Ed. by the non-attending mode, the teacher educators are there, but they have hardly the chance to teach, the teacher educator is there to just satisfy the NCTE norms by the institution'. Building on this crisis narrative, university-based Dr. Sarita also suggested that it is possible to get a degree 'without attending the classes, without completing the assignments, nothing, no training, the B.Ed. course is business'. In effect, she sighed, 'how much money you can spend, that much percentage you will get in B.Ed.'. This anecdotal evidence confirms the policy and media narrative of crisis and corruption teacher education colleges, and dilute the significance and relevance of teacher education programs. College-based Dr. Perveen put it poignantly:

> 'What is happening in the private sector is that they don't have anything except the building. But they are giving 100 seats or 200 seats. Just take it. Come here, pay the money, and take the degree. Because they don't bother about quality.'

Notably, the corruption was reported primarily at the institutional level – of TEI (e.g., buying accreditation) and student teacher (e.g., buying B.Ed. degrees), rather than at the teacher educator level. This means that individual teacher educators were rarely implicated in the narrative of crisis and corruption in teacher education in India, except in a few cases. For example, Dr. Rupam – who works in a public teacher education college – drew on the case study of her home state of Haryana to report that many private TEIs offer minimal salaries, and thereby attract 'some bad teacher educators who have degrees from distance mode' which ultimately dilutes the cadre and professionalism of all teacher educators. Dr. Shamayel

– drawing on over two decades of professional experience in teacher education - suggested that these corrupted, cumulative changes are proving to be a detriment to student teachers' learning. Using the example of her home state of Karnataka, she explained:

> 'Some of the colleges are in such a state that there are no teacher educators, no buildings, no benches, or furniture. Nothing. Even the library is borrowed for that particular day when there is an NCTE visit…even the teacher educators are paid for the day and there are no teacher educators for the whole year…some of the student teachers have not seen the face of the teacher educator who takes a general subject or core subject. They don't know what core subjects are. They don't know what pedagogy is.'

Conversely, some interviewed teacher educators also provided anecdotal counter-evidence of private TEIs that are striving to maintain high standards, beyond the expectations of NCTE policy mandates. It is important to highlight these instances to respond to the widespread and entrenched narrative of crisis and corruption in teacher education in India. For example, in a few cases, the privatisation of and subsequent free market in education were heralded for its high-performing TEIs. As Dr. Geetha T – who works at a private teacher education college – put it, there are 'private institutions are doing better, but that is not because of government policies, that is because of the market structure'. In addition to the invisible hand, the quality of private TEIs was explained as a function of the initiative and commitment of particular institutions and individual teacher educators. In this sense, rather than the market system, quality was reportedly dependent on the teacher education institution. Notably, Dr. J – principal of a reputed, private teacher education college in a metropolitan city–- explained the paradoxical dilemma for TEIs who strive to maintain integrity and high standards, but are subsequently ranked lower than corrupt, private TEIs. She recalled:

> 'One principal of a B.Ed. college said to me "I'm feeling very ashamed that I was very strict with my evaluation. I set a strict paper, and my students got low marks in my college… but there are colleges which are giving the answer paper [to the student teachers]", and then she said, "what have I achieved in doing this?"'

In these ways, the interviewed teacher educators both confirmed and contested the narrative of crisis expounded in the JVC Report. However, they explained that the crisis narrative of the JVC Report led to significant changes in teacher education that directly affected their practice through the subsequent NCTE Regulations 2014. In short, as Dr. Om opined, based on the JVC Report 'a consensus was developed among teacher education' on the need for reform and regulation in teacher education.

NCTE Regulations 2014

A key feature of NCTE Regulations noted as important by the majority of the interviewed teacher educators was the shift to the two-year B.Ed. program. Dr. Faiz – who entered the profession via the academic route - traced this prescription to the recommendations of the JVC Report. In his words, 'earlier it was one year course, then after Justice Verma Commission's recommendations and NCTE regulations 2014 it became a two-year course'. In this way, the NCTE Regulations was explained as an example of how education policies borrow their prescriptions from policy precedents. Importantly, the shift to the two-year B.Ed. was reported as critical for improving student teachers' learning about teaching, especially by requiring more time for school internships and field experiences. As Dr. Minoti explained, 'now it's 200 working days each year that are compulsory, 36 hours in a week is compulsory, and internship goes to 80 and 90%, which is which is a major part…in the future I think it will be better for India'.

The shift to the two-year program also reportedly affected the entry backgrounds and characteristics of student teachers applying and getting accepted into teacher education programs. Some university- and college-based teacher educators explained that in the one-year program, prospective applicants viewed the B.Ed. as a quick-fix, back-up, or stop-gap

option. More specifically, the B.Ed. was framed as a swift route to a stable job, an opportunity for a strengthened CV, and in some cases a boost for better marriage prospects. However, Ms. Deepti – drawing on over a decade of experience as a teacher educator – explained that things have changed, and applicants to B.Ed. programs are more likely to be motivated and passionate about teaching and being teachers, with positive implications for quality education. She explained that 'those students who used to think it's just a nine-month course, let's just do it, they have stopped entering into the B.Ed. thinking it's a two-year course. And only those who are actually interested in B.Ed. and are passionate about teaching, they have started entering the course…I think this has majorly got quality in education increasing'. These views reaffirm the significance of student teachers' entry characteristics as important determiners of their ability to become quality teachers. In this sense, the NCTE Regulations has reportedly had important implications for positively affecting student teachers' motivation for, and commitment to, the profession.

Despite its national mandate, Dr. Rajendra explained that the NCTE Regulations allow space for the contextualisation of teacher education programs to the specific needs of the local teaching-learning context. He drew on six years of experience of working as a college-based teacher educator in the remote, north-eastern state of Tripura to explain how TEIs in different states can offer teaching specialisations in state-specific languages. He recounted:

> **'**Kokborok is a language which is spoken in a very small area of Tripura. Tripura has a population of only 36 lakhs[29]. This [NCTE] Regulation grants the scope to preserve the Kokborok language by developing teachers who know Kokborok so that they can teach their community. Such kind of minor differences you will find in the teacher training programme in every corner of the country.'

[29] 3,60,0000.

Notably, there were reported differences between the expectations of the NCTE Regulations, and school principals in terms of what is expected of teachers and their teaching. This harkens to the reported separation between the sites of policy creation and teachers' practice, and repositions the teacher educator as important in contextualising the prescriptions and recommendations of teacher education policies in locally meaningful ways. However, these differences can only be reconciled if the TEI has the agency through accreditation to contextualise the mandated teacher education curriculum. College-based Dr. U.B. underscored this tension between institutional accreditation and autonomy, and its implications for preparing teachers for contextually-relevant quality education:

> 'The NCTE 2014 norms and regulations spoke about training the teachers only in one of the subject pedagogies…but during placements, when we interacted with the school principals, the school principals were horrified. They said we can't recruit a teacher who can teach only one subject, because the timetable is made in such a way that we will want our teachers to be trained in teaching two subjects. So, then we had to bring about changes. How did we do that? Fortunately for us, we soon got an A+ (grade from NAAC), and we became autonomous. Now being an autonomous college gave us the advantage of introducing things that are required and desirable in the schools.'

Paradoxically, some teacher educators suggested that the shift to the two-year B.Ed. has not led to an overall improvement in teacher education programs and teacher educators' practice. University-based Mr. Prateek posited that 'in implementation, one-year B.Ed. programme and two-year B.Ed. programme is the same'. This is partly because of a reported lack of clarity concerning the role of the teacher educator and their practice. Dr. Sudhindra – who previously lamented the lack of professional development programs for teacher educators - elaborated the point:

> 'When the duration of teacher education shifted from one year to two years, I didn't find any changes of quality in teaching future teachers, because it is old wine in new bottles…because the teacher educators themselves are in a dilemma and confused, what is their role in this two-year B.Ed. course…there is a lot of practicum, what is

> the role of the practicum? how can this practicum be carried out within the main curriculum course?... So, it is nothing but the old wine in a new bottle for me'

Thus, the NCTE 2014 Regulations were described as important because they prescribed the shift from the 1-year to 2-year B.Ed. Importantly, it mandated the recommendations of the NCFTE 2009 for teacher education curriculums, pedagogy, and assessment – thereby aligning itself with the constructivist vision of quality education and the expectations of the teacher and teaching in the NCF 2005. In the following chapter, I delve deeper into teacher educators' explanations of the impacts and implications of the NCTE 2014 Regulations on their teacher education practice.

In sum, specific aspects of three teacher education policies were described as important because of their prescriptions and recommendations for teacher educators' practice, especially in defining what counts as quality teaching and how quality teachers can be prepared through teacher education programs. Two important insight that emerged across teacher educators' descriptions are the reported gap between idealistic teacher education policies and the ground realities of teacher educators' practice, and the lack of support teacher educators' received – e.g., through professional development programs – to implement the prescriptions and recommendations of teacher education policies. This lack of support to implement Indian education policies further highlights the importance of investigating what teacher educators do and why.

Other Education Policies

In some interviews, a few education policies were implicitly named by highlighting their impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. These included both school and teacher education policies that were described as important because they speak to the debates

concerning where should teacher education be located, who can be a teacher, and who can be a teacher educator. I illustrate these points with three examples - the policies for Nursery Teacher Training (NTT), para-teachers, and eligibility tests for teachers and teacher educators.

The first example is the set of state government education policies that regulate the establishment of Nursery Teacher Training (NTT) centres that prepare teachers for pre- and primary education. The reported case of the NTT policies is important because it speaks to important debates regarding where and how teachers for nursery education should be prepared, and by whom. Given that education is a 'concurrent' subject – meaning that it is simultaneously administered by the Centre and the States – each state has its own education policies for establishing private NTT centres, often as franchisees of existing institutions. Ms. Swetha – co-founder of a teacher education NGO – noted that the policy accountability for nursery teacher education across the country is lax, and anyone can open an NTT centre. She stressed, 'if I want to open an NTT Centre in my garage, I can do it'. While she admitted that many NTT programs are well-designed, they are poorly implemented by the NTT teacher educators and have led to a proliferation of sub-standard nursery teacher training institutes. The reported ease of establishing NTT centres harkens to the purported laxity of the NCTE as a regulatory body, and the correlation between the lack of policy-mandated institutional accountability and poor quality of NTT provision. In effect, though the policy prescribed NTT curriculum was explained meaningful, it has reportedly failed in its implementation. Furthermore, the NTT was also presented as an example of how idealistic policies fail to be implemented in the everyday contexts of teacher education practice. Ms. Swetha – whose teacher education NGO works exclusively in ECCE and focuses on preparing teachers to achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy - reflected thus:

> **Ms. Swetha:** 'I think the NTT, the principles are not bad at all. In India, I think our policies are beautiful… even in terms of NTT, the things you need to do – the syllabus, the conversations you need to have, I think are quite sound. But what happens is in its implementation, it's entirely broken down.'

Four university- and college-based teacher educators highlighted the implications of the policies that established 'para-teachers' or 'contract teachers'. College-based Dr. Geetha T noted that 'the policy of *Shikshan Sevak* – that a teacher will be on contract basis for three years – completely changed the scenario, and there are many repercussions we are facing today'. This includes the reported recruitment of unqualified para-teachers in schools, who are paid a fraction of a regular teacher's salary for the same work, with adverse implications for the quality of teaching and school students' learning. Dr. Geetha T explained how the rise of para-teachers has led to the dilution of the status and perceived expertise of the teaching profession such that teaching is now 'no longer a profession of choice'. In this vein, Dr. Priyanka G stressed that it is time to do away with the policy of para-teachers and emphasise the value of formal teacher education degrees. She lamented that 'we still have the concept of para teachers, that should not be there if we are teaching seriously, we should have professionally qualified teachers with the requisite skills and degree'. Notably, Dr. Priyanka G drew on the 'UN dimensions of quality education' to explain her understanding of quality teachers and their professional preparation. In essence, the reported criticisms of 'unqualified' para-teachers highlights the significance of the professional preparation of teachers through formal teacher education programs. In this regard, Dr. Mandeep – drawing on almost three decades of experience as a teacher educator – explained that the rise in the number of para-teachers led to the dilution of the importance of teacher education programs, and has negatively affected teacher status and professionalism – with negative implications for the cadre of teacher educators. She reflected:

> ‘These types of not very polished policies, they diluted the process of teacher training a lot in the making of effective teachers. These policies killed the enthusiasm, the energy, and the passion towards the teaching profession and to become teacher educators as well.’

Related to the question of who can become a teacher, several teacher educators criticised the policies that established the Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET) conducted by the central and state governments. Passing the TET – organised by the central government (CTET) or state governments (STET) – is a mandatory requirement to become a public school teacher. The implicit assumption is that an individual’s ability and willingness to be a quality teacher is directly correlated with their performance on the TET. A few teacher educators stressed that the TET exams only measure content knowledge, and do not assess whether an individual is qualified to be a teacher. University-based Dr. Ashwini asserted that ‘we are only taking advantage of whether they [potential teachers] are sound in their subject knowledge…but there are no tests for good teaching or whether they are interested in the profession or not’. Relatedly, Dr. Ashwini previously stressed that content mastery and commitment to the profession were integral characteristics of the kind of teacher required for quality education. In this regard, college-based Dr. Geetha T recommended that teacher eligibility tests need to include ‘psychological tests that should be used for personality, attitude and aptitude…and interviews, group discussion’. Thus, some teacher educators - primarily located in universities and colleges - suggested that the existing teacher eligibility tests are not valid or reliable measures of a teacher’s eligibility to provide quality education in schools, and thus require reformation.

Relatedly, some teacher educators lamented how only a small fraction of B.Ed. graduates can pass the CTET and STET exams. This sheds a spotlight on the purported poor content knowledge of teachers who have qualified with professional degrees in education. In this

regard, Dr. Kaushal – Dean of a university Department of Education - noted with pride how B.Ed. graduates from his institution have a pass rate of 86% versus the reported national average of approximately 27% which according to him is 'almost the highest result in CTET'. Meanwhile, Ms. Nahid took the example of her home state of Uttar Pradesh to note that even 'TET qualified students are not properly teaching in that schools', thereby re-emphasising the inability of the TET to adequately assess an individual's ability and willingness to provide quality education in schools. Taken together, the interviewed teacher educators' references to the policies that established para-teachers and teacher eligibility tests address important debates including who can be a teacher, whether teacher education is necessary or if teaching can be learnt on the job, and how teachers' readiness for teaching can be assessed.

In nineteen interviews, the National Eligibility Test (NET) – conducted by the National Testing Agency – was highlighted as a necessary qualification to become a teacher educator (similar to the TET for teachers). These university- and college-based teacher educators noted the NET as an important landmark in their career trajectories, though its validity and usefulness were contested. Specifically, the NET was explained as inadequate in assessing who might be a quality teacher educator. For a few teacher educators, the NET needs to be reformed, and recruitment for teacher educators must also involve detailed interviews, personality assessments, and demonstrations of teaching (similar to the proposed TET reforms). Dr. Minoti – who entered the profession via the academic route (having shifted from working at a teacher education NGO) - remarked that the NET does not guarantee 'a good lecturer in Indian universities', instead she proclaims 'if you require a teacher educator, take a demonstration of teaching, give them a real situation, don't go with degrees'. In this light, Dr. Lakshmi – alluding to her institution's stress on interdisciplinarity - also advocated

for teacher educators to be drawn from diverse specialisations in addition to education. She regretted that policymakers 'refuse to have interdisciplinary professionals teaching in teacher education programs'. In response, quoting the Indian educationist JP Naik – whose philosophy underpins her TEI's vision and mission - she stated that we need 'to begin a revolution with a revolution' - in this case, the revolution of multi-disciplinary teacher educators for teacher education in India. These views of the relevance of the NET speak to questions of who can be a teacher educator, how their eligibility can be assessed, and what disciplinary backgrounds they should come from.

6.3.3 National Education Policy 2020

Thirty-four years after its predecessor, the latest National Education Policy was launched in 2020. The NEP 2020 is an overarching national policy that addresses the entire education ecosystem including schools and teacher education. This policy was described as important because of its proposals to redefine the meaning of quality education in schools, and restructure teacher education programs. Aligned with the NEP, the interviewed teacher educators explained that quality teachers – and the educators who prepare them – are central to ensuring quality education.

Quality Education

In the interviews, teacher educators emphasised different features of the NEP's vision of quality education such as experiential learning, socio-emotional learning, multilingual education, and citizenship education. For example, a few teacher educators stated that a key feature of quality education in the NEP is 'experiential learning'. As Dr. Ashwini – whose own schoolteachers served as models of 'what a good teacher should be' - asserted, the 'NEP

2020 has given importance to experiential learning'. Prof. Dhananjay explained that 'the motto of the NEP is without experiential learning you cannot be a good teacher'. Notably, Prof. Dhananjay rationalised the significance of preparing teachers for experiential learning in schools saying that 'children are not *tabula rasa* like John Locke had said, they have a lot of energy, they are blooming'. In this sense, he connected the process of experiential learning with engaging each child's unique needs, interests, and contexts. Meanwhile, some teacher educators stressed the significance of socio-emotional learning as a defining feature of quality education in the NEP. For Ms. Aparna, socio-emotional learning means that 'teachers can train the students to address difficult situations of life, or maybe some kind of disabilities that they have physically, mentally, emotionally'. Building on this view, and drawing on Swami Vivekananda's example and the 'cultural heritage of the *guru shishya* tradition', Dr. Abhijit proclaimed that what is required is a quality teacher who is a 'friend, philosopher and guide'. Notably, each teacher educator drew on their unique expertise and experiences to emphasise specific aspects of the NEP's vision of quality education.

A few teacher educators highlighted the importance of 'multilingual education', and preparing teachers to teach in local languages. In this regard, Ms. Avanti – who teaches linguistics to B.El.Ed. students at a renowned public university - pointed out that the NEP uses the terms 'regional language, home language, mother tongue, [and] first language' interchangeably, thus creating confusion. Further, the NEP's push for specific languages – like Hindi - over others is problematic for Ms. Avanti who explained that there is an 'emotional connection between the language one speaks and identity'. She asserted that children knowledge of local language 'is the primary resource, it's a huge cognitive and linguistic resource'. Notably, Ms. Avanti's critique on the NEP's vision of multilingual education is also rooted in her experiences of completing a Master's degree in linguistics, a

Ph.D. thesis that investigated language acquisition from 'a socio-cultural perspective', and the passion 'to contribute to language pedagogy'.

Still other teacher educators discussed the NEP's positioning of quality education as 'citizenship education'. Dr. Sudarshan said that citizenship education 'nurtures a democratic outlook' and is a 'very useful resource to help our country to strengthen its democracy'. Tracing this view to 'the American pragmatist John Dewey who said that education is the midwife of democracy', he continued, 'in true education, the teacher should try to mould a democratic outlook for the student'. Dr. Ashwini asserted that to prepare students for global citizenship, we need 'responsible and sensitive teachers'. In this regard, she pointed to the NEP's vision 'preparing children for global citizenship and sensitisation' to rationalise the significance of teacher educators who have a 'big responsibility, to motivate themselves and contribute to the best of their knowledge'. Importantly, Dr. J noted that quality education for global citizenship must not devolve into an 'excessive nationalism' that reinforces national identities and create conflict. Drawing on her Buddhist beliefs in an individual's inherent potential, Dr. J explained that her solution is for 'good teachers' to stress universal values like secularism and democracy because it is 'the only way for somebody to really bloom'. And reiterating the significance of the teachers' role, Dr. J explained that 'a good teacher can always convey underlying universal values to the student'. In effect, though teacher educators' resonated with the NEP's myriad definitions of quality education, some (such as citizenship education) were simultaneously described as problematic.

Ushering in a new vision of quality education for schools, the NEP 2020 proposed a shift in the structure of schooling to a new 5+3+4+4 model. This divides schooling into four stages – foundational (5 years), preparatory (3 years), middle (4 years), and high school (4 years). In

the interviews, two important implications of this stage-specificity were described: the emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), and the training of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) workers as teachers. In the NEP, a key feature of the first stage (5 years) of the new structure for schools is the emphasis on achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. However, NGO-based Ms. Swetha - whose organisation works exclusively with teachers in ECCE - highlighted how the focus on FLN can become problematic because pre-schools continue to be located separately from primary schools. She noted that with the policy turn towards FLN that teachers in each grade will likely focus solely on whether the child has achieved the minimum FLN learning outcomes. In this sense, she warned that 'assessment might become the focus of schools…[and] deteriorate the social and emotional development of children'. In this sense, the NEP's reported emphasis on FLN exemplifies the implicit tension between the quality education aims of achieving learning outcomes and holistic development.

With the proposed new stage-specificity, ECCE will now be included within the formal school education system. ECCE in India has previously been the purview of *Anganwadi*[30] workers – usually middle or high-school graduates, some with undergraduate degrees (but generally not in education). This means, as Dr. Om put it, around '13 lakh Anganwadi workers have to be transformed into teachers'. He questioned how policymakers will respond to this challenge, and whether they will opt for 'some 7-day or 10-day or 21-day training programme or such similar kinds of mistakes which we have committed since the 1990s'. Thus, he stated that more clarity is needed regarding the duration and structure of this specific

[30] Translated as 'courtyard shelter', *anganwadis* are day care centres for young children established by the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) policy in 1975.

teacher preparation, especially considering *Anganwadi* workers' diverse educational backgrounds and experiences.

A few teacher educators identified certain silences in the NEP's conception of quality education. For example, NGO-based Ms. Swetha said that the 'biggest gap' in the NEP's vision of quality education is the 'absolute silence on parents'. She explained that a focus on the 'parent-teacher relationship is probably the only sustainable way in which early childhood education can be managed'. Based on this premise, Ms. Swetha' teacher education NGO – and practice therein – emphasises the need prepare teachers to engage with families to understand their students' lives, contextualise their teaching, and involve parents in their child's learning process.

A few teacher educators explained that in previous education policies, policymakers were explicit about defining quality education as a medium for transforming socio-economic inequalities. Prof. Dhananjay - who described himself as a 'teacher educator activist' - explained that the 'missing point in this policy' is that it 'doesn't talk about how to reduce that gap between the haves and have nots', alluding to one of the envisioned aims of quality education – social transformation. The social transformation goal of quality education has always been dear to Prof. Dhananjay, who previously worked as a schoolteacher in poor, urban slum areas. Over two decades later, Prof. Dhananjay is now the Dean of the Department of Education at a large, private university. Building on his activism and professional experience, he was proud that his Department has 'adopted seven villages on the rural outskirts of Delhi' meaning that the university's student teachers spend the weekends teaching and volunteering towards the educational and social upliftment of these villages. Previous education policies, according to university-based Ms. Avanti, were 'explicit about

certain things in terms of social inequalities, in terms of reservations, but in this policy there is absolutely not a single word on it'. In light of the reported silence of social transformation as an explicit outcome of quality education, Dr. Lakshmi – who previously advocated for critical and decolonial approaches in teacher education - stressed the significance of investigating who made the policy and why, thereby alluding to the nationalistic and Hindutva agendas of the present government. Or again, in the words of Ms. Avanti – the linguistics scholar - 'when you read the document, it's all saffronisation[31]'.

Preparing Teachers for Quality Education

The NEP 2020 was described as important because of its proposal to shift all teacher education into multidisciplinary universities, and transition from the two-year B.Ed. to a four-year integrated teacher education program (ITEP). For a few university- and college-based teacher educators, shifting all teacher education into multidisciplinary universities is a continued reaction to 'low quality or sub-quality teacher education institutions' (Dr. Kaushal), 'where they can't deliver good teacher educators' (Ms. Avanti). As Dr. Monoronjon put it, the 'NEP has as fixed a goal that after 2025 there will be no standalone college… this is a good thing, if it can be implemented seriously'. In this sense, shifting teacher education into universities was explained as the proposed solution to the present narrative of crisis and corruption in teacher education in India.

The shift to the 4-year ITEP will reportedly have positive implications for student teachers' entry demographics, characteristics, knowledge, and skill – similar to the policy-mandated shift from the one-year to the two-year B.Ed. degree. NGO-based Dr. Pari – reinforcing the significance of student teachers' entry characteristics - hoped that the ITEP will result in

[31] Referring to the colour associated with the right-wing Hindu nationalist movement – saffron.

better selection and recruitment of teachers in India, as in other countries where 'only the best in the field, the creamy layer, are allowed to become teachers because they [countries] understand the role of teachers as nation builders'. In this regard, Dr. Priyanka S posited that the 4-year ITEP will lead to the 'professionalisation of teachers'. However, Dr. Mandeep – who has experience working in both universities and colleges - highlighted that it will be difficult to subsume the vast network teacher education colleges within the relatively smaller university system, and thus while degrees should be university-affiliated, teacher education colleges 'will have to play their role'.

With the shifting of teacher education into universities, teacher educators will also be responsible for the professional development of educators from other departments. However, college-based Dr. Geetha T noted that TEIs are 'not strong and confident enough at present to even take care of their own training of teachers'. Crucially, Dr. J – principal of a reputed private teacher education college - questioned the 'arrogant assumption' that all standalone TEIs are corrupt and sub-standard, and that all multidisciplinary university teacher education programs are high quality. These contested views suggest that quality in initial teacher education is dependent on the vision and commitment of individual institutions, rather than whether they are based in universities or colleges.

However, shifting from a two-year B.Ed. to a four-year integrated degree also reportedly creates challenges for TEIs in upgrading their infrastructure and resources so that student teachers can also study for undergraduate degrees. To illustrate Dr. university-based Geetha G explained that for physics students, the TEI will need to create labs, add to their libraries, and recruit additional staff who are subject experts. The proposed shift to the 4-year ITEP

also reportedly has implications for the question of who can become a teacher educator, and what necessary disciplinary backgrounds they must possess.

Furthermore, this shift will likely have different implications for different TEIs. For example, Dr. U.B. noted that her teacher education college was famous for being 'strict', i.e., requiring students to attend 100% of all classes during the B.Ed. program, and participate in all extracurricular activities. This has led to becoming a well-established teacher education college ('more than fifty years old') and receiving A+ grade in the NAAC accreditation. In effect, Dr. U.B. concluded that their 'execution is made so powerful, that when our student teachers graduate, there is a brand name, and it's with this brand name that they are hired in schools'. Despite this institutional status and reputation, Dr. U.B. was concerned about the implications of the proposed shift to the 4-year ITEP for her teacher education college:

> 'The NEP 2020 has scared us, especially our teacher education college because we are a standalone college. We do not have any other programme except the B.Ed. programme. So, there is a lot of pressure on us now to start a new teacher education programme. The problem is that if you start a new programme, you need to have some amount of extra area, space and so on. My college is located in one of the prime areas of Mumbai and the land prices are astronomical, there's no way we can expand or do anything. For us now, the challenge is how to survive.'

It is still presently unclear if the stage-specificity proposed in the NEP for school education will require attendant specialisations in teacher education programs. For a few teacher educators, the stage-specificity in schooling has no implications for teacher education. College-based Dr. Priyanka G noted that this is partly because 'the specialisation of teacher education already exists', in her examples, NTT for nursery, B.El.Ed. for primary school, and B.Ed. for middle and high school. Still, Dr. Priyanka G asserted that education policies need to clearly 'demarcate' the specific education degrees required for each stage of education, and be consistent about the mandated stage-specific degree requirements. Conversely, college-based Dr. Abhijit asserted that 'when you come to teacher education, you have to prepare for

the group of students from class one to class 12'. Related to his emphasis on the relevance of the image of the teacher as *guru*, Dr. Abhijit's view reflects the counter position that teacher education programs should prepare teachers to teach at any/all levels of school. Thus, Dr. Abhijit continued, the proposed stage-specificity 'does not affect teacher education, but it will affect the school education'. However, some teacher educators reported a need for commensurate stage-specificity in teacher education. As Ms. Swetha – whose NGO focuses on ECCE - put it, 'if you're going to prescribe how children learn differently, certainly prescribe what to train teachers also differently depending on the bracket'. Taking a more critical stance, Dr. Perveen commented that the proposed 5+3+3+4 stage-specificity 'is not a new model at all. This is just reshuffling of numbers'.

An important way in which the NEP will reportedly affect teacher educators' practice is through its implications for student teachers' recruitment and admission. In this regard, two teacher educators highlighted that the NEP's proposal to establish a National Testing Agency (NTA) that will be responsible for recruitment and admission into teacher education programs. Dr. Hans explained that 'definitely quality (of teacher education) will be better in the near future if this is successfully conducted by NTA'. Dr. Om explained the proposed NTA exam as the first part of a two-step admission process, national and institutional. He noted that NTA 'will conduct a single examination and students will be allocated through that' while TEIs will 'conduct a face-to-face interview, to know about the teacher's passion, commitment, and values'. Dr. Om termed this a 'double-entry double-check process'. These views reiterate the position that the key to improving teacher quality is a selective, and rigorous recruitment process into teacher education programs.

The impacts and implications of the NEP 2020 on teacher education in India will likely unfurl over the following years. Based on the interviewed teacher educators' descriptions of the NEP there is cause for both hope and concern. As Dr. Shivani succinctly put it, 'policies always do influence the teacher education system, whether it's positive or negative is a different discussion altogether'.

Implementation of the NEP 2020

Several teacher educators across the three institutional types raised questions about the implementation of the NEP 2020 in terms of its vision for quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. For example, university-based Ms. Aparna echoed the gap between idealistic policies and the realities of practice and noted that the NEP is 'quite demanding, the kind of shift it has asked for, especially in the school education system, has made us ponder how much of it can be executed and how much of it cannot be executed'. In addition to the NEP's idealism, concern was also raised about the lack of specific and measurable steps and targets to implement its recommendations. NGO-based Dr. Pari posited, 'the goals are not clearly mapped, the milestones are not clearly mapped for us to achieve'. Similarly, college-based Dr. Ritesh reported that the NEP 2020 is not detailed enough in mapping specific targets, and requires further elaboration on how its recommendations will be made into reality. Notably, he stressed the need for more uniformity – in the form of a common teacher education curriculum – because 'all over India, the same notion should go to every teacher'. This suggests the potential for common professional knowledge base for teachers across India, that is equally relevant in diverse state and local contexts. Further, Dr. Ritesh advocated that teacher educators will need dedicated professional development programs to understand and implement the NEP 2020. In short, most teacher educators across

universities, colleges, and NGOs were curious, sceptical, or concerned about the implementation of the NEP 2020.

Interestingly, a few teacher educators strongly emphasised that there will be no challenges in the implementation of NEP 2020. For example, when asked if she anticipated any challenges in the implementation of the, Dr. Jyotsna – former college-based teacher educator who now works for the Ministry of Home Affairs - declared 'no, clear no, there is no challenge'. Similarly, a few teacher educators like college-based teacher Dr. Shamayel elaborated that there are already several 'programmes, workshops, seminars, conferences' for teacher educators to support NEP implementation, and more coming up. The challenge and goal, Dr. Shamayel continued, is for teacher educators to 'utilise it'. In this sense, the onus of policy implementation reportedly rests with the teacher educator, both to understand the NEP 2020 and translate it into teacher education practice in contextually meaningful ways.

The interviewed teacher educators espoused different descriptions of who is responsible for the implementation of the NEP 2020. Dr. Jyotsna noted that academic institutions including schools and TEIs are responsible for policy implementation because 'policies are made for students, for teachers, for departments, for universities, for every institution of our country'. College-based Dr. Minoti stated that the responsibility rests with 'school administration, and state governing body of particular states', while for university-based Dr. Sarita, it is 'teacher educators, teachers, and parents'. In this regard, several teacher educators explained that 'we all' (Dr. Kaushal) are responsible for the implementation of the policy. As NGO-based Dr. Pari elaborated, 'everyone is responsible, we are supposed to be the largest democracy, so, from people to government, each one of us is responsible'. This diffused accountability for implementing the NEP 2020 harkens to India's collectivist historical traditions, while

absolving the government of direct responsibility to ensure quality education in schools (including the preparation of teachers to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education). Encapsulating this point – and alluding to importance of the 'education system' – college-based Dr. Priyanka G concluded that 'everyone' is responsible for the implementation of the NEP 2020:

> 'The government has to increase the GDP of our education sector. Then we have the academicians who are working on curriculum development, we have teacher educators, we have teachers, and institutions. And even the stakeholders in the society. When we talk about NGOs, or other stakeholders in the society, it is also their responsibility that the implementation of this policy happens in a truthful way.'

Amidst these descriptions of who is responsible for implementing the policy, most emphasised the role of the teacher educator in ensuring the NEP's vision for quality education. University-based Ms. Deepti explained that 'for a teacher to train the students in the objectives of NEP 2020, she herself has to be trained'. Similarly, university-based Dr. Ashwini elaborated that 'teachers have to be very well trained in what is the NEP, and what kind of changes will take place, that kind of orientation is required [in teacher education]'. These views reaffirm the causal relationship between teacher educators' practice, student teachers' learning, and teachers' practice in schools, and thus reemphasise the significant role of teacher educators in India. In sum, despite some disagreements about how, the majority of teacher educators described that the National Education Policy 2020 will be important for shaping their practice through its vision of – and proposals for - quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

6.4 Tracing Teacher Educators' Descriptions of Indian Education Policies

The interviewed teacher educators emphasised certain aspects of specific Indian education policies as important partly based on their unique personal and professional contexts. For example, the NCTE 2014 Regulations was noted by most university- and college-based teacher educators as significant for mandating a two-year B.Ed., and positively influencing student teachers' entry characteristics (e.g., motivation and background knowledge). While many teacher educators described Indian education policies as problematic, a few argued in favour of the government and policymakers. This included Prof. Dhananjay (Dean of Education at a prestigious private university in Delhi) and Dr. Shamayel (college-based teacher educator in Bengaluru). Notably, the two teacher educators' who most strongly defended the intentions and implementation of Indian education policies had both transitioned to working with the government – Dr. Letha at the Ministry of Education, and Dr. Jyotsna at the Ministry of Home Affairs. Both these teacher educators also espoused positive views of the NEP and did not anticipate any challenges in its implementation. This suggests that teacher educators' descriptions of the NEP (and education policies more generally) are importantly influenced by their personal understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education, and professional experiences.

Several teacher educators agreed with certain core ideas of Indian education policies, though these were interpreted differently. Specifically, while some interviewed teacher educators drew on the same philosophers/thinkers to explain their perspectives and practices, they did so in different ways. For example, the NCFTE's vision of 'constructivism' or 'constructivist' teacher education was interpreted by the interviewed teacher educators through myriad lenses including Vygotsky, Dewey, and Tagore. Moreover, different aspects of the same education

philosophy were emphasised to explain rationalise different perspectives. For example, in the previous chapter, Dr. Pari drew on Tagore – based on her personal resonance with his education philosophy - to explain the role of the teacher. In this chapter, Dr. Sudhindra drew on Tagore – based on his experiences as a student in a school established by Tagore and rooted in his education philosophy – to explain the significance of the teacher-student relationship in the teaching-learning process. Meanwhile, Dr. S.S. used the AC room as a metaphor for policymakers' lack of understanding of the realities of teacher education in India based on her understanding of quality education as 'critical education'. Based on her Freirean analysis, Dr. S.S. noted that she was 'critiquing the political domination of the government in the education system'. In effect, the teacher educators' descriptions of Indian education policies aligned in important ways with their personal experiences and understanding of quality education.

The teacher education institution (university, college, or NGO) reportedly played an important role in shaping teacher educators' description of – and engagement with – important Indian education policies. For example, college-based Dr. Abhijit pointed to the autonomy of his private college – rated 'A' by NAAC - to shape the mandated teacher education curriculum in alignment with the institution's vision based on the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. While university-based Dr. S.S. traced her critical approaches in teacher education to her current Department of Education, NGO-based Dr. Pari traced her emphasis on the development of 'life skills' to her organisation's specific vision for quality education. In this regard, the interviewed teacher educators explained how their TEIs resonated with certain aspects of the vision of quality education – and preparing teachers for quality education – explained in the Indian education policies. Importantly, the reported implementation of the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies was

also shaped by practical institutional constraints such as large class sizes in teacher education programs. In essence, the interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique life histories, perspectives, and professional experiences to describe the importance of certain aspects of select Indian education policies for their teacher education practice.

6.5 Summary

The interviewed teacher educators listed all the major education policies in independent India. However, only certain aspects of specific policies were described as important by teacher educators for their practice. Further, the teacher educators espoused contested descriptions of the extent and ways in which Indian education policies are important.

The interviewed teacher educators' emphasised the role of Indian education policies in defining expectations of what counts as quality education (and preparing teachers for quality education) in Indian schools. Positive points from the Indian education policies proffered by teacher educators include the emphasis on constructivist and inclusive education initiated by the NCF 2005 and RTE Act 2009, and the shift to the two-year B.Ed. mandated by the NCTE Regulations 2014. Notably, the interviewed teacher educators' descriptions focused almost entirely on the importance of national education policies, thereby pointing to the significant role played by the ruling government in shaping the contours of teacher educators' practice.

While teacher educators were willing to take on board certain aspects of selected Indian education policies, they highlighted a lack of professional development programs to enable them to implement these policies. Thus, they reportedly relied on their own views and experiences to translate policy prescriptions and recommendations into their teacher

education practice, within the unique challenges and opportunities afforded by their institutional and local teaching-learning contexts. As Dr. Ritesh reported:

> 'There was a paradigm shift in the curriculum in 2015 after the NCTE 2014 norms. Full paradigm shift. But, before implementing a curriculum you should train the teacher educator on how to implement it. I'm telling you, that kind of training, I have not attended any. I have attended one or two, and that was of no use. It was not fruitful… If you asked me if I learned anything about how to transact the curriculum? No. So, what I am doing right now is only of my own understanding'.

In sum, the interviewed teacher educators described specific aspects of certain school and teacher education policies as important because of their prescriptions and recommendations for quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. Importantly, the identified Indian education policies had different impacts and implications for teacher education practice reportedly based on each teacher educator's unique life histories and professional trajectories. Taken together, these findings reiterate the significance of the role of the teacher educator in translating Indian education policies into teacher education practice within specific teaching-learning contexts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW DO TEACHER EDUCATORS EXPLAIN THEIR TEACHER EDUCATION PRACTICE?

7.1 Overview

The previous chapter examined teacher educators' descriptions of which Indian education policies were important for their teacher education practice and why. The interviewed teacher educators described different impacts and implications of the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies based on their unique understanding of quality education, life histories, professional trajectories, and institutional contexts. Building on these insights, this chapter delves deeper to answer the third sub-research question – how do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?

The interviewed teacher educators explained their teacher education practice in terms of what they teach, how they teach, and how they evaluate student teachers' learning. Accordingly, this chapter presents teacher educators' practice through the dimensions of curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy. In addition to these three, most teacher educators highlighted a fourth dimension as central to their practice: the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher. Drawing on threads from previous chapters, each of the four reported dimensions of teacher educators' practice is examined in light of their unique understanding of quality education and description of important Indian education policies. In essence, this chapter presents how teacher educators explain their teacher education practice through four dimensions - curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and relationship.

7.2 Teacher Education Curriculum

According to NCFTE 2009, the teacher education curriculum is to be divided into 'three broad curricular areas' – Foundations of Education, Curriculum and Pedagogic Studies, and School Internship – aimed at the 'development of a broad repertoire of perspectives, professional capacities, teacher sensibilities and skills' (NCTE, 2009, p. 24). This recommended tripartite teacher education curriculum was subsequently mandated by the NCTE Regulations 2014[32]. While some teacher educators agreed with the structure and content of this prescribed teacher education curriculum, others expressed reservations. This section presents how university- and college-based teacher educators engaged with the policy mandated teacher education curriculum.

The interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators explained the teacher education curriculum as divided into two sets of subjects or 'papers'. The 'core papers' reportedly draw on the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, and psychology, and include topics prescribed in the NCFTE under the umbrella of Foundations of Education and Curriculum Studies (NCTE, 2009, pp. 28-36). Meanwhile, the 'methods papers' or 'pedagogy papers' are reportedly related to the teaching of specific school subjects, and include topics prescribed in the teacher education policy under 'Pedagogic Studies' (ibid, pp. 36-40). The 'core papers' and 'methods/pedagogy papers' distinction aligns neatly with the first the two 'theory courses' – Perspectives in Education and Curriculum and Pedagogic Studies – mandated by the NCTE (2014) Regulations. More specifically, this distinction between 'core

[32] In the NCTE Regulations 2014, the name of the curricular area 'Foundations of Education' was changed to 'Perspectives in Education' (p. 115)

papers' and 'methods/pedagogy papers' is exemplified by the following list of subjects[33], which university- and college-based teacher educators testify to teaching or having taught:

Core Papers
Psychology of Education
Philosophy of Education
Sociology of Education
Guidance and Counselling
Special Education
Research Methods
Conceptual Foundations of Education
Assessment for Learning
Knowledge, Curriculum, and Pedagogy
Gender, School, and Society
Educational Technology
Environment Studies
Inclusive Education
Methods/ Pedagogy Papers
Pedagogy of Mathematics
Methodology of Social science/ Teaching of Social Studies/ Social Science
Teaching of History and Civics + Teaching of Geography
Teaching of English/ English methodology
Teaching of Biology
Pedagogy of Science

Table 9: A snapshot of the teacher education curriculum

Some teacher educators explained that the prescribed teacher education curriculum is relevant and meaningful for their teacher education practice. This can be illustrated with reference to the subject 'Psychology of Education', and its content containing the developmental theories of (for example) Piaget, Erickson, Kohlberg, Freud, and Vygotsky. University-based Dr. B. suggested that these 'theories of child development are universal'. Notably, college-based Dr. Abhijit – who noted the continued relevance of the teacher as *guru* for India in the 21st

[33] Subject names are verbatim quotes.

century and whose TEI is rooted in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy – also noted that these 'theories developed by the Western thinkers' are both 'applicable' and 'universal'. Thus, highlighting the universality of the present teacher education curriculum and thereby dissolving the Western-Eastern dichotomy, Ms. Aparna – drawing on fifteen years of professional experience as a teacher educator - offered this analysis:

> 'I do understand there is a big divide in the Western and the Eastern concepts of life and philosophy, psychology, the way we see things, the family structures we have. But eventually, when we come down to it, the human mind is the same. And psychology is all about the human mind, and how you want to deal with the human mind. Even though these experiments and the theories generated by all the psychologists, say Piaget or Freud… when it comes to application, I think they are completely applicable to the Indian mindset as well.'

The above quote highlights how some teacher educators rationalised and justified the organisation and content of the prescribed teacher education curriculum by drawing on their personal understandings of what student teachers should know, rather than only the education policies.

Meanwhile, not all teacher educators were as convinced about the content of the prescribed teacher education curriculum. In this regard, some teacher educators explained how they engage with the curriculum differently to make it relevant to their unique teaching-learning contexts and the needs of their student teachers. University-based Dr. Shivani – who was previously an interior designer and nursery teacher before joining the profession - suggested that the teacher education curriculum aligns 'to a large extent' with developments in the 'international setting'. She explained that this is 'very problematic because our settings are completely different, culturally we are very different…our understanding of the construct of childhood and learner that we have in the Indian setting is quite different from the Global North'. In response, Dr. Shivani's practice includes redesigning the teacher education

curriculum to be contextually relevant, using a critical lens to examine the present Eurocentric curriculum. Importantly, she noted that she was 'lucky enough to work in' her highly reputed and well-funded university, that had the institutional autonomy and resources to engage in such curriculum redesign. In effect, there was a reported need for the teacher education curriculum to reflect knowledge created in, and relevant to, Indian settings. Building on this premise, Dr. Sarita – who also noted the continued relevance of the *guru* tradition for 21st century teachers and teacher educators – elaborated that 'while teaching Gardner or Thorndike, we should also include the ancient Indian concept of intelligence and Indian concept of psychology'. Drawing on examples from sacred Hindu texts (notably, the *Puranas* and *Mahabharatha*), she stated that the 'syllabus is the box, but at the time of teaching, we should go out of the box…if you are studying western concepts, western theories - okay, study it, no problem - but we have to start with Indian concepts and Indian theories, then go to the Western'. In effect, these teacher educators reported the need to recontextualise the teacher education curriculum specifically for India because, as Dr. Lakshmi – who previously advocated critical and decolonial approaches to teacher education - declared, 'we have been very dominated by a colonised body of knowledge'.

In this light, several university- and college-based teacher educators explained that the prescribed teacher education curriculum needs to be *made relevant* for individual student teachers, and the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities of the local teaching-learning context. For example, Dr. Pari – who shifted from being a college-based to NGO-based teacher educator - explained that a 'better way to do Piaget in B.Ed.' would be to require student teachers to conduct week-long observations of children in different developmental stages, and form their own conclusions. 'And then', she continued, 'when you teach that person the theory of Piaget, the student teacher himself will be able to draw out how well it is

connected to our own environment'. The purported purpose of this kind of personalised teacher education curriculum is to enable student teachers to 'strategically apply' the theory in the school classroom. In other words, Dr. Jyotsna - who entered the profession via the academic route - stated that the purpose of the curriculum is not to make student teachers 'rely' on theories, but to be able to 'develop their own'. This suggests an equivalence between the professional knowledge that student teachers learn in formal teacher education programs and the experiential knowledge they develop while teaching, while simultaneously privileging the latter. As Ms. Avanti – who also entered the profession via the academic route - asserted:

> 'All the theories are pointing to some kind of phenomenon, trying to explain some kind of phenomenon, but when it comes to the Indian classroom, we need to be really flexible, the western theories might not work in the Indian classroom…often students come to us and say that "you have taught us this, but this theory is not working in our classroom, there's a real gap". To them my answer would be "no, you need to understand your classroom situation, you need to *strategically apply that theory* in a way that would suit your classroom needs."'

Notably, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators engaged differently with the teacher education curriculum. Since they are not bound by NCTE norms and regulations they can create their own teacher education curriculums that are personalised to the needs and interests of *specific schools* and *teachers*. Unlike the uniform NCTE-mandated curriculum for pre-service teacher education, the NGO-based teacher educators emphasised the need for the curriculum to be useful to the immediate and practical considerations of *each* school and teacher. The first step in designing this tailored teacher education curriculum – as former TFI fellows Ms. Alex and Mr. Vinay both outlined – is conducting a 'needs analysis' of the school and teacher. However, Mr. Vinay clarified that the identified 'needs' are complemented by certain '*non-negotiables*… for teachers to become better in terms of content, in terms of pedagogy, in terms of different kinds of attitudes that we saw that was

lacking' (emphasis added). Importantly, these different 'non-negotiables' are reflective of each NGO's specific vision of quality education, and preparing teachers for quality education in India. For example, Dr. Sreehari stressed that the 'core issue' of their new teacher education curricula is 'intersectionality', while for Ms. Swetha and Ms. Namratha it is 'foundational literacy and numeracy'. In this sense, these tailored teacher education curriculums were vitally dependent on each NGO's unique understanding of quality education, and preparing teachers for quality education.

In summary, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators reported contested views of the relevance of the uniform policy-mandated teacher education curriculum for 21st-century India. Meanwhile, the NGO-based teacher educators explained the significance of needs-based teacher education curriculums tailored to specific schools and teachers. Importantly, the teacher educators across the three institutional types drew on their unique understanding of quality education, and what student teachers should know and do, to explain their views and engagement with the teacher education curriculum.

7.3 Teacher Education Pedagogy

Many teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained their teacher education pedagogy using terms from the education policies including - as Dr. Geetha T listed – 'collaborative learning, cooperative learning, learner-centred education, activity-based, and experiential-based education'. While the interviewed teacher educators used similar concepts and terms to explain their pedagogy, this had different meanings, impacts, and implications for their reported practice. This section illustrates how the interviewed

teacher educators reported a diverse range of pedagogies, and rationalised their teacher education practice in different ways.

Of the many terms, the majority of the interviewed teacher educators described their pedagogy as 'constructivist' and 'interactive'. These terms were used to explain an *epistemological position* (that knowledge is co-constructed in classrooms) and a *pedagogical position* (that teaching-learning is contingent on dialogue and participation). Importantly, the teacher educators explained what these terms mean for their pedagogy in different ways based on their unique understanding of how student teachers learn. In some cases, this meant the class is led by the teacher educator, and requires minimal – yet, essential – participation from the student teachers. In other cases, this meant the class is led by the teacher educator, but requires significant participation from the student teachers. Notably, in both cases, the teacher educator reportedly plays a significant role. Still, the teacher educators' explanations of their 'constructivist' and 'interactive' pedagogy can be imagined on a spectrum of teacher educator-led to student teacher-led. The following two examples of teacher educators' explanations of their 'interactive' pedagogy illustrate this spectrum, and how the same concept can have different impacts and implications for teacher education practice.

For university-based Ms. Deepti, 'interactive' implied the 'rule of pen and paper', requiring a specific form of curated participation from the student teachers. She recounted:

> 'Yesterday I was teaching one topic titled 'reading' - what is reading?... First, I just gave them the meaning. I gave them the definitions. I explained the meaning to them. Then, I asked my students to explain the definitions given by different documents. After that, I told them to write down all the definitions…I want them to use pen and paper. After that, I asked them, "what does each author say about reading?" - the topic. And once that was dispersed, I told them "now you derive the characteristics of reading, looking at those definitions" …*So, mine is a very interactive way of teaching*.'

Meanwhile, for university-based Dr. Sarita, 'interactive' implied that the teacher educator sets the pedagogic scene, and requires significant participation from the student teachers based on the content of the given lesson. She recalled:

> '*My classes are very interactive*, if I am teaching the concept of microteaching, I will draw the picture or cycle of microteaching. But when I am taking the example of how you [student teacher] will execute your microteaching in your method teaching classes, then I will call four or five students, one will teach, so the [student teacher] will become a teacher with a skill, a small skill, and teach them [rest of the class].'

The 'interactive' component of teacher educators' reported pedagogy is based on discussion and dialogue with student teachers. This was described as important to address student teachers' pre-existing beliefs about education, the role of teachers and teaching, and the relevance of formal teacher education. For example, in teaching 'Multiple Intelligence Theory' (Gardner, 1993), Dr. Geetha G reported that she began with 'an introduction of the theory and different types of intelligence', followed by 'chances for questioning and discussion'. Conversely, in teaching 'Issues in Indian Society', Dr. Minoti began by asking her student teachers, 'What is your opinion? What do you think are the issues in Indian society?'. She explained that this is because her 'purpose is not to prepare them for a good percentage [in the exams], but to teach or prepare them to be a good teacher'. In this way, some teacher educators begin their class with a discussion to engage with student teachers' beliefs *to elicit the context for their teaching*. Meanwhile, other teacher educators engage with student teachers' beliefs at the end of the class to *stimulate their reflection based on what has been taught*. In essence, the 'interactive' component of teacher educators' pedagogy is reportedly oriented toward addressing student teachers' pre-existing beliefs in relation to the teacher education curriculum and thereby cultivating student teachers' learning, albeit in different ways.

As highlighted in certain Indian education policies (see Section 6.3.1), the interviewed teacher educators also used the terms 'inclusive education', 'inclusion', or 'inclusiveness' to explain their teacher education practice. This implies both 'inclusive' teacher education practice as well as preparing student teachers for 'inclusive education', with an emphasis on the former. 'Inclusive' teacher education practice implied that all student teachers have equal opportunities for learning. For example, university-based Dr. Ashwini – drawing on her Ph.D. based on the socialisation of visually impaired students for inclusion - narrated how she adjusted her teacher education pedagogy for two visually impaired student teachers in her class, by asking other student teachers to help them with preparing presentations, organising materials, and reading books. She stressed that this relationship was symbiotic, with mutual benefit for all the student teachers involved. In addition, 'inclusive education' also referred to engaging with all student teachers – and their respective social and cultural backgrounds – through their teacher education pedagogy. For example, college-based Mr. Wan highlighted how he had to negotiate the delicate issue of student teachers' family backgrounds (notably, caste). He noted the significance of the role (and role-modelling) of the teacher educator in addressing these issues of social discrimination in the classroom, while remaining sensitive to student teachers' sense of autonomy and agency:

> '[My] student teachers come from different cultures and caste backgrounds. They don't want to mix with each other. These things have to be taken care of, and we [teacher educators] have to be extremely careful and sensitive in what we say. Because teacher educators are the ones who have to willingly come forward to do these things.'

Similarly, university-based Dr. Shivani explained that with student teachers from 'marginalised groups', she and her colleagues make a special effort to 'help them become not just be physically part of the class, but actually contribute to the class, environment, and the discussions'. She explained that this kind of 'social modelling' by teacher educators is essential for student teachers' learning about inclusive teaching. In this sense, inclusive

teacher education practice was explained as vital in preparing student teachers for inclusive education by modelling strategies that could subsequently be used in school classrooms. Thus, in alignment with the mandates of the RTE Act, several teacher educators highlighted the importance of inclusive teacher education practice – especially, the role-modelling of teacher educators – in preparing teachers for inclusive education in schools. This view reaffirms the causal logic that connects teacher educators' practice to the envisioned outcomes of quality education (in this case, social transformation through inclusion).

A few university- and college-based teacher educators also noted the importance of organising 'fieldwork' or 'community work' as an integral part of their pedagogic practice. In alignment with specific teacher education policies (NCFTE, 2009; NCTE, 2014), fieldwork and community work were explained as essential to enable student teachers to feel and understand the challenges of marginalised populations, and work to improve their lives. Similar to Prof. Dhananjay's Department of Education that 'adopted seven villages on the outskirts of Delhi', Dr. Ritesh explained that his college has 'adopted three villages on the outskirts of Kolkata'. Student teachers were tasked with visiting these villages on the weekends to teach the local children, and organising crafts and games. To ensure this happens, Dr. Ritesh explained that '75 marks out of 2000' are allocated for 'community work'. However, some teacher educators highlighted how social change (in India, and internationally) is slow, and difficult to achieve. University-based Dr. Shivani stressed this point to her student teachers by requiring them to attempt to change a self-selected social phenomenon, such as people smoking or littering in a certain area. After the activity, she explained that the 'act of engaging with the concept, trying to bring about that social change, helps them [student teachers] understand much better, that it's not easy to bring about social change, it takes time and effort, and it's a slow process'. The reported importance of

fieldwork/ community work for teacher educators' pedagogy harkens to the view of preparing teachers to achieve one of the envisioned aims of quality education - social transformation.

In essence, teacher educators' explanations of their pedagogy resonated with the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies, albeit in unique ways. Specifically, the interviewed teacher educators explained their pedagogy by drawing on their unique understanding of the terms used the education policies, and constraints and opportunities afforded by their professional context.

7.3.1 Teacher educators' pedagogic strategies

The interviewed teacher educators listed an array of pedagogic strategies to explain their practice. This included role-modelling, storytelling, creative writing, debate, reflection, discussion, projects, observation, concept maps, brainstorming, drama, games, videos, presentations, microteaching, and reflection journals. However, these reported pedagogies were rationalised in different ways, and rooted in different philosophical premises. For example, college-based Dr. Abhijit drew on the *Vedic* residential tradition of education and the image of the *guru* as an exemplar of virtue to rationalise the importance of his reported pedagogic practice of role-modelling:

> 'I also reside in the college quarters. So, these students (resident student teachers) are observing me all the time. And most of the teacher educators follow Swami Vivekananda's base principles in their life. That's why students are also observing this. So, they are observing real practice, as well as learning the principal philosophy in a theoretical perspective'.

Significantly, most of the reported strategies for teacher educators' pedagogy are also found in the NCFTE 2009 and NCTE 2014. Though the teacher educators did not elaborate on each

of these reported strategies, they did explain a few in detail. In these cases, the same strategy was rationalised in different ways by the teacher educators, with varied implications for their pedagogy. I illustrate this point with the examples of two such reported pedagogic strategies - microteaching and reflection journals.

Microteaching

In the teacher education policies, 'microteaching' is either lamented as 'mechanical' (NCTE, 2009, p. 40), or lauded as part of 'best practices' in teacher education (NAAC, 2007, p. 84). The latter policy states that 'the advantage of microteaching…is that it reduces the complexity of teaching situations…[and] focuses on controlled practice of specific skills rather than on vague, generalized practice of all skills simultaneously' (ibid, p. 87). The interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types echoed this contested framing of microteaching for their teacher education pedagogy.

Ten university- and college-based teacher educators explained that microteaching is an essential part of their teacher education pedagogy. These teacher educators highlighted the importance of microteaching skills, such as 'blackboard writing', 'communication', 'narration', 'explanation', 'stimulus variation', 'reinforcement', and 'questioning'. University-based Ms. Aparna noted that microteaching is 'beneficial' because student teachers subsequently learn to 'integrate them all in one'. Building on this idea, university-based Dr. B - who drew on her school teaching experience for her motivation to 'grow a community of resourceful, sensitive teachers' - offered the following rationale for microteaching based on her understanding of professional education:

> 'Even now, I still very strongly believe in microteaching as a grooming technique…we had this curriculum framework for B.Ed. which was released in

> 2015[34]... that also talks about that microteaching… for example, if we need to talk about any profession, if I talk about the legal profession, you are not allowed to go directly to the courtroom and contest cases. If you are a surgeon, you are not allowed directly to go and perform surgery. Any profession comprises of small skill sets, you are always groomed, trained, fine-tuned on the components of it, and then the whole picture. So, the same holds true for teaching also.'

Notably, only college-based Dr. Lakshmi drew on her critical and decolonial emphases to lament the 'tradition' of microteaching. She asserted that 'microteaching is such a fantasy in the teacher education programmes…it doesn't work out in the Indian classroom'. For, Dr. Lakshmi this 'western' method is incongruent with the unique and complex challenges of teaching in India. In this sense, the interviewed teacher educators both praised and problematised the relevance of microteaching as a pedagogic strategy drawing on their unique understanding of how student teachers learn teaching.

Preparing Teachers as Reflective Practitioners

Beginning with the Report of the University Education Commission (Ministry of Education, 1948), most Indian education policies have highlighted the importance of preparing teachers as reflective practitioners. These policies have variously extolled the virtues of preparing teachers for reflection, reflective thinking, reflective learning, reflective practice, reflective inquiry, reflective analysis, and reflective teaching. Taken together, the education policies emphasise the importance of preparing student teachers as 'reflective practitioners' and 'reflective teachers' to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education. To this end, the primary pedagogic strategy prescribed by these education policies for teacher educators' pedagogy is the use of reflective journals (e.g., NCTE, 2009, p. 61).

[34] Two-year B.Ed. syllabus commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education in the state of Karnataka (Ekbote, 2015)

Nine university- and college-based teacher educators mentioned that they require student teachers to maintain 'reflection journals' to cultivate their reflective thinking. For a few teacher educators this was necessary because of the policy mandate. In Dr. Sushanta's words, it is 'categorically mentioned in NCFTE 2009'. Others rationalised their use of the reflection journal by pointing to how it can help to cultivate student teachers' reflection. For example, Ms. Avanti – the linguistics scholar who previously advocated preparing student teachers to *strategically apply* theory - explained that by using the pedagogy of reflection journals, her student teachers can understand 'how a theoretical standpoint is different from the real-life application of that particular theory'. In effect, reflection journals reportedly enable student teachers to notice their own 'mistakes' (Dr. Rajendra), and enhance their 'critical thinking and metacognitive skills' (Dr. Rupam). Notably, Prof. Dhananjay traced the roots of reflective practice to the Hindu *Vedic* practices of *Shravana*, *Manana*, and *Nididyasana* (often translated as hearing, contemplation, and living). Furthermore, the usefulness of the reflection journal as a pedagogic strategy to cultivate reflective practice reportedly depends on the nature of student teachers' reflection. In this regard, Prof. Dhananjay elaborated the following expectations of the content of reflection journals:

> 'they narrate their whole experience of the day, what they have felt, what are the good things, what are the things they must learn, what are their shortcomings, how they can improve, if they are not good in some class, what are the experiences they have got and how they can meet up with the experiences and challenges faced by the learner.'

In a few education policies, 'reflective practice' is used synonymously with 'critical reflection' (e.g., NAAC, 2007). Similarly, some university- and college-based teacher educators also explained the purpose of reflection is to enable student teachers to think about and eventually address the discrimination and myriad inequalities in Indian society through their teaching. In this regard, Dr. Mythili - who also noted how she 'accidentally stumbled upon' becoming a teacher educator – recalled how she helped a batch of female B.Ed.

students reflect on the widespread discrimination faced by women in India. This was necessary, she stressed, because the female student teachers had generalised from their 'upper middle class' backgrounds to claim that (and joke about how) it was not women, but men in India who were being 'exploited'. Dr. S.S. – who credited her present university with introducing her to the philosophy and pedagogy of Paulo Freire (2017) - stated that cultivating this form of 'critical thinking' in her student teachers is integral for their 'conscientisation', which in turn will enable them to address and solve social inequalities and discrimination. In all, some teacher educators highlighted the importance of using reflection journals as a strategy to cultivate student teachers' reflection, in turn explained as important for its implications on student teachers' learning and subsequent school teaching, and thereby the achievement of the aim of social transformation.

A few teacher educators, however, were hesitant to use reflection journals as prescribed by the policies to stimulate student teachers' reflective thinking. They explained that this is because of one or more of the following three reasons: student teachers find that writing the reflection journal is time-consuming, are reticent to express their feelings, or are likely to 'copy' their reflections from their friends or the internet. University-based Ms. Aparna articulated these hesitations towards using reflection journals in her teacher education pedagogy:

> 'whenever we ask the student teachers to write a reflection, they would shirk away because they don't want to express themselves there. They're short of words to explain their experiences in terms of written work. So, what do they do? The biggest escape is to ask a friend, or just Google it, and copy it down from there.'

For these reasons, reflection journals reportedly do not serve the purpose of cultivating student teachers' reflective thinking. Thus, Dr. J – principal of a reputed, private teacher education college – explained that though there has been an 'NCFTE push' to require student

teachers to maintain reflection journals, they are primarily filled with 'I did this, and I did that'. To remedy this situation, she told me that the teacher educators in her college collaborated with a TEI in Israel to create and teach their own 'six-step model adapted for reflection from de Bono'. Notably, this pedagogic redesign was only possible because Dr. J's institution was graded 'A' by NAAC, thereby securing greater institutional autonomy and agency over the content of the teacher education curriculum. In short, the reflection journals have been reclaimed in some instances as meaningful, notably based on the initiative of individual institutions and teacher educators.

Apart from reflection journals, some university- and college-based teacher educators described how they use movies to prepare teachers for reflective practice. For example, Dr. Faiz explained that he shows the 1971 cult classic 'Anand' – a film about an eternally optimistic, yet terminally ill hero – to precipitate student teachers' reflections on the 'comparisons and similarities of isms… idealism, naturalism, realism, pragmatism'. Dr. Priyanka G recounted how she uses the short film 'Delivery Girl' – directed by Sreejoni Nag – to encourage her student teachers to reflect on how 'gender itself is a social construct'. And, Dr. Om shows the Hindi movies '3 Idiots' and 'Super 30' – films about inspirational educators concerned with individual and social transformation – to encourage student teachers to reflect on the purpose of education and the role of teachers. These examples illustrate how some teacher educators used movies to stimulate student teachers' reflection on the teacher education curriculum and society, while simultaneously highlighting specific aims of quality education (holistic development and social transformation), and expectations of the quality teacher (intrinsically motivated and self-sacrificial).

Meanwhile, some teacher educators suggested that their teacher education practice cannot make all student teachers into reflective practitioners. Dr. Jyotsna – acknowledging the importance of student teachers' backgrounds and experiences on their professional learning and subsequent school teaching practice - noted that whether an individual becomes a reflective practitioner depends on 'where the student teacher is coming from, and what kind of resources they have received during their whole education system'. For college-based Dr. Abhijit, only 'interested' student teachers will become 'reflective practitioners…[because] they try to resolve the tension between thought and their practice'. Similarly, university-based Dr. Sudarshan stated that 'we cannot make everyone reflective practitioner, the basic ingredient is true involvement, true belongingness, true love, and serious dedication to this profession'. In effect, it is the student teachers' interest and motivation in becoming a teacher – and not teacher educators' practice - that reportedly determines whether they become reflective practitioners. These views reaffirm the importance of student teachers' intrinsic motivation and unique characteristics rather than teacher education programs as key determinants of their ability to become quality teachers, and harken back to the debate surrounding whether quality teachers are born or made..

Tangentially, a few teacher educators explained that their own reflective practice was important, albeit for different reasons. The teacher educators' reported reflection involves thinking about their teaching – considering what went well, what did not, and why – with the aim of improving their teacher education practice. Importantly, teacher educators' reflective practice reportedly has an 'affective' aspect that involves trying to understand student teachers' feelings and experiences to contextualise the teaching-learning process (see also Section 7.5). For a few, it was vital for teaching reflection to student teachers (reiterating the previously extolled importance of role-modelling – or 'social modelling' in Ms. Avanti's

words – as an integral part of teacher educators' practice). For others, teacher educators' reflection was described as a form of self-care, predicated on the acceptance that things don't always go according to plan. As NGO-based Dr. Pari explained:

> 'For me, each class I reflect on how I could have done better, what went well, what did not go well, and how I should do, so that's what reflection is for me. In each class, I try to practice affectiveness, not just in terms of listening to them, but also, in feeling what they are feeling, and trying to make those experiences more positive for them. I know I don't succeed every time, I don't beat myself about it, because I accept that it is okay, at times I'm not able to do it to the optimum best, and it helps me to become more reflective each day.'

In sum, the examples of microteaching and reflective journals illustrate the diverse ways in which teacher educators rationalise and explain the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies. Importantly, their reported teacher education practice in preparing student teachers through micro teaching, and for reflective practice, was related to their personal understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

Teaching Values

Apart from methods, Indian education policies expect that teacher educators' pedagogy will prepare student teachers with specific values. This is described as essential for a teacher to be able to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education. In the policies, the expected values are variously framed as constitutional values, human values, moral values, Indian values[35], ethical values, core values, basic values, or universal values. An indicative list of these values includes equity, equality, scientific temper, creativity, freedom, trust, mutual respect, justice, and fraternity. In this section, I examine how teacher educators engage with

[35] '…traditional Indian values of seva (service), ahimsa (non-violence), swacchata (cleanliness), satya (truth), nishkam karma (selfless action), tolerance, honest hard work, respect for women, respect for elders, respect for all people and their inherent capabilities regardless of background, respect for environment' (MHRD, 2019, p. 96).

the idea of preparing teachers with specific values by bringing their voices into dialogue with the National Education Policy 2020.

The National Education Policy proposes that specific 'values across domains will be identified for integration and incorporation at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education' (MHRD, 2020, p. 12). A few teachers agreed with this proposal for a prescribed curriculum for teaching values in teacher education. In turn, policy mandated values were explained as a necessary first step for student teachers to reach the final stage of 'internalisation'. College-based Dr. Geetha T – who also advocated preparing student teachers to apply theories – rationalised the process of value internalisation in this way:

> 'In every aspect, some guidance, some guidelines, and some restrictions must be there. Just to begin, because that develops that culture, that is the beginning of the culture, so these things have to be there. And then the last step is internalisation. But to make that internalisation happen somewhere we need to begin, and for beginning somewhere we need to give something in hand, like readymade.'

However, some teacher educators disagreed with the NEP's proposal of preparing student teachers with specific values. Specifically, a few teachers highlighted that though shared norms and values are necessary for society, we must be wary of questions of power – i.e., *whose* norms, belief systems, and ethics are reflected in the policy mandates, and its potential implications for society. Articulating this argument, Dr. Shivani – who works at a renowned public university committed to social change - submitted:

> 'We are living in a society, and we need to be able to coexist with each other, we need these common understandings of norms, value systems and ethics. And definitely, there is a need for social control for solidarity to be there. But I think whose cultural norms, belief systems, and ethics are going to get represented? And we do know that it's largely the people in power, or the social group in power, whose belief systems are going to get represented.'

Some teacher educators explained they cannot merely 'teach' morals and values to their student teachers. Specifically, six teacher educators stressed that values are 'caught', and not 'taught'. In practice whether student teachers learn the requisite values is reportedly dependent on the teacher educators' ability to model these in their teacher education practice, thereby reaffirming the importance of who teacher educators are in addition to what they know and do. Furthermore, as university-based Ms. Aparna asserted, 'I think morals, in the end, you cannot teach them, you cannot preach them, they have to come from within, they have to be caught', thereby reasserting the significance of student teachers' intrinsic characteristics as key determinants of their learning. As college-based Dr. Hans hinted, we need to 'motivate or help pupil teachers realise - not only teach - but we should also make them realise or motivate them to inculcate these moral values'. In these ways, while most teacher educators agreed with the need to prepare student teachers with specific values, they drew on their unique views and experiences to differ on which values are to be taught, how they can be taught, and even whether it is possible to teach values at all.

NGO-based Teacher Educators' Pedagogy

As with the curriculum, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators explained that their teacher education pedagogy is personalised to meet the specific needs of the schools and teachers they serve. Like certain education policies – and their university- and college-based peers – NGO-based teacher educators' pedagogy was also described as experiential, constructivist, and activity-based, with a focus on multiple opportunities for teachers to rehearse new skill sets. This was reportedly complemented by personalised feedback and mentoring, and follow-up programs. As Mr. Joseph explained, the 'manager' is there 'to continuously support and listen to the teacher, to understand what they're doing and how they're feeling, and take them through that process as well'. In effect, each in-service student

teacher reportedly receives personalised attention throughout the teaching-learning process. Notably different from their university- and college-based peers, the NGO-based teacher educators described their pedagogy as a multi-stakeholder approach that involves the students, teachers, parents, and school management in helping to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education. Overall, the reported pedagogical aim was to equip teachers with knowledge and skills that are relevant for quality education, and easily applicable in their classrooms. Accordingly, the first step in NGO-based teacher educators' pedagogy is to conduct a 'needs analysis' and set 'outcomes' for in-service student teachers' learning.

A few NGO-based teacher educators explained that in-service teachers are looking for 'what works' – specific practices they can use in their classrooms to significantly (and quickly) improve students' learning. For example, Ms. Swetha – co-founder of a teacher education NGO that works in the ECCE space with a focus on FLN – described her organisation's 'systems approach' of focusing on 'what works in a given context, and what works at scale'. For example, they created lesson plans for every topic in each nursery subject, uploaded videos on YouTube of teachers modelling the lessons, 'and mapped it back to the lesson plan'. However, Ms. Swetha admitted that there is a 'high risk' that their lesson plans become prescriptive. Still, she stressed that in-service teachers appreciate this kind of detailed support, at least in the initial stages of their learning. Eventually, she continued, these teachers learn to make their own judgements in the classrooms concerning what works. The crux, according to Ms. Swetha, is to be 'mindful of when to withdraw'. To contextualise 'what works', Mr. Joseph explained that his pedagogic practice begins with 'user research – interviews with teachers, leaders, school systems', with the overall pedagogic emphasis on practice-theory being '70/30 or 60/40, with the higher case being teacher participation and understanding what works (in the classroom)'. Echoing this view, as Ms. Alex affirmed, 'the

idea is to give teachers solutions that work, solutions that are easy and quick to do.' In effect, the NGO-based teacher educators' pedagogy was explained as tailored by the individual needs of the schools and teachers they work with, circumscribed by a specific institutional vision of what counts as quality teaching through preparing schoolteachers with strategies that 'work'. Importantly, the 'what works' agenda is similar to 'microteaching' in that it is based on the premise that the complex whole of teaching can be deconstructed into discrete skills that can be individually mastered.

Notably, a few NGO-based teacher educators explained that an important aspect of their pedagogic practice involves addressing the differences in socio-economic backgrounds between themselves and their in-service student teachers. In this regard, a few NGO-based teacher educators shared how they came from relatively more privileged backgrounds compared to the teachers the work with (usually in low-income, under-resourced schools). For example, Mr. Joseph reflected on how his positionality and privilege is perceived by the schoolteachers that he works with. He pointed out how he is 'a lot younger' and comes from a 'very different backgrounds than these teachers'. Thus, he would often ask himself 'do they really want to listen to us? would they consider as privileged?'. Mr. Joseph suggested that 'there's already an existing mindset' among schoolteachers that NGO-based teacher educators (and tangentially, TFI fellows) come from wealthy backgrounds with increased access to 'resources…and certain provisions'. However, over his seven years of professional experience, he concluded that this difference in backgrounds 'plays a role for a while, but after the point it doesn't'. Ultimately, 'building a relationship…, being open, being vulnerable, understanding their life sharing and being supportive, it comes down to just that'. In essence, he concluded, 'comes down to the relationship between the teachers and their trainer'. In this light, NGO-based teacher education practice is reportedly rooted in

cultivating relationships with teachers to tailor and support the teaching-learning process (see also Section 7.5).

7.4 Teacher Education Assessment

The interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators explained their assessment using the terms used in the education policies such as 'Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation' (RTE Act, 2009), and 'formative' and 'summative' assessments (NCTE, 2009; NCTE, 2014). In alignment with the prescriptions and recommendations of these policies, they listed the following assessment strategies - assignments, projects, presentations, formative tests, reflection journals, fieldwork, annual summative exams, and school teaching internships.

In addition to Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and the formative and summative assessments prescribed by the policies, the teacher educators also highlighted the importance of assessing student teachers' motivations, attitudes, values, and dispositions. This personalised assessment was reportedly based on the teacher educators' relationship with each student teacher, and required sensitivity and attentive engagement with the student teachers. In this way - as Dr. S.S. suggested - teacher educators can understand each student teacher's 'own innovative ideas', and work to 'facilitate those innovative ideas in the classroom'. Accordingly, the teacher educators' reported assessment focused on the student-*teacher* - their motivations, feelings, attitudes, and values - in addition to their *teaching*. This personalised assessment was inextricably linked to cultivating student teachers' sustainable passion for teaching. Drawing on his own professional experiences to illustrate the point, Dr.

Monoronjan narrated how he encouraged a nervous student teacher with kind words and a joke:

> 'Then I personally, I talked to him:
> *"Why are you getting nervous?"*
> *"Sir, I don't know why I'm getting nervous. But how can I come back from here?"*
> So, then I come to the blackboard, with him on the dais, and give [him] some motivation:
> *"Okay, Rahul[36], you're good, you're good. Why are you doing this? Just think you're joking with your students, just think that today is April Fool's Day, and you are in a festive mode"*.
> So, this type of motivation, once two thrice four times. And ultimately that student teacher is now my best student.'

Of the various assessment strategies listed in the interviews, the university- and college-based teacher educators particularly focused on the assessment of school internships. As described in the NCFTE 2009, the teacher educators explained that they use written and oral feedback to assess student teachers' learning about teaching. For example, university-based Ms. Nahid noted that after observing a student teacher's school classroom teaching, she writes down the 'positive points and negative points' in their 'lesson plan book'. Relatedly Ms. Nahid recounted how her practicum experiences as a student teacher led to an intrinsic sense of motivation for the profession of teaching. At her first class during her school internship, she recalled how she was 'very nervous, [her] hands and legs all shivering, but after ten minutes [she] was very comfortable and taught'. She felt proud and blessed when her school students asked for her 'autograph' at the end of her school internship. After this, for the 'first time [she] was internally motivated to join this field of teacher education'. Drawing on this experience, she is now sensitive to the significance of assessing student teachers' assessments, including remarks such as 'you are confident or you are not confident, you have missed this, you have not called the students by their name, there is lack of punctuation in

[36] Pseudonym

your questioning, there is lack of pausing, you have delivered your questions not very well'. This aligns with the view that the professional knowledge base for teachers is made up of discrete skills, related to both the concept of teacher competencies (see Section 5.4.2) and preparing teachers through microteaching skills (see Section 7.3.1).

Notably, only university-based Dr. Rajendra - who entered the profession via the academic route - talked about the role of the school-based teacher educator. The 'mentor teacher', he explained, contributes to student teachers' learning by inducting them into the practices of the school, including showing them around the school, sharing teaching techniques and tips, and helping with parent-teacher meetings. However, most university- and college-based teacher educators only highlighted their role in assessing student teachers' school internships by guiding, monitoring, observing, supporting, and providing feedback.

In short, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators focused on the personalised assessment of student teachers' (e.g., their motivations and values) and their school internships, instead of the policy-mandated formative and summative assessments. In this sense, the university- and college-based teacher educators highlighted the significance of their professional role in shaping and assessing who is a quality teacher and what counts as quality teaching.

NGO-based Teacher Educators' Assessment

Meanwhile, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators did not explain their practice using terms such as CCE, or formative and summative assessments. Instead, they noted that they assess teachers' learning through changes in their knowledge, skills, and mindsets, *as manifested in teachers' classroom teaching practice*. Accordingly, NGO-based teacher

educators' reported assessments were based on their observations of teachers' classroom teaching, and teachers' self-reports of learning. As Ms. Namrata narrated, the foci of her organisation's teacher education assessment can be described through 'three buckets…knowledge, skills, and mindsets for teachers'. In addition to changes in teachers' teaching practice, cultivating, and assessing these 'mindset shifts' was an integral part of NGO-based teacher educators' reported assessment practice. Dr. Sreehari – who also emphasised empathy and compassion as integral characteristics of a quality teacher - explained how assessing mindset shifts through changes in classroom teaching is related to his organisation's vision of what counts as quality teaching:

> **'**in the TDP[37] when we talk about the elements like empathy and other things, it's also about the mindset shift of a teacher… it's not being a teacher, it's about facilitation…you are basically trying to listen more, ask questions, reflect more…being mindful in the classroom. I'm sensitive to my students in the classroom. I understand my students. So, the whole philosophy of facilitation is something that we really wanted to teach rather than the traditional metrics of a good teacher.'

Drawing on his NGO's vision of preparing teachers for quality education, Dr. Sreehari noted the need to redefine the concept of assessment in teacher education. He continued:

> 'Why should effective teacher education focus on the traditional metrics themselves? Why can't we talk about teacher effectiveness where the parameters are teacher professionalism, student-teacher relationship, and classroom engagement?'

The NEP 2020 states that the NCTE is to develop a National Professional Standards for Teachers. These new teacher standards might contribute to greater clarity on who is a quality teacher, and what counts as quality teaching. However, studies have illustrated that mandated teaching standards have their own drawbacks, including perpetuating narrow and technical

[37] Teacher Development Programme

views of teaching (see Section 2.1.2). Dr. J – principal of a reputed, private teacher education college - highlighted the significance of NGOs like CENTA that are offering standards-based teacher certification. Specifically, she described how schools are seeking CENTA-certified teachers, and 'people are taking their exams as benchmarks'. This emergence of NGO-established teacher standards reinforces the importance of NGO-based teacher educators' role in conceptualising quality teaching and the assessment of teacher quality.

In sum, the interviewed teacher educators' various views across institutional types reflect differences in their understanding of the purpose and process of teacher education assessment. Like Indian education policies, university- and college-based teacher educators explained assessment through specific methods including exams and projects. While most university- and college-based teacher educators stressed the significance of assessing who teachers are (i.e., their characteristics and dispositions), the NGO-based teacher educators highlighted the importance of assessing what teachers can do (i.e., shifts in their classroom teaching). However, there was little clarity or consensus on how these methods can be used to assess student teachers' learning of the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to achieve quality education outcomes. It is significant that among the four dimensions of teacher education practice described in this chapter, the interviewed teacher educators used the least amount of time to explain their assessment practices.

Thus far, I have presented teacher educators' engagement with education policies through their explanations of what they teach (curriculum), how they teach (pedagogy), and how they evaluate student teachers' learning (assessment). In the next section, I explore teacher educators' rationalisations of the importance of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher, and what this means for their teacher education practice.

7.5 The Relationship between Teacher Educator and Student Teacher

Most interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs highlighted the significance of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher. This relationship was reported as important because of its implications for shaping their teacher education practice and student teachers' learning. Notably, how teacher educators explained the nature of the relationship between teacher educator and student teacher differed based on how they understood their professional role. For example, university-based Dr. Bhaskar extrapolated his role as a teacher educator from his understanding of 'the basic definition of the teacher, that a teacher is a friend, philosopher and a guide'. Similarly, NGO-based Dr. Pari explained that the role of the teacher educator is 'self-sacrificial', in the same way that 'a teacher is someone who has taken up teaching because it drives you from within'. And, college-based Dr. Sudhindra – drawing on Tagore - asserted that being a teacher educator, like being a teacher, is a 'responsibility' and not a 'duty'. In this way, the interviewed participants drew on their understanding of the quality teacher to extrapolate their professional role as teacher educators.

From these different understandings of teacher educators' professional role, stemmed different explanations of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher. In practice, the teacher educators explained that cultivating relationships with the student teacher involves balancing the boundaries between their professional role and their personal lives. Importantly, they defined the boundaries between the professional and the personal in different ways based on their unique understanding of quality education. For example, some teacher educators explained their relationship with student teachers as personalised yet strict, with rigid professional boundaries:

> **Dr. Shivani:** 'I would say I'm a very strict teacher educator. And in fact, the first time I go into the classroom, I'm just bombarding them with the rules that they need to follow. Outright, I am telling them these are the rules. Don't even come back to me, there's no negotiation on this count. But over the months, they do realise that you need to follow your rules with her. But simultaneously, you will be getting the support that you need from her. They will follow the rules with me, they won't break the rules with me, and they won't take me for granted. But simultaneously, they also know that they can reach out to me whenever they want. I think that to be able to do this is something that comes from my engagement with social-emotional well-being and ideas of inclusion and things like that.'

For other teacher educators, there is a fluid boundary between their professional role and their personal lives. For example, NGO-based Mr. Prateek – who also emphasised empathy as a vital characteristic of 'true education or quality education' – suggested that teacher educators must show 'flexibility of time', and be available for student teachers even beyond 'office time'. Building on this, Prof. Dhananjay – Dean of Education at a private university - blurred this personal-professional boundary even further. He illustrated the point saying that 'they [student teachers] are part of my family, they come to my home, and we cook together, we laugh together, we learn together, because I feel that they are my best friends'. This kind of relationship with blurred boundaries implies taking a personal interest in the lives and well-being of the student teachers. For example, university-based Dr. Sarita – drawing on her parent identity - recounted how she will not tolerate student teachers smoking in front of her, neither on campus (where it is not allowed) nor in the local market (where she will not allow it). To illustrate this familial concern for her student teachers' well-being, she told this story:

> 'Somewhere behind the tree, someone is standing, and I'm coming out of my class and watching some smoke is coming, and I'm not that kind of teacher educator that I will leave them on their own to do what they want to do. I will go there.
> *"Who is there? "Come out! Who is there?". "Oho".*
> Instantly the cigarette vanishes.
> *"Ma'am! Sorry ma'am! Yes ma'am! No, no, no ma'am. Actually, I was talking on the phone".*
> *"I saw what you were doing, the department is a no-smoking zone! And even if you meet me in the market, I don't want to see this (smoking)! Have your parents sent you here for this?".*

> This kind of behaviour, this kind of affection and attachment should be there from the teacher educator's side.'

Two teacher educators recalled how they were able to help student teachers navigate - and overcome - feeling suicidal. For example, university-based Dr. Geetha G recounted how early one morning she received a phone call from a student teacher. The student teacher told her that he was going to commit suicide. It was 6:30 a.m. She and her husband hurried to the student teachers' house. They arrived to find that he had slit his wrist. Quickly, they rushed him to the hospital. The student teacher recovered, returned to his studies, graduated, and is now a successful schoolteacher in the United States. Reflecting on the incident, she concluded that 'even if we can influence one student teacher, that is a great motivation for us'. Given these personalised relationships with student teachers, a few interviewed teacher educators implied that their professional role extends beyond preparing teachers for quality education.

However, cultivating these kinds of relationships with student teachers is difficult. Dr. Letha – drawing on almost two decades of experience as a teacher educator - explained that 'many of their [student teachers] opinions are formed… they come with certain attitudes'. So, she noted that, student teachers will not learn 'unless they have that trust in you, that you are here to help them out, that instead of preaching you are there to talk to them, then things would be better'. However, she pointed to institutional and practical constraints to lament the difficulty of focusing on the 'individual uniqueness' of each student teacher when there are '60 to 70 student teachers' in every class. In addition, there is also the reported burden of the emotional labour involved in cultivating relationships with student teachers. NGO-based Dr. Pari posited that being a teacher educator can be 'emotionally draining' or 'emotionally charging'.

For her it is the latter – 'the whole emotion is like a high' – but she reflects on her privileged background and how it has influenced her view:

> 'So, a lot of my experiences also get biased because I wasn't working for money. I was working as I really got a kick out of it… now I am ten years into the system, I can stand back, reflect, and see that many people are driven by the financial needs that they have, or the need for their family to be supported and other burdens and responsibilities that bring along. So obviously, they may view the profession entirely in a different manner than I see it.'

In essence, almost all interviewees across institutional types agreed on the importance of the relationship between the teacher educator and student-teacher as an integral part of their teacher education practice. However, they defined different forms of this relationship based on how they understood the boundaries between their personal lives and professional roles as teacher educators.

7.6 Teacher Educators' Practice during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic led to seismic shifts in teacher educators' practice. The interviewed teacher educators reported that while some aspects of their practice have remained the same, most were drastically different. In this section, I examine the impacts of the pandemic on teacher educators' practice. This is significant because the only policy guidance for teacher education institutions during the early months of the pandemic was to close campuses and shift teaching-learning online. There was little indication in the policies concerning what this meant for teacher educators and their teacher education practice, further compounded by contradictory policy mandates. To illustrate, college-based Dr. Ritesh reported how the UGC changed the policy prescription thrice in rapid succession - initially, B.Ed. student teachers in their final year could graduate after completing take-home exams ('offline exams'), then the UGC required additional assignments for graduation, and finally

‘turned around 180 degrees’ and prescribed that the original summative exams must be held in-person. This absence of meaningful policy guidance necessitated an investigation of how teacher educators’ practice was impacted by the pandemic.

The interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types explained that the key change brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic was the shift in their teacher education practice to ‘online’, ‘blended’, and ‘hybrid’ models. This involved using *virtual classrooms* (Google Meet, Google Classroom, MS Teams, WebEx, Zoom, LMS), and using *digital teaching-learning resources* (MOOCs, SWAYAM, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp). In effect, the pandemic forced the teacher educators to adapt and evolve their teacher education practice:

> **Dr. Priyanka G:** ‘Teacher educators are trying to evolve themselves or develop themselves according to the changing needs. For example, when this lockdown happened in Delhi…we had LMS Learning Management System. So, we uploaded our presentations there with the audio recording…then slowly we started learning more about online platforms like Zoom, and WebEx. Right now, we are using Google Meet, and recently we have shifted to MS Teams. So, for us teacher educators, it is also something very new. And that's what we are doing for the student teachers.’

In this sense, the pandemic resulted in greater use of ICT in teacher educators’ practice. This was a shift welcomed by many teacher educators. For example, Prof. Dhananjay explained how an important part of his teacher education practice now involves uploading YouTube lectures on their Department’s channel, and contributing to their Facebook Live lecture series. Moreover, the shift to online teacher education practice reportedly allowed teacher educators to have a webcam ‘window’ into their student teachers’ lives at home. This window was positioned as helpful in learning more about the student teachers, and thus personalising their teacher education practice to the needs and contexts of each student teacher. Meanwhile, not all teacher educators were equally convinced about the shift to

online teacher education practice. Many especially criticised online-teaching learning because it limits the interaction between teacher educators and student teachers, with detrimental implications for teacher educators' practice and student teachers' learning. As Dr. J – principal of a reputed teacher education college – explained, 'in online classes, I can see a few dots, what do I do with those dots?'.

Most interviewed teacher educators explained that the main pandemic-induced problem for their teacher education practice was cultivating relationships with their student teachers. This is because of the lack of interaction with student teachers in the online classroom. The interviewed teacher educators explained that due to technical issues or personal reasons, student teachers often had their videos off, remain on mute, or are reticent to interact. For these reasons, university-based Dr. Sarita stated that making online classes 'lively' and 'interactive' is strenuous. She explained how she can 'keep an eye' on the student teachers in the physical classroom, check if they are listening, and see what they are doing. However, in the online classroom, student teachers remain on mute with their videos off ('to save data'). Still, she has found ways around to make her classes more 'interactive'. This includes screen-sharing, providing handwritten notes, uploading lecture notes to Google Classroom, and making PDFs of textbooks for student teachers. Similarly, Ms. Deepti - who also emphasised 'the rule of pen and paper' in explaining her interactive pedagogy (see Section 7.3) - disclosed that it is hard to tell if student teachers are listening or doing other things while on mute with their videos off ('there is no network'). In the classroom, she 'can make out from the student teachers' expression, what is clear, what is not clear'. 'Virtual is okay', she continued, but she is looking forward to being back in the 'physical' classroom. In this regard, Dr. J noted that 'it's so imperative with all these online methods forced on us today that we realise how important the teacher educator is, and how important nonverbal and

verbal gestures are in the class'. Prof. Dhananjay tied it all together saying that 'the teacher educators and taught relationship is very important, which is missing in this online mode'.

The pandemic has particularly affected how school teaching internships were being organised. During the initial heights of the pandemic, schools were closed for months on end, with most having shifted to online teaching-learning. Several teacher educators reported that school internships were either cancelled, formally conducted during the school's online classes, or informally organised by student teachers through tuition classes for children from the neighbourhood (either in small groups or online). Most university- and college-based teacher educators agreed that some form of 'catch up' classes will be required for these student teachers, especially 'because this particular batch of students have not encountered face-to-face teaching in the school' (Dr. U.B.). Importantly, college-based Dr. Minoti mentioned that the absence of school internships has had little effect on student teachers' learning of 'content' and 'pedagogical subjects'. However, she stressed that student teachers have not been able to learn teaching *'skills*', including (in her examples) 'introduction skill, blackboard skill, and reinforcement skill'. In this light, teacher educators' explanations suggest that student teachers' *learning about teaching* has only been marginally affected during online teacher education, but the pandemic-induced cancellation of school internships has significantly impeded their *learning to teach*.

Relatedly, some teacher educators highlighted how student teachers' differential access to technology had implications for their learning during the pandemic. Dr. Shivani – who works at a renowned public university committed to social transformation - noted that the lack of internet 'infrastructure' means that student teachers who are from poor and rural backgrounds are likely to have less access to electricity, the internet, smartphones, and computers.

College-based Dr. Ritesh regretted that this 'digital gap' is having disproportionately negative effects on the learning of student teachers from lower socio-economic backgrounds. One solution that he recommended was that the RTE Act 2009 should be amended to include the 'Right to Online Education'.

In short, the interviewed teacher educators adapted their teacher education practice to the challenges of the pandemic in different ways. For some, this pandemic-spurred shift presented new opportunities, and for others new challenges. However, despite the drastic changes, all the interviewed teacher educators reasserted their commitment to their professional roles and practice. In the lack of policy guidance, the teacher educators across the three institutional types explained that they were able to transform their teacher education practice to meet the constraints of the pandemic. This transformation of teacher education practice was based on their motivation for the profession, and in consideration of the institutional and social contexts of their professional practice.

7.7 Tracing Teacher Educators Explanations of their Practice

The interviewed teacher educators traced explanations of their teacher education practice to an array of different factors. This included their unique understanding of quality education and professional role as teacher educators, life histories, and institutional contexts. Notably, only a few teacher educators drew on their professional preparation (i.e., the M.Ed. degree) to explain their practice. This section investigates the diverse ways in which the teacher educators rationalised and justified their teacher education practice.

Most university- and college-based teacher educators who explained the relevance of the present teacher education curriculum drew on the uniting concept of the 'universal'. Meanwhile, the teacher educators who contested this reportedly 'western' teacher education curriculum rationalised their views by emphasising different aspects of the past and present Indian context. For example, university-based Dr. Shivani pointed to modern understandings of childhood in 21st century India, while Dr. Lakshmi advocated for the curricular inclusion of several Indian philosophers of education including BR Ambedkar and JP Naik. And, university-based Dr. Sarita – who also advocated for the continued relevance of teachers as *gurus* - appealed to Hindu sacred texts to contest the current curriculum. Meanwhile, most NGO-based teacher educators traced their teacher education curriculums to the specific needs of each school and its teachers. The majority of the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators rationalised their perspectives by pointing to the overburdened and under-resourced work of teachers in low-income schools in India. These practical and logistical constraints served to justify their focus on preparing teachers with 'what works' in the present Indian context of society and schools. In these ways, the reported universal relevance of the teacher education curriculum was juxtaposed against the unique cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts of India.

The interviewed teacher educators' institutional settings and professional experiences also reportedly shaped their teacher education perspectives and practices. For example, Dr. Lakshmi's partially attributed her counterpoints against dominant views – for e.g., against the romanticisation of the *guru* model and use of ICT in teaching – to the vision and mission of her private TEI that values critical and decolonial approaches to teacher education. To illustrate, Dr. Lakshmi explained that the TEI staff at her institution have multidisciplinary professional and academic backgrounds, and that she was the 'only one from the field of

education, [while] the rest of them are philosophy, sociology, political science and health science'. Furthermore, Dr. Lakshmi noted that she is not a 'traditional teacher educator' since she only teaches on the M.Phil. and Ph.D. in education programs (as her college does not offer B.Ed. or M.Ed.). Importantly, she attributed many of her teacher education perspectives and practices to the writings of JP Naik (upon whose philosophy her TEI is based). In this regard, Dr. Lakshmi used JP Naik's philosophy to justify the importance of interdisciplinarity in teacher education, and the inclusion of a culturally-rooted curriculum. Meanwhile, Dr. Ritesh illustrated the significant impacts of his professional experiences on his practice through completing the B.Ed. at a prestigious, public teacher education college. Specifically, he highlighted the access to certain resources (especially, the vast college library), regular guest lectures by 'big shots in the field of education' and resource persons from other institutes, and the calibre of his peers. He especially emphasised the role of his Ph.D. supervisor in 'shaping [his] destiny in education'. Drawing on these unique experiences, Dr. Ritesh exemplified how teacher educators' practice can be shaped by the 'atmosphere of the [teacher education] institute'.

Most of the interviewed teacher educators' reported pedagogies – e.g., as discussion, projects, and fieldwork – were explained as equally relevant to teacher education practice around the world. Although in some instances, these purportedly international pedagogies were traced to Indian cultural and historical roots, for example Prof. Dhananjay traced the concept of preparing teachers as 'reflective practitioners' to the *guru* legacy of education. Notably, university- and college-based teacher educators who advocated for microteaching as a pedagogic strategy included both those who had taken the entered the profession via the academic route and school teaching. Only one college-based teacher educator - Dr. Lakshmi who took the academic route and drew on her critical, decolonial perspectives –

problematised the perpetuation of microteaching as pedagogy. The contested relevance of microteaching suggests a lack of consensus in what teaching involves, and how it can be taught. Despite these nuanced contestations, it is notable that university- and college-based teacher educators explained a broad consensus on the kind of teacher education practice required to prepare teachers for quality education.

In several instances, the interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique life histories to explain their teacher education practice. For example, university-based Dr. Om explained his teacher education practice saying that he 'draw[s] inspiration' from his English teacher from school. Specifically, he was 'influenced by her teaching style, passion and dedication, and diligent assessment strategies'. Meanwhile, a few teacher educators drew on their college lecturers to explain their practice. For example, university-based Dr. Ashwini's role-model was one of her undergraduate biology lecturers. In her words, 'his dressing, his behaviour in the classroom, his presence, his interaction with students - though he sounded strict sometimes - his subject knowledge, blackboard writing skills, all these were the influencing factors'. These explanations point to the teacher educators' 'apprenticeship of observation' whereby they drew on their own experiences in education to explain their teacher education practice, and stress the significance of investigating teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs and experiences during their professional preparation and development.

A common thread that connected almost all the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types – and regardless of their diverse personal and professional contexts – was the reported significance of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher. This wider consensus harkened to the Indian cultural legacy of the teacher-student relationship in the *guru* tradition, while also explained as equally relevant for teacher

educators' practice in other contexts and countries. In this way, the shared emphasis on the relationship between teacher educator and student teacher – and its implications for teaching-learning – can be said to be culturally-rooted, and purportedly universally relevant for teacher education across the world.

7.8 Summary

This chapter presented teacher educators' explanations of their practice along four dimensions – curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and relationship. This led to the following insights:

The interviewed university- and college- based teacher educators espoused contested explanations concerning the relevance of the prescribed teacher education curriculum. For some, the structure and organisation of the prescribed curriculum are already relevant for their teacher education practice. For others, it needs to be made relevant through the inclusion or exclusion of certain content. Meanwhile, the NGO-based teacher educators stressed the importance of teacher education curriculums tailored to the unique needs of individual schools and teachers. In all, the teacher educators' explanations of the teacher education curriculum – drawing on their unique understanding of quality education - reflect the diversity of opinions on what student teachers should know and be able to do, with implications for the professional knowledge base of teachers in India. Despite these different views, all the teacher educators stressed the centrality of their pedagogic practice as the primary expression of the teacher education curriculum.

The interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types used similar terms (e.g., constructivist and interactive) and listed similar methods (e.g., microteaching and reflection journals) as in the Indian education policies to describe their pedagogy. Meanwhile, the NGO-based teacher educators explained their pedagogy as preparing teachers with 'what works', i.e., specific skills and strategies directly applicable and relevant to their teaching practice. Importantly, the interviewed teacher educators explained that their pedagogic practice was based on considerations of whether - and in what ways - they agreed with pedagogies recommended by Indian education policies, and its purported usefulness for the specific needs of their student teachers and local teaching-learning context.

Assessment was the least featured dimension in teacher educators' explanations of their teacher education practice. While university- and college-based teacher educators listed the assessment strategies prescribed by the education policies – such as formative tests and summative exams – they did not focus on discussing or explaining these methods. Instead, they stressed their personalised assessments of the qualities and motivations of student teachers, and their feedback on school teaching internships. Meanwhile, the NGO-based teacher educators highlighted the assessment of teachers' knowledge, skills, and mindsets as manifest in changes in their teaching practice. These diverse views illustrate the differences in teacher educators' explanations of what needs to be assessed (i.e., the quality teacher and/or quality teaching) – and how – in teacher education programs.

Finally, almost all interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types highlighted the central role of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher in defining their teacher education practice. However, they explained the nature of this relationship differently based on their unique understanding of their professional role as

teacher educators, and the relative boundaries between their personal and professional lives. This relationship reportedly served to personalise teacher educators' practice to the unique needs and contexts of each student teacher.

Taken together, the given explanations of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and relationship demonstrate the many ways in which teacher educators engage with policy prescriptions and recommendations in their teacher education practice. Notably, the explanations of their teacher education practice were reportedly dependent on their unique life-histories, institutional contexts, and understanding of quality education, preparing teachers for quality education, and professional role as teacher educators.

CHAPTER 8

REIMAGINING TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

8.1 Outline

The previous three chapters illustrated how the interviewed teacher educators engaged with Indian education policies in different ways based on their unique personal and professional contexts. Specific aspects of selected school and teacher education policies were identified as important for defining quality education and the expectations of teachers, and shaping the structure and content of teacher education programs. However, teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained their understanding of quality education and teacher education practice (i.e., preparing teachers for quality education) by drawing on their unique views and experiences, rather than the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies (or their professional preparation through the M.Ed. program). In essence, the interviewed teacher educators engaged with Indian education policies based on their personal understanding of quality education and professional role as teacher educators, circumscribed by the challenges and opportunities afforded by the specific contexts of their teacher education practice.

This chapter draws on insights from the findings chapters to offer four distinct contributions to the knowledge and research in teacher education. Drawing on teacher educators' descriptions of the diverse impacts and implications of Indian education policies, it unpacks the term 'education policies' to add greater nuance and subtlety to the analyses of the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher education practice in India. Next, it investigates the teacher educators' explanations of the logic of causality in education - exemplified by the NGO-based teacher educators - with implications for defining the

professional role of teacher educators in India and internationally. Then, building on the teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education and teacher education practice, it addresses and aims to dissolve the universal-contextual dichotomy in teacher education. Building on the preceding premises, the chapter concludes by proposing some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India that draw on insights from the current study and international teacher education.

8.2 Unpacking the Term 'Education Policies'

This section unpacks the term 'education policies' to investigate the relationship between policy reform and teacher educators' practice in India and internationally. Specifically, it illustrates how different types of Indian education policies can have diverse impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. By drawing attention to - and analysing - these distinctions, it points to the need to deconstruct the conceptual monolith of 'education policies' into its constituent parts. The interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators reportedly engaged with the four types of Indian education policies - Acts, Regulations, National Policies, and Reports - in different ways (see also Section 3.3). Despite differences in how each type of policy is created, with what purpose and legal mandate, there were reported patterns of similarities in their impacts and implications for teacher education practice. Drawing on these findings, the distinctions between the four types of education policies serve an important analytic function in explaining the complexity of the relationship between policy reform and teacher educators' practice in India.

In the interviews, all four types of Indian education policies were explained as important – especially by university- and college-based teacher educators - albeit for different reasons.

The RTE Act 2009 was noted as important because of its definition of quality education as 'inclusive education', and prescriptions for teachers and teaching. Given that it is a school education policy, it is notable that the RTE Act reportedly had important implications for teacher educators' practice in preparing teachers to meet the policy expectations of inclusive education and teaching. The NCTE Regulations 2014 were explained as significant because of its prescriptions for the structure and content of teacher education program, especially for increasing the duration of the B.Ed. program and mandating the framework of the teacher education curriculum. Given that the mandated framework provides only overarching guidelines, the findings illustrated the centrality of universities and colleges – and individual teacher educators – in shaping and translating the teacher education curriculum into practice. Given that the prescriptions of Acts and Regulations are legally enforceable, these two types of Indian education policies - whether aimed at school or teacher education – reportedly had direct impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice. In practice, the identified Acts and Regulations served to define quality education, the role of the teachers and teaching, and how teachers for quality education can be prepared through teacher education programs.

The Report of the Justice Verma Commission was explained as pivotal in framing the policy problem in teacher education (that teacher education programs are failing to prepare teachers for quality education) and its proposed policy solution (the increased reform and regulation of teacher education). And, National Policies – such as the SSA 2002, NCF 2005 and NEP 2020 – were highlighted as important because of their conceptualisations and expectations for the role of teachers and teaching. The recommendations of *Reports* and *National Policies* were noted as significant by the interviewed teacher educators for two reasons. First, the identified Reports and National Policies were explained as seeking to orient teacher educators' practice towards specific conceptions of quality education (including the role of

the teacher and their teaching) and preparing teachers for quality education. For example, the NCFTE 2009 – which in turn drew on the NCF 2005 – was explained as significant for stressing the importance of preparing teachers for (and through) constructivist education, and proposing the present tripartite teacher education curriculum. Secondly, the recommendations of *Reports* and *National Policies* purportedly formed the basis of subsequent policy prescriptions through *Acts* and *Regulations*. For example, several university- and college-based teacher educators explained how the prescriptions of the NCTE Regulations 2014 drew on the recommendations of the JVC Report 2012 and the NCFTE 2009. In these ways, the Reports and National Policies – though not legally enforceable – had reportedly the same impacts and implications as Acts and Reports for teacher educators' practice.

Both the RTE Act 2009 and NCF 2005 (a National Policy) were explained as important for their conceptions of quality education. In both cases, quality education (as 'inclusive education' in the former, and 'constructivist education' in the latter) was described in terms of an overarching framework or set of guidelines serving to orient teacher educators' practice (see Section 6.3.1). This reported similarity of purpose is notable because the RTE Act is legally enforceable, and provides a plethora of *prescriptions* for teachers' practice (e.g., Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation) and thereby serves to orient teacher educators' practice. Whereas, the NCF offers *recommendations* for teachers' practice through specific conceptions of constructivist education, quality teachers, and quality teaching. The interviewed teacher educators explained how the constructivist vision of the NCF 2005 – subsequently rearticulated in in the NCFTE 2009 (another National Policy) – played an important role in shaping their teacher education practice. Specifically, the findings illustrate how both Acts and National Policies - though created in different ways with different legal mandates – were important in articulating policy expectations of quality education and

preparing teachers for quality education. In effect, the teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained that different types of education policies sometimes served the same purpose.

Despite their agreement with the above policy framings of quality education, the interviewed teacher educators drew on diverse theoretical frameworks and philosophers to explain the meaning and significance of inclusion and constructivist education for their teacher education practice. Specifically, the interviewed teacher educators engaged with the RTE Act 2009, NCF 2005, and NCFTE 2009 in unique ways based on their personal understanding of quality education (e.g., inclusive education and constructivism), and the specific needs of individual student teachers and the local teaching-learning context. Thus, while different types of Indian education policies were reportedly aimed at similar purposes – i.e., defining quality education – they were translated differently by the interviewed teacher educators in their practice based on their unique personal and professional contexts.

The interviewed teacher educators' explanations of the significance of the four different types of Indian education policies are notable given the different ways in which these policies are created. While Acts are passed by the legislature (Upper and Lower House of Parliament), the remaining three types of education policies – Regulations, National Policies, and Reports - are issued by the executive (elected government or its appointed agencies). While both Acts and Regulations are legally enforceable, the former requires to be passed by a majority in both Houses of Parliament whereas the latter are unilaterally issued by the elected government through its Ministries (e.g., of Education) and Statutory Organisations (like the NCTE). Further, National Policies and Reports (which are also commissioned and published by the elected government) were explained as integral for framing the policy problem and

policy solution for teacher education, and reportedly served as the basis for subsequent Regulations. The interviewed teacher educators focused primarily on explaining their engagement with National Policies (such as the SSA 2002 and NCFTE 2009) suggesting that policies issued by the central government are equally significant – though with contested relevance - to the diverse teaching-learning contexts across all Indian states. Given the university- and college-based teacher educators' dominant emphases on Regulations, National Policies, and Reports, the findings illustrate how the elected government has the power to single-handedly shape the structure and content of teacher education, including the recruitment and role of teacher educators. Building on the preceding premises, the study also points to the significance of the shifting ideology and agendas of the ruling political party, and its implications for defining quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

Aside from the reported significance of national policies, some teacher educators also highlighted the importance of specific aspects and certain state education policies. Of the reported state education policies – including for Nursery Teacher Training – the majority of university- and college-based teacher educators highlighted the significance of the policies that establish the State Teacher Eligibility Tests (STET). The STET exams – consist of two papers each with 150 MCQs to be answered in 2.5 hours. The syllabus of these exams includes content from the B.Ed. curriculum (including the disciplines of child development, and pedagogy), and a selected school teaching subject (e.g., language, mathematics, environmental studies, science, and social studies). Given that passing the STET qualifies a teacher to work in a public school, several university- and college-based teacher educators explained how state governments – through STET policies – play a vital role in regulating entry into the profession with important implications for shaping the required professional

knowledge base for teaching. Notably, the relevance of the STET – for determining who can be a teacher – was contested given its singular emphasis on content knowledge. Accordingly, some university- and college-based teacher educators advocated for the reform of the STET to include – for example – psychometric tests for attitude and aptitude, and demonstrations of teaching. In this sense, the interviewed teacher educators sought to reclaim the autonomy to determine the professional knowledge base for teaching and how this can be assessed, thereby shifting the role of gatekeeper to the profession from the government to teacher education.

From the chronological listing of the major Indian education policies since independence, the interviewed teacher educators reported only *specific aspects of selected education policies* as important. Notably, only certain aspects of Acts and Regulations were described as important though they are both legally enforceable in their entirety. For example, the RTE Act 2009 was explained as important for its prescriptions for inclusive education and CCE, and the NCTE Regulations 2014 for its mandate to shift to the two-year B.Ed. degree. And though not legally enforceable, only specific aspects of National Policies and Reports were explained as important for teacher educators' practice. For example, the SSA 2002 was noted for its implications for teacher recruitment through the hiring of para-teachers, while the crisis narrative JVC Report 2012 was highlighted as important for framing the policy problem and solution for teacher education in India. Notably, the wider consensus on the importance of specific aspects of selected Indian education policies was belied by its diverse reported impacts and implications for teacher education practice.

By tracing the continuity and flow of policies, the interviewed teacher educators explained how Indian education policies tend to draw on each other for their aims, rationales,

recommendations, and prescriptions (see Section 6.2). For example, some teacher educators noted how many aspects of the National Education Policy 2020 can be traced back to the National Policy on Education 1986 and the Report of the Kothari Commission 1964. Other teacher educators traced specific prescriptions of the NCTE Regulations 2014 (e.g., the shift to the two-year B.Ed.) to the JVC Report 2012 and NCFTE 2009 (in turn, reportedly based on the NCF 2005). These reported interconnections between, and the diverse ways in which teacher educators engage with, Indian education policies harken to the metaphor of policy as a palimpsest (Carter, 2012). The teacher educators' explanations of the policy palimpsest phenomenon are also evidenced in the policy texts. For example, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009) draws on the National Curriculum Framework (for school education) (NCERT, 2005) to *expound on the crisis in teacher education* (p. 11-12), to *define the conceptual profile and expectations of the ideal teacher* (e.g., 'one who cares for children and loves to be with them' [p. 76]), and *provide recommendations for teacher educators practice* (e.g., preparing teachers to promote the 'inclusion of locally relevant content in the curriculum as well as pedagogy' [p. 14]). The palimpsest metaphor points to the need to further investigate how 'central government policy both constrained and enabled local effects and how, in turn, local practices, actions and decisions affected policy outcomes' (Carter, 2012, p. 438).

The findings showed how the interviewed teacher educators explained – and engaged with - specific aspects and selected Indian education policies based on their personal understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education, and the opportunities and constraints of their unique personal and professional contexts. For example, the university- and college-based teacher educators had different views concerning the relevance of the mandated teacher education curriculum. Accordingly, they translated the curriculum in their

teacher education pedagogy, assessment, and relationship with student teachers different ways based on their unique understanding of what teachers should know and be able to do, how student teachers learn, and their professional role as teacher educators. In this sense, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators explained their practice by drawing on their personal views and experiences, rather than their professional preparation or the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies. Though aligned in some respects with the prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies, the diversity of reported perspectives and practices point to the potential 'washout effect' (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981) of teacher educators' professional preparation whereby they draw on their unique life histories and contexts to guide and explain their teacher education practice.

8.3 Teacher Educators' Practice and Social Transformation

This section examines the causal logic reported by teacher educators - across the three institutional types - that confirms the complex relationship between teacher education and society, and affirms the centrality of the role of the teacher educator in contributing to envisioned quality education outcomes for individuals and society. Further, it investigates the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators' explanations of their practice – how this differed from their university- and college-based peers – and what this means for preparing teachers for quality education. Drawing on the interviewed teacher educators explanations of their perspectives and practices, this section addresses the relationship between teacher education and social transformation in India.

8.3.1 The Causal Logic of Teacher Educators' Practice

In the interviews, the teacher educators – across universities, colleges, and NGOs – both confirmed and contested the logic of causality between teacher education, school education, and society. With a sweeping consensus, most teacher educators stressed the significance of their role in preparing teachers to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education. For example, Dr. Shamayel – who explained that 'teaching is in [her] blood' – decided to become a teacher educator after a few years of working as a teacher in army school. She explained that she wanted to 'make good teachers, with good beliefs and practices...[who] should be in a position to leave a mark in the school and society such that people remember them for a very, very long time'. Similarly, the interviewed teacher educators reaffirmed the causal link between their teacher education practice and student teachers' learning, student teachers' learning in teacher education and their subsequent teaching in schools, and finally teachers' teaching and the envisioned array of positive outcomes for quality education. Dr. Rajendra – who 'had a dream to be a teacher' – explained this causal connection between teacher education and social transformation. During his B.Ed. program, Dr. Rajendra decided to become a teacher educator, instead of a schoolteacher, so that he 'can develop those who develop the [school] students…and so help the country in this way'. In effect, the interviewed teacher educators explained that they are located at the pinnacle of the causal chain leading to social transformation (see also Section 5.3).

However, teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs also noted an array of factors that temper this direct logic of causality including teacher education-level factors such as student teachers' diverse motivations and backgrounds, and school-level factors such as teachers' workload and low salaries. Still, the interviewed teacher educators stressed that it is

also important to acknowledge that quality education can be a powerful medium to affect the long-term well-being of individuals and societies. In essence, the findings focus our attention on the critical role of teacher educators in preparing teachers to provide quality education in schools and thereby achieve the envisioned aims for individuals and society.

In the international teacher education research, many studies have also affirmed the logic of causality - sometimes implicitly - through their conceptions of the aims and means of teacher education and teacher educators' practice. For example, Hansen (2008) alluding to the aim of holistic learner development, drew on the educational philosophy of Dewey to explain that a key purpose of teacher education is to prepare teachers for the 'cultivation of personhood' (p. 21). More generally, several studies – drawing on the theoretical lenses of social justice and equity – have stressed the importance of preparing teachers for social transformation, thereby acknowledging the causal relationship between education and society (Cochran-Smith & Keefe, 2022; Burke & Whitty, 2018). In this regard, teacher educators have been positioned as 'democratic reformers' who 'prepare teachers not only to work with others to enact deliberative democratic education but also to identify and work with others to eradicate the structures and systems that produce and reproduce school and societal inequity' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018, p. 581), though some researchers have criticised the overemphasis on an emancipatory position in teacher education (e.g., Alexander, 2018). In effect, the findings of the present study contribute the existing research that affirms the significance of the causal relationship between teacher educators' practice and individual and social transformation.

However, the logic of causality in education has been long criticised by certain scholars who have lamented how the linear logic unfairly holds teachers and teacher educators responsible for the health of the economy, society, and nation (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2005). Specifically,

studies have problematised the assumption of linear causality at each step from policy reform to teacher educators' practice and until the envisioned quality education outcomes, for example how student teachers' learning is mediated by their pre-existing beliefs and experiences (see Section 2.2.4), and school students' learning outcomes are dependent on their personal backgrounds including factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, parental education level and involvement, and gender (e.g., Strand, 2014; Dawadi, 2020; di Tommaso et al., 2021; Dowker & Sheridan, 2022). Similarly, the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs contested the linear logic of causality, notably by pointing to systemic and contextual factors that influence quality education outcomes (see Section 5.4.3). Taken together, the present study aligns with the existing research that both confirms and contests the causal relationship between teacher educators (and the teachers they prepare) and the envisioned outcomes of quality education.

In sum, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types both confirmed and contested the logic of causality in education. Importantly, they acknowledged the complexity of factors that shape their teacher education practice and student teachers' learning, and teachers' teaching and students' learning in schools. Despite these complicating factors, they reaffirmed the significance of their role – at the fountainhead of change – in preparing teachers to achieve the envisioned aims of quality education for individuals and society. Building on these findings, the present study proposes that the acknowledgement of the causal complexity in education does not preclude an acceptance of the potential significance of teacher educators' practice in preparing teachers for individual and social transformation.

8.3.2 The Role of NGO-based Teacher Educators

The findings highlight the significance of NGO-based teacher educators in India, especially for the in-service education of teachers working with children from poor and marginalised backgrounds. One key insight from this thesis is that NGO-based teacher educators are not bound by the prescriptions and recommendations of education policies in the same way as their university- and college-based peers. In this sense, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators reportedly engaged with education policies in different ways from their university- and college-based peers.

Notably, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators drew primarily on the institutional policies of their own NGOs to explain their understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. The NGO-based teacher educators' explanations illustrate how each teacher education NGO has different foci for quality education – such as foundational literacy and numeracy, inclusive education, or empathy. Accordingly, each NGO-based teacher educators' practice was unique, and oriented towards preparing teachers for the diverse institutionally defined visions of quality education. For example, Ms. Swetha – Co-Founder of a teacher education NGO focused on ECCE - explained how her institution's vision for preparing teachers for foundational literacy and numeracy involves empowering teachers with detailed lesson plans mapped to their existing school curriculums, along with demonstration classes of each lesson plan on their YouTube channel. Meanwhile, Dr. Sreehari explained that his institution – also responsible for designing a 'Happiness Curriculum' for public schools in one northern state - organises 'communities of practice', i.e., spaces where teachers can share their views and experiences to cultivate their empathy, emotional validation, and effective communication skills. In effect, the interviewed NGO-

based teacher educators primarily explained – and engaged with - their institution's unique vision of quality education and how to prepare teachers for quality education, rather than Indian education policies.

The interviewed NGO-based teacher educators explained their pedagogy in terms of preparing teachers with 'what works', i.e., strategies and skills that can be immediately applied in classrooms to boost school students' engagement and learning. This was reportedly accomplished through role-modelling and providing scaffolding materials such as detailed lesson plans. Analogous to the 'what works' agenda, some interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators stressed the importance of microteaching based on a shared assumption that teaching can be deconstructed into discrete elements and skills that can be taught (similar to the proposed primacy of 'core practices' – see Section 2.2.2). However, within the wider teacher education research, this agenda of preparing teachers with 'what works' has been criticised for compartmentalising the complexity of teachers' practice into discrete and disjointed skills, and narrowing the content and methods of teacher education (e.g., Gewirtz & Cribb, 2020; Tikly, 2015).

The interviewed NGO-based teacher educators explained that preparing teachers with 'what works' is an important first step in enabling teacher agency and professionalism. For example, Ms. Swetha – who previously noted the significance of 'being mindful of when to withdraw' - explained that by providing detailed lesson plans, instructional resources, and model classes on YouTube, teachers can immediately use their learning in their classrooms. By alluding to the challenging backgrounds and lack of professional development of teachers working in low-income schools, this form of directive support was explained as essential for cultivating teachers' confidence in using new forms of pedagogies and assessments in their

teaching practice. Over time, she reported that teachers gain confidence in their new skills, especially when they manifest in shifts in the classroom environment, and students' engagement and learning. This increased confidence reportedly leads to teachers beginning to experiment with different permutations of the pedagogic strategies in ways that are relevant and meaningful to their students and embedded teaching-learning context. In essence, the NGO-based teacher educators' explanations of their teacher education practice suggest that the model of 'what works' – preparing teachers with discrete skills and strategies that are contextually-relevant - actually does work for schoolteachers in India.

The interviewed NGO-based teacher educators explained their assessment practice in relation to observable changes in teachers' classroom teaching. Notably, these observable changes in teaching were explained as indicative of – and therefore, a proxy for - both new teacher knowledge and a shift in teacher mindsets. In this sense, teacher knowledge and dispositions were inferred from changes in observable teaching practice, along with teacher self-reports. This stands in contrast to the assessment of student teachers in university- and college-based teacher education which focuses primarily on testing student teachers' knowledge through formative and summative exams – with a strong emphasis on the latter - in alignment with the prescription of the NCTE Regulations that reserves '70% to 80% marks for external examination' (NCTE, 2014, p. 117). Despite this policy emphasis, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators stressed the importance of personalised assessments of the student teachers' personality and dispositions – in addition to their knowledge and skills. Notably, the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained the importance of cultivating relationships with each student teacher to enable the personalised and genuine assessments of student teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Across the three institutional types, the findings of the study suggest that the

assessment in Indian teacher education involves a combination of assessing who student teachers are – i.e., their personality and dispositions - and what they know and can do. In all, the NGO-based teacher educators' explained assessment as a collaborative tool for enabling professional learning and development, specifically in terms of shaping teachers and teaching towards specific visions of quality education.

In India – as in many other LMIC countries – teacher education NGOs play an important role in the teacher education system. In the interviews, the NGO-based teacher educators explained that this was in part to fill gaps in – and make up for the shortcomings of – the system of formal teacher education primarily based in universities and colleges. Specifically, the NGO-based teacher educators reported primarily working with teachers in under-resourced, low-income schools that serve the children of poor and marginalised populations. Drawing on their institutional policies, the NGO-based teacher educators explained the significance of their role in contributing to social transformation by preparing teachers for specific visions of quality education. This was explained as essential - especially in LMIC contexts like India with entrenched poverty, inequality, and discrimination - to ensure that all students regardless of their backgrounds have access to quality education. In this regard, all the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators stressed a social justice orientation in their practice. They reiterated the significance of their professional role by affirming the positive relationship between their teacher education practice, quality education in schools, and the transformation of social inequalities and discrimination. In essence, the NGO-based teacher educators unanimously asserted the causal relationship between teacher education practice, quality education (through teachers and teaching) and the envisioned social transformation.

8.4 Dissolving Dichotomies: The Universal and the Contextual

The interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained their teacher education practice in two ways – by drawing on contextually-rooted education traditions in India, and concepts and theories prominent in the international teacher education research. Building on these findings, this section addresses the conceptual dichotomy reported in the academic research between contextual (i.e., relevant only to a specific setting) and universal (i.e., relevant across settings) approaches to teacher education.

8.4.1 Understanding Quality Education

The teacher educators across the three institutional types drew on both Indian and international scholars and philosophers of education to explain quality education. An indicative list of the former includes Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, JP Naik, MK Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and Rabindranath Tagore. An indicative list of the latter includes noted philosophers (such as Dewey, Maria Montessori, Rousseau, Vygotsky, Paulo Freire, Hilda Taba, Gramsci, and Marx) and psychologists of education (Allport, Erickson, Freud, Kohlberg, and Piaget). For example, college-based Dr. Ritesh drew on his experiences as student in a school founded by – and based in the philosophy of - Rabindranath Tagore to explain his understanding of the aims and means of quality education, and his teacher education practice in preparing teachers for quality education. Meanwhile, Dr. Sheojee - drawing on his experiences as a teacher in a school run by the Krishnamurti Foundation of India - explained the universal relevance of Jiddu Krishnamurti's philosophy to explain his teacher education perspectives and practices. And, university-based Dr. S.S. - who stressed the significance of a Freirean lens – traced her practice to on her public university's explicit

commitment to social change. Notably, in the interviews, only individuals from India were named as exemplars of 'great teachers' or 'ideal teachers' including medieval scholars (Chanakya, Kabir, and Raidas), religious leaders (Guru Nanak) and former presidents (Dr. Radhakrishna and APJ Abdul Kalam). In this sense, while the interviewed teacher educators' reported understanding of quality education drew on both the contextual and universal, their examples of the ideal teacher and teaching continued to be contextually rooted. In essence, each interviewed teacher educator drew on their own unique life histories and professional experiences to emphasise the different educational philosophers and philosophies. Importantly, international understandings of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education were explained as relevant for India, while Indian understandings were explained as equally relevant for other countries.

In the interviews, some university- and college-based teacher educators' traced their explanations of the purpose of education and the role of the teacher to the *Vedic* system of education. The envisioned aim of quality education as the learner's holistic development was linked to the *Vedic* education tradition concerned with the complete intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual development of the learner. This understanding of quality education as the holistic development of the learner – with its historical and cultural roots – though explained as having contextual origins, was highlighted for its continued relevance in conceptualising quality education for 21st century India and internationally. These views align with scholars who draw on philosophers and educationists primarily from the Global North – such as Froebel and Pestalozzi – to posit how modern conceptions of holistic education are equally relevant, and vitally necessary, for quality education across countries (Forbes, 2003; Miller, 1997). Thus, linking the findings to the extant literature, this study proposes that the

conceptualisation of quality education as the holistic development of the learner is simultaneously contextual and universal.

Some interviewed teacher educators explained their understanding of quality education with special reference to the *guru-shishya* tradition of the *Vedic* period, while also drawing on concepts and thinkers in the international teacher education research. For example, a few teacher educators drew on the image of the *guru* to describe the quality teacher as an exemplar of virtue, a 'friend, philosopher, and guide' who cultivates meaningful relationships with each learner whom they love and treat as their own children. Other teacher educators explained their understanding of quality education in reference to ideas taken from thinkers, theories, and research from other countries. For example, several teacher educators across the three institutional types explained quality education through theoretical lenses popular in international research including 'constructivist education', 'inclusive education', and 'critical education'. These universal understandings of quality education are both commensurate, and in contradiction, with contextual understandings of quality education. Specifically, while aspects of the *guru's* pedagogy – such as dialogue and debate – can be seen as constructivist, the *guru* tradition was neither inclusive (it was restricted to only the highest caste) nor critical (it did not seek to dismantle existing social hierarchies and inequalities). In this sense, the interviewed teacher educators - drawing on their unique life histories and professional experiences – explained the simultaneous significance on specific features of contextual and universal understandings of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

The findings illustrated how the Indian cultural legacy of the teacher as *guru* is evidenced by the interviewed teacher educators' explanations of the quality teacher *as a particular kind of person* with a specific set of characteristics and personality traits (see Section 5.4.1). Despite

their disagreement on the continued relevance of the image of the *guru* for 21st-century India, the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs stressed the importance of cultivating relationships with school children as an integral aspect of the teacher's role. These relationships were primarily explained through the parent-child metaphor, suggesting the continuing cultural legacy of the *guru* tradition in teacher educators' understanding of quality education and the role of the teacher.

Importantly, the interviewed teacher educators explained that their contextually-rooted understanding of the teacher as a particular kind of person – and the centrality of the teacher-student relationship – was also relevant for quality education in other countries. This reported importance of preparing teachers as a particular kind of person, and cultivate teacher-student relationships, is also reported in the teacher education research from other countries with embedded local traditions. For example, the professional development program 'Te Kotahitanga' is aimed at preparing teachers with 'culturally relevant/relationship-based classroom pedagogy' in Aotearoa New Zealand (Hynds et al., 2011, p. 342), and provides an important model for how teacher education (in this case, in-service) can draw on local traditions of education to conceptualise the role of the teacher and their teaching (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). Moreover, studies have shown that teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand can address educational disparities by cultivating relationships with Māori students (Bishop et al., 2009), because of 'the centrality of relationships for pedagogy' in the Māori tradition of education (Bishop et al., 2014). In short, the findings when viewed in light of extant studies suggest similarities between different culturally-rooted definitions of the role of the teacher – especially teacher-student relationships – and point to the possibility of arriving at a universal definition of the role of the teacher that is relevant across countries.

In alignment with existing studies, the interviewed teacher educators highlighted the tension between preparing teachers to improve school students' test scores, and preparing teachers as a particular kind of person with specific values, and dispositions. The university- and college-based teacher educators reportedly addressed this tension by stressing their role in shaping and assessing the character and personality of student teachers. This personalised assessment – predicated on the teacher educator's personal understanding of preparing teachers for quality education - was explained as important because existing assessments in Indian teacher education are reportedly focused primarily on student teachers' knowledge and (in small part) their teaching skills in the school internship. In this regard, the interviewed teacher educators explain that their personalised assessment of student teachers' character – drawing on the contextually-rooted image of the quality teacher as a particular kind of person and a paragon of virtue - is just as important as assessing what student teachers know and can do.

In the interviews, teacher educators - across universities, colleges, and NGOs - outlined four essential conditions of the 'system' to ensure quality education - appropriate level of public expenditure, adequate infrastructure and resources, nurturing environment, and accountability. Specifically, an appropriate level of public expenditure and accountability were reported as essential to achieving adequate infrastructure and resources, and a nurturing environment. In India, several education policies, stretching back to the Kothari Report 1966 and including the new National Education Policy 2020, have recommended that public expenditure on education should reach at least 6% of GDP. An appropriate level of public expenditure on education has been deemed necessary in the NEP 'to attain the goal of education with excellence and the corresponding multitude of benefits to this Nation and its economy' (MHRD, 2020, p. 61). According to World Bank data, public expenditure on education – as a percentage of GDP - varies across countries, for example in New Zealand

(6.05%), Finland (6.28%), United Kingdom (5.17%), Canada (5.26%), and the United States (4.91%). In 2020, the reported public expenditure on education in India was 4.47%. These statistics indicate that India is nearing a level of public expenditure in education similar to countries with high-performing education systems (measured through the results of international standardised tests like PISA). Despite this convergence in public expenditure on education, there remains significant disparities in the quality of school education in India and other countries. Further, the share of private expenditure in education in India has risen steadily in India over the last fifty years (Motkuri and Revathi, 2020). This further foregrounds the significance of how outlays in public and private expenditure on education are aimed at achieving quality education in India. While several studies reiterate the positive relationship between increasing public expenditure on education and a variety of human development indicators, Ruzima and Veerachamy (2021) paradoxically report that in India there is a negative relationship between the two. As NGO-based Ms. Alex previously noted 'the question comes down to where is this money going?'. Drawing on the findings, the current study points out that as India nears its goal of raising public expenditure on education to 6% of GDP, questions remain about how these funds are being spent, for what purpose, and who stands to benefit.

The interviewed teachers educators' reported requirements of the education system are also common to other LMIC countries where public expenditure on education is low, and schools lack adequate infrastructure and resources. Research from other LMIC countries indicates that quality education is primarily viewed through indicators such as public expenditure on education, availability of infrastructure and resources, and metrics such as enrolment, and pupil-teacher ratios (e.g., Majgaard & Mingat, 2012; Opanuga et al., 2019; Valente, 2019). International scholars have used these metrics are used to determine where and how public

expenditure in education is directed. The implied logic – affirmed by the interviewed teacher educators' explanations - is that areas and schools with favourable metrics (like adequate school infrastructure, and low pupil-teacher ratios) require less public expenditure *because they imply* a better quality of education, and vice versa. However, though the interviewed teacher educators stressed the importance of a supportive 'education system', they focused on the role of the teacher and teaching in achieving the envisioned outcomes of quality education – a trend more typical in high-income countries. In effect, the findings of this study suggest that once certain foundational conditions for quality education are met (conceptualised through metrics such as enrolment and pupil-teacher ratios), conceptions of quality education subsequently shift to a focus on the role of the teacher and their teaching.

The findings – in alignment with existing research - illustrate the implicit logic that links the purported crisis in teacher education to the rationale for policy reform. For example, several university- and college-based teacher educators explained how the JVC Report (MHRD, 2012) highlighted the deep-rooted crisis in teacher education in India, and served as the rationale for subsequent policy regulation. These findings illustrate how in Indian education policies - as in many countries around the world – increased policy accountability in teacher education is being rationalised through the narrative of crisis in teacher education purportedly evidenced by school students' poor outcomes on standardised tests. For example, in the USA, increased policy accountability in teacher education has been traced to the influence of neoliberal economics, the chronic public narrative of the failure of teachers and teacher education, and the positioning of teacher education as a policy problem (Cochran-Smith et al., 2017). Though similar in these preceding ways, the Indian case is notably different in the reported response of professional organisations of teacher educators to the accountability turn in teacher education. In the USA, teacher educators' organisations such as the CAEP (formed

through the merger of the NCATE and TEAC) hold TEIs responsible for the quality of teacher preparation through its policies for institutional accreditation (ibid, pp. 579-58). Meanwhile, in India institutional accreditation for teacher education institutes remains under government control, under the ambit of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). These differences in the role of teacher educators' professional organisations across countries highlight the question and implications of what counts as quality in teacher education (worthy of accreditation), and who gets to decide (the government or the profession).

In addition (and response) to external policy accountability, most interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs highlighted the importance of holding themselves accountable for preparing teachers to achieve the envisioned outcomes of quality education. This self-accountability reportedly stems from their personal understanding of the importance of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education, and their professional role as teacher educators. In practice, the interviewed teacher educators' emphasis on their self-accountability mirrors the reported importance of professionalism in, and for, teacher education. In this regard, Vanassche et al. (2019) articulated the need to reclaim professionalism in teacher education through the lens of 'enacted professionalism… [that] gives a central stage to and trusts the professional judgement of teacher educators to do what they deem is good, appropriate, or best – understood in a broad sense – to support the professional learning of newcomers in the "profession"' (p. 485). Building on the interviewed teacher educators' explanations of their self-accountability, the findings of this study align with Cochran-Smith's (2021b) conception of the 'intelligent professional responsibility' of teacher educators, especially the notion of intelligent accountability that assumes that 'the people who did the work in a given profession actually had knowledge about that work and generally wanted to do better at it' (pp. 12-13). Notably, unlike the aforementioned

international scholars, the interviewed teacher educators drew primarily on the contextually-rooted role of the teacher - rather than research on professionalism - to rationalise their reported self-accountability in preparing teachers for quality education.

The interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types explained that the ensuring learning outcomes and the holistic development of school children will in turn lead to social transformation, economic development, and national prosperity (see Section 5.3). Notably, the interviewed teacher educators highlighted the significance of the quality teacher and their teaching embedded within a supportive education system to achieve these envisioned aims of quality education. This conception of the aims and means of quality education – especially the emphasis on the role of the teacher - is echoed in education policies and research around the world, including in the reports of supranational organisations like the OECD and World Bank. However, these ostensibly universal features of defining quality education are translated in unique ways around the world based on each country's specific historical, cultural, social, economic, and political contexts. For example, some interviewed teacher educators drew on the cultural legacy of the *guru* while others pointed to India's diverse geography, culture, and socio-economic settings to explain their understanding of quality education, and the kind of teacher and teaching required. Thus, the present study aligns with Cochran-Smith's (2021a) conclusion that 'what teacher quality means, what policies and initiatives are put in place to promote it, and how various reforms are embraced, extended, resisted, and/or altered always depend in part on *national and local contexts as well as on broader global developments*' (p. 425, emphasis added).

In essence, the interviewed teacher educators explained quality education through its *aims* (individual and social transformation) and *means* (quality teachers, teaching, and education

system). These findings align with the international teacher education research that notes how quality education in many countries around the world is aimed at achieving certain aims for individuals and society, through specific conceptions of the quality teacher and their teaching located within a supportive education system. By focusing on these commonalities in conceptions of quality education around the world, we can take the first steps toward establishing a universally relevant and contextually-meaningful knowledge base for teacher education. Though rooted in contextual traditions, the interviewed teacher educators explained that their understanding of quality education – especially the role of the teacher and the teacher-student relationship – is also relevant to other countries. Similarly, they illustrated how universal features of quality education (such as constructivism) are also relevant to the Indian context. In this way, the findings of the study demonstrate that quality education can be defined simultaneously universal (relevant across countries) and contextual (in this case, unique to India). Building on this, the following section investigates how teachers can be prepared for this balanced universal-contextual conception of quality education.

8.4.2 Preparing Teachers for Quality Education

The findings of this study speak to a longstanding debate in the academic literature concerning whether teacher education programs should prepare teachers for all contexts and countries (represented in this thesis as the 'universal' view), or whether they should to be tailored to increasingly specific settings such as the country, state, city, neighbourhood, or student demographics (represented in this thesis as the 'contextual' view) (Kline et al., 2013; Leavy et al., 2018; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). This universal-contextual dichotomy is illustrated by studies that investigate teacher educators' explanations of their perspectives and practices in preparing teachers either for 'any school' or specifically for their 'own school or

for a group of partner schools' (Davies et al., 2016, p. 297). Despite the tendency towards increasing context-specificity, scholars have also reported several similarities in teacher education programs and practices across countries, pointing to the potential for an underlying common professional knowledge base for teacher education. Drawing on the findings of the present study, this section addresses the purported dichotomy in teacher education, and proposes that preparing teachers for quality education can be simultaneously universally relevant and contextually meaningful.

The interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs drew on an array of international theories and philosophies that were explained as relevant to their practice of preparing teachers for quality education in India. For several teacher educators, these aspects shaped the reported relevance of the present Eurocentric teacher education curriculum, the aims of their practice (e.g., preparing teachers as 'reflective practitioners', or for 'reflective practice' and 'critical pedagogy'), and their teacher education pedagogy (e.g., using reflection journals and microteaching). For example, Dr. Sudhindra – drawing on his Ph.D. thesis – explained the continued and contextual relevance of Shulman's (1987) theoretical framework for defining the types of knowledge that student teachers in India should be prepared with. It is notable that these reported rationales and knowledge bases for teacher education, though drawn from other countries, were explained as relevant to preparing teachers in the current context of 21st-century India.

Within the wider academic research, teacher education scholars have similarly sought to set out a professional knowledge base for teaching and learning teaching that is equally relevant across countries. For example, researchers have espoused the relevance of Shulman's (1987) seven types of teacher knowledge and Mishra and Koehler's (2006) notion of Technological

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) for teachers and teacher education around the world, albeit in contextually-relevant ways (Akyuz, 2018; Angeli & Valanides, 2014; Tondeur et al., 2020). The universality of a common professional knowledge base for teacher education is often implicit in studies that are based in one country, but posit the relevance of its findings for the profession of teacher education more generally. For example, Amador (2022) asserted that 'noticing is one such knowledge base' for mathematics teacher educators (MTE) as a profession (across countries), though the professional development programme (i.e., the research intervention) was conducted with MTEs in the USA only. Universally relevant conceptions of preparing teachers for quality education are also explicit in studies that propose (for example) particular pedagogies for teacher educators' practice such as role-modelling as relevant across countries (Lunenberg et al., 2007), or suggest that specific strategies such as socio-cultural approaches to teaching and learning to teach are globally relevant (Burn & Menter, 2021). In alignment with these studies, the findings affirm the contextual meaningfulness of professional knowledge base for teacher education that draws on international theories and philosophies of education. Building on these premises, the present study points to the potential for a universally relevant, yet contextually meaningful, knowledge that is already scattered across – and can be consolidated from – the existing teacher education research.

Meanwhile, other interviewed teacher educators explained their teacher education practice in reference to their contextual understanding of preparing teachers for quality education. This was exemplified by the NGO-based teacher educators who stressed the importance tailoring their teacher education practice to the specific needs and contexts of individual schools and teachers. Furthermore, teacher educators' reported practice - across the three institutional types - was explained through a focus on preparing future teachers as a particular kind of

person by focusing on the development of student teachers' character and personality, in addition to requisite knowledge and skills for teaching. In effect, to prepare the kind of teacher envisioned for quality education, most teacher educators explained their professional role as concerned with the holistic development of each student teacher. In this sense, teacher educators' explanations of their professional role harken to the contextually-rooted image of the *guru*.

Akin to the *guru* tradition, a vital aspect of teacher educators' reported practice – across universities, colleges, and NGOs - was cultivating relationships with the student teachers. This personalised relationship was explained as important because of its implications for shaping teacher educators' practice, and affecting student teachers' learning and holistic development. In the teacher educators' explanations, cultivating a relationship with student teachers involves defining the relative boundaries between their personal and professional lives, based on their unique understanding of quality education and professional role. For many, this boundary was reportedly fluid, with teacher educators reporting a personal interest in the well-being and development of each student teacher manifest – for example – in being available beyond office hours. Moreover, several teacher educators reported viewing student teachers as their friends or family, even inviting student teachers to their homes. In this vein, Dr. Om explained the importance of cultivating relationships with learners in higher education by drawing on the example of his M.Phil. lecturer in chemistry who was 'dedicated, had a passion for class teaching, and commitment to each student', and even invited students to his home after work hours ('7 pm- 9 pm') to help them with their M.Phil. projects. This kind of reported personal interest in student teachers' well-being is exemplified by the testimonies of two teacher educators who recounted how they saved student teachers from suicide. In effect, almost all the interviewed teacher educators stressed how cultivating

relationships with the student teachers was an integral aspect of their teacher education practice.

Within the wider teacher education literature, few studies have investigated the nature and importance of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher and its implications for the former's practice and the latter's learning. However, in the international research, this relationship is primarily limited to the professional domain, with strict boundaries between teacher educators' personal and professional lives. In this sense, the reported importance of the teacher educator-student teacher relationship in teacher education is simultaneously universal, yet unique to India in terms of blurred boundaries between the teacher educators' professional and personal lives. In effect, the findings illustrate that a teacher educator is always a teacher educator whether they are in the classroom or the marketplace, during institutional working hours or beyond. This contextually-rooted definition of a teacher educator – drawing on the cultural legacy of the *guru* – is different from other countries where being a teacher educator is seen as a profession, with well-defined boundaries and specific work expectations. In essence, the findings suggest that being a teacher educator in India is more than just a profession, it is an identity. Thus, the present study points to the centrality of the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher, and its implications for defining the professional role and practice of teacher educators.

The proposed universal professional knowledge base for teacher education could play an important role in creating international labour mobility for teachers and teacher educators. This point was exemplified in the interviews by Ms. Swetha – co-founder of a teacher education NGO – who explained that how the 'common core' of the teacher education

curriculums in each country is different. She illustrated this point with the story of a volunteer from her organisation who had three Master's degrees in Education from Hong Kong, Singapore, and the UK because of each country's different expectations of school education, teachers, and teaching. She noted that this diversity complicated the possibility of an international, professional consensus on the aims and means of teacher education. Building on this experience, Ms. Swetha suggested the need for a universally-relevant set of 'common teaching and learning standards' for the profession – i.e., conceptualising who teachers are, what they know and can do; and how such teachers can be prepared through teacher education programs. With a few exceptions, the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs reported having worked only in India. Within the wider academic research, however, teacher educators have reported working in more than one country (Liao & Maddamsetti, 2019; Luguetti & McLachlan, 2021; O'Neill, 2017). In this regard, the present study points to the importance of the mobility of ideas and individuals, and leads to questions about the ways in which the professional knowledge base of teacher education is relevant for preparing teachers in different countries, how local traditions of education and indigenous ways of knowing and being are acknowledged, and how teacher education practice is embedded within the specific local and global contexts.

Building on the findings, this thesis proposes that teachers can be prepared for quality education in ways that are at once universal and contextual. In this regard, scholars have suggested that teacher education programs need to be simultaneously relevant to the global and local context (e.g., Steyn et al., 2017). For example, Li (2018) suggests the need for 'glocalised' understandings of inclusive education that draws on advances in education research, while respecting local cultural beliefs and practices. However, two potential objections to preparing teachers for diverse contexts need to be pre-emptively addressed –

language proficiency, and subject knowledge. The teacher must be able to proficiently speak the language in which they are expected to teach, and have a mastery of content knowledge in their chosen teaching subject. On top of language proficiency and content mastery, teachers might overlay their understanding of the purpose of education, and their knowledge of pedagogy to contextualise their teaching in different and diverse contexts. In essence, as Diagne (2013) deigned, 'true care for the universal means attention to the particular' (p. 7).

To enable the preparation of teachers for simultaneously specific and diverse contexts, the teacher education curriculum will need to be reimagined. This reimagined curriculum would draw on advances in – and insights from – international policies, research, and practice in teacher education (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2017), while also recognising and valuing cultural ways of knowing and being embedded within local education and social traditions. Drawing on the findings of the present study, the following section takes this analytic step by proposing some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India.

8.5 Reimagining the Teacher Education Curriculum for India

This section consolidates insights from the findings chapters and the international teacher education research to reimagine the three dimensions of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Given that the reimagined curriculum highlights the role of teacher educators, this section subsequently examines the entry routes and professional preparation of teacher educators in India. Taken together, this section proposes a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India by building on the possibility that understandings of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education can be simultaneously relevant across countries and meaningful in local contexts.

In the interviews, the content of the current teacher education curriculum was reported by the university- and college-based teacher educators as either relevant, needing recontextualization, or requiring change (see Section 7.2). Given that the NCTE 2014 Regulations mandate only the structure and guidelines for curricular content, it is notable that many teacher educators explained the current curriculum as 'Eurocentric' or 'western', i.e., primarily drawing on thinkers and theories from certain high-income countries in North America and Europe. However, the current teacher education curriculum was also explained as relevant to India by appealing to its universal relevance. For example, some teacher educators justified the inclusion of the theories of Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky in reference to a universal human psychology concerning how children learn, and how teachers can be prepared to cultivate students' learning.

In addition to international influences, several university- and college-based teacher educators also stressed the need for the teacher education curriculum to include more culturally-rooted content, including the philosophies and theories of Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Jiddu Krishnamurti, JP Naik, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore. For example, a few teacher educators referred to Gandhi's philosophy of 'hands, head, heart' to conceive one aim of education as the holistic development of the learner (see Section 5.3.1). And, Dr. Sheojee drew on Krishnamurti's philosophy to highlight the significance of preparing teachers to enable the 'spiritual development' of each school learner, because 'spirituality is the essence of humanity'. In essence, the interviewed teacher educators drew on these thinkers from India to conceive the aims of education, and the role of the teacher and teaching. What unites these different Indian philosophers and scholars is their shared emphasis on the character and role of the teacher – in addition to their teaching – to achieve the holistic intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development of the individual school

student learner (e.g., Krishnamurti, 1981; Malaviya, 2021). For example, Thapan (2022) concluded his analysis of Krishnamurti's education philosophy by noting that 'everything depends on the teachers and the quality of dialogue and engagement they bring to students and to life at school' (p. 34). While this culturally-rooted perspective of the role of the teacher and teaching was explained by the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types as necessary for India, it was equally positioned as relevant for education in other countries and contexts. In essence, some of the interviewed teacher educators rejected a universalist view of teacher education – by eschewing the current uniform western curriculum – while at the same time suggesting that Indian conceptions of teaching and learning have equal relevance for teacher education curriculums in other countries.

The relevance of the current curriculum, however, was also contested in ways that emphasise the uniqueness of school contexts in India. This contestation includes considerations such as lack of infrastructure, high pupil-teacher ratios, low teacher salaries and status, and the wider context of entrenched socio-economic inequalities. For these reasons, some university- and college-based teacher educators noted that the current 'western' curriculum reportedly needs to be made relevant to teacher education in India. This is significant as it aligns with the views of post-colonial and decolonial teacher education researchers who have argued for a teacher education curriculum that is based in, and tailored for, local traditions and contexts. While the NGO-based teacher educators did not refer to decolonial lenses, they did emphasise the importance of tailoring teacher education curricula to the needs of individual teachers and schools. In this sense, while university- and college-based teacher educators explained the teacher education curriculum as a national project, NGO-based teacher educators viewed the curriculum as context-dependent.

The teacher educators' contested explanations of the relevance of the current teacher education curriculum speak to debates in the research literature concerning what should be included in the curriculum, how much and what should be context-specific, and who gets to decide. Notably, most university- and college-based teacher educators described the existing teacher education curriculum through the traditional distinction between core subjects (drawing on the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, and sociology) and pedagogy subjects (based on teaching specific school subjects). Building on these findings, and moving beyond the core/pedagogy subjects distinction, a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India might consist of a series of interdisciplinary papers that draw on diverse disciplines including the traditional knowledge bases of philosophy, sociology, and psychology, but extend to (for example) neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, and cultural evolution. The findings highlight that it is not *where* the content of the teacher education curriculum originated that is important (whether in India or another country), but *how* insights from the teacher education curriculum can be made relevant for teaching and preparing teachers in specific countries and contexts through teacher educators' practice. Taken together, this view of the reimagined teacher education curriculum focuses our attention on the role of teacher educators and their professional expertise and judgement.

In alignment with the international teacher education research, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types asserted the significance of pedagogic strategies such as dialogue, discussion, role-playing, and reflection activities. These strategies have been explained as essential in preparing teachers for quality school education across countries and contexts (e.g., Martin, 2013; Reynolds, 2016). The pedagogies of discussion and dialogue - reported as important in the interviews - can be traced back explicitly through teacher educators' explanations to the *Vedic* tradition, and implicitly to other historical traditions of

education such as the Chinese, Socratic, and Buddhist. In all these traditions, it is significant that dialogue and discussion were positioned as essential for enabling students' learning, and thereby formed the basis of the expected pedagogy of teachers' (who were also teacher educators - see section 3.2). Thus, the findings point to an underlying consensus between contextual and universal understandings of the teacher educators' expected pedagogy - rooted in discussion and dialogue - in preparing teachers for quality education across space and time.

In the interviews, assessment was the least focused part of teacher educators' explanations of their practice. Assessment strategies reported by university- and college-based teacher educators included assignments, projects, presentations, formative and summative exams, and marking reflection journals, fieldwork, and school internships. In effect, these teacher educators' reported practice aligned with the prescriptions for teacher education assessment outlined in Section 4.3 of the NCTE Regulations 2014. Of these reported assessment strategies, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types focused on their role in the personalised assessment of student teachers. Notably, while the university- and college-based teacher educators stressed the significance of assessing who student teachers are (i.e., their personality and dispositions), the NGO-based teacher educators emphasised the importance of assessing what (student) teachers can do (i.e., their teaching practice). Both views, however, align with the policy prescription for teacher educators to provide 'professional feedback' to student teachers 'so that they get the opportunity to improve their performance' (NCTE, 2014, p. 117), and reiterate the significance of the role, professional judgement, and feedback of the teacher educator in assessing student teachers' learning,

Building on these findings, a reimagined curriculum for teacher education in India would include assessments of who student teachers are, in addition to what they know and can do. Notably, though the NCTE 2014 Regulations also lists 'student portfolio' as a mode of student-teacher assessment, this was not mentioned in any of the interviews. This is noteworthy because the university- and college-based teacher educators reported several formative and summative assessments of student teachers (e.g., projects, lesson planning, and reflection journals) including their reports of the school teaching internship. A reimagined assessment would involve weaving together these disparate assessments into a unified portfolio of evidence that documents the student teachers' learning, knowledge, and skills. Importantly, the cohesiveness of this envisioned portfolio assessment would depend on a professional consensus among teacher educators in India concerning the required knowledge, skills, and dispositions required from teachers for quality education.

International teacher education scholars have argued that capstone teaching performance assessments like the edTPA in the USA and ATA in Australia – can be important for student teachers' reflection and learning in teacher education, and serve as evidence of what teachers know and can do (see Section 2.2.3).However, studies have also illustrated how capstone assessments like the edTPA limit student teachers 'opportunity to develop the skills of self-efficacy, autonomy, and agency characteristic of effective educators', and socialises them to 'comply with policies that have limited educative value and do not reflect their values, those of their teacher education programs, or the needs of the students in their classrooms' (Dover, 2022, p. 999). In effect, the research demonstrates that the portfolio-based assessment of student teachers can be helpful as long as they do not have the effect of narrowing teacher education curriculums and teacher educators' pedagogies and student teachers' learning (Bird & Charteris, 2021). Building on this evidence base, and drawing on the findings of the

present study, future assessment for teacher education in India could include capstone teacher performance assessments including observations of teaching, and subsequent interviews with student teachers to interrogate their beliefs about education and pedagogic reasoning. Thus, this study reimagines assessment in teacher education in India by positing the importance of initiating locally-designed, portfolio-based assessment of student teachers as a means to cultivate student teachers' learning and create an evidence base for teacher education in India.

The findings of this study point to the significant role of individual Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) in shaping the contours of the teacher education curriculum, based on their unique understanding of quality education albeit circumscribed by relative degrees of institutional autonomy. For example, the findings illustrated several instances of how Departments of Education at universities shape contours of the wider teacher education curriculum through the inclusion/exclusion of specific content, and autonomous colleges ranked 'A' or 'A+' by the NAAC undertake minor redesigns of specific aspects of the wider curriculum. Notably, affiliated colleges reportedly have to subscribe the curriculum designed by their affiliating universities, while autonomous colleges can choose to adopt the university syllabus or tailor it to their own needs. Dr. S.S. illustrated the institutional influence on curriculum design by drawing on examples from her previous and current universities. In her previous position as teacher educator at a prestigious public university, the teacher education curriculum was singularly rooted in the theories of Indian philosophers - like Gandhi, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Madan Mohan Malaviya – and aimed at 'preparing students who will change the society'. However, she lamented the 'curriculum not providing critical conscientisation, no essential papers in gender education, research only in the quantitative tradition, and not cultivating critical thinking'. Conversely, Dr. S.S. explained that when she joined her current university, her pedagogic thinking and practice shifted. She

became ‘exposed to western philosophers like Paulo Freire and Marxist ideology’ and a teacher education curriculum that could ‘provide critical conscientisation’. Similarly, Dr. Minoti – drawing on her professional experiences - explained how her previous teacher education college rarely changed the syllabus, while her present teacher education college updates the syllabi every year. The difference she noted was that ‘it’s all about whether the institution wants to change or not’. Thus, the principles for a reimagined curriculum for teacher education in India would vitally depend on individual Teacher Education Institutions.

In essence, this thesis proposes principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum (including pedagogy and assessment) for India that draws on the findings of the present study and insights from international research literature in contextually-meaningful ways (e.g., Yeh & Heng, 2022). Building on these principles - and in response Cochran-Smith’s (2018, 2021b) call to reclaim accountability in teacher education – the present study proposes that the specific structure and content of the reimagined teacher education curriculum for India should be decided through the professional consensus of teacher educators across the country. However, for this to become possible, teacher educators and scholars – in India and internationally - will need to agree on an underlying, professional knowledge base for teaching and teacher education. This common professional knowledge base could then become the foundation upon which to build contextually-rooted modules that recognise and value local traditions of education, the knowledge on which they are based, and the social and historical contexts in which teaching-learning is embedded. These contextually-rooted modules would focus both on learning to teach in a specific context, and learning how to contextualise teaching-learning for different contexts.

There have already been some efforts towards such a modular teacher education curriculum that is both universal and contextual. For example, Grudnoff et al. (2017) identify 'six facets of practice for equity' common across different countries to design an equity-centred teacher education curriculum. The present study contributes to this wider project of comparative (and assimilative) studies that can enable the creation of a globally relevant knowledge base for teaching and learning to teach which is simultaneously relevant within and across countries (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Such a modular teacher education curriculum could also facilitate greater international labour mobility for teachers and teacher educators.

Taken together, the reimagined curriculum for teacher education in India highlights the centrality of the teacher educator – who they are, what they know and can do – and their teacher education practice. Given this primacy of the teacher educator's role in translating the reimagined curriculum, the following sections draw on the life histories of the interviewed teacher educators to investigate the entry routes and professional preparation of teacher educators in India.

8.5.1 Becoming a Teacher Educator in India

Among the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators, two major routes into the profession were reported. The first route was through acquiring the required academic qualifications and certifications, and becoming a teacher educator. The second route subsumes the first and includes being a schoolteacher before becoming a teacher educator. Investigating these two routes is critical to understand how one becomes a teacher educator in India, and what this means for teacher education practice.

Directly Teacher Educator

The first reported route to becoming a teacher educator was by acquiring the requisite qualifications and certifications. According to the NCTE (2014) Regulations, a teacher educator must have at least a postgraduate degree in a school subject, and an M.Ed. (p. 117). Further, individuals with the aforementioned qualifications must also pass the NET – conducted by the UGC - as it is an essential policy-mandated criteria for the (entry-level) post of Assistant Professor in Indian universities and colleges. It is noteworthy that school teaching experience is not a mandatory criteria to become a teacher educator in India. Taken together, 29 teacher educators, over half the sample, entered the profession of teacher education directly through pursuing the requisite academic qualifications.

The interviewed university- and college-based participants reported how they became a teacher educator by completing (in order) – an undergraduate and postgraduate degree in a school subject, B.Ed. and M.Ed. programs, and finally the NET. Many of these interviewees subsequently completed an M.Phil. and/or Ph.D. in Education while working as a teacher educator. For example, college-based Dr. Hans has a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Physics, B.Ed., M.Ed., Ph.D. in Education and NET qualification. In a slight variation, university-based Mr. Prateek completed a B.A. in Education (Hons.) – rather than B.Ed. – followed by an M.Ed. before becoming a teacher educator. He is presently enrolled in an M.Phil. degree (his research topic is the 'economics of teacher education' in his home state) that will eventually lead to a Ph.D. in Education. While a few teacher educators did report some background in informal teaching such as through after-school tuitions or volunteering with education NGOs, they did not have any formal school teaching experience. For example, Dr. Minoti worked in an education NGO before choosing to become a teacher educator at a private teacher education college in north India. Based on her experiences working in an education NGO, she

was motivated to become a teacher educator 'to build good teachers for Indian society'. Dr. Minoti explained that she 'shifted from an NGO to higher education' because she realised that being 'engaged with an NGO, [she] cannot change the whole system, so it would be better to get an opportunity to change future teachers'. Similarly, the university- and college-based teacher educators who opted for the direct route into the profession rationalised their decision by pointing to the potential for greater impact in positively affecting school education – and the society – through the formal preparation of teachers.

In many instances, this academic route to teacher education was explained as fortuitous. For example, Dr. Om remarked that 'the journey of being a teacher educator started accidentally' on the chance advice of his college librarian. Dr. Geetha G elaborated the point noting that she 'didn't want to become a teacher', rather it was her father who compelled her to join the B.Ed. program. During the B.Ed., Dr. Geetha G reflected how she particularly enjoyed her school internship, especially teaching and interacting with school students. This is when she decided that she 'does not want any other profession other than this because children are [her] real motivation'. Dr. Geetha G. completed her M.Ed. immediately after the B.Ed., and was subsequently hired during campus recruitment to become a teacher educator. Taken together, this academic route into the profession – with its diverse and fortuitous stories - is significant because it positions specific qualifications and certifications as proxies of an individual's capability to be a teacher educator.

First Schoolteacher, then Teacher Educator

The second reported route into the profession subsumes the achievement of the requisite academic qualifications and certifications, and includes first being a schoolteacher before becoming a teacher educator. In short, these teacher educators reported having an

undergraduate and post-graduate degree in a school subject, B.Ed. and M.Ed. and NET certification, along with formal school teaching experience. Notably, the university- and college-based teacher educators who followed this second route explained certain advantages for their teacher education practice from being able to draw on their school teaching experience.

Within the school teaching route into the profession, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators reported diverse trajectories. For example, university-based Dr. Ashwini worked at a Research Institute and schoolteacher before becoming a teacher educator. Notably, Dr. Letha shared how she was a schoolteacher for three years *before* her B.Ed. degree (and marriage) and for fourteen years *after* the B.Ed., followed by ten years as a teacher educator at prestigious private and public colleges and universities. Presently, she works Chief Consultant for the Ministry of Education on the implementation of the new National Education Policy 2020. Taken together, most of these university- and college-based teacher educators traced their motivation for the profession – and explanations of their teacher education practice - to their previous experiences as a schoolteacher.

Most university- and college-based teacher educators who took the route via school teaching into the profession highlighted important challenges for individuals who directly become teacher educators via the academic route. For example, university-based Dr. Mythili – drawing on a decade of school teaching experience – stressed that the central challenge for teacher educators 'who have directly come to higher education' is that 'they do not have that ground experience'. Relatedly, and drawing on her unique professional experiences, she explained that many individuals who directly entered the profession see themselves as 'superior because they did not have to work in schools and directly got the [teacher

education] job'. Still, Dr. Mythili concluded that only teacher educators who were first schoolteachers 'are confident, and able to guide the student teachers better than those who don't have school teaching experience'. Similarly, Dr. Letha – drawing on almost two decades of school teaching experience - explained that her 'exposure in school has been an asset', whereas she 'really feel[s] that this is lacking in many teacher educators - that connection to the grassroots'. These teacher educators who directly entered the profession and lack the 'grassroot touch', she continued, can 'talk about psychology and philosophy, give great lectures, and refer to umpteen books, but the problem for them is understanding how to convey a message to [school] children in a way that they would appreciate'. And, Ms. Aparna – who began her career as a primary school teacher - elaborated that some of her colleagues without school teaching experience take time to understand her teacher education practice because:

> 'They do not have the first-hand experience of what can go right and wrong in school. At university, they are talking about it at surface levels, to most ideal situation possible. But when it comes to implementation in situations, the most ideal situation is not executable. That is the underpinning, missing link I have observed. They fall back on the experiences of others'.

Notably, several teacher educators explained the school teaching route into the profession as fortuitous. For example, Dr. Monoronjon – Principal of a teacher education college - candidly reflected on how was a schoolteacher for over a decade 'due to poverty', during which time he acquired an M.Ed., and passed the NET. He accepted his first job as a teacher educator in 2006, and since then continues to take 'take this profession from [his] heart'. Importantly, Dr. Monoronjon reflected, 'I think my school teaching experience has helped me to become an effective teacher educator'. Relatedly, some of the interviewed female university- and college-based teacher educators – across both entry routes – noted how their professional trajectories were shaped by their gender, age, marriage, and children. These intersectional challenges were exemplified by university-based Dr. Shivani who began her career as an

interior designer. She recounted how she decided to 'get into teaching because once [her] child was born [she] realised that [she] wouldn't be able to give him enough time if [she] continued to be an interior designer'. When she went to enrol her son into nursery, she really liked the environment of the school and – on a whim - asked if there were any teacher vacancies. She explained that to be a nursery teacher 'you don't really need any qualifications, because you are a mother'. During this time, she enrolled for the B.Ed. degree. Reflecting on her experiences in the school internship, she lamented the 'extensive work and petty details' that went into preparing lesson plans, and how the 'practice sessions completely took away the fun of being a teacher'. She reported feeling 'stuck with not really being able to do what [she] wanted to do', and decided to become a teacher educator to remedy the situation. Looking back, Dr. Shivani reflected:

> 'I think just those three months of teacher practice [school internship] that I had was enough. I didn't really get into a school to teach after that. And immediately after that, I had already decided that I would rather get into teacher training.'

In short, the second route via being a school teaching into the profession is important because several teacher educators drew on their experiences as a schoolteacher to explain their motivation for the profession, understanding of quality education (including the role of the teacher) and teacher education practice.

NGO-based Teacher Educators

The interviewed NGO-based teacher educators also explained the same two routes - directly and via school teaching – into the profession. Importantly, the diversity of entry pathways within these two wider routes was reported as significant in NGO-based teacher educators explanations of their perspectives and practices.

Within the direct route, the NGO-based teacher educators reported a range of academic pathways. With few exceptions (e.g., Dr. Pari), most interviewed NGO-based teacher educators had academic – rather than professional – degrees in education. In practice, the examples of these NGO-based teacher educators suggest an equivalence between academic (e.g., B.A. and M.A.) and professional degrees (B.Ed. and M.Ed.) in Education. For example, Ms. Alex and Ms. Riya both reported completing an M.A. in education, with the former building on a B.A. in Psychology and the latter on a B.A. in Home Science. Importantly, Ms. Riya explained how the fieldwork during the M.A. program - especially 'going to school and interacting with the teachers' - sparked her motivation to become an NGO-based teacher educator. This reported academic route – without professional degrees - raises questions of the professional preparation and knowledge base of NGO-based teacher educators, and their roles – relative to their university- and college-based peers - for pre- and in-service teacher education.

Five NGO-based teacher educators reported entering the profession via school teaching, albeit in different ways. Dr. Pari shared how she started her journey as a middle school mathematics and physics teacher. In her first year as a schoolteacher at a prestigious private school in Mumbai, she explained how she 'did get a chance to apply all that [she] had learnt in the B.Ed.' However, she noted that the 'seasoned teachers out there do not follow the same, and [that] they have fallen into a fixed pattern'. Drawing on her experiences as a schoolteacher, she then reflected:

> 'I took up teaching primarily because I thought I could make a difference in the lives of students. And after my one year in school as a teacher, I realised that if I really want to make a larger difference, what I could do is train teachers instead. And I could contribute more. Every teacher [I train] will go and make the same contribution to 400 students each year. That is what got me to teacher education.'

Three NGO-based teacher educators explained their school teaching experiences as part of the Teach for India (TFI) fellowship. For example, Mr. Vinay explained that he began his career at a multinational investment bank which led to 'a lot of introspection' and eventual realisation that his 'passion is teaching and empowerment via teaching'. This spurred to him becoming a Teach for India fellow, and work as a schoolteacher for two years (similar to Ms. Alex and Mr. Joseph). Presently, Mr. Vinay works with a teacher education NGO responsible for the professional development of over 3000 public school teachers across 200 schools in one south Indian state. Meanwhile, Dr. Sreehari – who has a Master's and Ph.D. in Psychology – was a schoolteacher for a few years, then shifted to working as a school counsellor and clinical psychologist, before landing a university-based research role responsible for redesigning the university's B.Ed. and M.Ed. curriculums. Now, Dr. Sreehari is Associate Director (of Research and Impact) in charge of teacher professional development in his present role as an NGO-based teacher educator. Taken together, the diversity and variation with NGO-based teacher educators' entry pathways raise questions about their professional knowledge base, and point to the significance of investigating who the NGO-based teacher educators in India are, what they know and can do.

In essence, the interviewed NGO-based teacher educators reported diverse pathways into the profession, broadly through the academic route or via being a schoolteacher. Those who had been schoolteachers – like their university- and college-based peers - drew importantly on these experiences to explain their motivation for the profession, understanding of quality education (including the role of teachers), and teacher education practice. Notably – and unlike their university- and college-based peers – even NGO-based teacher educators who opted for the academic route repeatedly pointed to the 'ground realities' of schools and teachers to explain their teacher education perspectives and practices. In this sense, the NGO-

based teacher educators - independent of their entry routes into the profession - explained how their teacher education perspectives and practices were deeply intertwined the current contexts of schools and teachers in India.

Conclusion

The interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained two primary routes into the profession – directly via the academic route, or indirectly via first being a schoolteacher. Furthermore, the interviewed teacher educators recounted significant variations and nuances within these two wider pathways. Building on the findings, the present study highlights the importance of investigating these varied pathways because of its vital implications for defining the professional knowledge base for teacher education, and teacher educators' perspectives and practices.

8.5.2 Preparing Teacher Educators in India

The findings highlighted how the interviewed teacher educators drew on their unique personal and professional experiences to understand quality education, and explain their teacher education practice. Building on insights from the findings, this section investigates and professional preparation of teacher educators in India.

Many interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs drew on their unique contexts to understand quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. For example, NGO-based Dr. Sreehari explained his understanding of quality education and teacher education practice by drawing on over two decades of professional experience

'working in the field of education of children from adverse and disadvantaged backgrounds'. Similarly, NGO-based Ms. Alex explained her understanding of the role of teachers saying:

> 'It's a combination of all the things that I've seen people do and not do. It comes from a place of having seen teachers do these things, and then I think, okay, if you didn't do it, then you'd be great. And that means, you'd be great for the children. And I think that's where I draw my idea or notion of an ideal teacher.'

Echoing this view, the majority of interviewed teacher educators pointed the primacy of their experiences to explain and rationalise their teacher education practice. For example, university-based Dr. Sudarshan – who entered the profession via the academic route - rationalised his views of the quality teacher and teaching by explaining that 'our own experiences are the best ideas, so we need to keep the windows of our mind to the many ideas flying around in our environment'. Meanwhile, Ms. Deepti – who entered the profession via the school teaching route – rationalised her practice in preparing teachers for quality education saying:

> 'From where do I draw these ideas? It is when I interact with the student teachers that I know if there has been quality of not, so I get these kinds of ideas from interaction with the student teachers.'

Though a few interviewed teacher educators pointed to their professional preparation to explain their perspectives and practices, these explanations were either partial or dependent on individual teacher educators (rather than the progamme itself). For example, Dr. Ritesh explained that he drew his teacher education perspectives and practices from his experiences in a Tagorean school, i.e., 'the way and atmosphere where [he] grew up', and his Ph.D. supervisor whom he described as his '*guru*'. University-based Dr. Ashwini summarised the diverse sources of teacher educators' knowledge and practices succinctly, saying 'most things are experience-based, certain things are taught to you, certain things are from your own personality, and certain things you get to know from experiences'. Taken together, the interviewed teacher educators' explanations of their experiences as the basis of their practice

spotlights the significance of investigating the professional preparation of teacher educators, and the ways in which these programmes address candidates' pre-existing beliefs and experiences.

All the university- and college-based teacher educators had the same professional qualification - the M.Ed. - (in addition to their subject-specific degrees). Despite this shared premise, the findings demonstrated that university- and college-based teacher educators explained diverse *understandings* of quality education, and *practices* in preparing teachers for quality education. This raises the question of how and why teacher educators who have the same professional degree explain diverse understandings of the aims and means of their teacher education practice. For several decades – drawing on Lortie (1975) – the phenomenon of 'apprenticeship of observation' has been used to explain why student teachers draw on their personal backgrounds and experiences to model their teaching practice, rather than their learning during teacher education programs (Grossman, 1991; Westrick & Morris, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that teacher educators in India have their own 'apprenticeship of observation' or 'anti-apprenticeship of observation' (see Section 2.2.4). Building on the research on student teachers' learning, the findings of the present study point to the potential 'washout effect' (e.g., Adamakis & Zounhia, 2016) of teacher educator preparation in India whereby teacher educators draw on their unique beliefs and experiences to explain their teacher education practice. Given the interviewed teacher educators' explanations of the primacy of their unique experiences[38], this observed 'washout effect' can perhaps be partly explained by pointing to their 'apprenticeship of observation'. Thus, echoing Cochran-Smith

[38] For example, while Dr. Sudhindra drew on Tagore – based on his experiences as a school student in a Tagorean school – Dr. Sheojee drew on Krishnamurti – based on his experiences as a schoolteacher in a Krishnamurtian school – to explain their respective understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

et al. (2020), the study highlights the importance the investigating who teacher educators in India are, how they are prepared, and what counts as their professional knowledge base.

The reported diversity of the entry routes and professional preparation pathways of teacher educators in India means that each teacher educator begins their career with a unique professional knowledge base and skill set. For these reasons, many interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types emphasised the significance of their early career years in shaping their understanding of quality education and professional practice. This aligns with extant research that highlights the first years of being and becoming a teacher educator as vital in cultivating a teacher educator identity (e.g., Kastner et al., 2019). The findings also align with international self-studies that have illustrated how teacher educators' identity development is partly rooted in concerns about establishing credibility and legitimacy in their practice (Mansfield et al., 2022; Newberry, 2014), a challenge compounded because teacher educators in many other countries also join the profession through different routes and with diverse motivations (e.g., Richter et al., 2021). Based on the preceding premises, the present study spotlights the significance of sustained and meaningful induction programs - that build on the professional preparation of teacher educators (in this case, through the M.Ed.) - to facilitate the process of teacher educator identity formation in India (see Izadinia, 2014).

Moving beyond their professional preparation and induction, the findings also point to the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for teacher educators in India (see also MacPhail et al., 2019). In the interviews, many university- and college-based teacher educators lamented the lack of professional development programs to enable them to implement policy prescriptions and recommendations in contextually meaningful

ways. A few teacher educators did report having attended training workshops, which were explained as sporadic and unhelpful. In India, like in many other countries, there are no clear policy- or institutionally-prescribed pathways for teacher educators' professional development. For example, an analysis of how teacher educators are prepared in Norway, New Zealand, Israel, and the US showed that 'in no country is there a clear mapping out of these professional groups nor a comprehensive plan for their preparation and ongoing education' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020, p. 18). Notably, the interviewed teacher educators' testimonies indicate that some are not averse to implementing certain prescriptions and recommendations of Indian education policies. Based on these findings, the present study proposes that purposefully planned Continuous Professional Development for teacher educators can enable them to translate the expectations of education policies in contextually meaningful ways.

In essence, the present study spotlights the significance of investigating the entry routes and the professional preparation (and development) of teacher educators in India. The findings align with research that illustrates how becoming a teacher educator 'involves examining beliefs and values grounded in personal biography, and dealing with the inherent tensions that arise from overlapping and interrelated personal and professional identities' (Williams et al., 2012, p. 256). In all, the present study highlights the complexities of teacher education practice and affirms the need for further research into the professional preparational and development of teacher educators in India. For, as Goodwin & Kosnik (2013) note, 'given the critical role teacher educators can - and should – play in educational reform, attention to their preparation, knowledge, and quality becomes more important than ever' (p. 339).

8.6 Summary

This study makes four distinct contributions to the teacher education research in India and internationally. First, the study contributes to the teacher education research in India by highlighting the analytic value of investigating how the various types of Indian education policies – Acts, Regulations, National/State Policies, and Reports – can have differential impacts and implications. These analytic distinctions serve to deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher educators' practice in India. Secondly, in alignment with education policies and research in India and other countries, the findings affirm the significance and centrality of the role of the teacher educator (and the teachers they prepare) in achieving the envisioned aims of quality education for social transformation. Thirdly, drawing on the interviewed teacher educators' perspectives and practices, the findings address wider debates in the international teacher education research by proposing that understandings of quality education - and preparing teachers for quality education - can be simultaneously universal and contextually relevant. And finally, building on the preceding premises, the present study proposed some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum in India

This thesis contributes to the existing research on – and responds to the prevailing narrative of crisis in - teacher education in India by addressing the relationship between education policies and teacher education practice through the voices of teacher educators from across the country. In this sense, it contributes to the coordinated professional response to the narrative of crisis in teacher education, through the voices and experiences of educators and their explanations of the complexities of their practice (e.g., Dinham, 2013). The findings showed how the interviewed teacher educators engaged with Indian education policies in

diverse ways based on their unique personal and professional contexts. Taken together, the present study illustrated patterns of similarities and differences in teacher educators' reported perspectives and practices, and spotlighted the significance of investigating their professional preparation and development. In essence, the present study highlights how teacher educators play a critical role in translating policy reform into teacher education practice in India.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Synopsis

Teacher educators have been constantly criticised in Indian education policies, academic research, and media reports for failing to implement policy reform and prepare teachers for quality education (e.g., MHRD, 2012; Deswal, 2017). These criticisms centre around teacher educators' practice being lecture-based, promoting rote learning, and not addressing student teachers' beliefs and backgrounds. Specifically, teacher educators have been blamed for failing to prepare teachers for quality education, with negative implications for the wider Indian society, economy, and nation. Within this crisis narrative, however, few studies have investigated the relationship between policy reform and teacher education practice in India through the voices and experiences of teacher educators. Addressing this gap, the overarching research question for the present study was '*How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies*?'.

In Indian education policies, quality education has different meanings, each with implications for defining the role of the teacher (and thereby, the educators that prepare them). For example, preparing teachers to boost students' outcomes on standardised tests and cultivating students' holistic development require different teaching emphases (and teacher preparation). Furthermore, quality education in schools is expected to achieve an array of positive outcomes for individuals, society, the economy, and the nation. However, in the absence of mandated teacher standards and a consensus professional knowledge base for teacher education, there is little clarity on the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for teachers (or how teachers for quality education can be prepared through teacher education

programs). Given this complexity and ambiguity, the sub-research questions for the study were:

1) How do teacher educators understand 'quality education'?
2) Which Indian education policies do teacher educators describe as important, and why?
3) How do teacher educators explain their teacher education practice?

This study used an in-depth qualitative research design to answer the research questions. Fifty-two semi-structured, virtual interviews were organised with a stratified, purposive sample of fifty teacher educators based in universities, colleges, and NGOs across India (see Appendix E). An adapted form of Reflexive Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data – i.e., the interview recordings, transcripts, and researcher's notes – and answer the research questions (see Appendix F and G). Throughout, I remained alert to how my beliefs, knowledge, and experiences were imprinted on the data collection and analysis process.

In response to the first sub-research question, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types explained their understanding of quality education through consensus and differences. The teacher educators reported a broad consensus on the *aims* of quality education (for individual and social transformation, economic development, and national prosperity) and its purported *means* (through the quality teacher and their teaching embedded within a supportive education system). Within this wider consensus, each teacher educator explained and rationalised their unique understanding of quality education by drawing on a diverse range of sources especially their unique life histories and professional experiences. The reported consensus on the aims and means of quality education when juxtaposed against its multiple rationalisations draws attention to the diverse entry routes, and professional preparation (and development) of teacher educators in India.

In response to the second sub-research question, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types described only specific aspects of certain Indian education policies as important. While school education policies were highlighted for their conceptions of quality education and expectations of the role of the teacher, teacher education policies were spotlighted for their regulation of the location, structure, and content of teacher education programs. For example, the RTE Act (MHRD, 2009) was noted for its conception of quality education as inclusive education, whereas the NCTE (2014) Regulations were highlighted for mandating a shift from a one-year to two-year B.Ed. program. Notably, the identified school and teacher education policies reportedly had different impacts and implications for teacher educators' practice based on their unique understanding of quality education, institutional contexts, and socio-economic settings. Given the reported lack of professional development programs to enable the contextually-relevant implementation of policy reform, the interviewed teacher educators explained that they relied on their own views and experiences to translate policy prescriptions and recommendations into their teacher education practice.

In response to the third sub-research question, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators explained their teacher education practice – along the dimensions of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and relationship. The mandated curriculum was explained as relevant, requiring recontextualisation, or radical change based on the teacher educators' understanding of what student teachers should know, with implications for determining the professional knowledge base for teaching. Though aligned with policy prescriptions and recommendations, the reported pedagogic strategies (e.g., microteaching and reflection journals) were explained differently based on the teacher educators' understanding of preparing teachers for quality education and their institutional contexts. While many formative and summative assessment strategies were listed (including assignments, projects,

and exams), the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators stressed the personalised assessment of who student teachers are - their personality, dispositions, and values – in addition to what they know and can do. Thus, the interviewed university- and college-based teacher educators explained their teacher education practice through points of consensus and contestation.

The NGO-based teacher educators espoused patterns of similarity and difference in relation to their university- and college-based peers. Notably, while there were similarities in their reported understandings of quality education, they were notable differences in their descriptions of important Indian education policies and explanations of teacher education practice. The NGO-based teacher educators only stressed the significance of certain school and teacher education policies (e.g., policies concerning Nursery Teacher Training) because of their impacts and implications for shaping the expectations, contexts, and preparation of the (in-service) teachers they work with. Furthermore, the NGO-based teacher educators explained their practice through the creation of curriculums tailored to the specific needs of individual schools and teachers. And, their pedagogy was aimed at preparing teachers with 'what works' – discrete teaching skills and strategies that are contextually relevant – while their assessment was rooted in teachers' self-reports and observable changes in teaching practice. In effect, these teacher educators drew on the institutional policies of their NGOs - rather than Indian teacher education policies – to explain their teacher education practice.

The key similarity between university-, college-, and NGO-based teacher educators was their shared emphasis on the significance of cultivating relationships with student teachers. However, each participant explained the nature of this relationship differently based on their unique understanding of the boundaries between their personal lives and professional roles as

teacher educators. In essence, the interviewed teacher educators across the three institutional types stressed that cultivating personalised relationships is essential for tailoring teacher educators' practice and ensuring student teachers' learning.

Taken together, the findings of the present study demonstrated how the interviewed teacher educators engaged with Indian education policies in unique ways given their unique life histories, and the opportunities and constraints of their professional contexts. Notably, the teacher educators drew on their personal views and experiences – rather than the Indian education policies – to explain their understanding of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education. In this light, the present study points to the importance of investigating teacher educators' professional preparation in India, and the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs that respect teacher educators' autonomy while enabling them to translate education policy reform in contextually-meaningful ways. In essence, the present study spotlights the teacher educator as a critical filter through which policy reform is translated into teacher education practice.

Building on the findings, the study makes four key contributions to the field of teacher education in India and internationally. First, it illustrates the analytic value of investigating the different types of education policies to deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher education practice in India. Secondly, it highlights the role of teacher educators in India and other countries for achieving the envisioned aims of quality education by reclaiming the logic of causality in education while respecting its complexity. Thirdly, it dissolves the universal-contextual dichotomy in international teacher education research by positing that understandings of quality education (and preparing teachers for quality education) can be simultaneously relevant across and

within countries and contexts. And finally, by weaving together the findings and attendant insights, the study offers some principles for a reimagined teacher education curriculum for India.

9.2 Implications of the Study

The present study provided a first-hand understanding of the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher education practice in India through the voices of teacher educators. The findings illustrated the diverse ways in which teacher educators explained their engagement with Indian education policies based on their unique personal and professional contexts. Drawing on these findings and their attendant insights, the present study offers several important implications for teacher education policy, practice, and research in India and internationally.

For policymakers in India, the study provides evidence for how to streamline the implementation of policy reform. Despite their agreement with aspects of Indian education policies, the interviewed teacher educators across institutional types drew on their unique views and experiences to explain their understanding of quality education and practice in preparing teachers for quality education. This was reportedly because of the conspicuous lack of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for teacher educators. Building on these findings, the present study points to the importance of facilitating Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs that respect teacher educators' professional autonomy while enabling them to implement policy reform in contextually meaningful ways. Finally, drawing on the teacher educators' consensus emphasis on their self-accountability, this study asserts the need for policymakers – and the education policies they create – to trust

in teacher educators' professional judgement and expertise in preparing teachers for quality education, thereby returning autonomy and accountability to the profession of teacher education.

For teacher education practice in India, the study contributes in three unique ways. First, drawing on the reported differences across institutional types, it recommends the professional formulation of a cohesive teacher education program across universities, colleges, and NGOs. Secondly, building on teacher educators' explanations of the primacy of their personal and professional contexts in explaining their teacher education practice, the study spotlights the importance of engaging with teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs and experiences in their professional preparation and development. Finally, through the rich descriptions of teacher education practice in India, this study provides evidence for teacher educators in India to reflect on their own practice - for example, how it is influenced by their personal views and contexts – and thereby set the basis for creating 'communities of practice' for teacher educators in India (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Patton & Parker, 2017). Taken together, this study establishes a foundation for teacher educators' collaborative reflection and dialogue, and thereby contributes to the wider project of creating a consensus professional knowledge base for teacher education in India

For teacher education research in India, the present study contributes to the nascent studies that represent the voices and experiences of teacher educators in India. It highlights the heterogeneity of teacher educators in India – their life histories, motivations, entry routes, professional trajectories, and diverse contexts of teacher education practice. This serves to complicate – and explain – the complex relationship between Indian education policies and teacher educators' practice. The study also spotlighted the centrality of NGO-based teacher

educators in India, and the role of teacher education NGOs in shaping understandings of quality education and in-service teacher education in India. Notably, the study highlighted how teacher educators in India drew on culturally rooted (e.g., the *guru* tradition) and international aspects (e.g., critical pedagogy) of teacher education to explain their practice. This points to the dissolution of the universal-contextual dichotomy in teacher education by suggesting that preparing teachers for quality education can be simultaneously relevant across and within countries. In all, the study sets the foundation for a reclaimed, consensus professional knowledge base for teacher education in India by articulating teacher educators' views of conceptions of quality education and preparing teachers for quality education.

Though the findings of this study must be tempered by specific methodological considerations (i.e., online interviews) and the sample size, they do suggest important implications for future teacher education research in India. Notably, the findings chapters illustrated the complex ways the interviewed teacher educators drew on their personal, institutional, social, and historical contexts to explain their understanding of quality education and their teacher education practice. For example, just as Dr. Sheojee traced his Krishnamurtian perspectives and practices to his experiences as a teacher in a school run by the Krishnamurti Foundation of India, future research might investigate how a teacher educators' school teaching experience mediates their teacher education practice. Building on how most NGO-based teacher educators drew on their organisation's vision to understand quality education – e.g., foundational literacy and numeracy (Ms. Alex, Ms. Swetha, and Ms. Namratha) or empathy and happiness (Dr. Sreehari) – future research could examine how teacher educators' perspectives are mediated by the organisational contexts in which they are embedded. Taken together, this study highlights the complex ways in which teacher

educators' practice is mediated by a web of interweaving levels, and thus offers meaningful insights for future research to deepen our understanding of teacher education in India.

The significance of investigating the multiple embedded contexts of teacher educators' practice in India can be illustrated through the reported relevance of the *guru* for quality education in 21st-century India. In the interviews, many teacher educators traced their contested explanations of the *guru* model to a unique confluence of contextual factors. For example, Dr. Kaushal drew on his personal resonance with the *guru* tradition to explain that the 'role of the teacher is actually that of the ancient *guru*', whereas Dr. Sudarshan drew on the institutional vision of his university to advocate for the return to the *guru* tradition aimed at 'holistic education' and 'self-realisation'. Conversely, Dr. Lakshmi rejected the relevance of the *guru* by drawing on her college's mission to prepare teachers for critical and decolonial education. A few teacher educators problematised the usefulness of the *guru* tradition by pointing to the social contexts of contemporary India, including Dr. Hans who noted that 'in Modern India, logic is first (ahead of religion)' and Dr. Perveen and Dr. Pari who stressed the implications of low teacher status and salaries. In essence, the findings illustrate how the interviewed teacher educators traced their perspectives and practices to an intricate web of personal, institutional, and social factors. Stemming from these insights, future research might investigate how complex, embedded contexts mediate teacher educators' practice in India.

The present study also highlights the importance of investigating teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs and experiences in India, especially during their professional preparation and development to avoid the potential 'washout effect' of their learning. Furthermore, it points to the need for further investigation into teacher educators' explanations of the complexity,

diversity, and nuances in their teacher education practice. For example, one possible next step to deepen our understanding of the complexity of teacher educators' practice in India could be to create practitioner-generated maps that list and locate the array of personal, institutional, social, and political factors that affect teacher educators' practice (e.g., Ell et al., 2017). These maps can be used to uncover the multidimensional complexity, and unpack the pedagogic decision-making, of teacher educators' practice in India. Furthermore, the study spotlights the critical need to examine the teacher educator-student teacher relationship and its implications for the former's practice and the latter's learning. Future studies could also examine the institutional differences (and similarities) in teacher educators' practices across universities, colleges, and NGOs. Methodologically - building on its limitations - the study proposes the potential for longitudinal, mixed-methods, and multilingual research into teacher education in India (see Section 9.3). In all, the proposed future research could be vital in enabling an evidenced, professional knowledge base for teacher education in India, and the documentation of the diversity of teacher educators' views and practices and its implications for student teachers' learning in India.

Moving beyond India, the present study also contributes to international teacher education research and practice. The study reaffirmed the role of the teacher educator as a critical filter through which Indian education policies are translated into teacher education practice. In itself, this finding is not novel. Studies in several high-income countries (notably, USA, Canada, UK, and Australia) have illustrated the diverse ways teacher educators' engagement with education policies in their teacher education practice is shaped by their personal and professional contexts (e.g., Goltsev et al., 2022; Hamilton, 2021). Given this base, the present study contributes to the emerging evidence base for teacher education in LMIC countries such as India that investigate the complex relationship between policy reform and teacher

education practice. Moreover, by examining the reported interplay between traditional, colonial, and current approaches to teacher education in India, the study highlights the unique ways in which contextual and universal understandings of quality education - and preparing teachers for quality education – can be reconciled in teacher educators' practice. Building on the present study, future research might investigate the underlying principles that unite the profession – and professional knowledge base - of teacher education across the world in locally meaningful ways. Taken together, this study contributes to the scholarship that highlights the role of teacher educators and their practice in achieving the envisioned quality education aims for individual and social transformation. In essence, this study affirms the view that teacher educators' practice can be explained in a way that 'embraces complexity but also reclaims causality' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014, p. 119).

9.3 Limitations of the study

This section notes three important limitations of the present study pertaining to its sample, methods, and language. By reflecting on these limitations and its implications for the findings, the section suggests avenues for future research in teacher education in India.

The present study used a stratified, purposive sample of teacher educators working in universities, colleges, and NGOs. However, the sample did not include school-based teacher educators. This was a practical decision based on the impracticalities of access. There is no central database for school-based teacher educators in India, and creating a snowball sample would have been tedious and time-consuming. In addition, given the self-selected and relatively small sample size (given the size and diversity of India), the findings of the study cannot be statistically generalised to the entire population of teacher educators. However,

through the 'thick description' of the perspectives and reported practices of teacher educators working in diverse settings across the country, this study provides the evidence base for naturalistic generalisations of the relationship between education policy reform and teacher educators' practice. These limitations of the selected sample highlight the need for future research that investigates teacher education practice using a large-scale, stratified random sample of teacher educators that includes school-based teacher educators.

My initial research proposal to investigate teacher educators' perspectives and practices through an eight-month ethnography of a Department of Education at a private university had to be abandoned. This was unavoidable since all higher education institutions remained shut during this period due to the pandemic. Fortunately, the renewed research questions were amenable to modifying the original research design (see Section 4.1). Based on learnings from the pilot study, the refined research questions were aimed at investigating teacher educators' engagement with Indian education policies through their views and experiences, and explanations of their practice and pedagogic reasoning. This required choosing a research design and method that enabled a space where teacher educators could feel free to express themselves and share their stories. In this light, the selection of an in-depth qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews was tailored to investigate the given research questions. However, given that there was no participant observation of their practice, the interviewed teacher educators' explanations must be taken at face value. This means that the teacher educators' responses could have been influenced by several factors including their interpretation of the questions, social desirability bias, and the desire to withhold important (but potentially embarrassing or private) details in the interviews (e.g., Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Kvale, 1994). However, I believe that many of these concerns were initially allayed by my intentional cultivation of rapport and the teacher educators' reported motivations for

participating in the research, and subsequently evidenced by the detailed and candid explanations of their views and practices. Future research might build on these findings by combining in-depth interviews along with ethnographic participant observation to deepen our understanding of teacher educators' pedagogic decision-making in the unique contexts of their work, and thereby contribute to a more accurate and nuanced representation of teacher education practice in India.

The language used for the data collection and analysis – English - played an important role in shaping the research process. In effect, the sample was primarily restricted to teacher educators comfortable with English, and a few teacher educators who asked for the interview to be in Hindi or bilingual (Hindi/English). This means that teacher educators who primarily speak and teach in other Indian languages were potentially excluded. However, though the interviews were predominantly in English, many of the interviewed teacher educators also reported speaking their native local languages. In this sense, the final sample is also implicitly representative of the linguistic diversity among teacher educators. However, I recognise that the data might have been shaped by the language of the interview, and the same questions in another language might have precipitated different responses. Furthermore, only English language research literature and education policies were used to conceptualise and write this thesis. In effect, this primarily monolingual thesis precludes potential insights from the teacher education research from other countries in languages like Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, and French (e.g., Fwu & Hwang, 2016; Hamel & Gouin, 2022; Morelli & Iturbe, 2018; Mugime et al., 2019; Pan & Hung, 2020). Notably, there is little scholarly research on teacher education in Indian vernacular languages. Accordingly, the present study highlights a pressing need for multilingual research in teacher education in India – to highlight the diversity of teacher educators' and their teaching-learning contexts - and translations of the

international academic knowledge base for teacher education to increase their accessibility across countries.

Internationally, research on teacher educators' practice has been criticised for being under-theorised, small-scale qualitative studies (often, self-study) based on relatively small samples (e.g., Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). However, teacher education scholars have defended against criticisms by pointing to the heavy workload of teacher educators, the lack of research funding, and the complexity of evidencing the causality in education (e.g., Hordvik et al., 2020; Russell & Berry, 2014), while also pointing to the invaluable insights that might be drawn from these studies for teacher educators' practice and student teachers' learning. The present study addresses these criticisms by interviewing a sample of 50 teacher educators based in universities, colleges, and NGOs across India, and theorising the findings in relation to the existing teacher education literature. In sum, the stated limitations of the present study – pertaining to its sample, methods, and language - did not preclude answering the research questions, but instead herald new avenues for future teacher education research in India.

9.4 The Story Begins Again

The story of this research project was initially sparked by my experiences as a schoolteacher in Himalayan India (see Section 1.1). I had noticed that my teacher colleagues had diverse views (on the purpose of education) and teaching practices, despite all having the same professional degree. This led me to wonder how a single, policy-mandated teacher education program – the B.Ed. – could prepare teachers with such diverse knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In short, being a schoolteacher led to this DPhil project that investigated how teacher educators engaged with Indian education policies.

The present study demonstrated how the interviewed teacher educators across universities, colleges, and NGOs explained their understanding of quality education and teacher education practice by drawing on their unique views and experiences – rather than Indian education policies. This reported diversity of perspectives and practices casts a spotlight on the professional preparation and development of teacher educators in India, and how these programs engage with teacher educators' pre-existing beliefs and experiences. Through this DPhil project, my research interests have widened. Four years later, I find myself interested in the professional preparation of teachers and teacher educators. And so, the story begins again.

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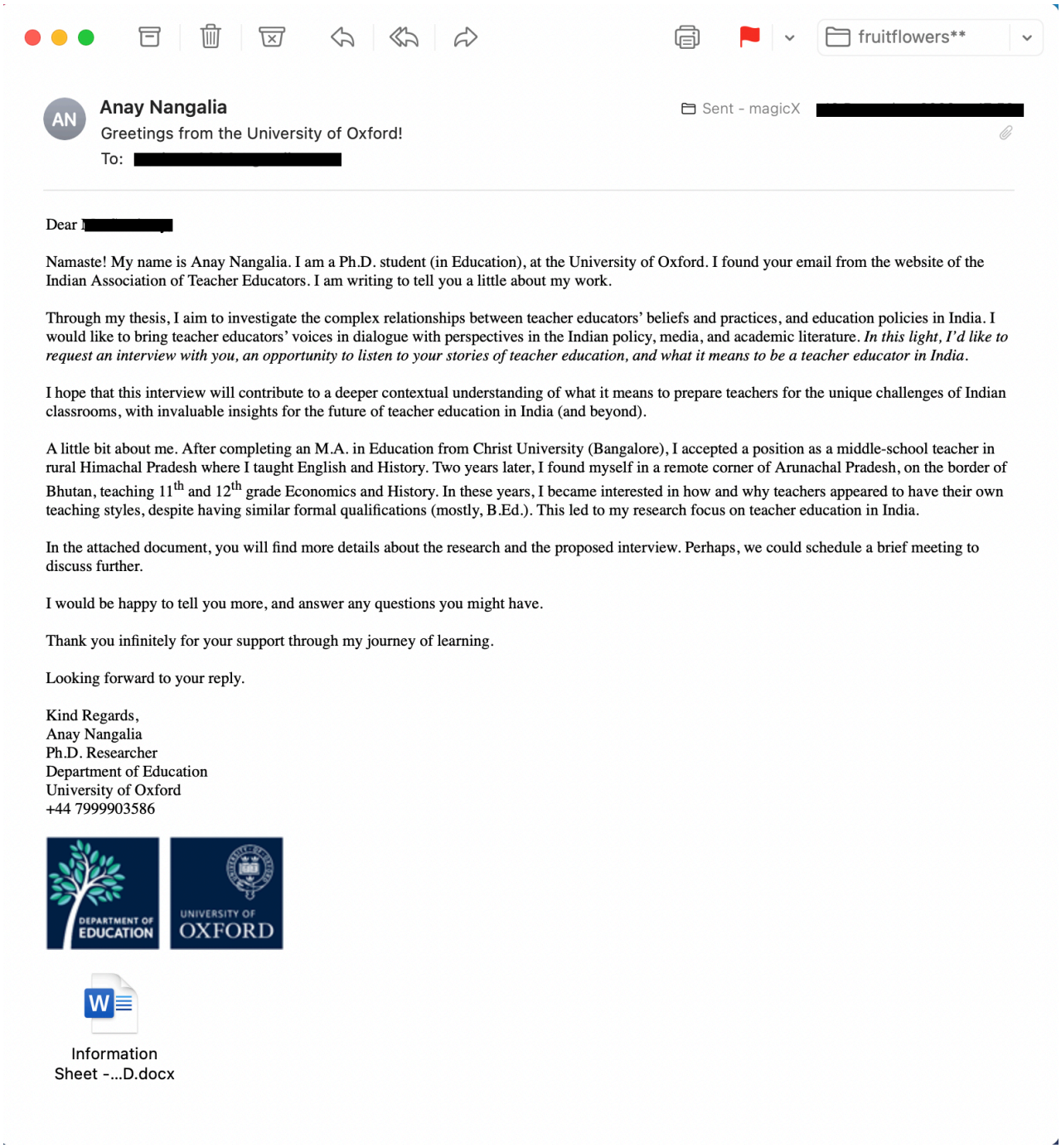
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Invitation letter



fruitflowers**

AN

Anay Nangalia

Greetings from the University of Oxford!

Sent - magicX [redacted]

To: [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Namaste! My name is Anay Nangalia. I am a Ph.D. student (in Education), at the University of Oxford. I found your email from the website of the Indian Association of Teacher Educators. I am writing to tell you a little about my work.

Through my thesis, I aim to investigate the complex relationships between teacher educators' beliefs and practices, and education policies in India. I would like to bring teacher educators' voices in dialogue with perspectives in the Indian policy, media, and academic literature. *In this light, I'd like to request an interview with you, an opportunity to listen to your stories of teacher education, and what it means to be a teacher educator in India*.

I hope that this interview will contribute to a deeper contextual understanding of what it means to prepare teachers for the unique challenges of Indian classrooms, with invaluable insights for the future of teacher education in India (and beyond).

A little bit about me. After completing an M.A. in Education from Christ University (Bangalore), I accepted a position as a middle-school teacher in rural Himachal Pradesh where I taught English and History. Two years later, I found myself in a remote corner of Arunachal Pradesh, on the border of Bhutan, teaching 11th and 12th grade Economics and History. In these years, I became interested in how and why teachers appeared to have their own teaching styles, despite having similar formal qualifications (mostly, B.Ed.). This led to my research focus on teacher education in India.

In the attached document, you will find more details about the research and the proposed interview. Perhaps, we could schedule a brief meeting to discuss further.

I would be happy to tell you more, and answer any questions you might have.

Thank you infinitely for your support through my journey of learning.

Looking forward to your reply.

Kind Regards,
Anay Nangalia
Ph.D. Researcher
Department of Education
University of Oxford
+44 7999903586

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Information Sheet -...D.docx

Appendix B: Information Sheet

Department of Education
University of Oxford,
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44 (0)1865 274027

How do teacher educators interpret notions of quality in/from Indian education policy?

What is this about? I am interested in how you understand the notion of quality in education, and what this means for your teacher education practice. I'd also like to discuss the implications of education policies for teacher education in India. In this light, I wish to invite you to an interview, via Zoom, MS Teams, or Skype. I hope that this interview will help to understand the challenges and opportunities of being a teacher educator in India.

Why am I asking you to be involved? The voices of teacher educators have been marginalised in the Indian policy, media, and academic literature. With this research, I aim to present a fresh perspective on teacher education in India, through the lived experiences of teacher educators. Participation is voluntary. You may also withdraw from the research at any point before the completion of the Ph.D. You can do so by informing me, and without giving a reason.

I would like to audio-record the interviews. This will help to authentically represent your voice and stories in your own words. All names and places will be given *pseudonyms*, which you may choose. I believe this interview could have meaningful benefits for the professional knowledge base of teacher educators in India.

How will the data be used? The data, including my notes and the recordings, will be kept in a locked safe, an encrypted hard drive, or password-protected computer. You may request any data which pertains to you during the research. The data will be published in the form of my Ph.D. thesis, and in academic journals. The final thesis will be stored online, and in print by the University of Oxford. The data will be not be shared with any government agencies, or third-parties.

What if there is a problem? If you have any problems, you can tell me and I will try to solve it within five days. You can also contact my supervisor Nigel Fancourt (details below). If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, you may do so by writing to the Chair, Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford at: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed by the Central University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford. It is deemed to meet the required ethical standards, and received clearance on 3rd July 2019 [ref: ED-C1A-19-213].

Anay Nangalia
Ph.D. Researcher
+44 7999903586

anay.nangalia@education.ox.ac.uk

Professor Nigel Fancourt
Supervisor
Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
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+44 (0) 1865 274024
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Appendix C: Consent Form

Department of Education
University of Oxford,
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44 (0)1865 274027

How do teacher educators interpret notions of quality in/from Indian education policy?
[CUREC Reference: ED-C1A-19-213]

Purpose of Study: This research investigates the complex relationships between education policies, teacher educator's beliefs, and teacher education practices in India.

		Please tick each box
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences.	☐
3	I understand that research data collected during the study may be looked at by designated individuals from the University of Oxford where it is relevant to my taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to access my data.	☐
4	I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.	☐
5	I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	☐
6	I understand how this research will be written up and published.	☐
7	I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	☐
8	I consent to audio recordings of the interview.	☐
9	I understand how the audio recording will be used in research outputs.	☐
10	I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publications using a pseudonym.	☐
11	I agree to take part in the study.	☐

Name _____ Date _____ Signature _____

Appendix D: CUREC Approval

Laura Molway — Inbox - magicX — 2 July 2019 at 21:05
CUREC 1A Ref:ED-C1A-19-213
To: anay.nangalia@education.ox.ac.uk, Cc: Education Research Office, Nigel Fancourt — Details

Dear Anay,

Title: How does teacher education in India shape the ideal teacher?
Ref: ED-C1A-19-213

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

If your research involves participants whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question (this includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults), then it is advisable to read the following NSPCC professional reporting requirements for cases of suspected abuse
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/reporting_child_abuse_wda74908.html

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to research.office@education.ox.ac.uk for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

Yours sincerely,
Laura Molway
Member of DREC

Laura Molway
PGCE Curriculum Tutor & D.Phil Candidate in Education
University of Oxford, Department of Education
Tel: 01865 611008

Please note that Thursdays are my research days and I may not be in my office

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

The purpose of this interview is to listen to your stories of teacher education in India, and what it means to be a teacher educator. Specifically, I am interested in how you understand the notion of quality in education, and what this means for your teacher education practice. Here are some themes and questions that I would like to discuss with you.

Theme 1: Understanding the lived experiences of being a teacher educator

i. Could you describe your journey to becoming a teacher educator? [for example - memories of school and teachers, motivations, and career trajectory]
ii. Can you talk me through a typical class for you? [for example, how do you undertake planning, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reflection?]
iii. Are there any exceptions to this process? [what, when, why, how?]
iv. What do you feel student teachers learn during their B.Ed. program? [What factors might influence student teachers' learning?]
v. What are your favourite memories of being a teacher educator?
vi. What are some challenges and opportunities of being a teacher educator in India?

Theme 2: Exploring perspectives of quality

i. In your own words, could you describe –
   a. Quality in education
   b. Quality education
   c. Quality teacher
   d. Quality teaching

Theme 3: Engaging with the policies

i. How has education policy in India influenced your practice? *Are there any policies in particular that have impacted/shaped your practice?* [For example, NCFTE's (2009) emphasis on critical pedagogy and reflective practice, and the NCTE (2014) Regulations that mandated the shift to a two-year B.Ed.]
ii. From your experience, in what ways are education policies enacted/interpreted by teacher educators?
iii. How do you feel about the new National Education Policy 2020? Is there anything that you strongly agree or disagree with? [*how would you interpret these themes which emerge from the NEP – teaching as a profession, stage-specificity in school education, online education, socio-emotional learning, holistic assessment, teaching mandated morals and ethics*]
iv. In what ways do you feel the NEP 2020 is likely to impact/effect/change teacher education in India? [what could this mean for your teacher education practice, and student teachers' learning in the B.Ed.?]

Theme 4: Dialogue with the NEP

I'd like to present some quotes from the NEP. I am interested in how you might explain, interpret, and respond to the policy.

i. “The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values.” [p. 4-5].

How would you describe the purpose of education?

ii. “The quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, service conditions, and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards.” [Section 5.1]

What are the factors which influence what, and how, student teachers learn in their B.Ed.? How do student teachers’ use their learnings from the B.Ed. once they become teachers?

iii. “Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers that will shape the next generation.” [Section 15.1]

In what ways do schoolteachers ‘shape’ the next generation?

iv. “Ultimately, knowledge is a deep-seated treasure and education helps in its manifestation as the perfection which is already within an individual.” [Section 4.4]

How would you describe ‘knowledge’? [*For example, is it already within an individual, is it external, or some combination?*]

Concluding Note:

Through this research, I wish to present the lived experiences of teacher educators in India. I would be happy if there is anything you would like to add so that I might better understand your beliefs and teacher education practice.

I look forward to speaking with you, and am grateful for your support.

Appendix F: Indicative list of descriptive codes

Interruptions	role of significant other	Curriculum
Technical Difficulties	parent or family	addressing gender inequalities
challenges	teacher	challenges for teacher educator practice
changes over time	teacher educator	changes in practices over time
curriculum	university professor	critical pedagogy
institution management and administration	views about causality	cultivating passion and intrinsic motivation
pedagogy	questioning the logic of causality	addressing student teachers' previous knowledge
privatisation	views about challenges for TE	classroom environment
professional development	infrastructure	preparing teachers as reflective practitioners
role of parents	politics and policy design	preparing teachers for inclusive education
status of teaching profession	privatisation	preparing teachers to teach morals and values
stratification in schools	views about knowledge	impact on schoolteachers and teaching
teachers	people referenced	impact on teacher education
Accountability in Teacher Education	reference to international (countries or practices)	challenges of online teaching-learning
Reference to Individual Accountability	Quality Education	differences between online and face-to-face teacher education
Reference to Institutional Accountability	quality in education	internship and field experiences
Reference to Lack of Accountability	systemic or infrastructural	shift to online teaching-learning
lack of individual accountability	defining a quality teacher	1964 Kothari
lack of institutional accountability	dispositions	1992 Plan of Action
assessment	knowledges	1992 Yashpal
decolonising teacher education in India	related phrases	2002 SSA
motivations	relationship	2005 NCF
pedagogy	assessment	2009 NCFTE
privatisation	opportunities	2009 RTE
qualifications and degrees	potential outcomes	2012 JVC
status of teacher education	work with community (transforming society)	2014 NCTE Regulations

Privatisation in Teacher Education	Anecdotes of Practice	2020 - NEP (Dialogue with)
age	Assessment	chance
choice	experiences as student teacher	influence of institution

Appendix G: Constructed themes

1 - CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE IN THE INTERVIEW
Online Interviewing
Interruptions
Role of Language
Technical Difficulties
The Questioning Process
bilingual
clarification
double barrelled
evolution
explanation
follow up
repetition
rephrase
skipping Q
Researcher
awkward
explaining research
gratitude
mistake
oxford
rapport building
Teacher Educator
interview feedback
professional relationships among teacher educators
Pseudonymising
scam spam
teacher educator support!
Time
tentativeness and qualifying to direct experience
why me

2 - CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' PRACTICE
Context of School Education
challenges
changes over time
curriculum
institution management and administration
pedagogy
privatisation
professional development
role of parents
status of teaching profession
stratification in schools
teachers
Context of Teacher Education
Accountability in Teacher Education
Reference to Individual Accountability
Reference to Institutional Accountability
Reference to Lack of Accountability
lack of individual accountability
lack of institutional accountability
Descriptions of State of Teacher Education
assessment
corruption
decolonising teacher education in India
description
difference between 1 year and 2-year B.Ed.
motivations
pedagogy
privatisation
qualifications and degrees
status of teacher education
student teachers
teacher educator
translation of B.Ed. in schools
Privatisation in Teacher Education

Research and Professional Knowledge Base for research for Teacher Education in India
references to research
Teacher Educators' Personal Context
age
experiences as student teacher
influence of institution
journey
decision making
chance
choice
role of experiences
role of significant other
parent or family
teacher
teacher educator
university professor
routes
directly teacher educator
first schoolteacher, then teacher educator
influence of school teaching on TE practices
school teaching experiences
moving on from teacher educator
Government
NGOs
School
motivations

3 - TE VIEWS ON QUALITY EDUCATION
Contextualising views
views about causality
from policy
from teacher education
questioning the logic of causality
views about challenges for TE
infrastructure
politics and policy design
privatisation
status of teaching as a profession
views about knowledge
Explaining Origins of beliefs
people referenced
reference to international (countries or practices)
theories and books
Metaphors
Quality Education
individual
institutional
quality in education
social
systemic or infrastructural
Quality Teacher
defining a quality teacher
dispositions
knowledges
related phrases
relationship
skills
Quality Teacher Education
assessment
challenges
curriculum
description

need for
opportunities
potential outcomes
work with community (transforming society)
Quality Teacher Educator
dispositions
knowledges
skills
Quality Teaching
assessment
description
learning
pedagogy
relationship

4 - TEACHER EDUCATORS' PRACTICE
Anecdotes of Practice
Favourite Memories
School
Teacher Education
Assessment
Curriculum
content of curriculum
relevance of western theories
subjects taught
theory practice gap
Pedagogy
addressing gender inequalities
challenges for teacher educator practice
changes in practices over time
critical pedagogy
cultivating passion and intrinsic motivation
explaining pedagogy
methods
addressing student teachers' previous knowledge
classroom environment
co-curricular
dialogue and questioning
discussion
engaging with context
examples
games
lecture
LMS
observation
presentation
project
role-modelling
simulation
technology

video
writing and dictation
practices (general)
preparing teachers as reflective practioners
preparing teachers for inclusive education
preparing teachers to teach morals and values
professional development
relationship with student teachers
role in leadership (dean, HoD, principal etc.)
challenges
opportunities
social and community work
Student Teachers
description of personal context
background
changes over time
motivations
previous knowledge
field experiences and internship
changes over time
description
learning after internship and field experiences
recommendations
ST teaching practice in schools
future trajectories
learning
recruitment of student teachers
the teaching job market
The Pandemic
impact on schoolteachers and teaching
impact on teacher education
challenges of online teaching-learning
differences between online and face-to-face teacher education
internship and field experiences
shift to online teaching-learning
The Work of NGOs in Teacher Education

anecdotes
background in-service teachers (professional development)
curriculum design
Description
in-service (student) teacher learning
origins of beliefs
personal journey
practices
role in teacher education
social transformation
teach for india

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5 - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TE PRACTICE AND POLICIES
1948 Radhakrishnan
1964 Kothari
1992 Plan of Action
1992 Yashpal
2002 SSA
2005 NCF
2009 NCFTE
2009 RTE
2012 JVC
2014 NCTE Regulations
2020 - NEP (Dialogue with)
21st Century (Skills or Teacher)
4-year ITEP
curriculum-
desc
good
implementation
implications
less good
arts et al integration
citizenship education
implications for teacher education
relevance or need for
description
description of policy formulation
description of the text
early childhood care and education
implementation
implications for teacher education
need for regulation
pedagogy
experiential learning
foundational literacy numeracy
good

holistic assessment
implementation
challenges
creating awareness
for school education
for teacher education
for teachers
onus of implementation
opportunities
policy practice gap
potential outcomes
professional development of teachers
role of state
inclusive education
multicultural education
multilingualism in school education
implications for teacher education
language and power
multilingual resources
other language
role of english language
role of hindi
nationalism patriotism
description
disagree
good
nuanced
need for increased public expenditure in education
preparing teachers for online education
differences from face to face
need for
professionalism
description
in schools
in teacher education
recommendations

- for school education policy
- for teacher education policy
- recruitment of student teachers
  - national testing agency
  - need for recruitment criteria
- representation of teacher educators' voices in policies
  - no
  - partially
  - yes
- role of community in education
- shift to universities
  - implication for teacher education institutes
  - implications for teacher education as a discipline
  - implications for universities
- socio - emotional
  - description
  - Empathy
  - implementation
  - pedagogy for socio-emotional learning
  - relationship
  - relevance
- stage specificity
  - concerns
  - description
  - emphasis on ECCE
  - good
  - implications for teacher education
- tradition
  - education
  - guru shishya
    - less or not relevant
    - nuanced
    - relevant
- views about future
  - concern

- hope and scope
- mixed feelings
- views about NEP 2020
  - good
  - good but depends on implementation
  - not good
  - nuanced
  - silences
- vocational education
  - in higher education
  - in schools

Implementation of policies in teacher education

Miscellaneous Policies

- Atma Nirbhar Bharath
- BALA
- KVC NVS
- Macaulay's Minute 1835
- NET TET CTET
- NTT

Policies (general)

Policies (list)