

# CURRICULUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME: WHAT DO TEACHER EDUCATORS SAY?

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*India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Besides the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and government aided institutions; private and self-financing colleges and open universities are also engaged in teacher education. Though most teacher education programmes are nearly identical yet their standards vary across institutions and universities. However, teacher education curriculum across the country has been blamed for ineptitude and needs urgent reforms. Teacher educators are a pivotal point of this programme and their opinion regarding the curriculum is very important. Keeping the above in mind, the present study aimed to find out the attitude of teacher educators towards existing teacher education curriculum and the needed renewal in teacher education curriculum. Data was collected from randomly selected 107 teacher educators working in colleges of education affiliated to GGSIPU and M.D.U. A five point attitude scale was developed by the researchers for the purpose of ascertaining their attitude. The findings revealed that teacher educators are largely in disagreement with the current curriculum and hold that a new vision needs to be made for the education of teachers as per the present needs of globalisation, RTE norms, and adoption of inclusive education.*

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher Education Curriculum, Teacher Educators Attitude

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## INTRODUCTION

At different platforms, lot of attention is being drawn towards the existing quality of education at school level in the country. There is a growing dismay about the quality and so a number of efforts have been planned and executed in the contemporary times to improve the quality of education, some of the notable ones are National Curriculum Framework 2005; adoption of continuous and comprehensive evaluation by CBSE. However, as noted by the Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on Learning without Burden, "...inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking." Teacher Education Programmes continue to train and equip the teachers to adjust to the needs of an education system where education is seen as the transmission of information and learning reproduced from textbooks. The teachers are prepared through (a) the meticulous planning of lessons in standardised formats, (b) the custom of fulfilling the required number of lessons delivered and supervised, (c) the convention of organising school assemblies and other routine activities and (d) the formal procedure of completing the required number of written assignment and projects.

Some innovations have been tried in Teacher Education Programmes (TEPs) during different times. After independence, NCERT itself took initiative to implement some innovations in TEPs its own four regional colleges of education in 1960s. In 1968, an innovation was started in Gandhi Vidyapith at Vedchchi, in 1981 a well known NGO made an attempt aiming at spiritual development of human being thought fit to educate teachers of primary level through participative mode of self-learning for school children as well as student teachers. Another programme is Mirambika Elementary Teacher Education Programme, Shri Aurobindo Educational Society, New Delhi, which is working for elementary teachers. In 1994 a group of people after consulting experts in the field, field workers and well known educationists evolved an innovative programme of educating elementary teachers at Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education, New Delhi. From 1997 onwards-strong innovative practice based on participatory self-learning process is in practice to educate secondary level teachers at Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan. However, all these and some other efforts are confined to the particular institutes only, thus leaving an impact on a very limited number of prospective teachers. Moreover teacher education programmes are under the purview of NCTE, which work out the modalities of these programmes including the curriculum. It is being realised and emphasised at different platforms that the unsatisfactory efforts made by the concerned agencies are

getting reflected in periodic revisions of curricula framework with little emphasis on revitalising a largely stagnant teacher education sector. The agenda, before the NCTE is thus twofold: to remove the existing deficiencies of teacher education and to meet the demand of new challenges before it. At present teacher education programmes are essentially institution-based. Their students need to be exposed more and more to the realities of school and community. Internship, practice of teaching, practical activities and supplementary educational activities need to be better planned and organised more systematically. The curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation of teacher education programmes need to be made more objective as well as comprehensive.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Institutions of teacher education fulfil 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. However, concerns are being raised about the quality of teacher education programmes in our country. Among the different concerns raised about the teacher education programmes, one, which requires immediate attention, is the curriculum. During the last few decades' teacher education curricula have come under severe criticism and their weaknesses have been highlighted. Some educationists feel that they do not fully address the needs of contemporary Indian schools and society and they do not prepare teachers who can impart quality education in schools. The principals of some public schools hold the view that there is hardly any difference between the performance of trained and untrained teachers because of out-dated teacher education curricula. These charges may appear to be exaggerated but some of them compel us to rethink about the curricula and their transaction.

Here at this point it becomes important to ascertain what do 'trans-actors' of this so-called obsolete curriculum think about it. Their opinion becomes important because it is they who are actually transacting the curriculum and are most aware about the nitty-gritty's of the curriculum. Because of their broad influence in curriculum implementation, as well as policy setting within educational institutions, faculty members of teacher-education institutions are perfectly poised to talk about the teacher education curriculum. Raussaria and Lele (2002) also state, 'Programme review is an important activity in maintaining quality in a programme. The inputs received and observations made from learners, employees, parents etc., are critical for further improvements'.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study was planned and conducted with the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the attitude of teacher educators regarding different components of teacher education programme (B.Ed.).
2. To determine the attitude of teacher educators towards the needed renewal of teacher education curriculum (B.Ed.).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is a descriptive research as information was gathered from a sample of 107 teacher educators drawn from a cross section of pre-determined population of teacher educators from colleges of education affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi (GGSIPU) and Mahrshi Dayanand University, Rohtak (M.D.U).

## **SAMPLE**

Incidental sampling was adopted to collect responses from 107 teacher educators teaching in the B.Ed. programme of affiliated colleges of GGSIP University and M.D.U.

## **TOOL USED**

A five-point attitude scale was developed by the researchers wherein items related to (i) existing curriculum of teacher education programme and (ii) items related to renewal needed in curriculum for the purpose of collecting the data were provided. Items were framed both positively and negatively in both the areas. Items were given a score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for SA (strongly agree), A (agree), N (not sure), D (disagree) and SD (strongly disagree). Basic demographic information was also collected through a Performa.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The average age of respondents in the present sample was 31.86 years whereas average experience of the respondents in teacher education was 5.62 years. The analysis revealed some hard truths about the attitude of teacher educators. The overall attitude towards the existing B.Ed. curriculum was found to be 2.79, which indicates that teacher educators fairly disagree with sufficiency of the existing B.Ed. curriculum to develop the competence among teachers. The findings have been tabulated in the following headings for better comprehensibility of the readers:

## **ATTITUDE REGARDING EXISTING CURRICULUM OF B.ED. PROGRAMME**

### **1. Duration of the Course**

The analysis revealed that the teacher educators were in disagreement with the existing one year curriculum and held that one year is not sufficient enough to develop the knowledge and competence of prospective teachers. An average of 2.12 was obtained on this item. This finding is in consonance with the findings obtained by Shukla, Singh and Tripathi (2009) where they found that 48 % of the respondents held that the duration of one year is sufficient for preparing of a trained teacher and according to 52 %, the duration of one year is not sufficient time for preparing a trained teacher. This needs to be understood in light of the fact that the sample in the latter study was of prospective teachers. So even the prospective teachers believe that existing duration of one year is insufficient.

### **2. Sufficiency of Teaching Practice**

Teaching demands knowledge as well as skill. Skill development in any field demands practice. As such, practice cannot be substituted for anything in teacher education programme. A low average score of 2.18 further indicates that teacher educators believe that practice teaching in a teacher education programme did not provide enough opportunity to prospective teachers to become master over the teaching skills. Further, they held that duration of teaching practice should be increased. Moreover, the teacher educators were in disagreement (average score of 2.06) with the current mechanism of assessment method followed; they held that the current assessment on practice teaching is far below satisfactory level.

### **3. Gap Between Theory and Practice**

The average score of 2.62 indicate that teacher educators were in between 'disagree' and 'not sure' but more towards undecided regarding the role of the existing B.Ed. programme in providing a sound theoretical base to become an effective teacher. Curriculum should give enough opportunity to the teacher trainees to apply what they study in theory but existing curriculum is too theoretical in nature due to which it becomes difficult to manage and control the real classroom situation. Moreover, in regard to the question on whether existing curriculum is able to bridge the gap between the world of knowledge and world of practice the average score was found to be 3.26 which indicates that teacher educators were once again not sure about it.

### **4. Need of Reflective Outlook**

In regard to the question if existing curriculum is sufficient enough to develop the creative teacher, the average score was found to be 2.08, which indicates that teacher educators were in disagreement, and same case was also seen

when it was asked whether the present teacher education programme can prepare reflective teachers (2.40). Reflective teaching-learning is the need of the hour and the existing curriculum framework doesn't offer much in this respect as teachers need to reflect on systematic issues occurring in the class and linking it with existing theories. The curriculum in its present form hardly offers any opportunities for reflection or any creativity.

### **5. Competency and Skill for Effective Teaching-Learning**

The teacher educators agreed that the existing curriculum was able to develop the competence and skill among teachers to handle the multiple identities in the classroom, as the average score was found to be 3.28. The teacher educators agreed that the curriculum to some extent prepares the teacher trainees to be competent in general and subject specific skills. They were also unsure about the capability of the existing curriculum in developing the competence among the prospective teachers for inclusive education as the average score was found to be 2.92.

### **6. Development of Communication and Presentation Skills**

In regard to question on developing communication and presentation skills during the existing B.Ed. programme average score was found to be 3.54 and 3.12 which indicates that teacher educators were in agreement (that too marginally) for communication skill but in presentation skill and management skill they were not sure about it. Both these skills are very much essential for a teacher.

### **7. Scope for Evaluating the Skills**

Teaching is both an art as well as a skill. Evaluation should be done both for the general and specific components of the programme. For the question whether the existing curriculum is hardly able to assess the competence of teachers the average score was found to be 3.92, which indicates that teacher educators were in agreement with it. It means that the B.Ed. programme fails to evaluate the skills. Further, teacher educators are in agreement that it was unethical to evaluate the students by non-subject teachers as reflected by the average score of 3.44.

### **8. Weightage to Different Components**

Teacher educators are not sure about the weightage given to theory and practical aspects of the course as average of teacher educators score was found to be 3.06. The curriculum should give a justified weightage to theory and practice since in facing the real classroom situation teacher trainees are required to practically apply the theories. It becomes important to prepare them for the practical experiences apart from the theoretical perspectives of the programmes.

## **9. Linkage Between School and Community**

For the successful implementation of the curriculum, the need lies in building up a strong rapport between the school as well as the community. In regard to the question whether existing curriculum develops the link between school and community a low score of 2.84 was obtained which indicates that teacher educators were once again unsure about it. The curriculum should include projects wherein school and community could be brought together leading to qualitative improvement in the society.

### **ATTITUDE TOWARDS RENEWAL OF THE CURRICULUM**

#### **1. Renewal of the Curriculum**

With respect to the prevalent deficiencies in the existing curriculum, the teacher educators were of the view that qualitative improvements should be brought about in the teacher education curriculum. With regard to revitalization the teacher educators agreed with the need to bring renewal in the curriculum was high. They got an average of 3.97, which indicates that teacher educators were in favour of change in the curriculum. The teacher education programme has to include teacher competencies beyond the usual oral, verbal ones, which are required in the participative learning process. Some of them are - Identifying 'sources' of information needed by students to generate learning activities and make them available to learners with differential learning needs.

#### **2. Enrichment in Courses**

The teacher educators believe that necessary changes need to be made in the content and methodology of the curriculum to keep it updated in the current scenario. They opined that there must be some units on subject enrichment in methodology courses (average of 3.98). However, they were not sure (average of 3.2) about whether there should be separate courses on methodology papers for graduate and post graduate B.Ed. students. Further, they held that short projects on community interaction and classroom observation should be introduced in the curriculum. The average of the group on the two discussed enrichments was 4.36 and 4.44 respectively. They were in agreement of the fact that the theoretical courses and school experience component should have equal weightage in the B.Ed. curriculum as an average of 4.24 was obtained on this item.

#### **3. Duration of the Course**

The responses on this item indicate that the teacher educators agree (average of 4.22) that they have felt that the duration of one year B.Ed. programme is insufficient and should be extended to at least one and a half years. They even suggested that the semester system would be more appropriate to run the B.Ed.

programme (average of 3.86). Such a scheme would provide for adequate scope for viewing theoretical understanding and its practical aspects in more integrated manner rather than as two separate components.

#### **4. Teaching Practice and Internship**

Regarding this aspect of the teacher education programme, an average of 4.4 indicates that teacher educators agree that an internship in schools of at least six months duration must be made mandatory for all B.Ed. trainees. Moreover, they were of the opinion (average of 3.98) that an objective criterion of assessment of B.Ed. students in teaching practice needs to be evolved. The overall learning setting or climate of the school experience program has to provide an experiential scope to student teachers to explore, reflect, critically appraise, experiment, and own responsibility for one's decision.

#### **5. Necessary Innovations**

Bearing in mind the need for development of peace values in our children and having a shaking faith in the capacity of teacher education programmes in training teachers, the teacher educators (average of 3.38) did not seem to be very sure that the B.Ed. curriculum can develop the skills and competence among B.Ed. students to impart peace related values through teaching. However, they (average of 4.22) held that the B.Ed. curriculum craft could be taught in such a manner that it can be used as a medium for both teaching and learning.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Teaching is a profession for which aspirants have to be prepared through rigorous education and training for developing needed skills and competencies and essential skills and competencies can be developed only with meticulously planned and sincerely implemented teacher education programmes. Moreover, The teacher educators need to become a reflective practitioner if there is a sincere intention to revitalize the existing curriculum. In light of these assumptions and results from the present study, the authors want to make a few recommendations with regard to structural and operational mechanism of the teacher education programmes. These are as follows:

1. A lot of autonomy needs to be provided to the institutions and the teacher educators while implementing teacher education programmes. This autonomy is not going to be alone and would be accompanied with accountability.
2. An built-in model for teacher education could be developed which may comprise of core components that would be common to all teacher education programmes (pre primary, elementary and secondary) followed by specialisation of professional development specific to the stage of education.



3. The role of national agencies such as NCTE, NCERT and their state level counterparts is of crucial significance in the curriculum renewal process. They need to provide well-coordinated support and take initiative in carrying out such processes.
4. Focus needs to be made on creating a conducive climate in the field for the paradigm shift and generate adequate supportive resources for successful implementation of any curriculum reform.
5. Teacher education programmes should be redesigned to respond to the school curriculum renewal process and in accordance with the state and regional context in which they are situated.
6. NCERT and NCTE in their present forms work in close association for education. However, high-level consultative arrangements between them on building linkages between teacher education and school curriculum design and its processes of renewal would need to be developed.
7. A nation-wide review of teacher education curriculum in the light of the school curriculum renewal exercise needs to be undertaken.

## CONCLUSIONS

A new vision needs to be made for the education of teachers that provides a framework within which pre-service teacher education and on-going teacher development programmes can be redesigned to create reflective practitioners who would have the promise of bringing about radical changes in the process of schooling for hundreds of millions of our children. Teacher education programmes therefore must make a conscious effort to design courses to provide greater 'space' to generate a deeper understanding of these linkages (NCF, 2005). Further NCF says teacher education programmes need to provide the space for engagement with issues and concerns of contemporary Indian society, its pluralistic nature and issues of identity, gender, equity and poverty. It can be safely concluded that the revitalisation of curriculum requires not a mere rearrangement of existing curricular inputs in teacher education. In fact, it requires a clear articulation on the substance or the conceptual contours of teacher education.

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