Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

1.0 Introduction

The education commission (1964-1966) acknowledged that “the destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms”. The National policy on Education (NPE, 1986: 31) highlighted that “the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society, it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”. In India, from time immemorial, teachers have been playing an important role in society. Teachers kindle inspiration, instil knowledge and encourage creativity in students. Teacher training and education prepares teachers for these responsibilities by providing them with knowledge, experience and guidance.

Teacher trainees come to pre-service teacher education with an expectation that by the time they graduate, they will be prepared for the real classroom, equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to enter the teaching profession. Two factors play an important role in making this changeover happen. First, teacher trainees should be provided with opportunities and experiences to gain and nurture the knowledge, skills and understanding required to become an efficient teacher. Second, teacher trainees must meaningfully engage with the opportunities provided for learning and professional development.
Reflective practice has become a crucial operator and an increasingly significant referent in the professional development of teacher trainees. How teacher trainees think and learn from their own practice is one component of pre-service teacher education that earned a lot of attention in educational research. According to Moore, reflective practice is more about “skills needed to reflect constructively upon ongoing experience as a way of developing those skills and knowledge and improving the effectiveness of one’s work” (Moore, 2000: 128).

In research conducted by Hatton and Smith (1995), teacher trainees were asked to reflect on their school-based experiences. The trainees were divided into three groups. The first group was required to write a reflective essay, second group was asked to participate in debrief sessions with a member of staff, trained to prompt reflective thinking, and the third group discussed personal experiences with their peers. Research findings indicated a huge variation in the amount of reflection illustrated in the three activities. Most reflection occurred in peer discussions and the least in the essay. Hatton and Smith concluded that the open context of peer discussion allowed the most reflection to take place, the debrief session with a staff member facilitated some, whereas the assessment context (the essay) had a restricting influence on teachers trainees’ reflection. The use of ‘narratives’ in developing reflection in pre-service teacher education has been restricted to writing, especially in the assessment context. Thus, the argument is that, as noted in the research work taken up by Hatton and Smith, narrative forms of writing like essays, autobiographical writings, journals, diaries etc., could not develop reflective practice among teacher trainees in pre-service teacher education as their
usage has been restricted to writing alone. Shulman (1987: 15) believes that teaching involves comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection and new comprehensions. Reflection enables teachers and teacher trainees to analyze and comprehend their classroom contexts and students’ learning better.

The study is open – ended and exploratory in nature, wherein, it looks into the minutiae of the processes of development of teachers to understand how they learn, mature and transform professionally. In the context of reflective framework, the study examines the awareness of teachers and teacher trainees about reflection and reflective practices, considered essential for their professional growth. The first chapter traces the history of teacher education in general and English in particular, then a report on the origin, growth and organization of second language teacher education (SLTE) is provided. Later, it highlights the issues related to pre-service teacher education. The rationale for the study, assumptions and the objectives of the study are presented towards the end of the chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

Teacher education is a fundamental component of any educational system. It is closely connected with the society and is based on the philosophy, culture and character of a nation. The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is acknowledged worldwide. Teacher education facilitates enhancement of school education by preparing skilled, dedicated and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demands of the system. The role, competence,
functions and preparation of teachers in India have undergone many changes from
time to time. The changing times as well as the requirements of the society have
demanded changes in the ways of teacher preparation. An attempt to sketch the
origin and development of teacher education in India is made in the next section.

1.1.1 Teacher Education in India – Origin and Development

Teacher training in societies all over the world, including India, has developed as a
separate field in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Prior to this period, in all
countries and communities teaching existed as an essential art. Parents and elders
in the family trained youngsters, the art of living inside the home and in the
community. The tribal head, the craftsman and the skilled worker controlled the
imparting of the special skill to individuals with as much honesty, sternness and
devotion. The proof of the worth of such diffusion lay entirely on the merit of the
pupil’s or learner’s use of the skill learnt. The teacher’s recognition came
automatically from the learner’s performance.

in India’, outline the history of teacher education in India, most of the discussion
presented in the section is based on Srivastava & Bose’ book. In Vedic India, the
teacher enjoyed a special status and position. According to Rig-Veda, a teacher
was selected and then educated or trained effectively. The freedom to accept a
disciple rested with the teacher, and a disciple or student had the liberty to choose
his teacher. Oral explanation was one of the important methods of teaching. The
methods used by teachers were followed and adopted by the disciples and handed
over from one generation of teachers to another. Gurukul-centered tradition of the Vedic period was modified and enriched under the influence of Budhistic vihara-based system.

‘Monitoring’ system was popular in India during fourteenth and fifteenth century. Good and experienced teachers identified able students and appointed them as tutors to look after and teach the junior students in their absence. The teachers were respected by the society and their students.

Prior to the arrival of the Britishers in India, the European missionaries first established normal schools and later initiated teacher training institutions.

In June 1826, the first normal school was started under the management, and with the finances, of the British government in Madras. A normal school is a school created to train high school graduates to become teachers. Its purpose was to establish teaching standards or norms, hence its name. Most such schools are now called teachers' colleges; though, in some places the term normal school is still used (Srivastava & Bose, 1973: 2-4).

In the 19th century, various committees were instituted which looked into the system of teacher education. Of them, Wood's Dispatch and Government of India's Resolution on Education Policy of 1904 made substantive recommendations which hold good for the present times too.

**Wood's Dispatch, 1854**

The Wood's Dispatch, an important educational document was released on 19 July, 1854. It is called the most significant document on English education in India. It gave very valuable suggestions for the improvement of the education of
teachers. It suggested that allowances be given to persons who possess teaching skills and who are willing to devote themselves to the profession.

The Dispatch suggests the introduction of pupil teacher system in India and an award or stipend to the pupil teachers and a small payment to the masters of the school they were attached to. On successful completion of the training programme they were to be given certificates and employment.

**Lord Stanley's Dispatch, 1859**

In 1859, Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India, in his Dispatch set forth an inspection of the operation of the 1854 Dispatch. The Dispatch very emphatically stated that the administration should stop procuring teachers from England and that teachers for vernacular schools should be made locally available.

**The Indian Education Commission 1882**

The Indian Education Commission 1882 (The Hunter Commission) recommended that an examination in the principles and practice of teaching be instituted, success in which should thereafter be a condition of permanent employment in any secondary school, government or aided. For graduates, it suggested a short duration course of training. Pedagogical courses became more prominent. This also led to the opening of new teacher training institutions. By 1882 there were 116 training institutions for men and 15 for women.

Thus, by the close of the 19th century some essential aspects in teacher training had been established. Pedagogical courses replaced general education, examinations and certificates in teacher training had been instituted and practical aspects in planning and teaching were given emphasis.
Government of India Resolution on Education Policy, 1904

This is one of the key educational documents which laid down the guidelines for the future educational system. It made important suggestions for the improvement of the teacher-training programme. They were:

The Resolution expressed that if secondary education had to be improved then the teachers must be trained in the art of teaching. Rethinking on the syllabus, improvements in facilities etc. were the results of the Resolution. There were five teacher training colleges in Madras, Kurseong, Allahabad, Lahore and Jubbulpur. Intermediates or graduates could seek admission to these colleges.

The Resolution proposed opening of more training schools. The normal schools were generally residential schools where students with vernacular education came for training and were given stipend. They received general education along with the instruction in the methods of teaching and practice in teaching. The Resolution recommended at least two years course. It suggested courses of training specially suited for teachers of rural schools.

After Independence, the University Education Commission was appointed in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission presented its report in 1949. For improvement of teacher training, it suggested that teacher educators should look at the whole teacher education course from a different angle; that the theory and practice should complement each other; that courses in the theory of education should be flexible and compliant to local circumstances; that the work by professors and lecturers in education should not suffer from separation and lack of inter-university planning.
Various Commissions and Committees like Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Commission (1948), Secondary Education Commission (1953), Kothari Commission (1964-66) appointed by the Central and the State Governments have always emphasized the need for quality teacher education suitable to the needs of the educational system. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) observed that a major factor responsible for educational reconstruction at the secondary stage was teachers’ professional training. In 1964, Kothari Commission was set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari. The Commission observed that a sturdy programme of professional education for teachers was essential for the qualitative improvement of education. The Commission pointed out the weakness of the existing system and suggested ways to improve it. For qualitative development, it recommended subject orientation and introduction of integrated courses of general and professional education. It presented ways to improve the quality of teacher educators. It advised the state governments to prepare a plan for the extension of training facilities.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established in 1961. The NCERT set up four Regional Colleges of Education, one each at Ajmer, Bhubaneswar, Bhopal and Mysore.

The Planning Commission in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) laid stress on teacher education for improving its quality, training more women as teachers and teachers from the tribal communities of India, training science and mathematics teachers for the lower and middle classes and organizing in-service training. It suggested correspondence courses for the training of teachers already
in service. It recommended greater co-ordination between the NCERT and the State Institutes of Education for qualitative development in school education. It also suggested training programmes for teacher educators.

In 1973, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was set up which was to work as a national advisory body for teacher education. The NCTE outlined a curriculum for preparing teachers for the new 10+2 pattern. The new curriculum was task-oriented. The framework envisaged that a teacher should play the role of a leader inside and outside the classroom, initiate action for the transformation of society as an agent of social change and thereby help achieve the goal of national development.

During this period, the National Commission on Teachers (1983) studied, in depth, the problems of teacher education and the status of teachers in the society. The recommendations it made were directed at enhancing the period of training, modification in the selection procedure of teachers, making the pedagogy of teacher education more meaningful leading to enrichment of the theory courses and practical work.

As a statutory body responsible for the coordination and maintenance of standards in teacher education, NCTE issued a Curriculum Framework for quality teacher education in 1998. This was a widespread document which dealt with almost all aspects of teacher education including its context, concerns and the social philosophy of teacher education in Indian society, which is considered to be an amalgamation of unity and diversity, liberty and compulsion, social planning and individual initiative. Its salient features were:
• Increased duration and multiple models of teacher education;
• Updating of theoretical and practical components of teacher education by giving new orientation and adding new inputs to the existing programmes;
• Emphasis on developing professionalism, commitment, competencies and performance skills;
• Optimal utilization of the potentialities of community, university and information and communication technology for preparation of teachers;
• Making provisions for preparation of teachers for the neglected sections of society, and
• Suggesting alternative educational programmes for teachers of gifted children, teachers of senior secondary schools and specialized programme of education for teacher educators.

A major effort to renew school education as well as teacher education towards modernization, contextualization and professionalization has been made in 2005 and 2009 through the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2005), and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) respectively.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) revised the Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education to raise the professional status of teachers; to develop greater commitment to society, their students and their profession; increasing their professional competencies and performance skills, and empowering them to face new challenges.

(http://www.ncte-india.org/curriculumframework/curriculum.htm).
NCTE attained success in its regulatory functions by bringing a vast majority of teacher training institutions under its vigilance. Particularly, commercialization of teacher education has been restricted to a great extent at the cost of a large number of cases pending in the courts and a huge expenditure on account of this. An important decision taken by NCTE was ‘to make Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy a compulsory part of B.Ed. course.’ (NCTE Annual Report, 2000-2001). A landmark achievement was the establishment of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) by the UGC for quality assurance and enhancement of higher education. The establishments of UGC, NCERT, NCTE and NAAC have had significant impact on teacher education.

The NCF 2005 expects a teacher to be the facilitator of students’ learning in a manner that helps them to construct knowledge and meaning utilizing their individual experiences. The whole pedagogical approach of pre-service teacher education, therefore, needs to be re-oriented from ‘traditional behaviourist to constructivist discourses’. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) developed by NCTE tries to ensure that teacher education courses are reoriented to align with the epistemological shift foreseen in the NCF 2005 and develop teachers as facilitators of learning. This framework envisages a two year teacher preparation programme. It is felt that the duration (two years) of teacher preparation will provide sufficient time and opportunity for self-study, reflection and engagement with students, teachers, classrooms and pedagogic activities which are necessary for developing professionalism in teachers.
As revealed in the above discussion, the Indian Government has made efforts to modify and renovate teacher education curriculum to suit the requirements of modern-day educational needs of the society, and to encourage professionalism in practicing teachers through pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

1.1.2 Teacher Education at Present

Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time based on the recommendations of many Committees/Commissions on Education described in the previous section. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, that became operational from 1st April, 2010 has important implications for teacher education in the country. The current goal of the Indian Government is to provide education for all. A lot of planning and resource is being spent for improving the quality of education. With the enforcement of RTE Act, the NCTE estimated that close to 10 lakh teachers would be needed across the country to keep the elementary school system running.

1.2 The status of English in India and teacher education for English teachers

The history of English language education can be tracked to 16th century but English education in India was introduced in the middle of the 19th century. Today, India is, after the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the third largest English ‘using’ country in the world. English, although a foreign language, has now become as much an Indian language as any other.
Traditionally, English was taught through grammar translation method. In the late 1950s, structurally graded syllabus was introduced as a most important innovation into the state systems for teaching English (Prabhu 1987: 10). The role of English in our Educational system has been changing ever since. In 1971, Calcutta university commission emphasized on the importance of the study of English as part of general education in India. The commission considered English essential for higher education in India. In many schools today, English is taught for five to six periods per week, each period lasting 45 to 60 minutes. Explication, dictation and drill continue to be the most common classroom techniques.

Today, to a large extent, English is the medium of instruction in many schools and colleges in India. It is a mandatory subject for all educational institutions in India. The official language commission (1956) recommended teaching English as a ‘language of comprehension’ rather than as a literary language.

The changes in general education had their effect on the training of language teachers also, though there is a lot of difference between the training of language teachers and subject teachers. There are very few training centres, especially, for English teachers in India. The agencies involved in the training of English teachers in India are The English and Foreign Languages University (formerly CIEFL), the Regional Institute of English, the State English Language Institutes and colleges of education.

The English specialized B.Ed programme offered by the institutes mentioned above is in many ways different from the general B.Ed programme. In specialized
B.Ed programmes, English is a compulsory subject, whereas, in general B.Ed programmes, English is an optional subject like any other language such as Telugu, Hindi or Sanskrit. Usually, in general B.Ed programmes, English is taught as methods—2. Be it general B.Ed programme or specialized English B.Ed, there is a need for reflective teachers who have a profound understanding of language learning and the English-multilingual classroom.

Justice J S Verma’s report (2012) on teacher education expressed some important concerns regarding the current teacher training programmes; few related to pre-service teacher education are listed below:

- Problems exist in the preparation of curriculum/modules, which have a top-down approach, in contrast to a needs-based approach

- Institutions where the training is conducted—DIETs, BRCs, etc.—are not adequately operational in terms of infrastructure (classrooms, seating arrangement, hostel facilities, etc.) and resources (library, audio-visual material, learning kits, etc.)

- The short duration of the training has also led to its low effectiveness

The report mentioned the lack of appropriate content and curriculum as a concern with pre-service teacher education, similar to what NCFTE (2010) observed. As discussed earlier, NCTE suggested a two year teacher preparation programme, which provides opportunities to build a revised curriculum, this revision of the curriculum can address the concern raised by the report.
1.3 Teacher Education Content and Curriculum

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) defined teacher education as a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education. NCTE introduced 2 year B.Ed course effective 2015-16 and presented a course structure and laid guidelines to the teacher training institutions to build their curriculum based on the framework designed (Appendix 1.1, p. 198). Curriculum is a plan that describes the aims, goals and objectives of an educational activity. The technique and tools used to achieve the goals defined, become the content. Teacher education includes teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills. The teacher education curriculum consists of courses in content to be taught and in foundational disciplines that most likely contain information about basic processes involved in schooling and teaching, e.g. learning and motivation, social expectations, organizational and administrative arrangements, historical perspectives, and the like. The course of study also includes methods, i.e. specifications and procedures for conducting lessons, and recommendations about how to resolve common problems that teachers face in the classrooms. All the universities in India develop the B.Ed syllabus according to the guidelines laid by NCTE. It proposed 3 curricular areas, foundation of education, curriculum and pedagogy and school internship.
Justice JS Verma’s report (2012) highlighted the following issues related to the pre-service teacher education curriculum content:

- The current teacher education programmes offer ritualistic exposure to fragmented knowledge which is neither linked to the larger aims of education and disciplinary knowledge, nor to the ground realities of the classroom. Needs-based approach is not followed in selecting content for training, thus seems irrelevant to teachers.
- Teacher education programmes do not engage student teachers with the subject knowledge; it only focuses on generic methods of teaching subjects.
- School experience, based on the model of ‘practice teaching’ provides piece meal experience of functioning as a teacher, mainly because teaching is ‘practice’ as a mechanical ‘delivery’ of a given number of lessons, rather that reflective practice.

The report, very categorically, stated that apart from increasing the duration of the programmes, NCTE also needs to incorporate the following curriculum transactions in its recognition norms:

- Teaching portfolios as reading materials for each course, theory and practicum
- Well designed tasks and assignments for practicum courses with the use of case materials
• Well defined assignments that require individual writing as well as group/collaborative work

• Systematic hands-on activities including analysis of text books, curriculum and syllabi, choosing and designing activities for classrooms (p.16).

The suggestions indicate that the 2 years B.Ed programme should aim to develop reflective practitioners. A serious concern as acknowledged by the J S Verma’s committee is the ‘ritualisation’ of a few practices in teacher education – e.g. lesson planning, journal writing. Consequently, the real objective of such practices goes unappreciated. Teacher trainees follow these as a matter of routine during the programme and do not continue these after completion of the course. Thus, it is critical to address this issue, and the gap between theory and practice needs to be bridged. There is a need to develop reflective practice in teacher trainees.

Collier (1999) noted that establishing self-monitoring and self-reflective activities in teacher education can promote the kind of self-awareness that allows teacher trainees to hear and listen to their own voices. Borg (2009) stated that looking at other teachers’ work can also stimulate productive thinking, the basis for reflection. NCTE 2009 avowed that pedagogical knowledge has to constantly undergo adaptation to meet the needs of diverse contexts through critical reflection by the teacher on his/her teaching practices. Teacher education has to build the ability in the teacher to develop knowledge to deal with different contexts based on understanding and analysis of experience and should provide opportunity to trainees for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule.
with teacher-directed activities only. It is important to identify the opportunities available to develop reflective practice in pre-service teacher education and thereby, make use of the opportunities to maximize reflection.

This study looked into details of the processes of development of teachers to understand how they learn, mature and transform professionally. In the context of reflective framework, the study observed how teacher trainees indulge in reflection, considered essential for their professional growth. Their opinions and views towards various reflective practices including narratives are examined.

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of study is to nurture and maximize the opportunities to develop reflective practice in pre-service teacher education.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study attempts to, identify the opportunities available for; and understand the importance of, developing reflective practice in pre-service teacher education.

The objectives of the study therefore are:

- To observe how reflection is facilitated in pre-service teacher education
- To identify the opportunities available to maximize reflection in pre-service teacher education
- Thereby, to see how narratives can be used to maximize the opportunities to develop reflective practice in pre-service teacher education
1.6 Assumptions

The present study is based on the following assumptions:

- There is a need to develop reflective practice in pre-service teacher education
- There are opportunities to develop reflective practice in pre-service teacher education
- The usage of ‘narratives’ in pre-service teacher education has been reduced or restricted to writing.
- Narratives, if used, have greater implications and can develop reflective practice in teacher trainees in pre-service teacher education.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The study is documented in five chapters; each chapter begins with an introduction and ends with an overview. The first chapter, ‘Introduction’ presented the background of the study. The aim, objectives and assumptions of the study were also presented.

The second chapter, ‘Review of Literature’ discusses the theoretical framework of the study wherein theories related to second language teacher education, reflection, reflective practices and narratives are emphasized. The structural and ideological changes in second language teacher education are elaborated, the development of reflection and reflective practices including narratives are discussed. An extensive review of related literature of the study is presented.
The entire research methodology of the present study is described in chapter three, ‘Research Design’. The chapter begins with the rationale for the study; the preliminary study and the findings are presented in the next section. The preliminary sample of the study is described which includes 15 teacher trainees from the English and Foreign Languages University and Osmania University; 9 teachers and 3 teacher educators (who participated in the online focus group discussion). Next, it presents data collection procedures for the main study and afterwards, it describes the tools used in the study. The tools include questionnaires, focus group discussions and informal interviews. It also presents the process of designing tools, their construction and administration, and the process of analysis and interpretation of data.

In chapter four, ‘Data analysis and interpretation’ the data collected through research tools is presented and analyzed. It presents the data gathered through the questionnaires, focus group discussions and informal interviews. The data is analyzed using both statistical and non statistical approaches. Results of the data collected from each of the tools are presented followed by a critical discussion.

The fifth chapter, ‘Discussion and Implications’ summarizes the findings of the study and discusses its implications. This chapter presents an overall critical discussion on the entire research and then, elucidates the significance of the study and acknowledges its limitations. At the end of the chapter, suggestions are made for further research.