

Hiring of permanent teachers in government schools: Effect of ‘Teacher Eligibility Test’

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	3
ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
METHODOLOGY	5
1. TEACHER ELIGIBILITY TEST: AN OVERVIEW	6
2. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES ACROSS DIFFERENT STATES.....	9
3. TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.....	11
3.1 RESTRICTED ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS.....	12
3.2 RECOMMENDATION: DEREGULATING ENTRY BARRIERS.....	13
4. APTITUDE.....	14
5. EFFECT OF TET	18
5.1 NATIONAL STANDARDS.....	18
5.2 PERFORMANCE IN TET.....	18
5.4 IMPLICATION ON TEACHERS: TEACHER’S UNION PERSPECTIVE.....	19
5.3 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS.....	20
5.4 PROLIFERATION OF COACHING INSTITUTES.....	21
6. COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE.....	22
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	23
CONCLUSION.....	24
REFERENCES.....	25
APPENDIX	27

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LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Pattern of TET question paper as per NCTE guidelines
2. Table 2: Matrix depicting recruitment procedure across five states.
3. Table 3: Percentage of students qualifying in CTET since 2011
4. Table 4: Eligibility requirement for taking 'Teacher Eligibility Test'

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TET: Teacher Eligibility Test

CTET: Central Teacher Eligibility Test

NCTE: National Council for Teacher Education

MHRD: Ministry of Human Resource Development

CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education

DSSSB: Delhi Subordinate Service Selection Board

AIPTF: All India Primary Teachers' Federation

NET: National Eligibility Test

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of 'Teacher Eligibility Test' (TET) on the recruitment process of permanent teachers in government schools. Following the implementation of RTE, TET has been described as a step in right direction in portraying government's non-compromising attitude towards quality of government school teacher. In spite of being in force for the past four years, a formal study on the assessment of TET is yet to be concluded. Such a need for comprehensive assessment of TET becomes even more imminent with the revelation of several fallacies in RTE provisions at a policy level. This study briefly examines the genesis of TET, its objectives and how it seeks to fill the gaps in the recruitment procedure by ensuring quality. Through qualitative analysis and semi-structured interviews, it tries to find the benefits and limitations of TET on its various stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of quality teaching to the academic success of students is intuitively obvious to any parent and is well substantiated by a vast body of sound research. Quality teachers are one of the most important school related factors found to facilitate student learning (Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges 2004; Rockoff, 2004). Here the phrase 'quality teachers' refers to those who positively influence student learning as opposed to 'qualified teachers' who have various degrees in teacher education. According to a study by Loeb, Kalogrides and Beteille, more effective schools are able to attract and hire more effective teachers. This implies that in the long run, quality of teachers hired is an important determinant of effectiveness of schools. Hence it is imperative to have a recruitment procedure which facilitates the selection of quality teachers. A step towards this direction was taken with the introduction of 'Teacher Eligibility Test' (TET) as one of the minimum eligibility criteria to apply for a permanent primary or elementary teaching position in government schools. Hailed as a revolutionary step by the government in recruiting quality teachers, the effects of this test are yet to be assessed. Considering the centrality accorded to this test in the recruitment procedure of various states and lack of any comprehensive analysis by the government or any other agency on the benefits and limitations of TET, it becomes extremely important and relevant to conduct a study on this subject.

Therefore the research question of the paper is 'What are the benefits of a standardised test like 'Teacher Eligibility Test' on recruitment of teachers? The hypothesis being that 'Teacher Eligibility Test' leads to better quality teachers in government schools as compared to the past when TET was not implemented. This paper primarily seeks to fill the vacuum of research in assessing the effect of TET on the recruitment process of primary and elementary teachers and address its limitations. This would further help to analyse the loopholes existing in the current recruitment procedure and suggest recommendations on improving the same.

METHODOLOGY

A mixture of primary and secondary research was adopted in course of the research. Through secondary research the past and current recruitment procedure of teachers across five states of Delhi, Haryana, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand was documented in form of a matrix. Secondary research was also used for identifying different aspects of TET ranging from its rationale, eligibility criteria to its structure and pattern. Primary research was then used to identify the problems plaguing the past recruitment procedure and to analyse whether the introduction of TET

addresses those problems. This was followed by a stakeholder analysis to have an in depth understanding of the effect of TET on its various stakeholders. The study primarily uses qualitative analysis wherein semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, officials of education department and officials of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Their responses were analysed to validate the arguments and findings obtained through literature review and stakeholder analysis. The reason for choosing the method of qualitative analysis was because conversational interviews are much more effective in bringing forth different aspects of TET as opposed to quantitative analysis. Also the results of quantitative analysis would not have been very reliable in assessing the effect of TET since it would be based only on the data of four years which is not sufficient to establish any conclusions.

1. TEACHER ELIGIBILITY TEST: AN OVERVIEW

1.1 GENESIS AND RATIONALE OF TET¹

The genesis of TET lays in the implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which requires the recruitment of a large number of teachers across the country in a time bound manner. To ensure recruitment of quality teachers, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) laid down the minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in primary and elementary classes. One of these minimum qualifications is to pass the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) conducted by the appropriate government. While the schools owned and managed by the State Government/ local bodies consider the TET conducted by state government, CTET conducted by CBSE applies only to schools of Central Government, schools under the administrative control of Union Territory and NCT of Delhi².

The rationale³ cited by NCTE for including TET as a minimum qualification for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher:

- It would bring national standards and benchmark of teacher quality in the recruitment process.

¹ Further details regarding Guidelines for TET issued by NCTE can be obtained : [http://www.ncte-india.org/RTE-TET-guidelines\[1\]%20\(latest\).pdf](http://www.ncte-india.org/RTE-TET-guidelines[1]%20(latest).pdf)

² Notification by Directorate of Education published in Delhi Gazette on 7th October 2011 recognises CTET conducted by CBSE for appointment of primary and elementary teachers in schools of Delhi.

³ As per a notification issued by NCTE dated 11th February 2011, three rationales were given for introducing TET. Link: [http://www.ncte-india.org/RTE-TET-guidelines\[1\]%20\(latest\).pdf](http://www.ncte-india.org/RTE-TET-guidelines[1]%20(latest).pdf)

- It would induce teacher education institutions and students from these institutions to further improve their performance standards.
- It would send a positive signal to all stakeholders that the government lays special emphasis on teacher quality.

Hence the objective of TET is to essentially act as a screening process whereby the focus is more on ensuring that those who become eligible to apply as teachers have a basic threshold level of knowledge so that the quality of education imparted does not diminish to low level.

1.2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible⁴ to take TET, it is necessary to have a degree/diploma in education or be on the verge of completing a degree in the year of taking the test. The eligibility condition for giving TET is same as the minimum qualification laid by NCTE to become a teacher. It is also mandatory for teachers to take TET within a period of five years from the time TET is first notified. There is no bar on the number of attempts by an aspiring teacher for obtaining a TET certificate and can appear a second time to improve the score.

1.3 STRUCTURE AND PATTERN

In terms of structure and pattern of TET, there are two separate papers for primary (1-5) and elementary classes (6-8) teachers. A person who intends to be a teacher either for classes 1 to 5 or for classes 6 to 8 will have to appear in both paper 1 and 2. Each paper contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions with compulsory sections on Child Development and Pedagogy, Language 1 and Language 2. Apart from this, Paper 1 contains section on Mathematics and Environmental Science while Paper 2 contains a section testing the specific subject which the teacher intends to teach at elementary level.

⁴ Detailed eligibility criteria for taking TET is mentioned in Table 4 in Appendix.

Paper	Details	Sections:	Questions	Marks
PAPER 1 (For Classes 1-5)	150 MCQs 2.5 hours No negative marking	1. Child development and pedagogy	30	30
		2. Language 1	30	30
		3. Language 2	30	30
		4. Mathematics	30	30
		5.Environmental Studies	30	30
PAPER 2 (For Classes 6-8)	150 MCQs 2.5 hours No negative marking	1. Child development and pedagogy	30	30
		2. Language 1	30	30
		3. Language 2	30	30
		4.		
		a) Mathematics and Science	60	60
b) Social Studies	60	60		
c) For any other teacher, either 4a) or 4b)				

Table 1: Pattern of TET question paper as per NCTE guidelines

The test is conducted both at the Centre level as well as State level. If a state decides not to conduct the test then the schools in that state or union territory will take into account the test conducted by the Central Government. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has entrusted the responsibility of conducting Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Most of the guidelines issued by NCTE are adopted and implemented across all the states in more or less the same form. However states do adapt and change certain provisions such as relaxation in minimum percentage required for qualification for people belonging to reserved categories.

Teacher quality is one of the most important factors influencing student achievement (Rice, 2003). And TET was considered to be an important step in ensuring teacher quality. The primary focus of this paper is to critically analyse all the different aspects of TET and assess if TET has lead to improvement in the quality of teachers hired.

2. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES ACROSS DIFFERENT STATES

The necessity for a uniform, standardised examination across the nation ensuring the selection of qualified teachers was long due considering the poor quality of teachers that were hired in recent decade⁵. Most of the educators and officials reported that the necessity of TET arose from the inability of previous recruitment process to hire good quality teachers. As an official at Directorate of Education, Delhi describes, “Earlier I had seen many cases where people who could not even write their name correctly were selected as teachers in government schools’. This indicates the magnitude of the problem persisting in recruitment process. Not only did the process lack transparency but resulted in recruitment of under qualified teachers.

Education being included in concurrent list falls majorly under the prerogative of state and therefore even though the centre can issue guidelines to direct state policies, it is the state government which has the final say in all matters.

The given matrix highlights the current process of recruitment in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Kerala. The reason for choosing these states was to show the variety of processes employed in recruiting teachers across different states. TET is a mandatory eligibility test in all of these states however other process and criteria for final selection may differ from state to state. In Delhi, the recruitment is made on the basis of the candidate’s performance in a competitive written examination, whereas in some other states like Uttar Pradesh, recruitment is made on the basis of the academic and professional background of the candidate. The merit of each candidate is determined on the basis of their score in the examinations passed in addition to previous teaching experience, if any. In some other states, a combination of the two procedures, i.e. performance in a competitive examination and merit determined on the basis of academic credentials is adopted. Some weightage is also given to the performance of candidates in their interviews like in case of Kerala and Haryana.

⁵ Written test paper for teacher recruitment exam is often leaked and interview marks are manipulated leading to selection of poor quality teachers. Link to some newspaper articles showing this : <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Teacher-recruitment-exam-papers-leaked/articleshow/30960929.cms> and <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/education/punjab-scrap-exams-after-ett-paper-leak/>

STATES	Minimum Requirements	Selection in teacher training course	Teacher Training Course	TET	Final level
UTTAR PRADESH	Graduation (any discipline)	Merit List on basis of percentage in: a) high school b) intermediate c) graduation	Basic Teaching Certificate (2 years) Special BTC for B.Ed Degree holders (6 months)	UP TET	Recruitment
DELHI	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Depending upon college selection is on basis of: a) academic performance OR b) Written test	Primary: Junior Basic Training (2 years) Secondary: Bachelor in Education (B.Ed)	CTET	Written exam by DSSSB
UTTARAKAND	Graduation (any discipline)	BTC Entrance Test	Basic Teaching Certificate (2 years) Para teachers promoted as regular after undergoing BTC course	UTET	Recruitment
HARYANA	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Depends according to teacher training institutions	Bachelor or Diploma in Elementary Education as per NCTE norms	HTET	Interview
KERALA	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Merit List: a) Marks at Intermediate level b) Marks in interview c) Excellence in sports	Teacher Training Certificate (2 years)	KTET	Interview

Table 2: Matrix depicting recruitment procedure across five states.

In spite of the differences in the detailed process, the general framework of recruitment across different states remains fairly the same. Prior to implementation of TET, an individual was only

required to complete a diploma or degree in education to become eligible to apply as a teacher. After this a written test/interview was conducted by the state based on which the final selections were made. The whole premise of this recruitment system was that once individuals acquire some sort of teacher education they have the necessary skills and aptitude⁶ required to be a teacher. However this premise falls flat when we assess the condition of most of the teacher education institutions where no proper training or education of teacher takes place.

3. TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Development of teacher education in India has shown no sustained growth except for quantitative expansion of teacher training colleges in India (Vashishtha, 1979). The proliferation of self-financing institutions for various teacher education courses has raised serious doubts about the teaching and training capacity available in these institutions and quality of courses transacted by them. While a large number of persons are provided degree/diploma in teacher education, it is not certain whether all or most of them have the aptitude, ability and subject knowledge required to become good teachers (MHRD, 2012). The apprehension cited in the Report of MHRD is confirmed from an interview with NCTE official. According to him, these institutes maintain the required standard at the time of obtaining recognition but once recognition is granted they fall back to low standards. Most of these institutes are found employing inexperienced and unqualified faculty and granting degrees without conducting regular classes or practical training sessions⁶. As a result, students passing out of these institutes are ill-equipped in terms of necessary skill and knowledge thus lacking the basic aptitude to become teachers. It is from such pool of applicants that final recruitment of teachers are made explaining the absence of quality teachers in government schools.

Implementation of TET is expected to change this situation as now students are not eligible to become teachers by simply acquiring the degree. They have to qualify a standardised test which is difficult to crack unless students have taken their teacher education courses seriously. Similar opinion was held by other interview subjects including officials of Directorate of Education and few principals of government schools. They emphasized how low pass percentage of students in TET would force the teacher education institutions to improve themselves or face falling enrollment numbers. However some teachers and the director of a coaching institute of CTET cited a different outcome. They claimed that there will be no effect on such institutions as they will continue to perform their job of granting degree without conducting regular classes since obtaining these degrees is still the first step towards acquiring eligibility. To comment on whether TET indeed leads

⁶ Here term aptitude broadly covers Mental Ability, Interest in profession, attitude towards children, adaptability and subject knowledge. Most of these parameters have been taken from 'Teaching Aptitude Test Battery' developed by Singh and Sharma (2011)

to selection of better quality teachers through improvisation of teacher education institutions it is necessary to have a closer look on the literature on teacher education.

The existing literature on teacher quality and teacher education has been widely viewed as inconsistent and inconclusive. The research findings of UNESCO in its Education Policy Series (2006) indicate that teacher education programmes contribute significantly to teacher effectiveness. Similar results were illustrated in other studies. Darling-Hammond presents an elaborate case to support formal teacher education. However Hanushek (1981, 1986, 1996 and 1997) in his meta-analysis of studies examining the impact of several key educational resources on student achievement concluded no systematic relationship of the impact of teacher education courses on student's performance. The more radical studies such as those carried by The Abell Foundation in 2001 and Hess in 2004 argue for deregulation of teacher preparation in favour of more flexible professional requirements. However the evidence through primary research indicates that neither an extreme centralised nor a complete deregulation of teacher requirements is a wise approach for improving teacher quality. All of the interview subjects unanimously emphasized the need for some sort of formal training for prospective teachers. However the point of contention raised by some prospective teachers and educators was the extent of regulation or entry barrier in the form of stringent eligibility conditions imposed for taking TET.

3.1 RESTRICTED ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

The eligibility requirement for TET makes it mandatory to have a degree/diploma in education before taking TET. This policy was enforced with the intention of ensuring that the candidates have relevant teacher education before applying for the eligibility test. However primary and secondary research⁷ reveals the futility of teacher education in most of the places. According to an owner of CTET coaching institute, 90% of the students taking CTET coaching who have bachelors and diploma in education have very little theoretical or practical knowledge regarding the same. The main objective of these students is to somehow obtain the degree and qualify TET to be eligible for a government job. No motivation or passion towards teaching is evident from the lack of interest to attend regular classes of teacher education courses. A systemic problem responsible for low quality of teachers starts right from an individual's decision to choose teaching as a profession. The system sets a low bar for entrance to teacher education institutions. This coupled with the fact that teaching is not considered an attractive profession by the young and bright leads to entry of those students barely having any teaching aptitude. Students need to have only 50% marks in their secondary examinations to get admission in diploma courses on teaching. As described by a high ranking official of NCTE, "These days getting 50% in 12th examinations is equivalent to merely passing and is not difficult to obtain. While most of the top scoring individuals pursue other 'attractive' professions, the ones entering teacher education are mostly from the lower quartile". In

⁷ Newspaper and internet is flooded with advertisement of colleges offering regular B.Ed degree without attending classes. Link of one such advertisement: <http://delhi.click.in/regular-b-ed-degree-program-without-attending-regular-class-c177-v5041463>

other countries like Finland, South Korea and Singapore recruitment of teachers are made from top third of graduating class in high school to attract high quality talent for teaching. (Dhawan, 2014)

3.2 RECOMMENDATION: DEREGULATING ENTRY BARRIERS

One of the ways of addressing this problem is by deregulation entry barriers for taking TET thereby ensuring flexible entry route to teaching profession. In present times only those who have undergone teacher education courses can give TET. This rigid system is based on the assumption that completing teacher education is the only means for preparing teacher. When enquired from NCTE via email as to whether it has conducted any study or research that links completion of teacher education course with better performance of teachers, the answer was no. Such a kind of policy formed merely on the basis of assumption without any evidence or research is bound to fail on some front. The attributes of an effective teacher includes many other features which a large number of ineffective teacher education institutions fails to inculcate (The Abell Foundation, 2001). As the primary research shows, even with the advent of TET it is difficult to improve these institutions whose sole purpose is to grant degrees without taking the trouble of imparting regular classes and training. Therefore it is necessary to reduce the heavy reliance on such institutions and remove the mandatory requirement of having a degree in teacher education to give TET. The only fixed requirement can be a Bachelor's degree in any discipline. This does not imply that individuals would be recruited without any training. Teacher education and training should be given only to those individuals who qualify TET to ensure a pool of quality prospective teachers. In most of the professional courses like journalism and management, entrance is based on the marks obtained in standardised examination and this has contributed effectively in maintaining quality standards.

There is also a pressing need to attract the right individuals to this profession. Significant number of interview subjects listed names of their friends and family members who have deep passion for teaching and are working as successful educators in NGO's or private schools without having any degree in teacher education. A working paper by Harris and Sass (2007) showed that there was no evidence to support that teachers with major in education were more productive than their non-education majors counterpart. This shows the sheer loss of teaching profession from having potentially good teachers because of restrictions imposed via eligibility conditions. This recommendation can therefore have the following positive effects:

1. It will diversify the pool of applicants genuinely interested in entering teaching profession. Anyone from a graduate to professionals working in other fields should be allowed to give TET.
2. TET scores should be used for enrollment in teacher education institutions for maintaining quality standards. This will also ensure that not anyone merely aspiring to have a safe government job without being interested in teaching per se undergoes this professional course.
3. This method of first giving TET and then undergoing teacher training would help in providing effective teacher education and training to the smaller proportion of students who manage to clear the eligibility test.

The same argument is supported by primary research where most interview subjects agreed with the benefits accruing from this change. TET would therefore help in increasing the bar of quality required for entering into teaching profession. However some interviewees felt unsure about whether this change in eligibility pattern will deliver upon its expected benefits.

4. APTITUDE

The whole point of conducting TET is to ensure that 'quality' teachers are recruited. Hence it is essential to understand what constitutes a quality teacher. Different studies have different definitions of quality. While Darling Hammond (2000) equates teacher quality with specific qualifications, Rivin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) identify teacher quality in terms of student performance. An effective or quality teacher is defined as one who has positive impact on student achievement (The Abell Foundation, 2001). However teaching is a complex and most of the research does not capture the interactions among the multiple dimensions of teacher quality (Rice, 2003). Teacher quality broadly covers wide variety of factors ranging from subject knowledge and pedagogical content to verbal ability, communication skills, intellectual curiosity, affinity for children and most importantly a passion for teaching.

4.1 CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PEDAGOGY

The objective behind current pattern of TET was to measure the candidate's subject and pedagogical knowledge. For this purpose both paper 1 and 2 have a compulsory section on 'Child Development and Pedagogy'. Along with this, almost half of the questions in other sections like Mathematics and Environmental Studies also test pedagogical skills. The emphasis laid on such skills in TET was well appreciated by most of the educators interviewed. As per NCTE Guidelines 2011, 'the test items on Child Development and Pedagogy focuses on educational psychology of teaching and learning relevant to the age group of 6-11 years. They will focus on understanding the characteristics and needs of diverse learners, interaction with learners and the attributes and qualities of a good facilitator of learning'. In this regard the interview subjects raise serious doubts over the extent to which this section succeeds in measuring the various aspects mentioned in the guidelines.

Based on a critical review of question paper and response of various educators and officials two key points were noted. It was observed that in spite of NCTE's rhetoric of emphasis on practical, application based questions, many questions were grounded on theoretical framework. Following questions asked in CTET 2014 illustrate this point:

Question: Which of the following is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory?

a) Operant conditioning

- b) Reciprocal teaching
- c) Culture-neutral cognitive development
- d) Insight learning

Question: A teacher says to her class, "As individual assignments are designed to help individual students learn more effectively, all students should complete assignments prescribed without taking any assistance" She is referring to which of the following stages of Kohlberg's moral development?

- a) Conventional Stage 4: Law and Order
- b) Post Conventional Stage 5: Social contract
- c) Pre-Conventional Stage 1: Punishment Avoidance
- d) Pre-Conventional Stage 2: Individualism and exchange

In both questions the major emphasis is on testing student's familiarity with a particular theoretical concept such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory or Kohlberg's moral development. The underlying purpose of such questions according to NCTE is to check whether students have acquired the relevant theoretical background in their teacher education courses. However this purpose stands defeated as students who hadn't seriously taken their teacher education course are able to acquire theoretical knowledge through selective study at coaching institutes. The more effective way would have been to ask application based questions of important theories which tested their understanding of the theory rather than their superficial knowledge.

Second observation was the obvious nature of answers of certain questions through giveaway options. Although NCTE officials claim that it is difficult to crack the child development section unless the candidate has undergone proper teacher education course along with the practical lessons the reality is far from this. Following question is illustrates this observation and is indicative of many questions of this type appearing in the paper.

If a student is consistently getting lower grades in school, her parents can be advised to help her by:

- a) Working in close association with teachers
- b) Withholding mobile phones, movies, comics and extra time for play
- c) Narrating her hardships of life to those who do not possess proper education
- d) Forcing her to work harder at home

Option b, c, d can be struck off by mere application of common sense. Consistent low grades indicate deeper problem which cannot be solved by merely withholding mobile phone or emphasizing the importance of education or forcing the child to work harder. The parent needs to work in close association with the teacher to identify the child's weak areas and work upon it. The whole point of application based or practical questions gets defeated without strong options to judge the candidate's aptitude. This indicates the requirement for a more nuanced, creative and conceptual approach in framing the questions and their subsequent options. Sometimes the framing of questions and their options in English and Hindi was also different and misleading which needs to be addressed in future question papers.

Ideally the purpose of this section should not be to test the knowledge gained during teacher education courses but to assess whether the candidate has the required aptitude to become a quality teacher. This research paper does not claim that all the questions asked in TET are completely based on theory or have giveaway options. There are significant thought provoking questions also which require rigorous analysis to answer. Frequency of such questions should therefore be increased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Greater focus on practical or application based questions.
- Avoiding giveaway options.
- Focus on correct framing of questions in English and Hindi to avoid any confusion.

4.2 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Another common section to paper 1 and 2 is test of proficiency in any two different languages. It assesses the candidate's comprehension and communication skills along with other elements of language including grammar and vocabulary. Recent research has established strong evidence of development of cognitive abilities through frequent and increased exposure to oral and written language. With this understanding in mind, it is claimed that individuals who demonstrate strong verbal ability may or may not turn out to be good teachers, but the odds are considerably more in their favour than for less able individuals. (The Abell Foundation, 2001) This considerably justifies the inclusion of sections testing language proficiency which covers most of the aspects of verbal ability.

4.3 SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE BASED SECTION

Remaining sections in Paper 1 are the ones on Mathematics and Environment Science and in Paper 2 they are the subject specific sections meant for testing subject knowledge. A mere glance through these sections reveals the rudimentary level of questions asked. But this can be justified to an extent considering that it is an eligibility test for elementary teachers. Moreover the fact that

only small percentage of students are able to pass this test in spite of having such basic level questions indicates that the section is serving its purpose of screening the teachers effectively. The pedagogical questions in these sections are also a positive trend but they are also plagued by same problems as the questions in Child Development and Pedagogy.

4.4 OBJECTIVE PATTERN

TET includes Multiple Choice Questions for an objective measure of assessment. Such an objective exam was desperately needed for recruiting teachers considering the innumerable instances of rigging in subjective tests conducted by state bodies. One of the interview subjects had to fight a case for seven years against DSSSB for not being selected in written examination in spite of performing really well. The subsequent investigations revealed that he had been marked less in subjective paper to facilitate the selection of other candidate who had bribed the officials. Hence introduction of a test based on objective rather than subjective pattern involving OMR sheet which is subsequently put up on the website of the body conducting TET is also an extra step in enhancing transparency.

4.5 OTHER ASPECTS OF TEACHER APTITUDE

One of the limitation of standardised tests cited in some studies⁸ is the MCQ pattern which limits the number of parameters that it tests. However this argument does not hold much substance when we evaluate the efficacy of 'Teaching Aptitude Test Battery' developed by Singh and Sharma (2011) in evaluating teaching aptitude. The aptitude test battery⁹ focuses on assessing diverse aspects of teaching through an MCQ format which TET majorly fails to assess. Teaching has multiple dimensions and to assess whether an individual is capable enough to be a teacher, it is not sufficient to just evaluate a person's subject knowledge level. While some important parameters are judged by TET yet many other parameters fail to be included. Professional interest or teacher motivation is one of the most important factor which TET fails to assess. Most of the educators emphasised the lack of passion for teaching as the single biggest factor affecting teacher quality. The director of a CTET coaching institute described the lack of passion among majority of students preparing to be teachers. Attitude towards children, another important necessary trait for a primary or elementary teacher has been measured through MCQ as part of the aptitude test battery. Similarly adaptability of teacher to learning requirement of diverse students, sensitivity towards

⁸ Alfie Kohn (2000) in the paper 'The case against standardized testing: raising the scores, ruining the schools' highlights how standardised tests measure limited parameters of candidates aptitude mostly excluding parameters which are difficult to measure quantitatively.

⁹ But Singh and Sharma 'Aptitude Test Battery' has been successfully administered in DIET institutes Haryana as well as in M.P to assess teacher aptitude through MCQ format.

social inclusion and openness to new and creative ideas of teaching are important aspects that TET completely fails to take into account.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Greater focus on questions testing professional interest, attitude towards children, adaptability towards diverse needs of students, sensitivity towards social inclusion and openness to creativity and innovative methods of teaching.

5. EFFECT OF TET

5.1 NATIONAL STANDARDS

One of the rationale cited by NCTE for introducing TET was to “bring national standards and benchmark in teacher quality in the recruitment process. The diverse selection methods adopted by various states many a times led to selection of below average quality of teachers. Significant number of states relied only on academic qualification and interview process for final recruitment which is highly prone to rigging. In other states where written tests were conducted, they had little or no credibility owing either to low level of questions asked or due to the corruption and manipulation plaguing the process. Almost all the interview subjects told about some corrupt practice which they had witnessed or were subjected to in the course of their recruitment. As a result, an imminent need of the hour was the creation of a test of national standards. If you have a national test, it inevitably suggests there is a national program or a national common denominator generic to the entire nation and that if people can pass this test everything is all right everywhere (Maeroff, 1985). TET as an eligibility test ensures national standards in recruitment of teachers by screening only those individuals whose performance are above the minimum level in a standardised exam conducted across the nation. This in turn also creates a benchmark quality for all teachers to adhere to and excel thus fulfilling the second rationale cited by NCTE for creating TET. The most consistent finding is that quality teachers score higher in standardised tests and on tests of verbal ability (The Abell Foundation, 2001). This indicates that teachers selected through process of standardised tests like TET prove to be more effective. As described by the principal of an MCD school, “There is no reason to question the higher standards created by introduction of TET in ensuring teacher quality.”

5.2 PERFORMANCE IN TET:

The most highlighted argument in media confirming the need for TET is the extremely poor performance of prospective teachers in TET. CTET was first conducted in 2011 and is conducted

twice every year. The following table lists the single digit pass percentage in CTET since 2011¹⁰. This is the situation when the minimum percentage required to qualify is 60% which is not a very ambitious figure.

YEAR	NO. OF CANDIDATES APPEARED	PASS PERCENTAGE
June 2011	11.6 Lac	9%
Jan 2012	7.85 Lac	7%
July 2013	9.2 Lac	11%
Feb 2014	7.5 Lac	1.79%

Table 3: Percentage of students qualifying CTET since 2011

The fact that many prospective teachers fail to qualify TET also indicates the effectiveness of TET in screening teachers. The same individuals who failed to qualify TET could have been teaching in government schools right now had TET not been made a mandatory requirement. Many reasons are responsible for this dismal performance of teachers. Lack of time and familiarity with pattern of question paper was often cited by students as reasons for their failure. However these reasons hold no substance as even after four years and increase of one hour in the examination, no improvement in result has been observed. The more prevalent reason cited during the interviews with education department officials was the poor quality of education and training imparted in majority of teacher training institutions. Failure to qualify in this exam indicates lack of any substantial learning in such degree/diploma courses. However in making this argument the underlying assumption is that quality teaching is a result of two years of training only and previously completed twelve years of schooling has no role to play in shaping of student teachers. Hence the problem runs much deeper than it seems. Even if the teacher education institutes are doing their job, they are not magical factories that'll produce the living encyclopedias in merely two years (Chugh, 2012)! Hence education needs to be seen as a continuous process and greater efforts should be made in improving the level of education in general.

5.4 IMPLICATION ON TEACHERS: TEACHER'S UNION PERSPECTIVE

The dismal performance of prospective teachers in CTET is indicative of the quality of teachers in India. Out of lacs of aspirants, only few thousands are able to qualify TET which is leading to

¹⁰ Except for the year 2013 when the pass percentage was double digit. This was mainly because of increase in time interval of one hour in the examination.

disenchantment of prospective and existing teachers with TET. Though the All India Primary Teacher's Federation (AIPTF) recognises TET as a valuable initiative to ensure teacher quality but S. Eswaran, Secretary General, AIPTF in his paper on TET lists down several negative implications of TET arguing for its immediate scrapping. One of the primary points highlighted was that TET tests only theoretical knowledge about child development thus leading to selection of teachers who may be theoretically sound in their concepts but may not necessarily be effective in classroom teaching. This argument is valid to an extent but is not so strong to support a rollback of TET by negating other significant benefits of TET. Moreover it is not entirely certain as to how by scrapping TET and reverting back to the pre-TET recruitment procedure one can ensure the selection of effective teachers. The solution does not lie in scrapping TET but in improving TET by framing more application and understanding based questions.

A member of teacher union in Kerala in an interview highlighted that TET increases the number of levels a teacher has to go through before being appointed. He described how teachers after completing their 'Teacher Training Certificate' courses still have to go through another process of qualifying TET to prove their eligibility which is completely unrequired. While his argument maybe correct in the context of Kerala where a majority of teacher education institutions are well functioning and churn out better trained teachers, the same argument cannot be applied in most of the other states with large number of dubious teacher education degree holders.

Third argument cites the requirement of about one million teachers being needed in primary and elementary classes while number of students passing TET is very less and would lead to teacher shortages. This problem is a genuine one wherein one might be tempted to trade off quality with quantity but this is not the correct approach towards the problem. A more long term quality sustaining alternative would be to deregulate the entry barrier for TET by making Bachelor's degree in any field the only eligibility requirement for TET. This would attract a greater pool of high quality applicants from other fields who were earlier interested in joining teaching profession but were restricted from doing so due to stringent entry barriers.

Hence the AIPTF fails to make any strong argument that could justify a roll back of TET. The logic behind protest of teacher's union against TET is largely because of conflicting interest of teacher community wherein all teachers now have to go through a quality check before final recruitment. A need for improvisation of TET is imminent but rollback is not the answer.

5.3 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Apart from the significant benefit of improvement in teacher quality entailing from TET, it also eases the administrative process. Prior to TET, Directorate of Education used to receive lacs of

applications which had to be processed and documents had to be verified for conducting written tests. This involved an expensive, inefficient process with significant room for error and corruption. Implementation of TET narrowed down the number of applications to mere thousands which were now dealt much more effectively. As per the education department official, although the expenditure of government in conducting the exams increased but the benefits accruing in terms of efficiency and transparency outweighed this cost.

Corruption in recruitment process of teachers was rampant across different states. It was in a 'Primary Teacher Recruitment Scam' that Om Prakash Chautala, former Chief Minister of Haryana was arrested and proved guilty for changing the list of selected candidates in Haryana with the list of candidates who had paid bribe upto 4 lacs to Chautala. This was possible because the main process of recruitment of teachers in Haryana was through interviews which are relatively easy to rig. Implementation of TET enhances one level of transparency by introducing an objective test. In CTET, CBSE uploads the OMR sheet of all the individuals on their website and has a mechanism in place to address any discrepancy in marks. Although the scope of corruption still exists in the subsequent procedures after TET but the introduction of TET ensures that even to bribe for final selection, an individual has to necessarily qualify TET.

5.4 PROLIFERATION OF COACHING INSTITUTES

Introduction of any new exam is always accompanied by simultaneous proliferation of coaching institutes that help the aspirants in tackling the exam. The same was observed in case of TET also. Many coaching institutes in Delhi had started in 2011 when the first time CTET was conducted. The director of one of the older CTET coaching institute in East Delhi commented that on observing the increased inflow of students to the existing CTET coaching institutes and the potential profit that can be made through this, more than twenty institutes cropped in the same area of East Delhi within half a year. When asked about which section of CTET students found the toughest, the undisputed answer was 'Child Development and Pedagogy'. The same was corroborated with teachers who had given TET. The reason behind this was that in spite of holding a degree or diploma in education most of the students were not familiar even with its basic concepts.

Based on interviews conducted with two owners of prominent coaching institutes in Delhi, two distinct effects of coaching institutes were observed. First effect is where students who have never seriously studied throughout their school and teacher education course rote learn the theoretical aspects of child pedagogy and psychology and learn to tackle the specific types of questions asked in the exam. But this does not necessarily imply that they would be better teachers as they would still lack an in-depth understanding of practical classroom teaching, professional interest, adaptability and right attitude towards children. Most of the students taking coaching classes for

TET are not doing so because they have a deep passion to be a teacher but because teaching offers an attractive pay scale and lifetime job security along with other added benefits. The other effect of TET coaching that is also sometimes observed albeit less frequently is that individuals who are passionate enough to be a teacher but have forgotten their concepts brush up their skills in the coaching classes.

6. COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

TET has been in force for nearly four years which is a short time frame for conducting any rigorous quantitative analysis to assess its effectiveness. Hence qualitative analysis was conducted through interviews with stakeholders. Apart from this it is also necessary to have a comparative analysis of TET with National Eligibility Test (NET) and assess its performance relative to NET.

National Eligibility Test (NET) introduced in early 1990's is one of the compulsory minimum qualifications for appointment as lecturer in university. It basically tests the candidate's teaching ability, subject knowledge, general awareness and general intelligence through an objective format. Necessity of NET arose in 1990's against the backdrop of large scale expansion in field of education which produced herds of graduates and postgraduates without any proper set of skills (Deshpande, 2006). At that stage NET acted as a systemic buffer in regulating and filtering limited students for the employment market. Even in present times, a national criteria like NET is needed as some kind of a check to ensure the quality of teaching in higher education (Krishnakumar, 2000). In a similar manner, quantitative expansion of poor performing teacher education institutions raised the necessity for a national test like TET to maintain minimum standards in teaching at primary level. In spite of continuing as an eligibility test for more than two decades NET continues to be plagued by several problems which hinder its effective implementation.

Several studies and research papers have raised serious doubts on the type of questions asked in NET. Instead of transforming the examination into one that engages students with the wider developments in their respective fields, NET continues to promote appalling and dangerous tendencies (Kannan and Khan, 2014). Many a times the questions are found having grammatical and factual errors. The current NET paradox is that some of the brightest students, many of them engaged in cutting-edge research find it extremely difficult to cross the NET hurdle. While NET-qualified candidates appearing for interviews for teaching positions in college often have difficulty in naming a single decent book pertaining to the subject (Farooqui, 2013). One of the fundamental problems causing such a paradox is that the exam is not designed so as to evaluate a candidate's understanding of the subject. Rather, the questions framed are such that candidates are discouraged from reflecting or debating on various aspects of their subject. As a result of this,

those who engage deeply in the subject are not able to qualify the exam that majorly tests superficial and factual knowledge thus resulting in lowering of quality.

It is not difficult to visualise a similar future of TET if immediate attention is not paid to the type of questions asked and the attributes assessed in the test. More emphasis on theoretical questions and lack of questions testing significant behavioural aspects of prospective teachers would lead to a similar paradox. Neither NET nor TET have completely failed in their objective of maintaining quality but serious efforts for improving the design of questions needs to made before NET or TET is rendered completely ineffective. Although NET was introduced against a similar context and requirement for maintaining quality as TET but somewhere down the road it deviated from its task of selecting the right individuals. Hence TET needs to revamp itself to become more effective as a test or face the same spate of problems in future as NET.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Deregulating entry barriers to TET: Removing of degree/diploma in teacher education courses as mandatory requirement for taking TET and making Bachelor's degree in any discipline as the only eligibility requirement would diversify the pool of applicants genuinely interested in entering teaching profession. A bigger pool of high quality prospective teachers would not only help in addressing the teacher crunch after implementation of RTE without compromising on quality but would also reduce the heavy reliance on dubious teacher education institutions. With no more mandatory requirement of training education degree the institutions granting degree without conducting proper classes and training would no longer be of any use. Either they would be forced to improvise or shut down due to lowering in enrollment of students.
- TET scores should be used for enrollment in teacher education institutions to maintain professional standards. A variety of other professional courses use similar standardised tests for entrance to their training institutions which has proven to be very effective. This method of first giving TET and then undergoing teacher training would help in providing effective teacher education and training to the smaller proportion of students who manage to clear the eligibility test.
- Greater focus should be given to practical or application based questions. The success of an eligibility test lies in screening the right candidates as per the job requirements and this relies heavily on the kind of questions asked. Each question tests a specific aptitude in the candidate. Having more number of theory based questions would therefore lead to

selection of individuals who can rote learn concepts and rejection of those who have a greater understanding and application based approach. Hence it is very important to shift the focus toward application oriented questions especially in Child Development and Pedagogy section.

- Avoiding giveaway options: While it is important to ask the right question it is equally important to give four thought provoking options. Otherwise the purpose of asking a good question gets defeated if the candidate can make out the correct answer out of the four options by mere application of common sense. Also there is a need to focus on correct framing of questions in both English and Hindi to avoid any confusion.
- Greater focus on questions testing behavioural aptitude such as professional interest, attitude towards children, adaptability towards diverse needs of students, sensitivity towards social inclusion and openness to creativity and innovative methods of teaching. These are just some of the defining attributes of a good teacher which TET fails to measure. The major result of this is loss of some of the best teachers who may not be able to qualify TET because it fails to take into account such important parameters. Hence more research and analysis should go into developing teaching aptitude test batteries whose questions can then be included for measurement of these parameters.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring quality teachers has been a subject of large number of studies reflecting its importance in the sphere of education. TET was introduced as an eligibility requirement by NCTE for the purpose of ensuring recruitment of quality teachers. This paper establishes the primary success of TET as an objective and transparent process bringing national standards and efficacy in recruitment of quality teachers. An important conclusion that emerged from the research was that TET served as an effective screening procedure and contributed positively in betterment of recruitment process as compared to the past. The critical analysis highlighted significant room for improvement of TET in terms of deregulating entry barriers by reducing eligibility requirement and including questions on behavioural aspects like professional interest or teacher motivation for better assessment of teaching aptitude. These aspects should be taken into account by NCTE for revision of TET in near future.

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APPENDIX

1. Eligibility criteria for TET
2. Questionnaire for educators: Principal and teachers
3. Questionnaire for NCTE and Directorate of Education officials
4. Questionnaire for coaching institute owners.
5. CTET coaching advertisement

1. TABLE 4: Eligibility Criteria for TET

<p>PAPER 1: PRIMARY (CLASS 1-5)</p>	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	passed or appearing in final year of 2- year Diploma in Elementary Education
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 4- year Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed).
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 2- year Diploma in Education (Special Education)*.
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 2- year Diploma in Education (Special Education)*.
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 45%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 2- year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known), in accordance with the NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure), Regulations, 2002.
		OR
	Graduation	Passed or appearing in final year of two year Diploma in Elementary Education
<p>PAPER 2 SECONDARY (CLASS 6-8)</p>	Graduation	Passed or appearing in final year of 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education
		OR
	Graduation (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in 1-year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed)
		OR
	Graduation (Minimum 45%)	Passed or appearing in 1- year Bachelor in Education (B.Ed), in accordance with the NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedure)
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 4- year Bachelor in Elementary Education (B.El.Ed).
		OR
	Senior Secondary (Minimum 50%)	Passed or appearing in final year of 4- year B.A/B.Sc.Ed or B.A.Ed/B.Sc.Ed.
		OR
	Graduation with at least 50% marks and	Passed or appearing in 1-year B.Ed. (Special Education)*.

1. Questionnaire for educators:

Principal of government school:

- (i) How many teachers in this school are selected through TET?
- (ii) How do the teachers selected through TET fare as compared to previous teachers in terms of subject knowledge and interest in teaching?
- (iii) Is there any improvement in performance of children being taught by TET qualified teachers?
- (iv) Do you think there was any problem with previous method of recruiting teachers?
- (v) What according to you are the reasons for poor performance of students in TET?
- (vi) Do you think that pre service teaching courses are really needed? Why or why not?
- (vii) Do you agree with eligibility requirement of TET?
- (viii) Do you think having a mandatory teacher education course as eligibility requirement dissuade other people from joining this profession?
- (ix) What aspects of teacher aptitude does TET test?
- (x) Does TET result in improvement in teacher quality?

Teachers working in government schools:

- (i) When did you qualify TET and in how many attempts?
- (ii) Out of Paper 1 and 2 which paper did you give?
- (iii) Which was the toughest section for you and why?
- (iv) What was the reason for failure in TET in previous attempts? Was it lack of time, preparation?
- (v) Did you take any coaching for TET? Why? If yes, did it help you in qualifying TET?
- (vi) Do you think a test like TET is needed? Why or why not?
- (vii) Was teaching your first career choice?
- (viii) What aptitude do you think TET measures?
- (ix) How many years of teacher education and training did you undergo?
- (x) Do you think TET will help in improving the quality of teachers in government schools?

2. Questionnaire for NCTE and Directorate of Education officials:

- (i) Why was TET introduced?
- (ii) What aspects of teacher aptitude does it test and why?
- (iii) Does it help in creating national standards?

- (iv) What were the faults with previous recruitment processes which necessitated the introduction of TET?
 - (v) Has TET been able to address those faults?
 - (vi) Has TET led to any improvement in transparency? How?
 - (vii) What was the rationale for the eligibility requirements for TET?
 - (viii) Doesn't having greater eligibility requirement on giving TET dissuade people of other profession or field from joining this profession?
 - (ix) Do you think TET has been successful in achieving its objectives?
 - (x) Is TET being conducted properly in different states? How do different states fare? Any issues or challenges recognized?
 - (xi) Has any study on assessment of TET been conducted by NCTE? Why or why not?
 - (xii) What are the weak areas of TET that can be improved upon?
 - (xiii) Any future policy of NCTE with regard to TET?
3. Questionnaire for owners of CTET coaching institute:
- (i) When did you start the CTET coaching institute?
 - (ii) What type students join your coaching classes? Do they have teacher education degrees?
 - (iii) What is the general knowledge and aptitude level of students taking CTET coaching? Are these students passionate about teaching?
 - (iv) Which section is toughest for your students in general? Why?
 - (v) How do you teach Child Development and Pedagogy? Is it a theory based paper or does a student need to have practical teaching experience to tackle such questions?
 - (vi) Which measure of teaching aptitude CTET fails to assess?
 - (vii) Do you think CTET actually measures teaching aptitude? What are its strengths and limitation?
 - (viii) What has been your coaching's success rate?
 - (ix) Does low pass percentage in CTET increases enrollment in coaching institutes?
 - (x) How much profitable is this venture?
 - (xi) Do you think CTET helps in recruiting better quality teachers?
4. CTET Coaching advertisement pamphlet:

नेशनल एकेडमी ऑफ टीचर्स ट्रेनिंग
भारत की सबसे बड़ी टीचर ट्रेनिंग संस्था ने

CTET 2014
(Central Teacher Eligibility Test)

कि परीक्षा की तैयारी के लिए बैच आरम्भ कर दिये हैं

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- देश भर में सबसे पुरानी विश्वस्तरीय संस्था (1999 से कार्यरत)
- परीक्षा के अनुसार बनाया गया Study Material
- सभी कक्षाएं परिचित अध्यापकों द्वारा ही जाती हैं।
- विद्यार्थियों के लिए समस्त-समय पर मुफ्त सलाहकार।

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