

Careers in Education

Introduction:

Education is so closely associated with people's lives that every individual in the society holds a view about it. However, one begins to recognize the complexity when we discuss the specific problems facing public education in India such as differential access to schooling, problems of infrastructure, lack of quality teaching, children's learning problems and so on, among others.

Several reforms with different emphases have been formulated to revive the public education system. These have ranged from equitable access to schooling, community involvement, pedagogical reforms, curricular changes, ICT in schools, PPP, teacher development and so on. An explicit need to develop people to address the challenges to education has been recognized for long years now.

Contribution in these areas require capable, knowledgeable, conscientious reflective practitioners and thinkers, who can take up responsibilities ranging from classroom teaching to policy analysis and research in education. This entails a systematized engagement with relevant body of knowledge and experience that brings to fore ideas of quality, quantity and the purpose of education. Such an inquiry forms the crux of any **Master's programme of educational studies**.

Public Education in India

Any improvement in public education in India depends on the people who are working in this system. Several **educational schemes** and projects in India in the last two decades **such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), setting up of District Institutes of Education and the provisions of Right to Education (RTE)** have highlighted important dimensions such as classroom pedagogy, teaching learning materials, assessment, text book writing, and teacher communities.

These experiences have pointed to the need to develop personnel in these areas who have relevant knowledge and experience to make informed decisions to support initiatives on the ground.

Teaching at schools requires a teacher certification qualification such as B.Ed, D.Ed or a B.El.Ed, while teaching at teacher education institutions requires an M.Ed, which is a two-year teacher-educator preparation post-graduate degree.

Opportunities in Education Sector:

There is a false perception in our society that the way to contribute to the education sector is as a teacher. However, **education has many aspects such as curriculum design, policy, issues of access and equity, school management, education of teachers, design of learning materials, assessment and research, that deserve attention and serious study.**

There is a need for specialized personnel to contribute to these various areas and the growing opportunities in the above areas signal that the government institutions are no longer the sole players but have found significant participation from civil society organizations, private organizations, international organizations, independent consultants and researchers. **Examples of non-profit initiatives in the area of education include Digantar, Eklavya, Azim Premji Foundation and others.**

Further, an increasing demand for people in the education sector is evident from the following data:

- ✓ India needs over five lakh teachers in the public schools to fulfill the RTE norms;
- ✓ Over 50% vacancies in the government teacher education institutions;
- ✓ Thousands of NGOs working towards primarily education and health;
- ✓ Rise in the involvement of the corporates through their CSR initiatives.

There is a need for good talent to enter the field of education to develop innovative responses to specific field realities.

Developing Education Experts:

A good education programme attempts to foster **perspective**, knowledge, attitude, ability and experience by offering courses in the areas of curriculum, philosophy and sociology of education, child development, research and policy and programmes. Besides an understanding of educational theory and practice, a good Master's programme also provides opportunities to do **theory-based practicum and field-related projects** that requires conceptual and theoretical clarity, an understanding of grass-root realities and abilities to make decisions and act. This gives graduates of the programme, capabilities to plan independent educational interventions. Finally, a good Master's programme in education should **foster personal qualities** to work in cooperation with others, form humane relationships and have a deep commitment to human wellbeing.

The wide range of themes such as curriculum, pedagogy, text book and teaching learning material development, teacher development, assessment, school management, early childhood

education offered by M.A in education, could be of interest to academic personnel working in the **District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTS)** and other government run institutions of education, who wish to strengthen their knowledge and capabilities in the above mentioned areas. In fact, students who complete their M.A. Education could aspire to these positions.

Employees of NGOs engaged with design and implementation of interventions, those working on policy issues and other areas such teacher development will benefit immensely from these programmes. Those who wish to be researchers or academics in education may join the programmes and later enroll for M.Phil and Ph.D programmes or may join on educational projects in research institutions.

The M.A programmes are an inviting space for teachers who wish to enhance their understanding of teaching-learning processes or aspire to work in other non-teaching areas of education. Those individuals who have a Master's degree in the foundational areas of education such as Philosophy, Sociology, etc., along with a teacher certification and a M.A. Education degree are eligible to teach foundational courses in teacher education colleges.

It is hoped that such programmes develop informed professionals who can confidently respond to the educational situations and work towards ensuring quality in the context of universalization of education, and contribute to a just equitable and a humane society.

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