



The Moral Crisis of Teacher Education in India: A Normative Reconstruction Through Rawls, Kant, and Ambedkar

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Abstract:

Within Indian Education, Teacher Education constitutes of fundamental ethical concern as it shapes not just pedagogical competence but also the ethical and communal aspect of society. In the Indian context, declining ethical standards, government failures and exclusion are frequently addressed through policy reforms and nonsupervisory mechanisms. Such approaches remain insufficient without a deeper philosophical explanation. From a philosophical reflection, this paper argues that the crisis of teacher education in India is fundamentally moral in nature. Persistent exclusion, weak responsibility structures and immorally deficient government reflect a deeper normative failure rather than mere administrative shortcomings. Drawing upon normative ethics and political philosophy, particularly the ideas of Kant, Plato, John Rawls and B.R Ambedkar, the study examines ethics, government, and inclusion as interrelated moral categories. It is contended that inclusive education is not a procedural ideal but a normative demand grounded in justice, dignity, and moral responsibility. This paper argues that the genuine reform in Teacher Education requires moral responsibility and reconstruction rather than solely technocratic intervention.

Keywords:-

Teacher education, Inclusion, Exclusion, Ethics, Government, Moral duty, Justice, Fairness, Philosophical Education.



Introduction

Teacher Education plays a vital role in determining both the quality of an educational system and its ethical and social awareness (John Dewey, 1916). Teachers do not serve solely as transmitters of academic content; they play a part in forming values, perspectives, and styles of social sense. As a result, the training of teachers should not be seen as solely a technical or administrative task. It encompasses moral evaluation, normative responsibility, and philosophical contemplation.

In the Indian context, current debates regarding Teacher Education primarily concentrate on regulation, institutional effectiveness, and policy changes (National Council for Teacher Education, 2009). Although these enterprises are important, they do not attack the more profound aspects of the issue. The ongoing drop in credibility, repeated governance failures, and constant trends of rejection indicate that the schoolteacher education crisis cannot be sufficiently understood through procedural or managerial explanations alone. Rather, these difficulties indicate a fundamental ethical misalignment.

This study asserts that the challenges facing Teachers' Education in India are primarily of a moral nature. Ineffective responsibility structures and innocently lacking governance styles directly impact the capability of Teacher Education Institutions to apply inclusive education in any meaningful way. Inclusion, as stated here, must not be limited to adherence to programs or mere numerical representation. It's a normative expectation grounded in justice, equality, and ethical obligation (John Rawls, 1971).

This study engages with normative ethics and political philosophy from Plato, Immanuel Kant, John Rawls, and B.R. Ambedkar, and also conducts a philosophical analysis of ethics, governance, and inclusion to determine the ethical prerequisites essential for redefining teacher education in India.

Teaching and Teacher Education: A Normative Clarification

Teaching is not a value-neutral activity. *Normative ethics* deals with what to do and what not to do (Immanuel Kant, 1785/1993). Classical philosophical traditions constantly regarded education as a moral practice concerned with the cultivation of virtue, rationality, and ethical judgement. Plato viewed teachers as moral guides responsible for shaping the ethical aspect of the moral state (Plato, trans. 2007). Aristotle conceived education as the cultivation of excellence (*aretē*). Within this frame, teacher education assumes a moral responsibility: teacher educators shape teachers, who in turn shape learners.

Kant's moral gospel provides a vital normative foundation for understanding this responsibility. According to Kant, moral action is predicated in duty and respect for *moral law* (Kant, 1785/1993). For him duty for the sake of duty is the moral standards. Teaching, understood in this sense, is not simply an occupation but a duty-bound vocation. Teacher Education Institutions thus carry a categorical obligation to treat prospective teachers as ends in themselves, not simply as means to institutional survival, request demand, or regulatory compliance.

The rising commodification of Teacher Education represents a violation of this ethical principle. When instrumentalization, numerical affairs, or profitability becomes the dominant concern, moral agency is subordinated to instrumental rationality. Analogous reduction undermines the ethical foundations of education and weakens the moral seriousness of teacher preparation.

Government as a Moral Category

The government is constantly discussed in technical terms such as regulation, accreditation, and compliance. From a philosophical viewpoint, still, the government is fundamentally a moral order. It concerns legality, responsibility, trust, and ethical responsibility (John Rawls, 1971). Ethical governance presupposes that institutions honor their responsibility not only to non-supervisory authorities but also to society and to moral reason itself.

The government crisis in Teacher Education reflects institutional moral dis-engagement. Responsibility mechanisms



exist, yet they constantly operate without moral substance. Procedural compliance replaces moral commitment, and regulatory adherence replacements for responsibility. This condition resembles what Hannah Arendt described as ethical thoughtlessness, where wrongdoing arises not from deliberate intent but from the absence of moral reflection (Arendt, 1963/2006). According to Plato, education governed without philosophical wisdom degenerates into moral affection. Present day government failures in Teacher Education are not simply executive inefficiency but a deeper absence of ethical leadership.

Inclusive Education as a Demand of Justice

Inclusive education is commonly framed as an access or representation. Such interpretations are administratively useful but philosophically inadequate. Inclusion in education is not a quantitative category; it is a normative demand arising from justice (John Rawls, 1971).

John Rawls(1971) in his *Theory of Justice as Fairness* provides a powerful framework for understanding inclusion in teacher education. He introduced two principles in his Theory of Justice. First principle: “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty of others.” The second principle has two parts: “(a) the social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and in particular, to the advantage of the least well off person.” “(b) Social economic inequalities are to be arranged under conditions of fair equality of opportunity” (John Rawls, 1971). To him social institutions must ensure fair equality of opportunity, particularly for the least advantaged members of society. Applied to teacher education, this principle requires institutions to address historically produced inequalities rather than merely guaranteeing formal access to inclusive education.

The exclusion of rural learners, first-generation students, women, and socially disadvantaged groups cannot be regarded as accidental. It reflects structural injustice embedded within institutional practices. Inclusion in education must be understood as a process of moral repair aimed at restoring quality, recognition, and equitable participation.

Ambedkar and the Ethical Meaning of Education

B.R. Ambedkar's ideology offers a critical moral perspective on education in the Indian surroundings. According to Ambedkar(1936) “education as the primary tool for liberating the oppressed, arguing it is essential for fostering self- respect, critical thinking and social equality.” He noted three mantras: *Educate, Agitate and Organize*; emphasized education as the foundation for fighting injustice and achieving profitable, social and political empowerment. Education was thick from the struggle for quality, justice, and liberation. It was n't simply a means of social mobility but a moral forceable of challenging settled scales.

Teacher Education that neglects this ethical dimension risks reproducing caste, class, and gender inequalities under the guise of impartiality. As per Ambedkar's point of view, exclusion signifies a failure of moral imagination, the incapability of institutions to honor learners as bearers of equal quality (B. R. Ambedkar, 1936). Ethical governance thus requires active commitment to justice rather than procedural equity.

Ethical Failure and the Reproduction of Injustice

Ethical erosion in government directly contributes to exclusion within teacher education. Institutions lacking moral seriousness are unable to cultivate ethical sensitivity among future teachers. Teachers trained within immorally compromised surroundings are likely to reproduce exclusionary practices within classrooms and communities.

This creates a cycle of moral reproduction. Unjust institutions produce morally unreflective teachers, who in turn perpetuate injustice in society. The extremity of teacher education therefore becomes a broader crisis of ethical continuity.



Conclusion

The crisis of Teacher Education in India is best understood as a crisis of moral vision. Government failures, weakened responsibility, and patient exclusion are connected instantiations of a deeper moral deficiency. In this paper, I argue to establish that 'teacher education is a moral practice before it's the professional training system.' It's a philosophical and ethical enterprise predicated in justice, quality, and responsibility. Without a morally grounded government, inclusion remains representative; without philosophical depth, reform becomes technocratic. A just and inclusive education system is possible only when teacher education institutions are guided by moral argument. The future of education depends not simply on regulation or policy invention but on the moral heart of those institutions entrusted with preparing teachers.

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