The State of Teacher Education in France: A Critique

Pradeep Kumar Misra

The State of Teacher Education in France: A Critique

Pradeep Kumar Misra

N°58 | january 2014

The study of teacher education systems of different countries working in different conditions and following different patterns holds great promise to improve teacher education system in general. The analysis of different systems of teacher education helps to understand that what works well and what not in different systems and conditions and this ultimately paves the way for improvement of teacher education systems across the globe. The French teacher education system that is going through a process of change and radical reforms seems an interesting case in this regard. The study of teacher education system of France becomes more significant in a sense that it is unique in many terms and was a topic of debate and policy reforms between previous and present government.

Working Papers Series

The State of Teacher Education in France: A Critique

Pradeep Kumar Misra

January 2014

The author

Dr. Pradeep Kumar Misra is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education and Allied Sciences of M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, India. His research specializations are Teacher Education, Educational Technology and Lifelong Learning. Dr. Misra has received a number of prestigious awards that includes Commonwealth Academic Fellowship of CSC, UK; Indo-French Exchange Scholarship of FMSH, Paris; Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholar Scholarship of European Commission; Senior Researcher and Doctoral Scholarship of DAAD, Germany and Postdoctoral Research Award of UGC, India. Dr. Misra was visiting scholar in the Danish School of Education, Copenhagen in 2009 for International Masters in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management Programme. He has to his credit a number of international and national publications, authored a book 'Educational Television in Germany' and completed different Research and Development Projects. Dr. Misra is also the founder member and Secretary of Society for Professional Development of Indian Teachers (SPDIT). He is also contributing for different educational causes via his website: www.technologyandteachers.com and can be contacted at: pradeepkmisra@yahoo.com

Acknowledgements

Citing this document

Pradeep Kumar Misra, *The State of Teacher Education in France: A Critique*, FMSH-WP-2014-58, january 2014.

Les Working Papers et les Position Papers de la Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme ont pour objectif la diffusion ouverte des travaux en train de se faire dans le cadre des diverses activités scientifiques de la Fondation : Le Collège d'études mondiales, Bourses Fernand Braudel-IFER, Programmes scientifiques, hébergement à la Maison Suger, Séminaires et Centres associés, Directeurs d'études associés...

Les opinions exprimées dans cet article n'engagent que leur auteur et ne reflètent pas nécessairement les positions institutionnelles de la Fondation MSH.

The Working Papers and Position Papers of the FMSH are produced in the course of the scientific activities of the FMSH: the chairs of the Institute for Global Studies, Fernand Braudel-IFER grants, the Foundation's scientific programmes, or the scholars hosted at the Maison Suger or as associate research directors. Working Papers may also be produced in partnership with affiliated institutions.

The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect institutional positions from the Foundation MSH.

Abstract

The study of teacher education systems of different countries working in different conditions and following different patterns holds great promise to improve teacher education system in general. The analysis of different systems of teacher education helps to understand that what works well and what not in different systems and conditions and this ultimately paves the way for improvement of teacher education systems across the globe. The French teacher education system that is going through a process of change and radical reforms seems an interesting case in this regard. The study of teacher education system of France becomes more significant in a sense that it is unique in many terms and was a topic of debate and policy reforms between previous and present government. In this backdrop, present research analyzes the on-going efforts, policies and practices of teacher education in France; makes a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threat) analysis of French teacher education system; and identifies best adoptable teacher education policies and practices from France.

Keywords

teacher education, France, education systems, education

L'état de la formation des enseignants en France : analyse critique

Résumé

L'analyse comparative des différents systèmes de formations des maitres et des enseignants selon les pays se révèle toujours intéressante. L'étude du système français est particulièrement enrichissante pour l'Inde.

Mots-clefs

formation des enseignants, France, systèmes éducatifs, éducation

Sommaire

Background

"Institutions of teacher education fulfill vital roles in the global education community; they have the potential to bring changes within educational systems that will shape the knowledge and skills of future generations. Often, education is described as the great hope for creating a more sustainable future; teacher–education institutions serve as key change agents in transforming education and society, so such a future is possible. Not only do teacher–education institutions educate new teachers, they update the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers, create teacher–education curriculum, provide professional development for practicing teachers, contribute to textbooks, consult with local schools, and often provide expert opinion to regional and national ministries of education" (UNESCO, 2005, p.11).

Echoing the same sentiments, a report from OECD (2005, p.96) also underlines, "*Teacher education is high on the policy agenda in many countries. Countries are seeking to ensure that teacher education is attractive to high-quality entrants, and that it adequately prepares teachers for the demands of modern schooling.*" Beside these expectations, the teacher education systems have to also take into account the ever emerging changes and challenges emancipating from society, economy and technology.

We are living in an era of change that brings new demands and promises before teacher education at regular intervals. Today, we are confronted with the more radical and in many ways disturbing but seeming to be very promising prospect of excellence in an age where innovation is indeed the keyword to gaining access to all the promises and perils of a new world order. By wide consensus, a dramatic societal shift is underway, and the gradual emergence of a new technologically textured, knowledge-based form of social existence and organization is becoming apparent. These changes in society place teachers, as well as school policy and teacher education, before new demands and challenges (Green, 2004, p.187). Talking about these new demands and challenges, a document of European Commission (2007, p.4) illustrates, "*As well as imparting basic knowledge, teachers are also increasingly called upon to help young people become fully autonomous learners by acquiring key skills, rather than memorising information; they are asked to develop more collaborative and constructive approaches to learning and expected to be facilitators and classroom managers rather than ex-cathedra trainers.*" Teacher education systems across the globe are expected to deliver in backdrop of all these expectations, changes and challenges.

Teacher education systems of today are expected to nurture a teacher fit for all purposes, as indicated by Darling-Hammond (2006, p.1), "*Teachers need not only to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students but also to be increasingly effective in enabling a diverse group of students to learn ever more complex material. In previous decades, they were expected to prepare only a small minority for ambitious intellectual work, whereas they are now expected to prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few.*" Furthermore, classrooms now contain a more heterogeneous mix of young people from different backgrounds and with different levels of ability and disability. Besides, ICT provide new tools and resources for teaching and learning; they change the knowledge itself, the ways for accessing knowledge, and they bring new concepts to our Societies. They give information and knowledge a new status (Cornu, 2006). From all these observations, it is clear that teacher education needs a change in vision and action to cater to varying demands of changing societies.

There is great diversity in teacher preparation programmes internationally depending in large part on the economic, political, and social contexts that exist within each country (Cooper and Alvarado, 2006, p.13). In this context, the study of teacher education systems of different countries working in different conditions and following different patterns hold great promise to improve teacher education system in general, as suggested by Krek (2011, p.8), "*A familiarity with the systems in various countries enables us to undertake professional reflection on individual good solutions and transfer these to practice in such a way that we either adopt that which is feasible in our own environment or adapt the solutions to the characteristics of the concrete situation.*" The analysis of different systems of teacher education helps to understand that what works well and what not in different systems and conditions and this ultimately paves the way for improvement of teacher education systems across the globe. The French teacher education system that is going through a process of change and radical reforms seems an interesting case in this regard. The study of teacher education

system of France becomes more significant in a sense that it is unique in many ways and was a topic of debate and policy reforms between previous and present government.

The link between teacher recruitment and training is a core French specificity. Teachers are recruited by the State through national competitive examinations open to students having passed a bachelor degree, and then they are provided with a post in a school as civil servant. Secondary teachers usually teach what is commonly perceived as only *one* school subject, even if it is composite (like *history and geography*, *biology and geology*, *physics and chemistry*). Their professional identity is strongly marked by a sense of belonging to their subject: the competitive examination they pass principally certifies their competencies in this subject matter. By contrast, primary teachers have to be polyvalent and pedagogy is at the core of their professional identity (Baron and Harrari, 2003, p.36). During the past two decades, France has experienced a major change in teacher education institutional structures. The new orientations tend to promote the competency approach in teacher education and training. In other side, teacher education in France remains more regulated than the other sectors of higher education. The Ministry of Education feels a strong responsibility towards teacher education because it influences the quality of primary and secondary education in general (Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet, 2011). Keeping these and many more characteristics in view, the present research was conducted to:

- Analyze the on-going efforts, policies and practices of teacher education in France.

- Make a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threat) analysis of French teacher education system.

- Identify best adoptable teacher education policies and practices from France.

Methodology

The methodological approach to conduct this research included two main phases: documentary work (desk research) and interviews in the field. The documentary work was mainly based on the review of existing policies and practices, as well as other available literature and statistics related to teacher education in France. The field research was conducted mainly in Paris, France. The researcher visited teacher training

institutions (IUFMs) and University departments and conducted semi-structured interviews with teacher educators and would be teachers. Besides, policymakers at the government level, and teacher education researchers and experts were also contacted via email to complete a survey (developed by the researcher) about teacher education in France. In all, 15 people responded and answered different questions about teacher education in France. The researcher would like to clarify that at this moment teacher education in France is going through a transition phase (new system is expected to take place from September 2013) and this have a bearing on the readiness of people to provide information, collected data and its analysis. The researcher would further like to add that data collection and analyses for this research are mainly qualitative in nature and based on a limited sample of profiles. These issues have of course some implications on the validity of the results, but the conclusions of the study should be seen in the context of the scope of the analyses and the objectives of highlighting issues.

School and Higher Education in France: An Overview

It is a well-known fact that teacher education takes inputs (students) from higher education and its outputs (trained teachers) goes to serve in primary and secondary education sector. Therefore, it seems logical that any attempt to understand the teacher education system of any country must begin from the study of school and higher education of that country. Keeping this in view, it will be worthy to understand the school and higher education system of France. Talking about the specificity of French education system, Baron and Bruillard (2003, p.178) comment, "*France is a country with a long tradition of debate and, sometimes, confrontation, particularly in educational matters.*" In France, the state, regional authorities, and professional bodies have shared responsibility for education. Central government retains fundamental powers when it comes to defining and implementing education policy and national education curricula and is responsible for the recruitment and salaries of teachers. Since the 1980s, the State has been devolving powers in order to strengthen the role of local authorities in the management of the school system. Local authorities are financially in charge of educational

buildings and materials and normally decide about the amount of funding they will invest in educational reforms and the kind of infrastructure they will install (Baron and Bruillard, 2003). France spends more per capita on education than many other European countries (About-France.com, 2012). Presently it spends nearly 6% of its GDP in education including schooling (World Bank, 2013).

France has 26 regions, 101 district (*departments*), 36,851 municipalities and 30 local authorities (*academies*). According to Baron and Harrari (2003, p.35-36), "*A key feature of the French system is the existence, at the regional level, of an important education administration, named académie. Académies are ruled by a rector (Recteur, also chancellor for universities), a very prominent official in the region, representing the minister of education (he or she is directly appointed by the cabinet and may be fired at any cabinet meeting). Rectors are in charge of the public service of education in their resort, from kindergarten to university and also has competencies regarding registered private schooling. It is the rector's duty to apply the national regulation, to manage education at his level to inform the ministry and to maintain links with the other regional powers (economy, territorial authorities…). In every département, an inspecteur d'académie representing the rector heads the education services at that level (except concerning universities).*" There are two Ministries of Education in France- Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sport (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Jeunesse et de la Vie associative*) and Ministry of Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*). In France, both school and higher education systems are guided by clearly defined objectives, followed by distinct provisions and structures.

(i) School Education

The present French school (*école*) system was founded on general principles that were inspired by the 1789 revolution, and principle of secularism. State schooling in France has been secular since the Jules Ferry Education Act of 28 March 1882. Baron points-out, "*There has been in fact a war between partisans of clerical or secular education, in the beginning of the 1900… and then came the law separating the church and the state in 1905*"(G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013). According to the Law of year 1959, schooling is compulsory from the age of six to sixteen for all French or foreign children who are resident in France. There is also a provision of home schooling with prior approval of state. Schooling is mandatory from ages 6 to 16 and nearly all children begin school by age four. There are two tiers of school education - level 1 (*premier degré*) that includes nursery and elementary schools, and level 2 (*second degré*) that includes lower secondary schools (*collèges)* and upper secondary general, technological and vocational schools (*lycées*). Nursery school (*Ecole Maternelle***)** is optional, and children can begin classes at age two. The three-year cycle of Nursery school (*Petite, Moyenne, Grande Section***)** is referred as the *cycle des apprentissages premiers*. Primary schools (*Ecole Primaire –CP-CM2***)** start at age six, correspond to grades 1 through 5 and takes 6 years. The first two years- CP (*cours préparatoire*) and CE1 (*cours élémentaire*) constitute the second two-year cycle (*cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux)*. The next three years, constituting the *cycle des approfondissements*, are CE2 (second year of *cours élémentaire*), CM1 and CM2 (first and second year of *cours moyen*) (Expatica, 2011; Ministry of National Education, 2012).

After primary education that lasts for five years, the next stage is lower secondary education. This education takes place in *Collège* **(four classes-6ème, 5ème, 4ème, 3ème)** and lasts for four years. The first year of lower secondary school (6ème), is called the *cycle d'adaptation***;** the 5ème and 4ème are the *cycle central*; the 3ème is the *cycle d'orientation*. After lower secondary education, pupils may opt either for general or technological or professional education in *lycées* preparing for the *Baccalauréat*. The education at lycées lasts for 3 years. The year of *lycée*, the *seconde*, is known as the *cycle de détermination*; students take the same core curriculum of some eight subjects but are offered three electives and an artistic workshop. At the end of this year, the key decision is made as to which *baccalaureat* the student will pursue. There are three types of baccalauréat *general*: literature and language (L), science and maths (S), and economics and social sciences (ES). There is a system of national exams for *baccalauréat* at the end of upper secondary education. Passing it gives a right to undertake higher education in Universities or other institutions (Baron and Harrari, 2003). At lycées, students can also opt for technical/vocational education, preparing first for the *Certificat d'Aptitude professionnelle* (CAP) or the

Brevet d'Etudes professionnelles (BEP) in two years and then, for those who want to continue, there is *Baccalauréat professionnel* which lasts for two more years (Expatica, 2011; Ministry of National Education, 2012). The schooling structure of France and students enrolled in different types of schools is discussed as Table-1 and Table-2.

Table-1: Structure of School Education in France

Level	Type of School	Age Level	Length of Schooling (Years)	Certificate/Diploma Awarded
Primary	*Ecole Primaire*	6 to 11	5	--
Lower Secondary	*Collège*	11 to 15	4	Brevet des Collèges
Upper Secondary	*Lycée d'Enseignement general / technologique et professionnel*	15 to 18	3	Baccalauréat général / Baccalauréat technologique / Baccalauréat professionnel
Vocational	*Lycée professionnel*	15 to 17	2	Certificat d'Aptitude professionnelle (CAP)/ Brevet d'Etudes professionnelles (BEP)/

Source: EuroEducation.net

Table-2: Number of Schools in France and Pupils Enrolled

Type of Schools	Number	Pupils Enrolled
Primary Schools	53,798	6, 620,000
Lower Secondary Schools (Collèges)	7,018	3, 126,400
General and Technological Upper Secondary Schools (lycées)	2,640	1, 425,700
Vocational Schools (lycées)	1,637	705,500
Special Schools	80	44,300
Adapted secondary schooling: referral units	--	95,600
Total	**65,173**	**12,017,500**

Source: Repères et références statistiques 2011 – The State of schools 2011 – Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance (Assessment, Forward-Planning and Performance Directorate), –Ministry of National Education, Ministry for Higher Education and Research)

In France majority of the schools are state schools with few private schools that have a contract with the state to coexist within the system. As fact, 83% of pupils are schooled in the state system and 17% in private schools. Following the directives of French constitution that 'it is the duty of the state to provide free, compulsory, secular education at all levels', state offers free schooling (no fee, free text books) at primary and lower secondary education level (Ministry of National Education, 2012). The average number of children per class is currently around 25.9 (nursery school), 22.7 (primary school), 23.7 (*collège*) and 27.6 (*lycée*) (France Guide, 2013). The French educational philosophy emphasizes: the authority of the teacher; individual competition including an absolute grading system; stress on analytical thought; and generally high academic expectations. The schools more or less follow same syllabus and textbooks at the same level throughout France. In general, French schools place a great emphasis on the French language (particularly grammar), arithmetic and the sciences. The Outline Act of 23 April 2005 for the future of French schools, entail ensuring equal opportunities and success for all students by establishing a common knowledge base and integrating more young people into the working world (Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2007).

Besides, schools in France try to help pupils to acquire the Common Core of Knowledge and Skills that are based on the recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on 'key competences for education and lifelong learning'. These key competencies include: command of the French language; proficiency in a modern foreign language; key elements of mathematics, scientific culture and technology; mastery of ordinary information and communication skills; humanist culture; social and civic skills; autonomy and initiative. Since 2011, command of the seven skills – as certified by the head teacher at the end of *troisième* – is a compulsory prerequisite for the *Diplôme National du Brevet* (DNB), the end of lower-secondary school exam. The other notable feature of French education system is that about 80 per cent of children continue their schooling beyond the age of 16 (Ministry of National Education, 2012). In words of Baron and Harrari (2003, p. 36), "*France has a strongly controlled school system. Several bodies of inspectors are in charge of overseeing how the system is functioning: general inspectors, depend directly from the minister. Regional inspectors working in close relation with the General Inspection and the rector have authority upon pedagogy in subject matters or school life in secondary education. "Primary education inspectors (named National Education inspectors), have in charge smaller units, called "circonscriptions"."*

(ii) Higher Education

Higher education in France is characterized by a dual system: it is provided in Universities (including *Instituts nationaux polytechniques*) open to a large number of students and in *Grandes Ecoles* and other professional higher education institutions with selective admission policies. The education in Universities is divided into three *cycles* in accordance with the common European system: *Licence* (Bachelor), Master and Doctorate (LMD). The number of semesters of postsecondary study and their equivalent in ECTS credits are counted toward the award of degrees. The credits required for different degrees are: *Licence* (L) = 6 semesters = 180 ECTS credits; Master (M) = 4 additional semesters = 120 ECTS credits; and Doctorate (D) = minimum of 3 years after the Master (not expressed in ECTS credits). Currently, France has 83 public universities enrolling 1.4 million students, including 70,000 doctoral candidates. Universities in France offer curricula in academic fields and of various institutes and schools - such as the IUT - offering courses in Engineering and Technology and special programmes in Management, Political Science, Languages and Physical Education, the IUFM (*Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres*) which offer training courses for primary and secondary schools teachers, the IUP (*Instituts Universitaires Professionalisés*) which offer technological courses and practical training with an introduction to research and foreign languages (EuroEducation.net; Campus France. Org). Universities in France come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*). In comparison to other parts of the French higher education system, tuition fee is lower in Universities (about €400 a year) as government pays much of the true remaining cost of each student's education (which ranges from €8,000 to €14,000 per year).

The other unique feature of higher education in France is the Grand Schools (*grandes* écoles

and *écoles supérieures*). *Grandes écoles* and *écoles supérieures* are university colleges specializing in professional training. Often termed as elitist higher education system in the world, grandes *écoles* are heavily funded and equipped. The state spends around €40,000 educating a student at a *grande école*, compared with just €12,000 at a university (Justlanded.com, 2013). *Grandes écoles* comprises both public and private institutions, such as schools of engineering, the four *écoles normales supérieures* (ENS), institutes of political studies (IEP), schools of business and management, and schools of veterinary medicine, agronomy, and other specialized subjects. Admission is highly selective in *grandes écoles*. Students are admitted after 2 years of preparatory study at a special preparatory school (*Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles/CPGE*), and the passing of a very selective competitive entrance examination. *Grandes écoles* offer a high standard of professional education that ranges from 3 to 7 years of study. The other notable feature is that these prestigious schools (*ecoles normales supérieures, Polytechnique*) pay the students during their studies. Beside Universities and *grandes écoles, there are* more than 3,000 other public and private institutions that offer programs in specific areas like health professions, paramedical services, audio-visual arts, communication, journalism, social work, fashion, design, tourism, culinary arts, military studies, agriculture, agronomy, and political science. Normally these programs last for 2 to 5 years (EuroEducation.net; Campus France. org). The number of different types of higher education institutions in France is given in Table-3.

Teacher Education in France: From Past to Present

When one traces about the history of teacher education, it appears that teaching existed long before teacher education came in place. In earlier times, the assumption was that anyone who had completed a given level of education could turn around and teach it. Teachers needed no special preparation in the art of teaching; they just needed modest familiarity with the subject matter to teach. The simple rule for teachers was-take the class, teach the class (Labaree, 2004). The credit to change this situation and evolving the concept of teacher education mainly goes to Europe and North America. France played a pioneer role in bringing the concept of teacher training in reality. This is evident from the fact that way back in 1685, John Baptist de La Salle founded the first teachers' training college (*école normale*) in Reims (city in the Champagne-Ardenne region of France). According to French text and Encyclopaedia, the exact English version of the French term école *normale* ('*en Angleterre, les écoles normales d'instituteurs et d'institutrices sont appelées*') is 'training colleges' (Edwards, 1991).

(i) History

The legal use of the term *école normale* in France first appeared in a law of October 30, 1794, approved by the National Convention (1792-1795). Educational historians have inferred the existence of the idea of teacher education in Rolland's Theory, History, and Practice of Education

Table-3: Number of Higher Education Institutions in France

Type of Higher Education Institutions	Number
Universities and Equivalent institutions	83
Schools of Engineering	224
Schools of Business and Management	220
Schools of Art	120
Other Schools and Institutes	3000

Source: Campus France. org

239 Report (1768) which "proposed a national system of education to replace both the schools of the Jesuits and those of the Brothers of the Christian Schools," and "a higher normal school to train teachers for the Colleges (secondary schools) (Cubberley, 1920a, p. 510). Incorporated with these ideas has been the proposition of Condorcet (1791) that teachers for each grade of school should be prepared in the school above (Cubberley, 1920b, p. 512). This proposition paved the way for a school higher than the *lycées* to prepare teachers for the *lycée*, and saw its fulfilment in Lakanal's bill submitted to the National Convention for the creation of a national normal school (*école normale),* where citizens of the Republic already schooled in the useful sciences should be taught to teach. These schools engaged distinguished teachers such as Laplace, Lagrange and Berthollet (Edwards, pp. 238-239).

The teacher education came under resurrection by a decree of Napoleon of March 17, 1808. This decree has laid the foundation for establishment of *école normale supérieure* (the Grand schools) and training for three hundred young persons in the art of teaching the arts and sciences - i.e. for teaching in the lycées. After this decree, Prussian law of 1819 came into existence. This law continued the foundation of primary teacher training colleges (*Schüllehrer Seminarie*) in major towns, one for each department of the state. This law emphasized that each teacher training college would have approximately seventy pupils, age 16 to 18, who would remain there for three years, after which each successful candidate would be required, by contract, to teach for ten years in the school or schools to which he was assigned. This law was followed by Guizot Law of 1833. With Guizot's law, a school was set up in every town district and in every county a teacher training college (*école normale*) was created to train primary school teachers (IUFM, 2005). The importance given to teacher education in France clearly reflects in these words of Guizot's Law, "No *Schoolmaster should be appointed who has not himself been a pupil of the school which instructs in the art of teaching, and who is not certified, after a strict examination, to have profited by the opportunities he has enjoyed*" (Cubberley, 1920b, p. 459; Edwards, pp. 238-239).

Until the recent reforms, initial teacher education was different for primary and for secondary school (*collège* and *lycée*) teachers. Since 1879,

colleges for preparation of primary school teachers, the ENIs (*Ecoles Normales d'Instituteurs et d'Institutrices*), were opened progressively in all counties to take charge of pre- and in-service training. On the contrary, secondary school teachers did not receive any professional training until the middle of the 20th century. The situation changed in 1989, as observed by Baron, "*Since 1989, primary and secondary teachers are supposed to receive the same level of training in universities. But modalities differ*" (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013). The credit for changing this situation goes to Orientation law (*Loi d'orientation*) of 1989. This law brought a major change in the French teacher education system by emphasizing global education, learner-centered approach, and competence development (Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet, 2011). This law paved the way for creation of postgraduate teacher training institutes (*Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres- IUFMs*) in each county of the state. These institutes, popularly known as IUFM, was entrusted the responsibility of initial education to primary school teachers, secondary school teachers (in mainstream, technical and vocational education) and organization of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes for teachers.

Since its inception in 1990, the IFUMs have gone through three phases so far. The first phase starts from 1991. During this phase (1991-2010), IFUMs were isolated from Universities and worked as an independent institution. In this phase, students were given "*concours*" at the end of the first year, and have to complete second year with part time in schools. This situation changed in 2010, when as per the law for priorities and curriculum in the future of school, IUFMs became schools within universities. This second phase existed during 2010-2013 and called as Masterisation and integration of IUFM in Universities. During this phase, there was no more second year and it was necessary for students to pass the exam and join the schools as full time teacher. In 2012, the labour government came into power in France and keeping the promise of electoral manifesto, decided to restructure the teacher education system. As first step in this direction, the government has decided to rename and restructure the existing IUFMs. These IUFMs will now be called as, Schools of Education (*Ecoles Superieures du Professorat et de l'Education - ESPEs*) (E. Bruillard, personal

communication, May 30, 2013). As per the law, these ESPEs will be in charge of initial teacher education for primary and secondary education and will also take care of continuing professional development for primary and secondary teachers (Sarre, 2013). These institutes will be affiliated to nearby Universities and are supposed to function from September 2013.

(ii) Entry Routes

The teacher education system in France is going through a wave of reforms, as observed by Baron, "*Education is traditionally rather high on French decision makers' agenda. Teacher education has been undergoing a series of reforms for more than 20 years*" (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013). The system was changed in year 2010, and new government has completed his homework to change it again from September 2013. Therefore, it will be justified to discuss the existing as well proposed entry routes to teacher education in France. According to the existing norms, Master is an essential qualification for the recruitment of primary and secondary school teachers. Till last academic session, initial training of teachers was conducted by IUFMs and from September 2013 onwards it will be the responsibility of ESPEs. As part of the autonomy that has been granted by law No. 2007-1199 of 10 August 2007 relating to university freedoms and responsibilities, the IUFMs were responsible the Masters programme as well as the preparation of competitive recruiting examinations for entry to the profession of primary- or secondary-school teacher. Now this responsibility will be entrusted to ESPEs.

A future teacher in France has to meet two criteria to become a fully qualified teacher: holding a Masters degree and passing the competitive recruitment examination organized by the French Ministry of Education. Once these criteria are met, newly qualified teachers become civil servants after one probation year. Teachers recruited by private schools must also pass competitive examinations and are paid by the State if they are part of grant-aided schools. However, they are not civil servants (Picard and Ria, 2011). Explaining further about this system, Thanh underlines, "*Teachers have to undergo a Masters' degree in a specific field (e.g. Physics) then pass a national competitive exam. If they get it, they become "fonctionnaires" meaning they work for the state, they have their job for life but are at the disposal of*

the state: it decides where the teachers go to work (and live). There are two competitive exams: the CAPES and the AGREGATION. The first one allows you to teach at the secondary and higher secondary levels, the second the secondary, higher secondary and university level. Basically the AGREG is harder to get, the persons who graduate from this exam get a higher salary and less hours of teaching, and sometimes they teach in nicer schools too. It is kind of a hierarchy thing" (J.T. Thanah, personal communication, July 30, 2013).

The students have to study for two years to complete their masters and qualify a national competitive examination. The students having obtained credits corresponding to a first-year Masters (M1), or 60 ECTS credits after the first year of Masters are allowed to sit in competitive examinations for the recruitment of primary school teachers (*Professeurs des Écoles*) (Eurypedia, 2013; IUFM, 2005). Afterwards, students go for completion of second year of Masters (M2). Being recruited as a teacher, which means entering the State civil service (with the status of trainee teacher in the first year of work), implies both passing the competitive examination and successfully completing a Masters. For those, who wish to become secondary school teachers the path is almost similar with minor variations. The main difference is that those wishing to become secondary school teachers have to go to Universities to complete Masters, whereas, primary teachers were required to complete their Masters from IUFMs. The other requirements remain same. At the end of first year of their Masters (M1), students have to take one of the following competitive examinations, as per their field of specialization:

- the *certificat d'aptitude au professorat du deuxième degré* (certificate for teaching one particular subject – foreign language/ mathematics/ sciences/etc. - at secondary level) (CAPES)

- the *certificat d'aptitude* for technical school teaching (CAPET)

- the *certificat d'aptitude* for physical and sport education (CAPEPS)

- the certificat d'aptitude for vocational lycée teaching (CAPLP)

- the *Agrégation*

The competitive exams are same in nature but differ in terms of curriculum for primary and

secondary school teachers. The competitive examination has two parts – part A is written examination and part B consists of oral examinations. For primary school teachers, written examinations consists of two papers of 4 hours each-paper I-French, civics, history, geography, paper II- maths, science and technology. The oral examination is also divided into two parts- lesson planning in French, and education system and lesson planning in maths and arts/music/physical education. The competitive examination for secondary school teachers mainly focuses about their school subjects. The structure of examination remains same- two written papers and two oral examinations. Like primary school teachers, secondary school teachers have to also pass both- the competitive examinations and Masters to become permanent teachers in secondary schools (civil servant). In the proposed reforms, the basic qualification for becoming a teacher would remain same-Masters and qualifying the competitive examinations. The reform is mainly focusing about where to put the competitive examinations for the recruitment of teaching staff, means in the middle of first year of Masters or in the beginning of second years of Masters (M. Huchette, personal communication, May 31, 2013).

In existing system, teacher educators for primary and secondary school teachers differ in terms of qualifications and training. Those who wish to become teacher educators for primary school teachers have to receive a specific one-year training leading to a *Certificat d'Aptitude* (CAFIPEMF, a certificate of professional competence) as a Master Educator. There are two forms of the *Certificat d'Aptitude*: first, a general form that enables an individual to be assigned as a "generalist' for an inspector of National Education or as a Master educator for a university, second with specialisations (EPS, music teaching, the plastic arts, languages and regional cultures, educational technologies and resources) leads one to specialist positions. In other side, teacher educators for secondary school teachers are normally university teachers.

(iii) Categorisation of Teachers

In France, the teaching profession was fragmented into many different categories before its structures were unified. Several parliamentary and ministerial reports (Joxe in 1972, Prost in 1983 and Ribot in 1899) underlined the adverse

consequences of this extreme diversity of status, workload and wages for teachers who sometimes do the same job in front of the same pupils. The process of enhancing the teaching profession launched in 1989 by Minister of Education Jospin unified the status of all teaching staff (whether in primary or secondary or in general, technological or professional education), the same minimal recruitment level (at least a three year university degree, the *licence*), two years of initial professional training at one of the University Institutes of Teacher Training (IUFM) and strictly comparable career opportunities. Yet, there are still three categories of professors who share in common the same recruitment, compensation and career conditions: school professors (at pre-primary and primary schools), certified professors (at *collèges* and *lycées*) and professional *lycée* professors. In addition, the traditional *agrégation*, a higher and more prestigious *concours* requiring the higher university degree of the *maîtrise* has been kept for the recruitment of about 10% of secondary education professors (Cros and Obin, 2003, p.15).

(iv) Teaching and Training

The main aim of initial teacher education to primary as well secondary school teacher in France is to help them to become profession-oriented; recruitment-oriented; and research-oriented. But their curriculum and training patterns differ. Primary school teachers have to complete 2 semesters (12 course units) in first year, and 2 semesters (12 course units) in second year of Masters. During these 2 years, they have to go through various subjects and activities like- Humanities: academic and didactic approach; Sciences: academic and didactic approach; knowledge, tools and methods in teaching; teaching practice and reflective analysis; Research in education, seminars, project, and dissertation. As practical activity, during first years (semester 1 &2) they go for class observation and supervised teaching practice. The supervised teaching practice continues in second year of masters (semester 3). In the last semester, the students go for independent practice teaching. During their teaching practice, student teachers are observed by a mentor and a teacher educator. These observers give a report (observation sheet with feedback and advice) after each observational visit.

There are several Secondary Education Masters e.g. research-oriented or profession-oriented. The

trainees have to go through similar curriculum organisation. In first year they have to take academic training and introduction to professional training. Afterwards, they go for competitive recruitment exam preparation and professional training in real situations. The professional training aims to engage teachers to deepen their subject knowledge; enable them to identify resources and constraints in situations they may encounter; enable them to analyze their practice; and help them gather and exploit the knowledge acquired through experience (Deane 2003, p. 117). There are two phases of practice teaching. During phase first, trainees go for observation and supervised practice in the class of a tenured teacher. This phase lasts a maximum of six weeks and offers trainees the chance to participate in the real exercise of the profession. The second phase which also lasts for a maximum of six weeks is termed as work experience with responsibility. In this phase, trainees act as full-fledged classroom teachers under the supervision of mentors. During training phase, students are given proximity support and attend several trainee-specific meetings, depending on the available budget. Expert instructors and educational advisers (in primary school) and tutors (lower and upper secondary schools) provide guidance and support under the aegis of inspectors (Picard and Ria, 2011).

(v) Professional and Societal Expectations

As per the law of 22 July 2010, a core of ten teacher competences defines the new professional model (Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2010). Every teacher in France is expected to acquire following ten skills:

- Being able to behave as a civil servant and in an ethical and responsible way

- Have a good command of French

- Have good academic knowledge of their curricular subject and general knowledge

- Being able to plan lessons and teach from lesson plans

- Being able to organize class work

- Being able to differentiate their teaching

- Being able to assess learners' knowledge and skills

- Being able to use ICT in their teaching; Being able to work in collaboration with parents and other educational partners

- Being innovative and willing to train further (CPD)

Teachers are expected to play a vital role to fulfil these expectations. Talking about the societal expectations from teachers, Baron suggests that teachers are respected as professional of childhood and there is awareness that teachers have been well trained and selected under the supervision of the national state. Teachers traditionally have a large pedagogical freedom. Expectations are probably traditional that their children should be taken care of in a good way (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013). While, Thanh comments, "*Parents expect the teachers to have full or exceptional command of their topic(s), to prepare their children for exams, to be fair and neutral yet to take into account their child's difficulties and take some time to address them. I feel parents also expect the school system to educate their children on various topics as well (e.g. how to behave in group, not to steal...), not only school related subjects (e.g. math). So double expectations: academic content + "social" content*" (J.T. Thanah, personal communication, July 30, 2013). The other big issue for teachers is social differences and diverse population in classes. School teachers are expected to deal with pupils from all social categories, whether working in a secluded rural area or in the suburbs of a city populated mainly by families of immigrant workers (Cros and Obin, 2003). Reffay aptly summarizes the expectations from teachers in these words, "*To make them study in the best possible way whatever their skin colour, origin, or religion and to adapt their teaching methods to find the best capacities of the children*" (C. Reffay, personal communication, June 19, 2013)

(vi) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Provisions

Academic authorities are in charge of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or in-service teacher training of permanent teachers in France. CPD is organized within region by each DAFOR (*Délégation Académique à la FORmation*). The DAFOR is in charge of conducting a needs analysis in terms of staff training, elaborating training schemes for staff in both primary and secondary education, drawing up the local *Plan Académique de Formation continue*- PAF and

list of courses offered, following up on the implementation of the PAF courses by the various actors (Universities, IUFMs, inspectors, external consultants, etc.), setting up more individualized training pathways for certain staff, and evaluating the PAF courses. According to the Law for the future of schools when a teacher seeks training for the purpose of personal advancement and receives approval from the *recteur*, it will be arranged in priority, outside of the required teaching hours and may qualify for an indemnity (Eurypedia, 2013).

This training mainly focuses on developing additional professional skills, providing adaption training (new career, new position, etc.), providing training to gain official qualification (competitive exam) or certification, providing training for personal/ cultural development, providing training and resources for teacher trainers and mentors. There is a provision of different types of training like courses open for all teachers, courses open for specific target groups (often organized by inspectors), and pedagogical workshops (on particular topics, e.g. new curriculum) (Sarre, 2013). An important point is that teachers have a right to get professional development training as per his/ her needs but have no obligation to attend CPD programmes. The participation in CPD is generally voluntary, and participation by teachers in one or several on-going training activities may be taken into account in their evaluation, which partly determines their career advancement (Eurypedia, 2013).

(vii) ICT Training

ICT is integrated in initial teacher education and made compulsory for future teachers. The certificate C2i (computing and internet certificate) (level 1) at bachelor level is mandatory to enter teacher training institutes. During their teacher training, trainees are thought about ICT, and have to acquire certificate C2i (level 2). The government sets training areas and framework, while *Rectorat* and *Inspection Académique* are in charge of in-service training and sometimes they also take help from IUFM. These certifications mainly help students- to know and respect the rights and obligations linked to digital operations, to manage strategies for the research and exploitation of digital information and maximizing its use, and to organise professional collaboration using digital technology in a professional

context. This ICT training to teacher trainees is cross-sectoral and mainly provided in distance- and self-training mode. The other feature of this ICT training is that majority of the competences of the framework revolves around the practices developed in schools and pedagogical teams (Europan Schoolnet, 2010, p.8; Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2012). Talking about this training, Baron comments, "*The scheme put in place around Certificat informatique et internet (C2i) is a good idea. It offers a first level of training*" (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013).

Teacher Education in France: A SWOT Analysis

Above observations clearly reveals that France has a well placed and well defined teacher education system. This system has worked well and served education system of France from more than 200 years. But at this juncture, all is not well with teacher education in France. A closer look reveals that France is witnessing progressive development as well experiencing persistent tensions in the path of revamping and reorganizing teacher education. The main points of concerns and debates about teacher education are: impact of "masterisation" of teacher education to improve the quality of teacher preparation, proper use of ICT cultures for the networking and teachers' involvement in formal and informal learning, building links between Licence and Master cycles, cooperation of different actors (academics, trainers, school authorities), maintaining balance between theory and practice, bridging the gap between the world of university focusing on research and the world of school focusing on practice, evolving new models of teacher preparation, retention of central control over the qualification process and teacher recruitment, and the development of partnership and professional learning approaches (Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet, 2011, p.190). Before delving further on these issues, it will be beneficial to talk about the core objectives of teacher education in France. The teacher education in France is mainly guided by following objectives (Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet, 2011, p.179):

- To prepare all the candidates for the competitive examinations of the recruitment (*concours*)

- To provide the professional preparation for the teacher trainees who have passed the *concours*

- To organize and offer in-service training for all teachers

- To develop research in the field of education

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of French teacher education system with reference to these objectives will help us to discuss about the system in a more objective way.

(i) Strengths

Strengths of any system is usually defined in terms of those factors that are likely to have a positive effect on (or be an enabler to) achieving the laid down objectives. An analysis of French teacher education system in reference to above mentioned objectives reveal that its biggest strengths lie in preparation and recruitment of teachers for teaching profession. After passing the competitive examinations (*concours*), the future teachers get the status of civil servants. This is a unique feature in itself. In other parts of the world, students prepare them to get the degree first, and then look for a job of teacher. While in France, they get the job first and then go for completion of second year of their Masters. More interestingly, teacher training institutions/Universities help them to prepare and qualify the *concours*. After passing the examination, the students have a job security and are expected to learn their lessons of teaching with confidence and purpose. The other feature of this system is that there is hardly any 'trained teachers unemployment', as system produces only the required number of teachers (M. Artigue, personal communication, June 3, 2013).

The other notable feature of French teacher education system is a good balance between theory and practice. During professional preparation phase, system gives good emphasis to both theory and practice, and maintains a good balance between subject knowledge and its practical implications in classroom conditions. Although, its priorities differ: for primary teachers more emphasis about pedagogy and for secondary school teachers more emphasis about subject knowledge. In French system, students have enough chances to field test their subject knowledge in classroom conditions and apply various pedagogical principles training (E. Bruillard, personal communication, May

30, 2013). The other aspect is multi-disciplinary approach of teacher education. Following this approach, teacher trainers of different subjects learn from each other, and incorporate this new found wisdom into their classroom. For example, a teacher of science learns from a teacher of history, and uses this knowledge to teach about different topics like history of science, history of scientific inventions, and so on (Cécile de Hosson, personal communication, June 5, 2013). Indicating about another unique feature of teacher education in France, Baron states, "*Perhaps, the main unique feature is that public teaching is very tightly linked with the emergence of the secular republic, toward the end of the XIXth century and that there has long been a general trust regarding the teaching profession, which may be fading away*" (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013).

In France, new models and methodologies have also been evolved to bring professional orientations among future teachers, like the model of "*alternance*" that includes theoretical preparation at the institute and supervised practice in schools during the two years of pre-service professional training (Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet, 2011, p. 183); preparation of portfolios for evaluation purposes; and sessions for reflections on different issues and classroom problems. The earlier system of teacher education, before 2010, was also known for its intensive internship programme. The new reforms would like to bring back this system in practice again. It has also been observed that *masterization* of teacher education has helped the teachers to come better prepared to develop research in the field of education. The system also offer good opportunities for students to establish a link between knowledge gained in Universities and its use in classroom conditions (M. Artigue, personal communication, June 3, 2013). In nutshell, one can say that French teacher education system is unique in some ways and best among them is that it offers excellent opportunities for acquisition of both subject-specific knowledge and didactic skills for teacher trainees during the same period of study.

(ii) Weaknesses

Weaknesses are usually defined as factors that are likely to have a negative effect on (or be a barrier to) achieving the objectives. It is an old saying that often your strengths become your weaknesses, and this applies on French teacher

education system as well. The competitive examination system for entry into teaching profession is often hailed as its strengths, but critics see this examination system as a weakness of system itself. Commenting on this issue, Picard and Ria (2011, p.122) affirms, "*The competitive recruitment examination mainly assesses disciplinary knowledge, especially during the written admission tests. While oral examinations rather assess the candidates' teaching and relational skills, the overall academic course does not guarantee that those who pass the competitive recruitment examination will master basic professional competences.*" Responsibility of supervising practice teaching of trainees is another big issue, as observed by Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet (2011, p. 183), "*It can be supervised by university teachers, by trainers of the IUFM, by class teachers depending on the phase of practice. The cooperation between them is very weak and there isn't any official framework describing how teacher trainers must be prepared.*" Baron (personal communication, June 22, 2013) also supports this claim and recommends for better organization of practicum. Thanh points out a different problem of teacher education, "*New, young and inexperienced teachers who just got their test are sent to sometimes very difficult schools or areas, where schools don't have a big budget for activities or material for instance, or where the classes welcome too many students. The discrepancy between the schools is sometimes enormous and it impacts on the quality of teaching, not because the teachers are bad, but because they don't have the means to teach properly*" (J.T. Thanah, personal communication, July 30, 2013)

Concerns has also been raised that teacher education for secondary school teachers mainly focuses on subject knowledge, and gives less emphasis on pedagogical aspects. Talking about this issue, Cros and Obin (2003, p. 43) observe, "*Only after passing the concours will trainee teachers start discovering the questions related to the professional practice of teaching, i.e. to those concerning the organisation of teaching, the pedagogical link to learners, general education, teamwork and the role of parents.*" Similarly, Gumbel (2012) claims, "*Teachers haven't been trained to bring as many students as possible up to the sought-after level. What teacher training existed in the past was mainly focused on the teachers' own knowledge of their subject, and not on how to convey it effectively to pupils.*" The teachers unions in France are also raising this issue, as evident from the comment of EI Secretary General Fred van Leeuwen, "*While intensive recruitment of teachers is crucial to achieving the Goals of Education for All by 2015, teachers should be given a high standard of training to ensure they embark successfully on their careers and stay in the profession.*" An SNES-FSU - an EI national affiliate in France - survey in October aimed at trainee teachers and completed by 400 people revealed that it is becoming very difficult for trainee teachers and school leaders to join the profession (Educational International, 2012).

According to the OECD, France is at the bottom of the league of member countries, when it comes to the ratio of staff to students (five to 100), far behind Portugal, Greece and Spain, but also Sweden, Belgium and Austria, countries where the rate fluctuates between six and 10. In 2011, the OECD also indicated that the country invested 14 per cent less than the average in OECD member countries, and that the statutory salary of primary and secondary school teachers with at least 15 years of experience declined in France between 1995 and 2009 (Carroue , 2012). This issue is certainly has a negative impact on those wishing to join teaching profession in future. The participation of teachers in CPD is also an issue in France. In spite of expectations from government and local authorities only few teachers' volunteer to attend these programmes. There are two reasons, first participation in CPD is not mandatory, second participation in the in-service training does not have any significant influence on teachers' careers. The other noted weaknesses is that in spite of the same recruitment, compensation and career conditions, training for primary and secondary education teachers is very different in terms of content and organization (M. Huchette, personal communication, May 31, 2013).

(iii) Opportunities

Opportunities denotes to those external factors that are likely to have a positive effect on achieving or exceeding the system objectives, or unforeseen goals. A communication from the European Commission observes, '*Improving the quality of teacher education is an important goal for Europe's education systems...*' (European Commission, 2007, p.3). Another document of European Commission (2012, p.7) justifies this call for improvement in teacher education in these words, "*In the global economy, and in the current economic climate, education and training are more important than ever. Helping all citizens to develop*

the competences they need in a global labour market based on ever higher skill levels requires the Education and Training systems of Europe to adapt and improve thoroughly; it calls for radical changes in teaching and learning. This cannot be achieved without significant improvements to the ways that teaching staff are encouraged and supported so that they can help every learner to achieve optimum educational outcomes." These observations are more or less equally applicable for teacher education in France. France has number of opportunities to improve its teacher education system.

The first opportunity is that in comparison to other European countries, France still not has shortage of teachers. It means France has time enough to critically analyze and tighten the loose strings of prevailing system. The proposed reforms of new government that came into power in 2012, seems a fitting attempt in this direction. The second opportunity is to make the jobs of teachers more attractive and rewarding. This measure will be helpful to attract better students towards teaching profession, as observed by Fred van Leeuwen (General Secretary, National Union of Independent Trade Unions-Education), "*Good working conditions and decent pay for teachers are a big part of providing quality education for all*" (Educational International, 2013). The third opportunity is to use new technologies for continuing professional development and in-service training of teachers. This measure will help the teachers in many ways, as suggested by Reffay that use of technologies will bring more practices about interdisciplinary problems, subjects and projects that are complex enough. He further adds that it will also bring reflexion on methods and advanced features or tools (C. Reffay, personal communication, June 19, 2013). In a holistic view, Baron very nicely summarizes the opportunities before teacher education in France in these words, "*I think that things must be considered as a whole regarding education. Uppermost, what is needed is stability*" (G.L. Baron, personal communication, June 22, 2013).

(iv) Threats

Threats are defined as those external factors and conditions that are likely to have a negative effect on achieving the objectives, or making the objective redundant or un-achievable. The first biggest threats for teacher education in France is that attractiveness of the profession is decreasing and numbers of those applying to enter teaching

professions are going down. It has been observed that ratio for number of candidates appearing versus available positions is continuously going down (E. Bruillard, personal communication, May 30, 2013). Commenting on this situation, Cros and Obin (2003, p.27) affirm, "*Teachers' salary in itself is unattractive and young graduates with scientific qualifications find it easy to earn a better living in private enterprises; this is the reason why so few applicants hold science degrees: in particular in primary education, the vast majority of teachers hold degrees in humanities.*" The other threat emancipates from the fact that expectations from teachers are increasing but the pattern of preparing teachers is almost same as it was years before. According to Sacilotto-Vasylenko and Fave-Bonnet (2011, p.182), "*The demands of the State, the "teachers' employer", towards the teacher qualifications has considerably increased but the amount of hours for their preparation is unchanged and sometimes it is diminished.*"

It has been observed that from 2007 to 2012, some 80,000 teaching posts were eliminated in France while, at the same time, the number of pupils remained virtually stable. Education was seen only in its financial dimension, and, therefore, potentially as a way of saving costs to the national budget, and not considered as a universal right. This led to deterioration in working conditions for teachers, reduction in the quality of initial training, undermining of the status of the teaching profession in society, and low pay, which has resulted in a lack of interest in the teaching profession among today's students (Carroue, 2012). Discussing about the concerns of teacher trainees, a survey from National Union of Independent Trade Unions-Education reports, "*Qualifications in foreign languages and IT can now be demanded for gaining tenure in all disciplines is causing trainees extra anxiety. Almost half of all those who have passed the competitive examinations to enter the profession do not have these qualifications. The results show that the trainee year is not a year of training and even discourages some trainees from taking up careers in teaching and education*" (SNES, 2012).

The other threat comes from the fact that teacher education system in France is facing a gender imbalance, as observed by Cros and Obin (2003, p.27), "*The proportion of female teachers keeps growing, to such an extent that a gender-balanced approach to education becomes difficult. Since it has become unconstitutional to recruit separately for men*

and women, the question of how to attract more male teachers no longer finds an answer, all the more that until recently the teaching profession has been seen as an easy job suitable for women seeking a topup income compatible with raising a family." The educational divide among teachers belonging to different categories (primary, secondary and professional education) is another issue. The other point of concern is that whether universities who are known for their academic orientations would be able to offer a real professional preparation to the future teachers (M.S. Claude, personal communication, June 14, 2013). There is another belief that presence of so many actors in teacher education is rather a problem than solution, while Reffay views this from another angle and comments that major threat to teacher education in France is its disorganization (C. Reffay, personal communication, June 19, 2013).

Teacher Education in France: Best Adoptable Practices

Above analysis reveals that French teacher education system boasts a number of good practices that can be adopted for betterment of teacher education in other countries. In this context, some of the best adoptable practices from teacher education system of France may be:

- Its system of picking would be teachers first and then preparing them for the real job. This system helps both trainees and educators to carryout their tasks in a better way. After knowing that they got the job, trainees are supposed to try their best to learn about the profession. In other side, teacher educators feel more committed to train these selected teachers.

- Its system of intensive internship. During internship students understand the tricks of profession in real life situations. This helps them to prepare in a better way for world of teaching.

- Its system of research orientation to future teachers. The research orientation of would be teachers helps them to deal with educational problems in a better and organized way. This orientation helps them to conduct useful action researches on different educational issues.

- Its system of minimal competency standard for ICT to enter the profession and acquisition of further ICT skills during teacher training phase. These competencies help the teachers to use emerging technologies for betterment of teaching learning process in best possible way.

- Its system of ten competencies and expectations from teachers. These guidelines help teachers to realize that what to do and what not to do to become a professionally committed and socially responsible teacher.

- Its system of interdisciplinary approach of teaching, training and learning. This helps both teachers and trainees to learn from their colleagues and develop new insights and perspectives about their disciplines.

Conclusion

In view of Calderhead (1997, p.2), "*Teacher education in Europe offers a fascinating natural laboratory for educational researchers to explore different ideas and programmes, and the effects of different forms of training.*" This observation is equally applicable for teacher education system of France. A critical analysis of the system reveals that:

- Teacher education in France has a unique history and played pioneering role to develop teacher education discipline at global level

- Teacher education has a steady past and served well to French society by producing qualified teachers

- Teacher education in France is undergoing a turbulent present with waves of different and frequent reforms

- Teacher education receives due consideration at social and political level and is part of electoral promises and debates

The good news is that teacher education is on the agenda of current government with a promise that new Teacher Training Colleges (ESPEs) will be opened at the start of the school year in 2013 and they will address the "professionalisation of both content and method" (Carroue, 2012). The academicians, practitioners and experts of teacher education view the present situation of teacher education from two different angles. One view is that present reforms will make it more significant and productive in terms of teacher preparation and serving the society, and opposing voices

claim that present reforms are merely eyewash and will not bring any significant changes in the vision and action of teacher education. France is in middle of new teacher education reforms. The new teacher training institutions (ESPEs) with new teacher training modalities will come into existence from current academic session that will begin from September 2013. What shapes these reforms will take and what impact they will have, only time and future researches will tell.

References

About-France.com. (2012). *Primary and secondary schools in France*. Retrieved from http://about-france.com/primary-secondary-schools.htm

Baron, G.L., & Bruillard, E. (2003). Information and communication technology: models of evaluation in France. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *26*(2), 177-184.

Baron, G.L., & Harrari, M. (2003). Potential for dramatic change- France, ICT and decentralization. *LLinE Lifelong Learning in Europe*, *VIII* (3), 34 - 43.

Brisard, E. (2002). *National visions of initial teacher education? The coceptualisation of the initial preparation of secondary teachers in England, France and Scotland*. Retrieved from http://www.ser.stir.ac.uk/pdf/144.pdf

Calderhead, J. (1997). Towards a research base for the development of teacher education in Europe: The 1996 SERA Lecture. *Scottish Educational Review*, *29* (1), 3-9.

CampusFrance.org. (2011). *Higher education in France*. Retrieved from http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/agence_cf/presentations/en/enseignement_sup_en.pdf

Carroue, C. (2012). Enhancing teachers' status in France is the long-eroded status of teachers about to improve? *Worlds of Education*, *41*, 46-49. Retrieved from http://worldsofeducation.org/pdf/46/Magazine_en.pdf

Cooper , J.M., & Alvarado, A. (2006). *Preparation, recruitment, and retention of teachers*. France: IIEP; Belgium: IAE.

Cornu, B. (2006). *Teacher training: the context of the knowledge society and lifelong learning, the European dimension and the main trends in France*. Retrieved from http://www.seeeducoop.net/education_in/pdf/workshop/tesee/dokumenti/monografija/Cornu-France.pdf

Cros, F., & Obin, J. P. (2003). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers country background report for France*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/france/30414627.pdf

Cubberley, E.P. (1920a). *History of education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Cubberley, E. P. (1920b). *Readings in the history of education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57 (X), 1-15.

Dean, M. (2003). Teacher education in France: Evolution or revolution? In Moon B., Vlasceanu L. and Barrows L.C. (Eds.), *Institutional approaches to teacher education within higher education in Europe: current models and new developments* (pp.109-135). Bucharest: UNESCO CEPES.

Education International. (12 December 2012). *France: Improving working conditions for trainee teachers*. Retrieved from http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2400

Educational International (03 May, 2013). *France: Government move to improve primary teachers conditions*. Retrieved from http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2558

Edwards, R. (1991). Theory, history, and practice of education: Fin de siècle and a new beginning. *McGill Journal of Education*, 26 (3), 237-266.

Europan Schoolnet.(2010). *France country report on ICT in education*. Retrieved from http://cms.eun.org/shared/data/pdf/cr_france_2009_final_proofread_2_columns.pdf

EuroEducation.net.(2013). *The Europeans education directory*. Retrieved from http://www.euro-education.net/prof/franco.htm

European Schoolnet. (2010). *France country report on ICT in education*. Retrieved from http://insight.eun.org

European Commission.(2007). *Improving the quality of teacher education*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/com392_en.pdf

European Commission. (2012). *Supporting the teaching professions for better learning outcomes.*

Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/sw374_en.pdf

Eurypedia. (2013). *European Encyclopaedia on national education Systems*. Retrieved from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Main_Page

Expatica. (2011). *French education system*. Retrieved from http://www.expatica.com/fr/education/school/a-guide-to-the-french-education-system-945_10468.html

France Guide.(2013). *Introduction the French education system*. Retrieved from http://www.justlanded.com/english/France/France-Guide/Education/Introduction

Justlanded.com (2013). Higher education Universities, Grandes Écoles & Ecoles Supérieures. Retrived from http://www.justlanded.com/english/France/France-Guide/Education/Higher-education

Green, B. (2004). Renewing teacher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *32*(3), 187-191.

Gumbel , P. (2012).*Too much grammar, too few teachers: The French education system is failing*. Retrieved from http://qz.com/24585/too-much-grammar-too-few-teachers-the-french-education-system-is-failing/

IUFM. (2005). *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres- IUFMs* . Retrieved from http://www.iufm.education.fr/connaitre-iufm/plaquettes-documents/en_4pages-quadri.pdf

Krek, J. (2011). Foreword. In M. Valenčič Zuljan and J. Vogrinc (Ed.), *European dimensions of teacher education –Similarities and differences*. Ljubljana : Faculty of Education; Kranj : The National School of Leadership and Education.

Labaree, D. (2004). *The trouble with ed schools*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Ministère des Affaires étrangères. (2007). *The education system in France*. Retrieved from http://ambafrance-us.org/IMG/pdf/education_system.pdf

Ministry of Higher Education and Research. (2010). *Définition des compétences à acquérir par les professeurs, documentalistes et conseillers principaux d'éducation pour l'exercice de leur métier*. Retrieved from http://www.

enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid20536/rubrique-bo.html?cid_bo=52614

Ministry of Higher Education and Research. (2012). Computing *and internet certificate (C2i)*. Retrieved from http://www.c2i.education.fr/IMG/pdf/Referentiel-C2i2-en.pdf

Ministry of National Education. (2012). *School education in France*. Retrieved from http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/dossiers/07/3/2013_School_Education_in_France_244073.pdf

OECD. (2005). *Teachers matter attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. Paris : OECD. Retrieved from http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/letolt/nemzet/oecd_publication_teachers_matter_english_061116.pdf

Picard, P., & Ria, L. (2011). Neopass@ction: a training tool for beginning teachers. In P. Picard & L. Ria (Eds.), *Beginning teachers: a challenge for educational systems– CIDREE Yearbook 2011* (pp. 119-130). Lyon, France: ENS de Lyon, Institut français de l'Éducation.

Sacilotto-Vasylenko, M., & Fave-Bonnet, M.F. (2011). Teacher education in France: Persistent tensions. In M. Valenčič Zuljan and J. Vogrinc (Ed.), *European dimensions of teacher education –Similarities and differences*. Ljubljana : Faculty of Education ; Kranj : The National School of Leadership and Education.

Sarre, C. (2013). *Teacher education programmes at the IUFM Paris*. Power-point presentation (unpublished).

SNES. (2012). *SNES survey on trainee teachers*. Retrieved from http://www.snes.edu/Semaine-d-expression-des,24172.html

UNESCO. (2005). *Guidelines and recommendations for reorienting teacher education to address sustainability*. Paris: UNESCO.

World Bank. (2013). *Public spending on education, total (% of GDP)*. Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS

Working Papers : la liste

Hervé Le Bras, Jean-Luc Racine & Michel Wieviorka, *National Debates on Race Statistics: towards an International Comparison*, FMSH-WP-2012-01, février 2012.

Manuel Castells, *Ni dieu ni maître : les réseaux*, FMSH-WP-2012-02, février 2012.

François Jullien, *L'écart et l'entre. Ou comment penser l'altérité*, FMSH-WP-2012-03, février 2012.

Itamar Rabinovich, *The Web of Relationship*, FMSH-WP-2012-04, février 2012.

Bruno Maggi, *Interpréter l'agir : un défi théorique*, FMSH-WP-2012-05, février 2012.

Pierre Salama, *Chine – Brésil : industrialisation et « désindustrialisation précoce »*, FMSH-WP-2012-06, mars 2012.

Guilhem Fabre & Stéphane Grumbach, *The World upside down, China's R&D and innovation strategy*, FMSH-WP-2012-07, avril 2012.

Joy Y. Zhang, *The De-nationalization and Re-nationalization of the Life Sciences in China: A Cosmopolitan Practicality?*, FMSH-WP-2012-08, avril 2012.

John P. Sullivan, *From Drug Wars to Criminal Insurgency: Mexican Cartels, Criminal Enclaves and Criminal Insurgency in Mexico and Central America. Implications for Global Security*, FMSH-WP-2012-09, avril 2012.

Marc Fleurbaey, *Economics is not what you think: A defense of the economic approach to taxation*, FMSH-WP-2012-10, may 2012.

Marc Fleurbaey, *The Facets of Exploitation*, FMSH-WP-2012-11, may 2012.

Jacques Sapir, *Pour l'Euro, l'heure du bilan a sonné : Quinze leçons et six conclusions*, FMSH-WP-2012-12, juin 2012.

Rodolphe De Koninck & Jean-François Rousseau, *Pourquoi et jusqu'où la fuite en avant des agricultures sud-est asiatiques ?*, FMSH-WP-2012-13, juin 2012.

Jacques Sapir, *Inflation monétaire ou inflation structurelle ? Un modèle hétérodoxe bi-sectoriel*, FMSH-WP-2012-14, juin 2012.

Franson Manjali, *The 'Social' and the 'Cognitive' in Language. A Reading of Saussure, and Beyond*, FMSH-WP-2012-15, july 2012.

Michel Wieviorka, *Du concept de sujet à celui de subjectivation/dé-subjectivation*, FMSH-WP-2012-16, juillet 2012.

Nancy Fraser, *Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History: An Introduction*, FMSH-WP-2012-17 august 2012.

Nancy Fraser, *Can society be commodities all the way down? Polanyian reflections on capitalist crisis*, FMSH-WP-2012-18, august 2012.

Marc Fleurbaey & Stéphane Zuber, *Climate policies deserve a negative discount rate*, FMSH-WP-2012-19, september 2012.

Roger Waldinger, *La politique au-delà des frontières : la sociologie politique de l'émigration*, FMSH-WP-2012-20, septembre 2012.

Antonio De Lauri, *Inaccessible Normative Pluralism and Human Rights in Afghanistan*, FMSH-WP-2012-21, september 2012.

Dominique Méda, *Redéfinir le progrès à la lumière de la crise écologique*, FMSH-WP-2012-22, octobre 2012.

Ibrahima Thioub, *Stigmates et mémoires de l'esclavage en Afrique de l'Ouest : le sang et la couleur de peau comme lignes de fracture*, FMSH-WP-2012-23, octobre 2012.

Danièle Joly, *Race, ethnicity and religion: social actors and policies*, FMSH-WP-2012-24, novembre 2012.

Dominique Méda, *Redefining Progress in Light of the Ecological Crisis*, FMSH-WP-2012-25, décembre 2012.

Ulrich Beck & Daniel Levy, *Cosmopolitanized Nations: Reimagining Collectivity in World Risk Society*, FMSH-WP-2013-26, february 2013.

Xavier Richet, *L'internationalisation des firmes chinoises : croissance, motivations, stratégies*, FMSH-WP-2013-27, février 2013.

Alain Naze, *Le féminisme critique de Pasolini, avec un commentaire de Stefania Tarantino*, FMSH-WP-2013-28, février 2013.

Thalia Magioglou, *What is the role of "Culture" for conceptualization in Political Psychology? Presentation of a dialogical model of lay thinking in two cultural contexts*, FMSH-WP-2013-29, mars 2013.

Byasdeb Dasgupta, *Some Aspects of External Dimensions of Indian Economy in the Age of Globalisation*, FMSH-WP-2013-30, april 2013.

Ulrich Beck, *Risk, class, crisis, hazards and cosmopolitan solidarity/risk community – conceptual*

and methodological clarifications, FMSH-WP-2013-31, april 2013.

Immanuel Wallerstein, *Tout se transforme. Vraiment tout ?*, FMSH-WP-2013-32, mai 2013.

Christian Walter, *Les origines du modèle de marche au hasard en finance*, FMSH-WP-2013-33, juin 2013.

Byasdeb Dasgupta, *Financialization, Labour Market Flexibility, Global Crisis and New Imperialism – A Marxist Perspective*, FMSH-WP-2013-34, juin 2013.

Kiyomitsu Yui, *Climate Change in Visual Communication: From 'This is Not a Pipe' to 'This is Not Fukushima'*, FMSH-WP-2013-35, juin 2013.

Gilles Lhuilier, *Minerais de guerre. Une nouvelle théorie de la mondialisation du droit*, FMSH-WP-2013-36, juillet 2013.

David Tyfield, *The Coal Renaissance and Cosmopolitized Low-Carbon Societies*, FMSH-WP-2013-37, juillet 2013.

Lotte Pelckmans, *Moving Memories of Slavery: how hierarchies travel among West African Migrants in Urban Contexts (Bamako, Paris)*, FMSH-WP-2013-38, juillet 2013.

Amy Dahan, *Historic Overview of Climate Framing*, FMSH-WP-2013-39, août 2013.

Rosa Rius Gatell & Stefania Tarantino, *Philosophie et genre: Réflexions et questions sur la production philosophique féminine en Europe du Sud au XXᵉ siècle (Espagne, Italie)*, FMSH-WP-2013-40, août 2013.

Angela Axworthy *The ontological status of geometrical objects in the commentary on the Elements of Euclid of Jacques Peletier du Mans (1517-1582)*, FMSH-WP-2013-41, août 2013.

Pierre Salama, *Les économies émergentes, le plongeon ?*, FMSH-WP-2013-42, août 2013.

Alexis Nuselovici (Nouss), *L'exil comme expérience*, FMSH-WP-2013-43, septembre 2013.

Alexis Nuselovici (Nouss), *Exiliance : condition et conscience*, FMSH-WP-2013-44, septembre 2013.

Alexis Nuselovici (Nouss), *Exil et post-exil*, FMSH-WP-2013-45, septembre 2013.

Alexandra Galitzine-Loumpet, *Pour une typologie des objets de l'exil*, FMSH-WP-2013-46, septembre 2013.

Hosham Dawod, *Les réactions irakiennes à la crise syrienne*, FMSH-WP-2013-47, septembre 2013.

Gianluca Manzo, *Understanding the Marriage Effect: Changes in Criminal Offending Around the Time of Marriage*, FMSH-WP-2013-48, GeWoP-1, octobre 2013.

Torkild Hovde Lyngstad & Torbjørn Skarðhamar, *Understanding the Marriage Effect: Changes in Criminal Offending Around the Time of Marriage*, FMSH-WP-2013-49, GeWoP-2, octobre 2013.

Gunn Elisabeth Birkelund & Yannick Lemel, *Lifestyles and Social Stratification: An Explorative Study of France and Norway*, FMSH-WP-2013-50, GeWoP-3, octobre 2013.

Franck Varenne, *Chains of Reference in Computer Simulations*, FMSH-WP-2013-51, GeWoP-4, october 2013.

Olivier Galland & Yannick Lemel, avec la collaboration d'Alexandra Frenod, *Comment expliquer la perception des inégalités en France ?*, FMSH-WP-2013-52, GeWoP-5, october 2013.

Guilhem Fabre, *The Lion's share : What's behind China's economic slowdown*, FMSH-WP-2013-53, october 2013.

Venni V. Krishna, *Changing Social Relations between Science and Society: Contemporary Challenges*, FMSH-WP-2013-54, november 2013.

Isabelle Huault & Hélène Rainelli-Weiss, *Is transparency a value on OTC markets? Using displacement to escape categorization*, FMSH-WP-2014-55, january 2014.

Dominique Somda, *Une humble aura. Les grandes femmes au sud de Madagascar*, FMSH-WP-2014-56, january 2014.

Débora González Martínez, *Sur la translatio de miracles de la Vierge au Moyen Âge. Quelques notes sur les Cantigas de Santa Maria*, FMSH-WP-2014-57, janvier 2014.

Pradeep Kumar Misra, *The State of Teacher Education in France: A Critique*, FMSH-WP-2014-58, january 2014.

Position Papers : la liste

Jean-François Sabouret, *Mars 2012 : Un an après Fukushima, le Japon entre catastrophes et résilience*, FMSH-PP-2012-01, mars 2012.

Ajay K. Mehra, *Public Security and the Indian State*, FMSH-PP-2012-02, mars 2012.

Timm Beichelt, *La nouvelle politique européenne de l'Allemagne : L'émergence de modèles de légitimité en concurrence ?*, FMSH-PP-2012-03, mars 2012.

Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães, *Race, colour, and skin colour in Brazil*, FMSH-PP-2012-04, july 2012.

Mitchell Cohen, *Verdi, Wagner, and Politics in Opera. Bicentennial Ruminations*, FMSH-PP-2012-05, may 2013.

Ingrid Brena, *Les soins médicaux portés aux patients âgés incapables de s'autogérer*, FMSH-PP-2013-06, avril 2013.

Samadia Sadouni, *Cosmopolitisme et prédication islamique transfrontalière : le cas de Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui*, FMSH-PP-2013-08, septembre 2013.

Alexis Nuselovici (Nouss), *Étudier l'exil*, FMSH-PP-2013-09, septembre 2013.