

A STUDY ON MODERN FEATURES OF TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract

This paper seeks to present a framework for the teacher education curriculum in the twenty-first century. Curriculum development is a local, regional, or state/provincial level process that student teachers often have difficulty comprehending. Education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teachers have to increasingly play the role of crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted. It is necessary that student teachers be sensitized to the need for reducing curriculum load, organize appropriate learning experiences which are joyful in nature and related to immediate environment of the learner and help them develop and imbibe desirable values. The main paper focuses the objectives, hypotheses, method, sample, tool, Analysis, Findings and Suggestion.

Key words: Curriculum, Teacher Educators.

Introduction:

“Curriculum is the question of the methods of teaching and the spirit in which the teaching is given” - **Bertrand Russell**

It is important to engage prospective teachers with the conceptual knowledge they have gained through general education. Most teacher education courses focus exclusively on the methodology of teaching individual school subjects. It is assumed that the teacher trainees have the subject-content knowledge which they would draw upon when required. Hence, teacher education curricula do not engage teacher trainees with subject-content. However, if we want to prepare teachers to present subject-content in developmentally appropriate ways and with critical perspectives it is essential that several theoretical concepts learnt during general education in school and college be revisited and reconstructed. This course also aims to engage student teachers with epistemological and ideological assumptions about knowledge, learner and learning; their implications for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in school education.

Curriculum development is a local, regional, or state/provincial level process that student teachers often have difficulty comprehending.

The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as - A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. According to Goods Dictionary of Education “Teacher education means”, - all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.

Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

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

Teaching skills would include providing training and practice in the different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teachers to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills, preparation and use of instructional materials and communication skills.

Pedagogical theory includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practicing the teaching skills in the classroom. The theory is stage specific and is based on the needs and requirements that are characteristic of that stage.

Professional skills include the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes soft skills, counseling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieving and management skills and above all lifelong learning skills. An amalgamation of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development.

Nature of Teacher Education

- Teacher education is a continuous process.
- Teaching is considered as an art and a science, the teacher has to acquire not only knowledge, but also skills that are called – ‘tricks of the trade’.
- Teacher education is broad and comprehensive.
- It is ever-evolving and dynamic.
- It is a system that involves an interdependence of its Inputs, Processes and Outputs.

Curriculum Definition

The word “curriculum” comes from the Latin word “currere” which means “a course to be run”. Curriculum in India described as ‘a competency based rather than a content based curriculum’ (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2012).

Philosophical bases for curriculum and instruction

John Dewey (1938) viewed education from another perspective. He points out that philosophy is the general principle of education and that education is the laboratory of education. Philosophy plays an important role in deciding the aims of education, teaching content and organization. Hence, its impact on curriculum design cannot be over-emphasized. Dewey stresses that - ‘education should equip children with the ability to solve social problems to promote their growth’. It is important that they develop continuously to meet the ever-increasing challenges of the world. In accordance with this, Dewey deems it necessary to design a curriculum based on children’s experiences and let children be involved in interesting and challenging problems.

Changing Role of the Teacher

The current system of schooling poses tremendous burden on children. Educationists are of the view that the burden arises from treating knowledge as - a given, an external reality existing outside the learner and embedded in textbooks. Knowledge is essentially a human construct, a continuously evolving process of reflective learning. The NCF 2005, requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children's learning in a manner that the child is helped to construct his/her knowledge. Education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers. Teachers have to increasingly play the role of crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted.

Challenges in Teacher Education

Unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes during the past few years characterizes the teacher education scenario of today. With increasing school enrolments and the launch of pan-Indian primary education development programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, there was a natural increase in the demand for teachers. Added to this, the backlog of untrained teachers in the system and the essential requirement of pre-service teacher certification for appointment as a teacher led to mounting pressure on existing institutional capacity. The demand far exceeding supply, market forces have taken over unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country.

Curriculum Content and Transaction

Teacher education for preparation of UEE would require special consideration in dealing with students of rural background, girls, SC / ST, working children, urban deprived, disabled, children in difficult circumstances, migrating, children in poor families, socially disadvantaged groups and minorities. It would also need special effort for bringing all the children to the mainstream of education.

It is necessary that student teachers be sensitized to the need for reducing curriculum load, organize appropriate learning experiences which are joyful in nature and related to immediate environment of the learner and help them develop and imbibe desirable values.

The NCFSE – 2000 highlights education in human values as an integral part of curriculum for all subjects at all stage of school education. It stresses the need for suitably weaving of values, human rights and fundamental duties of citizens in day-to-day teaching and other school activities. This has a clear implication for teacher education. Teachers have to play a crucial role in inculcating values among children. Since every teacher is envisaged to be also a teacher of values, student teachers have to be oriented for value education and developing different strategies for inculcation and promotion of values among school students.

Need of the Study

The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes, "The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in

critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher.”

The National Academy of Education Committee’s Report (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005) wrote that - “Teachers must be aware of the many ways in which student learning can unfold in the context of development, learning differences, language and cultural influences, and individual temperaments, interests and approaches to learning”. Teachers need to know how gather additional information. More importantly, teachers need to keep what is best for the student at the center of their decision making.

“The Ministry of Education document - Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective (1985)” has mentioned - Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. India has reached the threshold of the development of new technologies which are likely to revolutionize the classroom teaching. Unless capable and committed are teachers in service, the education system cannot become a suitable and potential instrument of national development.

The teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The teacher’s work has become more complicated and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy, sociology, modern media and materials. The teacher can be made proficient with well planned, imaginative pre-service and in-service training programmes.

Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigour of programmes should be appropriately enhanced.

“A Study on Modern Features of Teacher Education Curriculum”

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the opinion modern features of teacher education curriculum.
2. To find out the modern features of teacher education curriculum with respect to the following areas
 - Gender : Male / Female
 - Locality: Rural/ Urban
 - Methodology: Maths, Science & Social

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the male and female prospective teachers on modern features of curriculum.
2. There is no significant difference between the rural and urban prospective teachers on modern features of curriculum.
3. There is no significant difference between the Maths, Science and Social prospective teachers on modern features of curriculum.

Variables of the Study

The following are the variable of the present study on which the hypothesis will be tested.

Independent variables

- Gender: Male/Female
- Locality: Rural/ Urban
- Methodology: Maths, Science & Social

Dependent variable

- Modern features of curriculum

Scope and Delimitations of the Study:

The present study was limited to the 200 prospective teachers in Guntur district only.

Method of Investigation

On the present study normative survey method was used.

Plan and Procedure of the Data

The present study aims at gathering the opinions of large number of sample. In this study the problem is clearly defined and had definite objectives. The data gathered in this study has undergone careful analysis and interpretation and logical and skillful reporting of the findings were done.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A random sample of 200 prospective teachers in Guntur district only.

Tool

A Questionnaire is prepared by the investigator with the help of research supervisor and educational experts. The questionnaire consists of 30 items. i.e. agree/ disagree/ undecided

Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria for the given response is

“Agree” for 3 marks, “Disagree” for 2 marks and “Undecided” for 1 mark.

Administration of the Tool and the Collection of Data

The investigator personally went to each college, taking permission of the respective heads of the institution and administrate the tool to 200 prospective teachers belongs to both rural and urban colleges.

Statistical Techniques Used

To find out Mean, SD, % of mean and ‘t’ values are computed.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Objective – 1: To find out the opinion of modern features of teacher education curriculum.

Table 1

Sample	Mean	S.D.
200	68.175	5.446

Objective – 2: To find out the modern features of teacher education curriculum with respect to the different variables.

Table 2: Comparison of the scores w.r.t. different variables.

Variable	Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	S.Ed	't' value
Gender	Male	25	69.45	5.99	0.823	1.8 ^{NS}
	Female	25	68.93	5.652		
Locality	Rural	25	69.76	4.42	0.783	3.02 ^{NS}
	Urban	25	66.99	6.480		
Methodology	Maths – Science	25	67.84	5.948	0.844	0.912 ^{NS}
	Social	25	68.61	6.00		

Findings

- The mean scores of opinion of prospective teachers on modern features of teacher education curriculum are high.
- The variable gender is not influenced the modern features of teacher education curriculum of prospective teachers.
- The variable Locality is influenced the modern features of teacher education curriculum of prospective teachers.
- The variable medium of instruction is not influenced the modern features of teacher education curriculum of prospective teachers.

Suggestions

- The new curriculum framework lies due emphasis on constructivism and encourages critical thinking and learning by interaction and participation.
- More classroom research is conducted to develop teaching and learning strategies to enhance students' generic skills and the assessment strategies of such skills.

Educational Implications

- Systemic changes in tune with curricular reforms
- Ensuring quality education for all children
- Reducing stress and enhancing success in examinations
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) need to be conceived and implemented in a mission mode, involving the establishment of separate VET centers and institutions from the level of village clusters and blocks to sub-divisional/district towns and metropolitan areas in collaboration with the nation wide spectrum of facilities already existing in this sector.
- Language skills - speech and listening, reading and writing - cut across school subjects and disciplines. Their foundational role in children's construction of knowledge right from elementary classes through senior secondary classes needs to be recognized.

Mathematics

- The teaching of mathematics should enhance children's ability to think and reason, to visualize and handle abstractions, to formulate and solve problems. Access to quality mathematics education is the right of every child.

Science

- Science teaching engage the learners in acquiring methods and processes that will nurture their curiosity, creativity and skills particularly in relation to the environment and to enter the world of work.

Social Sciences

- Social science content needs to focus on conceptual understanding rather than lining up facts to be memorized for examination, and should equip children with the ability to think independently and reflect critically on social issues.

Work

Curricula need to be reconstructed to realize the pedagogic potential of work as a pedagogic medium in knowledge acquisition, developing values and multiple-skill formation.

Art

- Arts (folk and classical forms of music and dance, visual arts, clay work, theatre, etc.) and heritage crafts should be recognized as integral components of the school curriculum.
- The arts should comprise a subject at every stage of school education.

Peace

- Peace-oriented values should be promoted in all subjects throughout the school/college years with the help of relevant activities.

Health and Physical Education

Health and physical education are necessary for the overall development of learners. Through health and physical education programmes (including yoga).

Conclusion

No nation develops beyond the quality of its education system, which is highly dependent on the quality of its teachers. Teachers should be given the most appropriate tools during and after their training, including content knowledge and skills as well as teaching methodology to be able to do their work professionally.

“The drill and kill curriculum... undermines rather than improves the quality of education”

- **Monty Neill.**

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