Regarding requirements of teachers with specialisations in the education of children with disabilities, arts education, physical education and early childhood care and education, a recent Supreme Court ruling (for the appointment of special educators) and the National Curriculum Framework documents opens up possibilities for creating separate cadres in Government schools.

The Hon. Supreme Court in an order passed in 2021 had issued an order to appoint special educators in general schools in every state and Union Territory of India.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2023) places the arts as one of the main curricular areas.

Following the recommendations of NEP 2020, a separate National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage has been brought out (NCERT, 2022). This framework takes an integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Education for children between ages 3-8.

SOTTER 2023 interviewed two key informants from each of these four sectors, with more than two decades of working in premiere national institutions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. These interviews were mostly conducted face-to-face, with one exception where the interview was conducted over phone. Each interview lasted 45-60 minutes. A summary of the interviews is tabulated here primarily with the intent of understanding the nature of teacher preparation, demand for such courses, the profile of students who enrol in their courses and the career prospects of their graduates. The responses are quoted in italics and where they differ or bring in another perspective, each respondent is identified as (1) and (2).

|  | **Special Education Teachers** | **Art Teachers** | **Physical Education Teachers** | **Teachers for the Foundational Stage** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preparation | *Earlier it was more in distance learning mode. With RCI this has come down (1).*  *All* (university*) education departments must include special education* (2). | *It started with National Curriculum Framework 2005, which suggested that all the activities are ‘curricular’ in nature. It created space for specialized courses for teachers. Meanwhile, now it is mainly NEP 2020, where you may find its reference in chapter 5. Also, the New NCF (2023) has* (integrated arts in education). *At present, we do not have any system for preparing Art educators. Only a few diploma courses are offered. Maximum number (of art educators) is that of artists basically. But they do not know pedagogy* (1)*.* | *As per the ministry guidelines, the candidate must be playing one of the games recognized by the institute. We conduct, fitness test, then skill test and then written test which earlier was in English only, now also in Hindi. Finally, an interview to test the attitude and aptitude is conducted. According to these, rank list is prepared. Now two-year BPEd is also there after graduation apart from four-year course. Now we have post graduate diploma in sports coaching* (1)*.* | *Not much of teacher education is happening. Diploma Courses - 2 months to a year are available. It is a huge variation. IGNOU has been offering a 2-year diploma consistently. But there is no regulation. Private sector is more active currently* (1)*.* |
| Demand | *Definitely, it has gone up. Earlier it was barely 200-300*  (in the state of Delhi)*. This upwards trend started somewhere around 2012* (1)*.*  *In terms of employment, special education is better than the general B.Ed course, so is a preferred one* (2). | *Now there is more enrolment and less dropout in the courses* (2)*.* | *Demand has gone up* (but) *the devotion is lacking but now actually more people are coming to this field as almost all the parents want their children to be sportsperson in the country.* | *There is a decline in training institutions in the country. Private institutions are also closing. No demand is there. In the Eastern states there are hardly any institutions. There are no regulations. Anganwadi Training Centres (AWTCs) are closed down* (1)*.* |
| Profile of students | *Since NTA has taken over, more urban middle-class is coming in while earlier it was mostly rural. The fee is also going up, you can see, in the same university, general B.Ed. is 10k while special B.Ed. is 75k to 90k* (per annum) (1).  *Predominantly girls, but now more boys are also enrolling* (2). | *Mostly EWS (Economically weaker sections) students coming in. (With) schemes for girls, the profile has changed in the past years* (1)*.* | *Mostly boys from poor communities. Rural people used to be more than urban but now it is kind of equal.* | *Students are mainly from lower socio-economic backgrounds. They mainly go for 2 to 4 month certificate courses. The students are largely females. Feminization of the cadre is a concern. It is a general belief that anybody who is a woman can be an ECCE educator* (1)*.* |
| Employment prospects | *Very good job scenario, especially after CBSE directive. Earlier..... it was not a ‘right’ then. Now, proper posts are there for special educators post-RtE Act.* | *RtE Act had a huge impact. In some of the states universalization of education was misinterpreted in a way that it impacted art education. Art teachers were there in Rajasthan and Maharashtra earlier but the clause that said if no regular teacher is available, then guest teachers may be hired. This somehow became a norm and only guest teachers were then hired. It ended art education in some of the states*  (2). | *After graduation they are qualified to become a teacher in a school. No need of TET. This was the only opportunity in the old times. Now specializing in one game, they can even become coach. They get opportunity in government as well as private sector.*  *Many of them are even joining fitness industry as a lot of opportunities are there. They can even start their own fitness centre. They can join fitness centres, 3-star, 5-star hotels as fitness specialists.* | *There is no cadre for ECCE. Only program for this is ICDS but a larger system is not there. There is no requirement for ECE teachers (in the government sector). A lot of teachers are employed in private sectors but they may prefer B.Ed., M.Ed* (1)*.* |
| Suggestions | *In cities like Delhi, there is high concentration. But the distribution is not even. More programs are not needed but distribution of resources in a more judicious way is what we need* (1).  *If the* (Supreme Court) *order is implemented, more educators will be needed and thus more institutions or seats to prepare such teachers* (2). | *Similar to Physical Education Directorates, there must one for Arts Education as well at the State and District levels. Only this will promote arts education* (2). | *Even students realize the importance of physical education. We also need to fight challenges like drugs among youth. There must be compulsory/permanent program for PE in schools. Every class must have a physical education class in a day. Even general fitness activities need to part of the processes* (1)*.* | *The need for professionalization of ECCE teachers should be recognized. Setting in place a regulatory system with specific budgetary provision. If* (conceived as) *part of Elementary education, it gets diluted. There should be a dedicated cadre* (1)*.* |

Source: SOTTER 2023 Key Informants’ Interview