CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

The selection of role models is a crucial factor in the professional development of pupil teachers. Role models influence an individual's values, behavior, and professional choices in significant ways. Pupil teachers, who are in the formative phase of their careers, often look up to individuals who exemplify qualities they admire or aspire to develop. These role models may be experienced educators, personal mentors, historical figures, or even media personalities who inspire through their actions, values, or achievements. The relationship between the pupil teacher and the role model is not one of passive admiration but active internalization, where observed qualities begin to shape the observer's teaching philosophy, identity, and approach to the profession.

Role models serve as guiding figures, reflecting the attributes one wishes to embody. In teacher education, where future educators are not only acquiring academic knowledge but also forming ethical and professional identities, the influence of role models is profound. Pupil teachers often draw motivation from individuals who exhibit dedication, creativity, empathy, leadership, or innovation. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they tend to emulate behaviors, attitudes, and approaches that resonate with their values and aspirations. For instance, a teacher known for their innovative classroom methods or dedication to social causes may become a source of inspiration for pupil teachers aspiring to make a difference in their future classrooms.

The process of choosing a role model is deeply personal and reflective of the pupil teacher's own developmental needs and goals. This choice is rarely random; rather, it involves a selective and meaningful identification with qualities perceived as desirable or worthy of imitation. In the classroom, these influences manifest in various ways—from teaching styles and classroom management techniques to communication strategies and professional decision-making. As pupil teachers adopt these observed practices, they begin to construct their own identities, shaped in part by the models they admire.

Beyond pedagogy, the influence of role models extends to broader aspects of educational engagement such as leadership, advocacy, and community involvement. Pupil teachers who admire figures known for educational reform or social justice may also develop a commitment to such causes, envisioning their roles not just within the classroom but in shaping the educational system at large. Thus, role models contribute to the holistic development of pupil teachers, inspiring them to think critically, act ethically, and engage meaningfully in their professional communities.

From a developmental perspective, the tendency to emulate admired individuals begins early in life and evolves with age and experience. During childhood and adolescence, role models are often drawn from immediate environments—parents, teachers, elders—but as exposure

broadens, individuals start identifying with public figures, authors, cultural icons, and educators whose lives or work resonate with their beliefs and ambitions. This modeling process—central to social learning—allows individuals to learn vicariously through observation, retaining and reproducing behaviors that are reinforced socially or emotionally. In the context of teacher education, this learning is magnified, as pupil teachers consciously observe and absorb the traits of those they look up to, while also preparing to become role models themselves.

The modern digital landscape has diversified the range of available role models. Social media, films, online platforms, and global access to information expose pupil teachers to an array of personalities, some constructive and others potentially misleading. While this offers diverse sources of inspiration, it also necessitates critical reflection. Not all widely admired figures exemplify values compatible with the ethics of teaching, and uncritical imitation can lead to superficial or conflicting professional behavior. Therefore, encouraging reflective engagement with chosen role models is essential in shaping a mature, responsible educator.

In teacher education, the importance of understanding who pupil teachers admire and why becomes especially relevant. The individuals they choose to emulate reveal much about their professional inclinations, ethical orientations, and educational philosophies. This understanding can help teacher educators provide more targeted mentorship and foster an environment where future educators develop a strong sense of purpose. Aligning teacher education with this awareness promotes thoughtful engagement, encouraging pupil teachers to explore their inspirations in meaningful and ethically grounded ways.

As pupil teachers transition into full-fledged professionals, the imprint of their role models continues to influence their practice. Whether in lesson planning, classroom interaction, or broader professional conduct, the echoes of admired figures remain present. Recognizing the power of this influence, teacher education programs must integrate opportunities for guided reflection, dialogue, and critical engagement with role modeling. Doing so supports the formation of educators who are not only skilled but also grounded, reflective, and inspirational.

In conclusion, the selection of role models by pupil teachers is not a trivial matter. It is a dynamic and meaningful process that shapes their evolving identity, informs their professional conduct, and inspires their lifelong journey as educators. Understanding this process enriches teacher education and supports the broader goals of building a competent, ethical, and inspired teaching workforce, as envisioned in national educational policies and global frameworks alike

Importance of Personality Development and Role Models

Personality development is a lifelong process influenced by various internal and external factors. Among these, the selection and impact of role models play a crucial role, especially during the formative years. Role models provide behavioral, emotional, and moral examples that young individuals often observe, imitate, and internalize. As students navigate through different stages of growth, the role models they choose significantly shape their character, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships.

Role of Modeling in Social Learning

The concept of modeling, as discussed in social learning theory by Bandura and others, emphasizes that individuals learn through observation and imitation. Modeling involves adopting behaviors, emotions, and attitudes exhibited by others. When individuals perceive a role model as successful, admirable, or authoritative, they are more likely to imitate their actions. This observational learning becomes a powerful tool in personality formation and social adjustment.

Impact of Role Models on Adolescents

Adolescence is a particularly sensitive stage where identity formation, emotional growth, and cognitive development are at their peak. During this time, students are more susceptible to the influence of role models. Whether the influence is positive or negative depends largely on the characteristics of the role model. As students internalize behaviors without always critically analyzing them, there is a risk of adopting detrimental habits if the model promotes such behavior.

Pupil Teachers as Observers and Future Models

Pupil teachers are in a transitional phase—they are both learners and emerging educators. They not only seek role models for their own personal and professional development but also prepare to become role models themselves. Understanding the types of role models they choose offers insights into their values, ethical perspectives, and personality traits. These influences have long-term implications for how they will guide and inspire their future students.

Types of Role Models Chosen

Young individuals, including pupil teachers, may choose their role models from diverse spheres—family, teachers, peers, public figures, fictional characters, and increasingly, social media influencers. While traditional models like parents and educators typically promote ethical and goal-oriented behavior, media figures might present idealized or misleading images. The variety in role model sources reflects both the diversity of influence and the complexity of modern personality development.

Positive and Negative Influences

The behavior adopted from role models can lead to positive traits such as confidence, empathy, and responsibility. However, when role models exhibit aggression, dishonesty, or shallow fame, those traits can be mirrored by the observer. Imitating without understanding can hinder

critical thinking and identity clarity. Therefore, it is important to analyze not just who is being modelled, but also why and how their behaviors are influencing students.

Relevance to NEP 2020 and Teacher Education

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes holistic development, character-building, and value-based education. In this context, the role of teachers as role models becomes even more vital. For teacher education programs, understanding the personality traits of pupil teachers and their role model preferences can help in designing curricula that foster responsible, ethical, and effective educators. It also aligns with the NEP's focus on reflective, empathetic, and inspirational teaching practices.

Role Model Selection as a Reflection of Identity Formation

Role models are deeply linked to an individual's identity formation, especially during the late adolescent and early adult stages. According to Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, individuals at this stage are navigating the "identity vs. Role confusion" conflict. The people they admire and attempt to emulate become blueprints for their future selves. For pupil teachers, the role models they select—be it a caring school teacher, an empowering professor, or a social reformer—indicate the kind of educator and person they are trying to become. Thus, role model selection is not random; it is a symbolic representation of their aspirations, self-perception, and personal goals.

Role Models and Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development suggests that individuals progress through stages of moral reasoning, from obedience and punishment to universal ethical principles. Role models, particularly those demonstrating high moral standards, play a key role in this development. For pupil teachers, being exposed to ethical mentors—those who model fairness, integrity, and empathy—can enhance their moral reasoning skills. Conversely, negative or unethical role models may hinder the development of moral judgment or encourage rationalization of unethical behavior.

Gender Differences in Role Model Preferences

Research shows that gender identity and social conditioning influence whom individuals choose as role models. Female pupil teachers may prefer role models who display emotional intelligence, resilience, and nurturing behavior—often women in education or social service. Male pupil teachers, in contrast, might be drawn to authoritative figures or those who exhibit confidence, achievement, and leadership. These gendered preferences are shaped by cultural narratives and expectations. Understanding these patterns can help educators and institutions design inclusive and responsive mentorship programs.

Influence of Cultural and Social Backgrounds

Cultural upbringing and socioeconomic status greatly impact the choice of role models. Pupil teachers from rural or traditional backgrounds may idealize family elders, local teachers, or spiritual leaders who embody wisdom and simplicity. Those from urban or affluent backgrounds might admire celebrities, entrepreneurs, or global change-makers. These differences reflect diverse value systems—collectivist versus individualist orientations, for

example. Recognizing such cultural influences ensures that teacher education programs respect and integrate diverse inspirations rather than imposing a single model of success.

The Gap Between Ideal and Real Role Models

There is often a psychological gap between the idealized traits pupils admire and the realities of the individuals they choose as role models. For instance, a teacher may seem inspiring from afar but may not consistently practice what they preach. This dissonance can lead to confusion or disappointment in pupil teachers. However, it can also prompt reflection, leading to a more grounded understanding of human complexity and professional expectations. Teacher education programs should prepare students to critically analyze the traits of their role models and learn selectively.

1.2 Need and Justification of the Study

The present study aims to explore the relationship between the role models chosen by pupil teachers in relation to their career preferences. In the context of teacher education, this area of research holds significant importance. Teachers are not only facilitators of knowledge but also influential figures who shape the attitudes, values, and behaviors of their students. As future educators, pupil teachers are in a critical phase of professional and personal development. Understanding the kind of role models they look up to and the influence these figures have on their personalities can provide deeper insights into their future roles as teachers.

In today's rapidly changing socio-cultural and technological environment, young people are exposed to a wide range of influences. Traditional role models such as parents and teachers now share space with celebrities, social media influencers, and fictional characters. These diverse sources of influence can have both positive and negative effects on personality development. With the increasing prevalence of digital media and online platforms, the process of role model selection has become more complex. Therefore, it is essential to study how pupil teachers navigate these choices and what impact such modeling has on their personality traits.

Moreover, the personality of a teacher plays a crucial role in classroom management, student motivation, communication skills, and overall teaching effectiveness. Teachers with well-developed personalities are more likely to create positive learning environments and establish meaningful relationships with students. Hence, investigating the personality traits of pupil teachers in relation to their role model preferences can contribute to the enhancement of teacher education programs.

Another justification for this study lies in the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which places strong emphasis on the holistic development of learners and the role of teachers as mentors and role models. The policy advocates for the professional growth of teachers through self-awareness, reflective practices, and value-based education. This study aligns with these goals by examining how the modeling behaviors of pupil teachers reflect their internalization of values, aspirations, and teaching philosophies.

Despite the significance of role models in shaping the personality and values of future teachers, there is a lack of comprehensive research in the Indian context that directly explores this relationship. Most existing studies either focus on general student populations or do not establish a link between personality traits and role model selection. This study attempts to

bridge this gap by providing empirical evidence and meaningful interpretations relevant to the domain of teacher education.

Therefore, the study is both timely and relevant. It not only addresses a theoretical gap in the field of educational psychology but also has practical implications for curriculum design, teacher training modules, and policy-making in education. By highlighting the impact of role models on personality development, the findings of this research may contribute to developing more self-aware, responsible, and effective educators who can inspire the next generation.

Pupil teachers are not only expected to acquire pedagogical skills but also develop a strong, balanced personality. Their emotional stability, social adaptability, moral reasoning, and leadership qualities are crucial in shaping them into effective educators. Studying their choice of role models helps understand the psychological and social influences shaping their personality.

The National Education Policy stresses character building, ethical values, and responsible citizenship. To align with these goals, teacher education programs must understand how pupil teachers' personality traits are influenced by their choice of role models and whether they resonate with the NEP vision.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of holistic development in education, underscoring the need to nurture well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also ethically and emotionally intelligent. In line with this policy, the role of the teacher is seen as integral to student development. Teachers are expected to be mentors who guide students not only in academic pursuits but also in personal growth. This makes the study of role models and personality traits especially relevant in the context of teacher education. Understanding the factors that shape a pupil teacher's personality can help design more effective curricula that foster emotional intelligence, empathy, and ethical responsibility—qualities that are essential for a successful educator.

In conclusion, the need and justification for this study are grounded in the understanding that role models play a pivotal role in shaping the personalities of pupil teachers, who will go on to influence generations of students. By examining the relationship between role model preferences and influencing traits, this study contributes to the broader understanding of teacher identity formation, professional development, and the future trajectory of teacher education. The insights gained from this study can help in developing more personalized, effective, and value-oriented teacher training programs that align with the goals of NEP 2020 and contribute to the creation of ethical, empathetic, and reflective educators.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to examine the relationship between role models chosen by pupil teachers with their career preferences. It investigates how specific dimensions influence the type of role models selected and how this selection could influence their career preferences .

1.4 Research objectives
1. To determine role models selected by pupil teachers.
2. To find out characteristics by considering which pupil teachers have chosen their role models.

3. To study the relationship between role models chosen by pupil teachers and their career preferences.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Who are the role models selected by pupil teachers?
2. To find out those characteristics by considering which pupil teachers have chosen their role models?
3. What is the relationship between role models chosen by pupil teachers and their career preferences?

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

1. Target Group: The study focuses exclusively on the B.Ed.-M.Ed. integrated students of the Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Bhopal. The findings will be based solely on the role models chosen by this specific group of teacher education students, who are in various stages of their integrated program.

2. Geographical Limitation: The study is conducted within the geographical confines of the Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal, and does not extend to other teacher education institutions or regions. The results of the study are thus contextualized within this particular educational environment.

3. Academic Focus: The study is limited to the role models chosen by students enrolled in the B.Ed.-M.Ed. integrated program. Therefore, it does not include students from other educational programs, such as undergraduates, postgraduates in other disciplines, or students from different fields of study.

4. Sample Size: The study is delimited to the students enrolled in the B.Ed.-M.Ed. integrated program at RIE Bhopal. The sample size is based on the total number of students within this program during the study period, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other teacher education institutions.

5. Methodological Limitation: The study relies on survey-based data collection (Google Forms), which is confined to self-reported responses from the participants. As such, the study does not include direct observational or longitudinal data, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influences on role model selection over time.

1.7 Definition of key terms

1. Role Model: A role model refers to an individual who is admired and looked up to by others, particularly for their qualities, achievements, or behaviors. Role models serve as examples that others, especially students, may seek to emulate or imitate in their personal and professional lives. In the context of this study, a role model is someone whom pupil teachers choose to admire and model their behavior after, influencing their values, character, and teaching approaches.

2. Pupil Teachers -Pupil teachers are students enrolled in teacher education programs, such as the B.Ed.-M.Ed. integrated program at the Regional Institute of Education (RIE) Bhopal. These individuals are in the process of acquiring professional teaching skills and knowledge to become educators. Pupil teachers are both learners and prospective teachers, which means they are simultaneously undergoing academic training and preparing to take on teaching roles.

3. Role Model Selection- Role model selection refers to the process of choosing someone as an example or influence to follow. It involves identifying individuals whose characteristics, achievements, and behaviors are admired and whose qualities are seen as desirable. This term pertains to the ways in which pupil teachers decide which figures to look up to and emulate in shaping their teaching philosophy, personality traits, and professional identity.