

# Teacher education in India: Some Policy issues and Challenges

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## ABSTRACT

*Education is the key for development of any nation and it depends on the quality of teachers. Knowledge, dedication, quality, professional commitment and motivation of teachers are the factors responsible for quality education and learner achievement. Producing such teachers is a major challenge for governments across the globe today. With the ever increasing amount of knowledge today, teacher's job has been more challenging in the light of new pedagogical and psychological theories, philosophy, sociology and globalization. Well planned and imaginative Teacher education programmes are required today. Teacher education programme has to be critiqued, studied, reformed, rethought and reoriented today. Improvement in teacher education is a 3 dimensional task-*

*It's a challenge for every nation to provide well prepared and effective teachers; it is an area of concern for degrading values and questions about purpose and goals of education for society; and it is a research problem involving educational issues, concerns, questions and conditions. In India, during the quest of this reforming and restructuring and in the light of various policy papers and documents like- Kothari commission report (1964-66), Acharya Rammurti Samiti Report (1990), NCF (2005), National knowledge commission report, NCTE regulations 2009, Right to education act 2009, NCTEF (2010) etc., the Teacher education curriculum and regulations have witnessed a paradigm shift in recent years. However some of the problems have also been there like updated curriculum, duration and quality of internship, in-service teacher education, lack of practical aspects and teacher education through distance mode are debatable issues. This paper deals with some policies, problems and proposed suggestions for teacher education.*

**Keyword:** Education, Teacher Education, Issues, Challenges

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that teachers have a pivotal role in the development of an inclusive education system. Highly motivated, qualified, and trained teachers are important factor for ensuring meaningful access to education. [1] Teacher education is the process for the development of proficiency and competence of teachers which in turn enable and empower them for meeting the requirements and challenges of the profession in present times. Goods Dictionary of Education explains- 'Teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.'

W.H. Kilpatrick specified teacher training by stating that 'Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.'

Clinton stated in his Call for Action for American Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1996) that, "Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation and training". [2]

This indicates the importance of preparing good teachers. A good teacher education system is a major requirement of any nation for its progress. Teacher quality is the most important factor of school education. UNESCO-ILO stated that "Teacher quality is an important consideration in student achievement, and although

defined differently by different people, it continues to be a central concern of those responsible for teacher education. Quality teachers are products of quality teacher education programs, policies and practices.” [3]

India has the world’s third largest educational system and is among the largest systems of teacher education in the world. The educational expansion, universalization of elementary education, vocationalization of secondary education, higher and professional education and quality concerns of education are major drivers for the increased demand and need of good teachers, in such conditions, there is a big need to produce good teachers and today it is on the top of global agenda.

Recently Universalization of Elementary Education, and implementation of RTE coupled with sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have produced a huge requirement of teachers and to meet this new challenge, our country should be able to supply good teachers in large numbers. Today new innovations and experiments are being tried out inside as well as outside the classroom that includes project based learning, development of thinking skills, and discovery learning approaches. Many teachers are not perfectly familiar in implementing the concepts of new curriculum and many are not equipped to properly implement the curriculum. So it is necessary to define the professional qualifications and skills needed for a good teacher and inculcate them within prospective teachers. [4]

These qualities which make good teachers were summarised by Arthur et al, in a survey on UK teachers - fairness, creativity, and a love of learning, humour, perseverance and leadership as the six most important character strengths for good teachers, along with kindness and honesty.

In this line and to improve quality of teachers, certain nations have developed teaching standards. For example- Australia, developed standards for teachers in 2010 and finalized 3 domains of teaching and seven standards mentioned in Education Services Australia (2011), which are given below: [3]

*Professional Knowledge: (Domain 1)*

1. Know students and how they learn;
2. Know the content and how to teach it;

*Professional Practice: (Domain 2)*

- 3 Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

*Professional Engagement: (Domain 3)*

6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents / carers and the community

Teacher education is the means for inculcating these professional qualities within future teachers.

## **2. SCENARIO OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA-**

After independence, several committees, commissions, documents and policy papers were prepared time to time and brought into force to review and suggest progress and achievements in every aspect of education, including teacher education. These were-

**University Education Commission (1948-49)** was the first education commission set up in Independent India. It critically examined the existing courses in teacher training programme and suggested that these courses must be flexible and adaptable to local circumstances. It recommended that teacher education courses should be remodelled, suitable schools to be taken for practical training and more time to be given to school practice, and replaced the term ‘teacher training’ with ‘teacher education’.

**Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)** suggested that during one year of training graduate teacher should be trained in methods of teaching in at least two subjects. The practical part of teacher training should consist practice in teaching, observation, demonstration and criticism of lessons; it should also include the construction and administration of scholastic tests, organization of supervised study and ‘student’s societies’, conducting library periods and maintenance of cumulative records.

**Ford Foundation Term (1954)**—was an International team of experts appointed by Government of India, to examine in detail the major recommendations of Secondary Education Commission. It recommended that the teacher training institutions should include demonstration or laboratory schools where experiments are made in curriculum construction and progressive methods of teaching are used.

**Pires Committee (1956)** recommended that practical aspect should be given more weightage than the theory portion in teacher training. The examination papers should be reduced to four viz.-

1. Principles of Education and School Organisation
2. Educational Psychology and Health Education
3. Methods of Teaching Two School Subjects
4. Current Problems in Indian Education.

**Education Commission of 1964-66** (Kothari Commission) observed that a sound programme of professional education for teachers was essential for the qualitative improvement in education at all levels of teacher education to meet the requirements of the national education system.

**National Policy Statement on Education (1968)** emphasised that among all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, teacher is undoubtedly the most important. Teacher, must therefore, be accorded an honoured place in society. Teacher's emoluments and service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory with respect to their qualifications and responsibilities.

**First Asian Conference on Teacher Education (1971)** held at Bangalore and jointly sponsored by Association of Teacher Educators (IATE) and the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) recommended that the programs of school education and teacher education in each country should be modified to meet the new challenges.

**Efforts of Indian Association of Teacher Educators (IATE)**—The Indian Association of Teacher Educators, formerly All India Association of Training Colleges, the only national organization of teachers of training institutions, have been organizing annual conferences beginning with their first meet at Baroda in 1950. IATE constituted a study group popularly known as Baroda Study Group towards revitalizing the B. Ed. Programme.

**National Commission on Teachers- I** (for school teachers) of **1983-85** suggested a 4 year training course after senior secondary, or preferably a 5 year course leading to graduation and training. For elementary teachers it suggested a two year training course after Class XII. It recommended that an integrated 4 year curriculum of a degree in education should consist of general education and professional preparation. Training curriculum for elementary teachers should emphasize on mastering of language and communication skills.

The teacher educators in colleges of education should be from disciplines of various school subjects like psychology, sociology, philosophy etc. The minimum qualification for a teacher educator should be PG degree in the subject and a B.Ed., preferably a M.Ed. degree. The minimum qualification for a teacher educator for the elementary training institutes should be a PG degree with B.Ed. training. This commission also suggested that the practice teaching should be replaced by the word 'Internship'.

**The National Policy of Education (NPE)** in 1986 recommended that teacher education is a continuous process and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable.

NPE 1986 and its Programme of Action 1992 advocated for improving the quality of teacher education as it was the prerequisite to improve the quality of school education. As result, some training schools were upgraded to District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs).

**Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990)** observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because "...the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time."

**Yashpal Committee (1993)** noted that inadequate programme of teacher preparation leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in school. Therefore, the B.Ed. programme should offer the possibility of specialization in secondary or elementary or nursery education. The duration of the programme should either be one year after graduation or four years after higher secondary. The contents of the programme should be restructured and be relevant to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking.

The statutory NCTE prescribed a Curriculum Framework (1998) to provide guidelines for the content and methodology of teacher education. As a result, many universities and state governments revised the courses of teacher education.

**The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005** for school education made recommendations about curriculum, school, exams and many more. It stated that teacher quality is an outcome of several factors: teacher's status, remuneration and conditions of work, besides teacher's academic and professional education.

**National Knowledge Commission (2007)** suggested that there should be adequate monitoring of the teacher education programmes by private institutes, the budgetary allocations should be increased, and the state level training system along with DIETs should be revamped. [5]

**National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2010** highlighted that the education and training of a prospective teacher will be effective enough be delivered by competent and professionally qualified teacher educators. To improve the quality of teacher education, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) took up several initiatives jointly with National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to bring quality.

**Teacher Education in different Five Year Plans**—Fourth and Fifth 5 year plans provided correspondence courses to thousands of elementary and secondary teachers as in-service programmes. B.Ed. course was started as correspondence mode by Himachal Pradesh University, Jaipur University and several South Indian universities with assistance of NCERT. NCERT Regional Colleges were started at Ajmer, Mysore, Bhubaneswar and Bhopal. NCTE Act was passes in 1993 by the Parliament and NCTE was given the responsibility to look after the Teacher Education of the country.



The Eleventh plan was a boost for education sector. It focussed on-

- Strengthening Teacher Education by
- Augmenting teacher education capacity in SC/ST and minority areas.
- Professional development of teacher through training programmes.
- Professional development of teacher educators through Refresher Courses and Fellowship programmes.
- Technology in teacher education.
- Integrating elementary teacher education with higher education.

In the Twelfth 5 year plan, the thrust area is to integrate technology in teacher education to promote openness for adaptability to new technology for developing professionalism. [6]

All these efforts resulted a significant growth of teacher education in the nation but during the last two decades it is felt that the global scenario is presenting new challenges on the sector. Some of these challenges are listed below-

### 3. CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION-

Great expansion of teacher education institutions during the last decade reflects the teacher education scenario of today. Increase in the no. of schools and enrolment as a result of countrywide primary education programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, has resulted in increased demands for the teachers. This produced a great demand and increase of teacher education institutions but the quality parameters were ignored in the process. As result, poor quality, lack of responsibility, and lack of desired qualities and dedication is seen among the newly produced pupil teachers. Some of the major challenges of the teacher education system in India are shown in the figure 1.

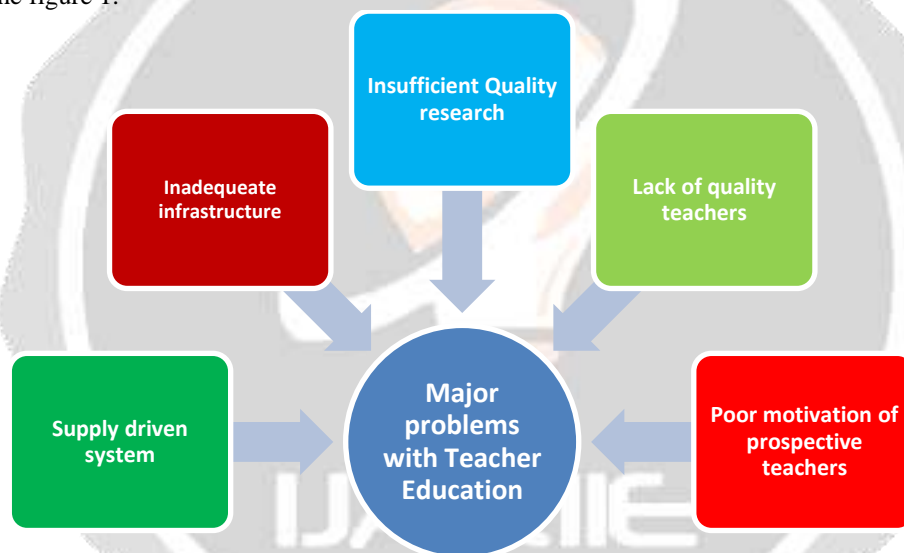


Fig. 1- Major challenges of Teacher Education

#### 3.1. Poor Integration of skills

Certain skills as life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human developmental skills and spiritual skills need to be integrated in the teacher education programmes. There should be simultaneous focus on the creative thinking, critical thinking, self and social management skills. The present teacher education system of country fails to integrate these skills within learners. [7]

#### 3.2. Small time period for teacher's training

In India, this period is of one year after the graduation and finally the effective 6 to 7 working months in a session was less than required to develop healthy attitude, values and multidirectional interest. To overcome this problem, NCTE has extended this period to 2 years from 2015. There are some positive and negative impacts of this step but the final result has to come yet. But controversies are still there. A recent survey (possible rollback) of NCTE by inviting suggestions about the duration, before the completion of the first batch, is a strange and unexpected step.

#### 3.3. Problem of selection

Selection process for teacher education programmes includes some defects which result in deterioration of the quality of teachers. A better selection processes and use of appropriate method is needed to improve the quality of prospective teachers and in turn their training. Including steps like test of General Knowledge, school

subjects, language, intelligence, aptitude, interest and attitude by suitable methods coupled with interview of candidates will be a good move.

### **3.4. Incomplete competency development of teachers**

The present training programme does not provide proper opportunities for pupil teachers to develop their competency as these training programmes are not well concerned with the existing problems of schools. So a close link between the routine work of a school teacher and the programme of teacher training college is a must. The recommendation of increasing the internship period of school is a good step in the direction.

### **3.5. Improper and inadequate practice teaching**

Generally practice teaching is not taken seriously and professionally by pupil teachers, especially in many private teacher training institutes and there is a lack of sense of duty, and they remain irresponsible, aimless, and indifferent to children, which are hurdles in the development of pedagogical skills.

### **3.6. Lack of subject knowledge**

The B.Ed. programme does not emphasize the knowledge of the basic subject. It should ensure the development of subject knowledge along with teaching skills. Without it the teaching practice will remain somewhat ineffective with regard to the subject knowledge.

### **3.7. Inappropriate methods of teaching**

In India teacher educators are neutral towards adopting innovative methods and experimentation in their teaching. Their acquaintance with modern class-room technologies and effective ICT techniques is poor.

### **3.8. Incomplete supervision and feedback**

The supervision coupled with proper feedback is useful for improving practice teaching and instructional activity of the pupil teachers. Feedback and support help them in developing confidence to face the classroom. Guidance for planning lessons, learning to organize contents, and developing other classroom skills are its parts but in reality the lesson plans are checked superficially and no meaningful discussion is made by the subject method masters.

### **3.9. Inadequate empirical research**

In India, educational research conducted is not of satisfactory quality and not at par with global standards. This is a weaker link in the chain of effectiveness of teacher education.

### **3.10. Inadequate professional development and infrastructural facilities**

Most of the programmes are facing lack of professional and necessary infrastructure. This results in unsatisfactory professional achievements. In India, several teacher education institutions are operated in rented buildings without proper facilities and without an experimental school, library, computers and other ICT equipments which are necessary for operation a good teacher education department. There are no separate hostel facilities for student. Particularly some of the institutes and extension campuses, regional centres of some universities, established during 11<sup>th</sup> plan, are facing difficulty of materials, infrastructure, equipments and teachers.

### **3.11. Poor motivation and academic background of pupil teachers**

Most of candidates joining the teaching profession do not come here by choice; instead they come here by chance, when there is no other option. They do not have the requisite level of motivation and an academic background for the noble profession of teaching.

### **3.12. A mismatch in demand and supply**

Teacher education has become supply driven, instead of demand driven. The state education departments have no plans and accurate data for proper management of their institutions. There is a considerable gap between the demand and supply of teachers. This has created the problems of unemployment and underemployment.

**3.13. Poor budget allocation-** Less budgetary allocation is a main reason which in turn makes suffer the institutions for equipments, facilities, arrangement of co-curricular activities and sometime contractual appointment of the staff shortage. It directly affects the quality of outcome.

**3.14. Lack of feedback system-** a perfect feedback system from institutions, staff, faculty and stakeholders regarding courses and implementation is required at every stage of change and planning. Recently 2 year curriculum of B. Ed. is started by NCTE countrywide, which was recommended time and again in various policy papers and reports. Surprisingly even before completion of the first batch and outcome of results, NCTE has invited suggestions about the duration of course as 1 year or 2 year, which may be a probable rollback. A good planning coupled with proper feedback is required for these types of steps.

**3.15. Insufficient co-curricular activities-** In present courses mostly the focus is on completing the syllabus and no place is there for well planned co curricular activities like NCC, NSS, educational visits etc., particularly in private institutions. [8, 9]

## **4. SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES-**

- 4.1. Timely updating of curriculum** - Curriculum of teacher education programme should be revised from time to time according to changing needs and latest developments of the society, profession and globalized world.
- 4.2. Proper monitoring of private institutions**- National Knowledge Commission has suggested that- 'Teacher education institutions should be put under strict control of this regulatory body for the selection of teacher, students and provisions of good infrastructure etc. and Institutions working should be examined from time to time and strict action should be taken if they fail to come up to expected level.' It is required to stop these types of institutes to become degree producing factories, on the other hand regulate the smooth operating of government and other institutions.
- 4.3. Faculty training in value education and stress management**- Teachers should be trained about stress management and value education so that they could help students in managing the stress and sustaining themselves in this time of social isolation, parental pressure and cut throat competition and they could educate young minds in the right direction by appropriate values.
- 4.4. Development of critical thinking**- Bloom placed creativity at the top of revised objectives of higher order thinking because development of creativity is very essential for the all round development of human being. Teachers should be able to think critically and make right decisions and maintain harmonious relations with others. Teachers should encourage student's capacity to construct knowledge.
- 4.5. Development and enrichment of life skills**- Teacher education programmes should enable the teachers to develop life skills among pupil teachers. Life skills are essential for personal development and growth of learners. These skills enable man to deal with the life's difficulties and adversities more effectively. These skills include (a) Thinking Skills (b) Self Awareness, Problem Solving, Creative Thinking, Decision making and Critical thinking (b) Social Skills – Interpersonal relations, effective communication and empathy (c) Emotional Skills – Stress Management. [10]
- 4.6. Developing competency of teachers**- enough to incorporate the usage of science and technology and ICT in educational activities as well as for effective learning and to apply it in teacher educations institution. [11]
- 4.7. Encouragement to quality research teacher education**  
European Commission rightly stated that "Developing reflective and critical competences are key objectives for teachers who need to adapt to an evolving curriculum and to changing techniques and social environments. These are key to new education practices where creativity and innovation are combined with the objective analysis of rigour and assessment of outcomes, i.e. the intended qualities of training through research." Teachers and teacher educators need to be equipped with enquiry-oriented practice. Research develops the capacity, motivation, confidence and opportunity in teachers.
- 4.8. Improving quality of teacher educators**  
Engaging Quality teachers and improving their quality with continuing education efforts is needed in present scenario. According to European Commission "Teacher educators are crucial players for maintaining - and improving – the high quality of the teaching workforce. They can have a significant impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in our schools." Teacher educators must be experienced and well qualified with language proficiency.  
A teacher needs to be a lifelong learner, similarly, teacher educator need to be lifelong learner. Teacher educator's lifelong learning can be facilitated by continuously updating their knowledge and utilising the newly acquired knowledge in improving skills of imparting training, Professional development courses, refresher courses, short term courses and faculty development programme, workshops, seminar and conferences are useful for this purpose. MOOCs courses and some other online learning courses are other options. [3]
- 4.9. Including some innovative steps**- Some innovative steps in teacher education include- Master of Education technology (computer applications) programme by SNDT University Mumbai, M. Tech. (Education technology) course of Kurukshetra University, establishment of University of teacher education Chennai (2008), Early faculty induction programme by QIP- All India Council for Technical Education, IGNOU Institute of professional competence advancement of teachers (IIPCAT 2009), Indian institute of teacher education, (Gujarat bill 4, 2010). [11, 12]
- 4.10. Maintaining Academic Uniformity**- Academic and institutional uniformity across the country among teacher education institutions should be ensured and maintained with respect of duration of the programme, curriculum and structure. Ideal pupil teacher ratio of 1:8 should be followed in teacher education institutes.
- 4.11. Quality Internship of appropriate duration**- The internship of appropriate duration is a must in teacher education and it should be objective, reliable and valid and of proper time.
- 4.12. Proper place for co-curricular and extracurricular activities**- Co-curricular and extracurricular activities are essential part of a good teacher education curriculum and these should be



included in a well planned manner. Various types of activities such as daily assembly programs, community living, social work, library organization and other curricular activities, which promote the democratic spirit of mutual appreciation, should be part of it.

- 4.13. Provision of demonstration schools-** It will be in the fitness of things if at the time of setting up a teacher education department, a demonstration school is made an integral part of it and a definite norm should be followed for certain facilities such as laboratories, libraries and other important audio-visual equipment.
- 4.14. Adequate funds allocation-** Adequate provision of funds availability should be made sure for teacher education. Assistance should be provided for running an experimental school and practice teaching sessions in various schools.
- 4.15. Correspondence courses for working teachers- for working teachers** in teacher education institutes, Correspondence courses should be arranged, with a variety of options like peace education, and a rigorous manner of assessment. Presently NCERT offer course in peace education, educational management and NUEPA in school management in a mixed mode.
- 4.16. Strengthening and Library facilities-** Libraries are needed to be enriched with complete and comprehensive reference section equipped with e- journals, online subscriptions with a wide range of digital library facilities. [13]

## 5. CONCLUSION



Strategies for developing high quality teachers vary from one nation to another. Efforts get boosted when a nation assures entry of talented individuals to teaching profession. [3] Quality teachers are the key factor for sustainable global development and their training, recruitment, retention, status and working conditions are among global priorities today. In fact, teachers are the single most influential and powerful force for equity, access and quality in education. There is a shortage of well trained teachers worldwide. According to the UNESCO Institute for statistics (UIS), to achieve universal primary education by 2030, the demand for teachers is expected to rise to 25.8 million. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entrusts UNESCO to lead and coordinate Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which has a target calling for a substantial increase in qualified teachers. [14] Recent national policy guidelines such as the National Curriculum Framework 2005, NCF for Teacher Education 2009, and Right to Education Act 2009 emphasized on transforming India's elementary and secondary education system. Since, no education system can improve without the quality of its teachers, rigorous efforts will be needed to bring substantial reforms. In recent years, it is seen that large no. of prospective teachers appearing for the central/ state teacher eligibility test (CTET/ State TET) fail to express even the most basic knowledge base expected from a teacher, it shows that there are some basic problems with the system which should be taken care of. I we make a Google search for "problems of teacher education" it provides 1,30,00,000 results in 0.48 seconds showing that the importance of the topic worldwide. [15] Although a range of committees and policy documents have made many suggestions and recommendations for urgent reform in teacher education during recent decades, but the majority of these proposals have yet to be implemented. As demand for teachers has increased in recent years and led to an explosion in the number of Teacher Education Institutions and courses at various levels, this has not been coupled with a reform in infrastructure, faculty expertise, learning resources or quality at policy and practical levels. To fill this gap we have to do a lot and the central government, statutory bodies like NCTE, UGC, NCERT, NUEPA, Institutes of Advance Studies in Education (IASEs) of the Universities, Central Universities, premier institutions of education and policy planners with other stakeholders have to play a major role in this process of reform.

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