Accountability in Teacher Education for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030

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Abstract

A teacher is believed to have a significant role in shaping the future and guiding the younger generation in the right direction. And no doubt, this is the foundation for the prosperity and social advancement of any nation. Thus, we can say that the teacher makes a huge contribution to the development of the person, society, nation, and the entire world. TheNational Education Policy (NEP) 2020, in its recommendations, clearly states that teachers must be enthusiastic, focused, professionally qualified, and equipped to teach students at all levels.However, if the recent research studies in Teacher Education (TE) are examined, it would be noticed that India observes various challenges in teacher education that include designing uniform curricula for teachers, identifying and preparing qualified and qualitative teachers, preparing teachers to cater to the diverse needs of 21st-century learners, changing roles, multi-culturalism, competency-based teaching and assessment, etc. Such hindrance creates a lot of hurdles in bringing quality not only to the TE but also to the entire education system. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which were endorsed by all UN Member States in 2015, provide a shared path forward for peace and prosperity for people and the environment both now and in the future. By reducing poverty and other forms of deprivation among people, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2030) seek to promote global peace and prosperity by improving health, education, the environment, and economic growth. At its heart, 17 goals are decided in a global partnership. If the objectives are carefully followed, it will become clear that all of the goals are achievable provided we have a robust educational system created by qualified human resources.A teacher can make the child understand the concerns of crises like hunger, poverty, discrimination, inequalities, consumption and production, peace, justice, and global climate change.Hence, the author of this paper believes that it is very important to find the linkages between the components of sustainable development and TE.

In this paper, the authorexamined the need and significance of one of the key variables of TE i.e. *'accountability',* and its relevance as a chief component in achieving the goals of SDG, 2030. To accomplish this, the authorexamined over 35 studies that addressed the topic. After a thorough examination and analysis of the published literature, it was discovered that the majority of academic work views accountability more frequently as a moral commitment, responsibility, and community duty. However, now is the moment to examine accountability from a broader angle, considering how it relates to sustainability. Further, this article also highlights various models of accountability that could serve as a roadmap for achieving the SDG 2030 goals. As a submission by the author, this paper advocates to pursue and maintain the process of establishing a democratic voice in educationthat is aligned with global goals. The author promotesthe idea of *'Democratic Accountability'* in TE as one of the ways of achieving sustainability. Democratic Accountability ensures that leaders and institutions are transparent, responsive, and answerable to the people they serve. And in TE, it refers to teacher educators being

open, receptive, and accountable to prospective teachers.So in a way, to achieve the 17 goals of SDG, teacher educators may exercise democratic accountability for making adequate academic preparation, continued professional growth, knowledge of and concern for their students, ethical conduct, active participation in community affairs, communication, involvement in educational and social concerns so on and so forth. Once teacher educators practice it, it will automatically be instilled in the student teachers. Such quality in future teachers will increase the likelihood of a democratic and sustainable environment in school education.The author concludes by arguing that democratic accountability in teacher education is essential for preparing teacher educators and future teachers who can support inclusive, moral, and values-based education, encourage civic engagement and critical thinking and act as change agents within and outside of their communities. Not only this, it also guarantees that the knowledge and abilities of the next generation are prepared to tackle the difficult problems of a sustainable future and harmonize teacher education with democratic ideals.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Sustainable Development, Accountability, Democratic Accountability, Models, and NEP 2020.

Introduction

Learning is fascinating and delightful when the education is of high quality. In Indian culture, a teacher is known as a "guru" and is held in the highest regard by society as they are crucial to the reform of education. Every teacher has a responsibility and duty to shape students into responsible individuals in society. It is rightly quoted in many intellectual works that success can be easily ensured if the teachers are highly educated, academically vibrant, and interested in what they do. Therefore in our social structure, teachers are considered to be the most responsible and accountable members of society. In Indian mythological writings, the prestige of a teacher is explained in length and breadth. Through different Sanskrit shlokas, the Vedas, Puranas, and Bhagavat Gita highlight the dignity of a teacher. While describing the importance of the teacher in the life of a child, one of the shlokas (verse)read:-

अखण्डमण्डलाकारंव्याप्तंयेनचराचरं।
तत्पदंदर्शितंयेनतस्मैश्रीगुरुवेनमः॥

This shloka means:-

Salutations to the great Guru, who has enabled us to comprehend the state that permeates both live and inanimate parts of the cosmos.It conveys the true value of a teacher as well as the significance of a teacher in influencing the future and steering the next generation in the right direction.Since it enables the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next, the teacher is regarded as being at the center of the educational and development process.Additionally, teaching is a profession that contributes to the development of the individual, community, nation, and world, which is the cornerstone of any nation's wealth and socioeconomic advancement.However various research works reported that in the teaching profession, obligations and challenges go hand in hand. Today's teachers are required to uphold the highest standards for academic integrity, emotional maturity, classroom personality, interpersonal skills, and professional devotion and play a variety of roles.This places a lot of expectation on the teacher education system since they must produce skilled teachers who are committed to their jobs.Studies on this subject also reported that teachers are under stress because of a variety of issues including persistent problems and high demands for accountability.It is noticed that the current reactive rather than proactive nature of school culture results in a structure-focused school culture where

external control and safety are valued more highly than collaboration and mutual support.The educational system has been found to promote authoritarian demands and societal control (rules, regulations, and penalties) rather than encouraging self-direction, personal responsibility, intrinsic motivation, and well-being.To reduce such stress and burnout, the preparation process of teachers needs to be taken seriously as it has the biggest impact on the community and advances efforts to improve society.

The recently launched National Education Policy (2020) of India also gives special importance to the teacher preparation process in the document. It explains teacher training in paragraph 15.1 of the policy, which says that the process of preparing teachers involves the practice of teaching under the direction of the most qualified mentors, the growth of varied viewpoints and knowledge, and the formation of attitudes and values. Paragraph 15.2 goes on to discuss the necessity of raising the bar and restoring the system of teacher education's integrity, credibility, efficacy, and high caliber. The academic community must hold conversations about solutions in light of the demands, existing state of affairs, and recommendations for national policy.

In this paper, the author aims to discuss the concern of accountability in the education system and understand the concept of accountability through the study of various models of accountability in the school system. The author also made an effort to examine the implications of accountability in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals, 2030 (SDG, 2030)and Teacher Education

What do we understand by Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development is defined as meeting present needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This involves creating an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for all people on the globe. It also emphasizes the importance of balancing the three main development-related factors: environmental preservation, social inclusion, and economic growth. These elements are all thought to be connected and crucial for the well-being of individuals and communities. Sustainability is a multifaceted concept. Concerns over the preservation of certain habitats and the biological forms that occupy them, the human race, and the quality of life are among the uncertainties surrounding the future of our planet and its natural resources.

Not only this, the question of whether activities and practices can be sustained is also covered by the concept of sustainability. In its broadest sense, sustainability is concerned with the future and what must be done to ensure well-being in it. It has developed into a widespread idea that many educational organizations have adopted as a guiding principle for development. Discussion on sustainability is increasingly being accompanied by an awareness of global interdependence. Significantly, the first two goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 are the eradication of poverty and hunger. These goals serve as an international validation of the necessity for a determined commitment to the preservation of people and the planet.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which were endorsed by all UN Member States in 2015, provide a shared path forward for peace and prosperity for people and the environment both now and in the future. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2030) aim to improve health, education, the environment, and economic growth to promote global peace and prosperity by reducing poverty and other forms of deprivation among people. At its heart, 17 goals are decided in a global partnership.The SDG (2030) aims to improve health, education, environment, and economic growth by reducing poverty

and other deprivations among people for global peace and prosperity. The SDGs emphasizenational and international level challenges in all countries, and distinguish them from their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2015.Though the governments of the member countries of the UN are in charge of making sure their nations achieve the goals' stated targets, by raising the collective awareness of the problems and working for change, a significantcontribution is expected at the individual level too. Further, target 4. C of SDG mentions the need to increase the number of professionally trained passionate, and committed teachers through international cooperation for teacher training, especially for under-developed countries and islands.For this, teacher education must advance and reach the levels of credibility, accountability, and integrity which is necessary to revive the teaching profession's reputation and, consequently, create a viable educational system.People all across the world have faced difficult challenges in the last few years, including trade wars, the climate crisis, and the pandemic that rocked the world. In an unpredictable world, the general population's faith in governments, the accessibility of trustworthy information, and moral leadership have all taken on crucial roles.Therefore, building efficient, responsible, and inclusive institutions at all levels to support inclusive, peaceful societies for sustainable development and to guarantee everyone's access to justice is all time important. Through a range of courses centered on developing ethical principles of leadership and accountability while practicing in the real world, educational institutions have been preparing students for this. As a teacher's critical role in achieving the SDGs is to be cognizant of both their actions and their actions about greater society, teacher education institutions should receive top priority among all educational institutions.Teacher needs to be prepared to take accountability for preparing their students as a Global Citizen where they sense, understand, and respond appropriately to global issues. It is termed as Global Citizenship Education (GCE) by the UN. GCE enables students to understand the complexity of global issues and make connections between the local and the global. To promote teaching and learning about and for the SDGs, it makes use of a variety of participatory teaching and learning techniques, such as discussion and debate, reflection, role-playing, rating exercises, and communities of inquiry.

Now, let us see what is accountability and what role it has in the teachingprofession.

Michael Heim (1995) offers the following working definition of accountability:-

'Accountability is the duty that comes along with a person's power to act. The duty is to exercise authority in a legitimate and trustworthy manner.'

Accountability is ingrained at all social levels and affects people individually as well as in groups and institutions, making it a universal concept. It has many facets, including control, evaluation, and authority. The concept of accountability in education has been taken from the worldviews of technology, corporate management, engineering, and science.The term accountability was first used in the Indian educational context in the National Program of Education (NPE) of 1986, and it has subsequently grown in acceptance within scholarly communities.

Models on Accountability

Many models based on the accountability structure established between local centers of authority and schools have been developed to create social processes (Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Elmore, 2003). According to the Rand Study Report (Stecher & Kirby, 2004), there are four basic models of accountability in particular: market, performance, professional, and bureaucratic.

The Beauracratic Accountability Model: It seeks to regulate the way that students are taught in schoo-

ls, how resources are used (including money), and to develop and follow administrative standards. The principal and teachers are jointly responsible for following these rules and standards and are held accountable for their activities. Upper management establishes the standards for educational procedures. To reduce undesirable behaviors, upper management penalizes school staff members who exhibit the desired behaviors (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Bovens, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1990; O'Day, 2002), and how bureaucratic authority over schools is altered.

The Performance Accountability Model: This time, the results are the main concern for control rather than the instructional methods. Within this framework, the principal and educators bear responsibility for the children's academic development, and upper management sets ambitious targets for the reading, science, and math departments. Standardized evaluations are used by higher management to evaluate student performance and identify the achievement levels of the teaching staff.Then, they commend those who succeed in meeting program standards and criticize those who fail to do so. Additionally, upper management develops teacher-performance contracts that hold instructors accountable for their work and define the educational requirements**.**

The Market Accountability Model: Itsupports the deregulation of state laws and the benefiting of the home and educational environments of students. This model first gives parents and the local school community the power to decide on the teaching program, instruction, spending, and staff, leaving the management of school success in the hands of the empowered parents and community. In addition to being able to transfer their children to a different school of their choosing if they are unhappy with the one they are now attending, parents also have the right to take part in decision-making while their children are still in school. Second, upper management lets the private sector open magnet and charter schools and provide educational services, leaving them unregulated in a free market. Schools are in charge of their own decisions and schedules.

The Professional Accountability Model: The professional accountability approach places more emphasis on enhanced achievement than it does on bureaucracy and rules; schools must have leadership in teaching and decision-making, as well as highly qualified, knowledgeable teachers. Schools prioritize having teachers adhere to a professional teaching standards policy. These requirements are used to establish the attributes that teachers and teacher-preparation programs ought to possess, as well as how to accredit instructors, make career decisions, and evaluate professional conduct and performance. Second, because teachers are the only people with the necessary expertise to make decisions about education, the professional accountability model gives them sole authority and responsibility. Teachers will analyze issues at the school, come up with a solution, present it to the parents and school board for approval, and then put it into action. The most qualified and experienced people at the institution are the teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1985; Hess, 1991; Kuchapski, 2001; Leithwood & Earl, 2000; O'Day, 2002; Ranson, 2003; Bruns, Filmer, & Patronas, 2011;). Teachers claim to have expertise in the areas of school finances, instructional programs, teaching, and learning.

Democratic Accountability in Teacher Education and its importance in bringing Sustainable Development

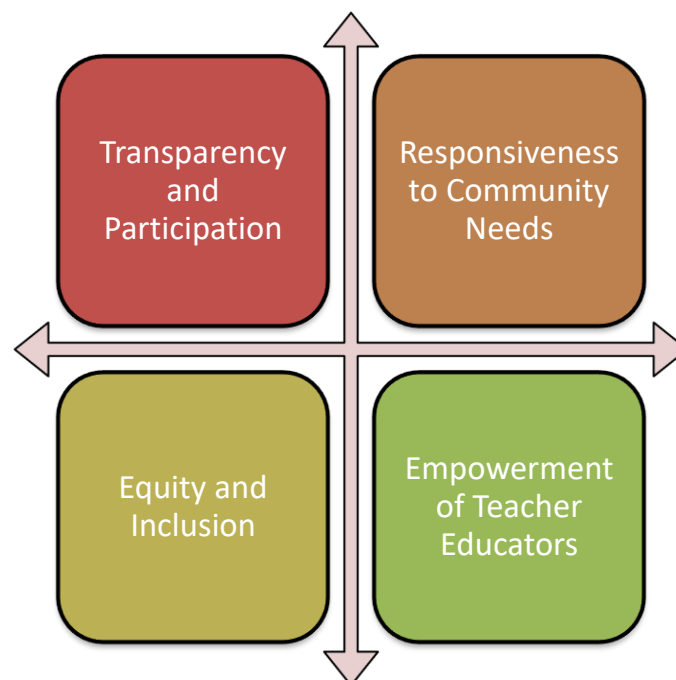*What is Democratic Accountability?*

Democratic accountability in the context of teacher education refers to the duty and openness of institutions, programs, and instructors in preparing aspiring educators for their roles in a democratic society. It entails making certain that the preparation of teachers is in line with democratic ideals,

promotes civic engagement, and gives educators the tools necessary to help students develop similar values. If we delve into democratic accountability further, we'll find that there are several reasons why teacher education should prioritize the relationship between democratic accountability and sustainable development. Some of the crucial elements are promoting inclusive education, civic engagement and critical thinking, ethical behavior, values-based education, encouraging teachers to be change agents, understanding partnerships and community engagement, and engaging in continuous development.Diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunity for all students are highlighted by Democratic Accountability in teacher education. Further, by ensuring that education is accessible to all, teachers trained in these programs are more likely to implement inclusive practices in the classroom, meeting the diverse needs of their students and making a positive impact on sustainable development. Not only this, democratic accountability-focused teacher education programs place a strong emphasis on the value of civic engagement and critical thinking. Teachers trained in these programs are better able to impart these values to their pupils, encouraging informed and engaged citizens who can support sustainable development by participating in civic life and making responsible decisions. Further, thesignificance of ethical behavior and values-based education is highlighted by democratic accountability in teacher education. Educators with training in democratic principles-based curricula are more likely to impart moral values to their pupils, helping them grow up to be environmentally and socially conscious people.

As we see, future generations' attitudes and values are greatly influenced by the teachings they receive, therefore teachers must be prepared to be change agents who can address social and environmental issues in their communities. When they are educated in a system that prioritizes democratic accountability, such agendas can be easily achievable. Democratic accountability also talks about cooperation and partnerships amongst schools, teacher preparation programs, and the larger community. Through community engagement and shared decision-making, this collaborative approach guarantees that teacher education programs are responsive to the needs of local communities, fostering sustainable development. In addition to this, if we examine further, continuous professional development is also part of a dedication to democratic accountability in teacher education. Throughout their careers, educators are urged to stay current on pedagogical practices, educational research, and societal shifts to ensure that they continue to be effective contributors to sustainable development.Hence, to prepare teachers who can support inclusive, moral, and values-based education, encourage civic engagement and critical thinking, and enable them to act as change agents in their communities and beyond, democratic accountability in teacher education is essential. It guarantees that the knowledge and abilities of the next generation are prepared to tackle the difficult problems of a sustainable future and harmonize teacher education with democratic ideals.

To meet quality standards and move closer to the goals of sustainable development, democratic accountability in teacher education is crucial. In teacher education, democratic accountability refers to a system in which decision-making processes are actively participated in by a variety of stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, communities, and legislators, to ensure transparency, responsiveness, and equity in educational outcomes.Democratic accountability improves the efficacy, relevance, and inclusion of teacher preparation initiatives by fostering transparency, participation, equity, and empowerment. Devoted to democratic values, social fairness, and sustainable development principles, efforts to fortify democratic accountability in teacher education must be directed.

Democratic Accountability in Teacher Education

Democratic accountability promotes openness by giving interested parties access to data regarding the procedures, policies, and results of teacher education. Additionally, it encourages active involvement in decision-making processes by giving stakeholders the freedom to share their knowledge and viewpoints. Also, it guarantees that teacher education programs cater to the unique needs, priorities, and cultural settings of varied people by incorporating local communities in educational decision-making. The efficacy and relevance of teacher preparation initiatives are increased by using this responsive strategy. Along with this, democratic accountability works to advance fairness and inclusivity by giving voice to underrepresented groups and promoting laws that lessen barriers to high-quality teacher preparation. Addressing ingrained prejudices and impediments promotes a more fair allocation of educational opportunities and resources. It also provides the right to teachers to influence educational policies and practices that have an immediate impact on their jobs in a democratically accountable system. Their professional autonomy, morale, and dedication to providing high-quality education are all improved by their involvement. Hence, the major significance of democratic accountability can be reflected graphically in the following manner (figure 1.1):-

Figure 1.1: Significance of Democratic Accountability in Teacher Education

However, as more is learned about the prospects and difficulties of implementing democratic accountability in the teacher education system, it becomes clear that removing power imbalances among stakeholders is essential. To promote inclusive participation, strategies for overcoming barriers related to socioeconomic status, language, and culture may need to be developed. Increasing the capacity of stakeholders to engage in democratic accountability mechanisms is also crucial. Through professional development programs, community seminars, and educational campaigns, stakeholders can enhance their knowledge, skills, and confidence, empowering them to constructively participate in the development of teacher education policies and practices. Furthermore, successful democratic accountability depends on maintaining coherence between local decision-making processes and national educational policies. Policymakers must establish conducive conditions that bolster grassroots endeavors

and enable cooperation among national agencies, local administrations, academic establishments, and neighborhood associations.

Conclusion

Literacy, skill development, technical advancement, and the ability to utilize the environment's natural resources for growth are all based on education. However, a variety of problems plague this important domain. Issue areas that demonstrate the subpar performance of the sector include poor quality of school products, ineffective administrative practices, a lack of accountability in the educational system, politicized hiring and appointment of school heads, ineffective supervision, and flawed quality assurance and control mechanisms. Furthermore, the concept of accountability in education is conceptualized differently by various points of view.Establishing accountability in teacher education is essential to meeting quality standards and moving closer to the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Accountability procedures facilitate the development of capable and socially conscious teachers who can effectively assist global efforts toward sustainable development by fostering transparency, equity, and continual improvement. Equity, inclusivity, and sustainability as well as a common commitment to educational excellence must serve as the guiding principles for initiatives to increase accountability in teacher education.The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 will be significantly impacted by teacher education, which is crucial in determining the standard of education. Ensuring accountability in teacher education programs is crucial for accomplishing academic goals and more extensive developmental objectives. The need for accountability in teacher education is discussed in this discussion note, along with how it relates to meeting standards and SDGs by 2030.

According to Hunt (2002), accountability in terms of ethics is the ability or willingness to give relevant stakeholders a justification or explanation for one's choices, intentions, deeds, and omissions when called upon to do so. It entails accepting criticism of one's conduct from others and, when required, taking ownership of errors, hasty decisions, and carelessness in addition to acknowledging and applauding others for their skill, diligence, grandeur, and wisdom.It is observed that imprecise educational goals which make goal attainment and execution challenging and administrators' inability to demand complete leadership responsivenessare a few of the issues with accountability in education. And, failure to do this brings mistrust towards the system. The implementation of results-driven, externally-driven accountability in education has encouraged unwelcome rivalry and eroded confidence. Equity and inequality gaps have not been closed, nor have educational standards been raised (Lingard et al. 2017; Smith 2016; UNESCO 2017). Internal accountability systems that are built on shared accountability and actively involved stakeholders are more likely to result in real educational advancements, including progress toward ambitious educational goals, despite the challenges associated with their development and implementation (Fullan 2011). This article makes the case that an organized democratic voice is a crucial element of successful accountability for which Democratic, Professional, and Performance Accountability Models are well appreciated in the Education system. As these models of accountability provide multi-party discussions in the field of education, hence, their effects are evident. With such models, better-aligned goals andless disjointed accountability are more cogent. Accountability practices become less vulnerable to outside shocks and political whims by establishing platforms for democratic input in educational planning and policy. Hence, it is worthwhile to pursue and maintain the process of establishing a democratic voice in education.

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