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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: ROLE OF POLICY MAKERS & TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS <i>DR. NEENA ANEJA</i>	1
2.	WORK LIFE BALANCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE IN HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY <i>RASHMI FARKIYA &amp; DR. PAWAN PATNI</i>	3
3.	AN ASSESSMENT OF SATISFACTION LEVEL OF TOURISTS IN KANHA NATIONAL PARK <i>DR. ASHOK JHAWAR &amp; SHUBHANGI JAIN</i>	6
4.	BRAND AWARENESS OF HINDUSTAN UNILIVER LTD. AT THIRUTHURAIPOONDI <i>M.KALAIVANI &amp; B. KAYATHIRIBAI</i>	13
5.	SOME EXAMPLES IN USAGE OF PARAMETRIC TESTS <i>SAHANA PRASAD</i>	16
6.	STATUS OF QUALITY PRACTICES IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN PUDUCHERRY STATE <i>K. KANDASAMY &amp; DR. D. ARAVAZHI IRISSAPPANE</i>	19
7.	A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS MOBILE VALUE ADDED SERVICES: A HOLISTIC PERCEPTIVE <i>BGK MURTHY, DR. A. SATISH BABU &amp; DR. B. NAGARAJU</i>	24
8.	SCOPE OF MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK IN CURRENT CENTURY <i>DR. MARIYA T CHEERAN, GEORGE JOSEPH &amp; RENJITH T A</i>	27
9.	LEGAL PROCEDURE AND STATUS OF ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE FOR SERVICE QUALITY IN NOTARY PUBLIC'S OFFICES: IRAN AND FRANCE <i>DR. GHASSEM KHADEM RAZAVI &amp; FATEMEH SHAFIEI</i>	29
10.	PRADHAN MANTRI JAN DHAN YOJANA: PROGRESS IN SIKKIM STATE (INDIA) <i>SANJAYA KUMAR SUBBA</i>	33
11.	LAND ACQUISITION BILL: A LONG AWAITED REFORM TO SPEED UP 'MAKE IN INDIA' INITIATIVE <i>KAVITA KARAN INGALE</i>	36
12.	ONE PERSON COMPANY (OPCS): ANALYSIS OF COMPANIES ACT, 2013 WITH RESPECT TO FORMATION AND OPERATION OF OPCS IN INDIA <i>ANIL KUMAR</i>	38
13.	RURAL MARKETING: AN OVERVIEW <i>P. BHANUPRIYA &amp; D.SUPULAKSHMI</i>	40
14.	A STUDY OF AWARENESS ABOUT LIFE INSURANCE SCHEME AMONG PEOPLE IN KANGRA DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH <i>KEWAL SINGH &amp; SARWAN KUMAR</i>	42
15.	A STUDY TO ANALYSE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRODUCTION OF STEEL AND FERRO ALLOYS IN THE WORLD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA <i>ASHISH V. DONGARE &amp; DR. ANAND MULEY</i>	46
16.	EFFECTS OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE STAFFS OF INSURANCE COMPANIES IN JAFFNA <i>THASIKA YOGESWARAN</i>	49
17.	IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY ON COSMETIC PRODUCTS <i>ASHA T K</i>	55
18.	POTENTIAL CUSTOMER FOR MARUTI SUZUKI SWIFT <i>RAMESHA.R &amp; SANDHYA.P</i>	59
19.	PRIVATE SECTOR, THE ENGINE OF RWANDA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT <i>SYLVIE NIBEZA</i>	62
20.	JOB SATISFACTION AND PROBLEMS FACED BY ANGANWADI WORKERS <i>SHETAL R. BARODIA</i>	69
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	71

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## PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: ROLE OF POLICY MAKERS & TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*To prepare teachers to teach in the context of globalization is the job of teacher education programs, which like the other educational institutions they have been traditionally oriented to their local contexts. "The culture of teacher education is local and therefore has advanced policies that serve the neighborhood institutions but not the needs of future citizens of today's globalized world" (Longview Foundation, 2008), and consequently, "teacher training programs are often among the least internationalized programs. In addition, in India, teacher education already faces a multitude of different pressures. To change this culture is not easy. Any cultural change takes determination, time, and effort. The current political environment of education and teacher education makes the change even more difficult. The increased attention on standardized curriculum and testing in institutions not only has narrowed what they teach (McMurrer, 2007, 2008) but also makes it difficult for teacher education programs to expand their curricula to include courses and experiences needed to prepare globally competent teachers. This paper is an attempt to analyse the factors responsible for bringing the changes and preparing global age teachers.*

### KEYWORDS

globalisation, teacher education, curriculum.

### INTRODUCTION

To prepare teachers to teach in the context of globalization is the job of teacher education programs, which like the other educational institutions they have been traditionally oriented to their local contexts. "The culture of teacher education is local and therefore has advanced policies that serve the neighborhood institutions but not the needs of future citizens of today's globalized world" (Longview Foundation, 2008), and consequently, "teacher training programs are often among the least internationalized programs. In addition, in India, teacher education already faces a multitude of different pressures. To change this culture is not easy. Any cultural change takes determination, time, and effort. The current political environment of education and teacher education makes the change even more difficult. The increased attention on standardized curriculum and testing in institutions not only has narrowed what they teach (McMurrer, 2007, 2008) but also makes it difficult for teacher education programs to expand their curricula to include courses and experiences needed to prepare globally competent teachers. The test-driven accountability movement further pushes teachers and teacher education programs to focus on scores on a few standardized tests for both their students and future teacher candidates, which again makes adding international content an unfavorable suggestion.

The tendency to reduce teachers to bureaucrats or robots to be subordinated to "externally mandated and closely monitored curricula, scripted and timed instruction, merit pay tethered to achievement scores, and public humiliation when students fail to meet the formula for expected progress" (Grumet, 2010, p. 66) forces teacher education programs to pay attention to techniques, skills, standards, and subject matter content, further limiting what future teachers can learn. Moreover, the almost exclusive emphasis on the need for teachers in STEM lures teacher education programs to go after the precious dollars put up by the government while neglecting other subject matters such as foreign languages and international studies. But the imperative to change is clear and immediate. The need for all teachers to be well prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students have been well documented (Garcia et al., 2010); so has the need for globally competent teachers (Longview Foundation, 2008). The number of schools that wish to offer more internationally themed courses in response to public demand is on the rise (CCSSO & Asia Society, 2008). The shortage of foreign language teachers, especially the traditionally less commonly taught languages such as Mandarin Chinese and Arabic, is growing (Asia Society, 2008).

A few visionary teacher education programs have already embarked on the journey to prepare teachers for the global age. In 2008, the Longview Foundation convened a group of education deans, teacher educators, teachers, and global educators to address this question. The report that resulted from the meeting, "Teacher Preparation for the Global Age: The Imperative for Change," gathers the strategies, programs, and practices from teacher education programs that have begun the transformation. Although the activities in which these pioneers have engaged provide excellent examples, we need to have a much more comprehensive, thoughtful, and deliberate plan to prepare our future citizens to successfully live in a world that will become only more globalized in the future.

### SUGGESTIONS

#### POLICY ADVOCACY

The current education policies and priorities are major obstacles to preparing globally competent students and teachers. Thus, the first element of a comprehensive plan for global education is to advocate policy changes. For the sake of students, there is need to emphasize the importance of global education at the national, state, and local levels.

#### CULTURAL REORIENTATION

The second thing the teacher education profession should do is to shift its thinking from serving the local community to the global. We need this shift to create a culture that immerses future teachers in educational experiences that expand their horizons, change their perspectives, and cultivate a positive disposition toward the world. This shift is needed also because preparing the teachers to work possibly in any part of the world, and to serve students from any part of the world, and have teacher candidates from other nations. In addition, research is consumed by teacher professionals from all over the world. Thus, as both practitioners and researchers, there is need to situate our work in the global context and be mindful of its global nature.

#### ARTICULATING EXPECTATIONS

The third element should be a set of explicit and well-articulated expectations for all teacher candidates to become globally competent. Such expectations can serve as a guiding framework for a coherent and systematic experience we can offer future teachers. More importantly, they can serve as goals for future teachers. The Longview Foundation (2008) report provides a list of expectations that can serve as a good starting point.

#### PROGRAM REALIGNMENT

The fourth element is to realign programs to the needs of education in the age of globalization. Although the existing programs may already be overloaded with all mandated courses and experiences, we must think creatively about how to infuse a global element in all experiences we offer our future teachers, for example, internships abroad, service learning in the English learning community or a foreign country (Garcia et al., 2010), and utilizing international graduate students as teaching assistants. A global element can also be integrated in existing courses. In methods courses, for example, international testing and educational practices from other countries can be included. There is another level of program realignment: the preparation of specialized educators for global education. Teacher education programs should expand their scope of preparation. Foreign language teachers, especially those in less commonly taught languages, are in demand. There are other areas that will see a rise in demand as well. For example, a growing number of schools have begun to offer international education programs in the forms of student exchange, online international conferences and collaborations, study abroad programs, and courses focusing on global issues. It is foreseeable that many schools will create positions for those with expertise and preparation in this area. Coordinating and



teaching in these programs require specialized training, which is currently unavailable. Thus, teacher education institutions should anticipate, even proactively create the need and begin developing such programs.

#### COMPREHENSIVE AND COHERENT EXPERIENCES

A comprehensive and coherent curriculum that maps out the courses, experiences, and activities aimed at preparing globally competent teachers. This curriculum should cover all the years of the future teachers' university experiences. Teacher education programs need to work with other units across the campus to devise such a curriculum.

#### GLOBAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Teacher education programs do not stand alone and cannot meet the challenges alone. Three types of partnerships are needed to deliver a comprehensive and coherent global education program: university-wide partnerships, P-12 schools and community partnerships, and international partnerships. Very often on the same campus exist international studies centers, foreign language departments, study abroad offices, and disciplinary departments that have been engaged in global issues; colleges of education can and should work with them to identify courses and experiences related to the development of global understanding and make these courses part of future teachers' learning plans. Teacher education programs can also benefit a great deal by collaborating with schools and communities that have a high concentration of immigrant children and/or a strong interest in global education. These schools and communities can serve as sites for student teaching, service learning, and observation. Developing partnerships with teacher education institutions in other countries is also of tremendous value not only for future teachers but also for developing global competence in the faculty.

#### CONCLUSION

Globalization has already affected our economic, social, and cultural life significantly. The impact of globalization is only going to deepen and the consequences will be more broadly felt. For our children to live successfully and peacefully in this globalized world, we need to help them develop the appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives. This requires a new generation of teachers who are able to act as global citizens, understand the global system, and deliver a globally oriented education. To prepare this new generation of teachers, we need a teacher education system that is globally oriented. In the age of globalization, educational institutions will continue to be operated as local entities; however, they will need to consider themselves as global enterprises because their products (students) will need to function well in the globalized world in terms of competition for opportunities and collaboration with individuals from different cultures. Thus, schools need to adopt a global perspective in deciding what they should offer their students and how they can take advantage of global resources to provide high-quality education. This does not mean that schools should abandon their traditions. Quite the contrary, globalization demands schools to be different and unique so they can prepare students who will be able to discover and create their own niche. The term *glocalization*, which combines *globalization* and *localization*, suggests an excellent framework for the kind of education we need in the 21st century: local but with a global perspective.

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