



## **TEACHER ELIGIBILITY TEST – ITS IMPLICATIONS**

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The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has introduced Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) with a view to improving the quality of teaching workforce and thereby enhancing pupils' learning outcomes. No one having a Diploma in Education or Bachelor in Education/Elementary Education can become a teacher either in a government or private school without clearing Teacher Eligibility Test with at least 60% marks in the test.

This test is conducted both at the Centre level as well at the State level. If a state decides not to conduct the test, schools in that state or union territory will take into account the test conducted by the Central Government. Validity of the qualifying certificate (TET) is decided by the state government, union territory or the centre, subject to the condition that it cannot be more than 7 years. There is no bar on the number of attempts by an aspiring teacher for obtaining a TET certificate. Moreover, an aspirant can appear a second time to improve the score.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is required to maintain the database, and the repository of experts and resources that are shared with the state governments and UTs. TET has two papers with multiple-choice questions (MCQs). Paper-I is for those who are intending to become teachers for classes I-V. Paper-II is for those aspiring to become teachers for classes-VI to VIII. Those interested to teach from Classes I to VIII are required to clear both the papers. As mentioned above, clearing of TET is mandatory to become a school teacher in a government as well as in a private school at the primary and upper primary level.

In paper-I, candidates are tested on five subjects – Child Development and Pedagogy, Language I (medium or instruction) and language II (chosen from a list other than language I), Mathematics and environmental studies. Paper-II has three compulsory sections on child development, pedagogy, language –I and II. For mathematics and science teachers, there will be 60 MCQs of one mark each. For social studies teachers, there will be 60 MCQs of one mark each.

Though the introduction of Teacher Eligibility Test is a valuable initiative on the part of the Central Government, but it has serious implications for young aspirants, their guardians/parents and the society.

### **Implications**

Some of the implications of the introduction of Teacher Eligibility Test are highlighted below:

- a) Aspirants are tested for having theoretical knowledge about child development, Understanding their characteristics, stages of their development, needs of diverse

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learners and pedagogy – science of teaching children. The TET is based on assumption that those who are strong in theoretical knowledge in respect of above aspects will be able to teach effectively in the classroom. This assumption is erroneous. It is commonly observed that those who have high theoretical knowledge of the above aspects are not necessarily effective teachers in transacting the content in the classroom and to meet the needs diverse learners. Therefore they are not successful teachers. On the contrary, many who have moderate theoretical knowledge are quite effective in teaching and are rated successful teachers. This is because that mastery over the content and the delivery of the content are different skills. Therefore the TET is selecting only those who have good theoretical knowledge of the above aspects and not effective teachers. Therefore the TET is hardly justified on academic grounds because it is not selecting effective teachers. The need of the hour is to select effective teachers who can improve the quality of education.

- b)** An individual spends two years to acquire diploma in education (D.Ed.) after 12 years schooling. Similarly an individual spends one year for acquiring degree in education after bachelor degree. Those who acquire bachelor in elementary education devote four years after 12 years schooling. An individual may spend about a year and so in clearing TET. If he/she fails in clearing the test after one or two attempts, three years of his/her precious years of life are wasted. This is a colossal wastage of human and material resources. After three years, he/she is bewildered as what to do to earn his/her livelihood. He/she suffers from frustration and in some cases from depression. This is not only wastage of an individual's human and material resources but national wastage too. This is because he/she could not contribute towards economic growth of the country for three years. If at all TET has to be there, it should be before an individual is admitted into any college of education. This would avoid national and individual wastage of human and material resources.
- c)** There is a mushroom growth of colleges of education both at the elementary and secondary level particularly in the private sector. A good percentage of these institutions are substandard. Teachers being turned out by these institutions do not acquire requisite knowledge and skills to perform effectively in the classroom. The NCTE is not able to close most of these substandard institutions because these are owned by politicians, business magnates, influential persons, etc. One of the functions of NCTE has been to have manpower planning with respect to teachers in the country. The NCTE has completely failed in this regard. As a consequence, the supply of teachers is outstripping the demand of teachers in the country. This has led to the wastage of human and material resources in the country.
- d)** About one million teachers are needed in primary and upper primary schools. This includes the teaching positions as a result of implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009. Presently the result of TET at the central level is below 10 per cent. The result of Teacher Eligibility Test during 2012 was 7 per cent. This reflects that the quality of teachers being turned out by colleges of education is not up to the mark. The experiences being provided to them in colleges of education are woefully inadequate. The quality of the teaching practice

programme in most of the colleges of education particularly those which are in the private sector, is abysmally poor. As a consequence, teachers being turned out by colleges of education can hardly do justice to their professional duties particularly teaching. If this state of affairs continues, it is very difficult to predict as to when all the 1 million positions will be filled-up. Rather teachers' shortage would further increase.

- e) Teaching is still not a very lucrative profession. Every student after 12 years schooling either wants to join a medical or engineering college. Students also want to become scientists or chartered accountant. This is because these professions are very well paying. Some students those who are not able to join medical/engineering college etc., want to become teachers. Even with improved pay scales of teachers, teaching is not a very paying profession. However, many good students are now joining teaching profession because of slightly better pay scales. Once they come to know that there is Teacher Eligibility Test after acquiring the professional qualification, they are to clear TET to become a teacher. They would start thinking that they may or may not be able to clear the TET. If they fail to clear it, they will be wasting 3 to 4 precious years of their life. This is sure to have a dampening effect on them. In this way, many promising students may leave the idea of becoming a teacher. The professional will therefore be deprived of the talented individuals. This would in-turn affect adversely the quality of education.
- f) The introduction of TET is likely to lead to corruption. Though it is purely an objective test but still lure of money may encourage concerned officials to help the aspiring candidates in one way or the other. Even it is not possible to rule out the political intervention in this regard. We have already witnessed a problem in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This may occur in other state too.
- g) The mushroom growth of colleges of education due to opening the field of teacher education to private players is helping only the entrepreneurs. They are minting money out of this venture. Many prospective teachers would be losing precious years of their life. Parents will be losing a lot of financial resources when their wards are not able to clear Teacher Eligibility Test.

In the light of the situation highlighted above, it can be concluded that Teacher Eligibility Test after the prospective teachers acquire the professional diploma/degree in education will have devastating effect on those who are not able to clear it. This would be pushing these prospective teachers to frustration and to some to depression. The Government of India needs to reconsider the implementation this test to save the prospective teachers from frustration and depression. Their parents would curse themselves for taking a decision that their wards should go for teacher education. The TET is also acting as a road block to fill-up vacant positions of teachers for the elementary stage. This is resulting as severe hindrance to achieve quality education for all by 2015. It is, therefore requested that the Government should scrap the scheme forthwith.