

# Elementary Pre-service Teacher Education Programme in the Context of National Curriculum Framework–2005 A Study in Delhi

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## ABSTRACT

*The study focused on examining the status of elementary teacher education programme in Delhi in the context of National Curriculum Framework 2005. The objectives were to analyse the curriculum, to identify the infrastructure and learning activities of the teacher education institutions, to study the opinion of teacher educators, and to identify the problems (if any) faced by them in transacting the curriculum. Following the mixed methods approach, data were collected employing tools like categorisation matrix for content analysis, check list, and questionnaire. Results showed that the elementary pre-service education curriculum in Delhi has not been modified in accordance with NCF 2005. The availability of infrastructure in institutions was insufficient and learning activities were mechanical and formal as per syllabus. Various problems relating to transaction of curriculum were identified by the teacher educators.*

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## Introduction

One of the major weaknesses of the attempts to bring about curricular reforms in the past has been the lack of a comprehensive plan to link curricular changes with the process of teaching learning, teacher training and the evaluation reforms (Bradley, 2002). It is argued that school curriculum reforms will be seriously constrained if the practice of teacher education and reform in the current teacher education curriculum is not immediately attended to (Batra, 2009). Therefore, reforms in school education

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system need to be ideally accompanied by reforms in teacher education programmes. Historically, four attempts have been made to reform school education curriculum in India. The recent reform in school education was brought out with the publication of *National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005*, which proposed a new paradigm for schooling to support child-centric education. The NCF-2005 advocated for connecting knowledge to life outside the school, de-emphasising rote learning, focusing on overall development of children, and making examinations more flexible. The NCF-2005 gave a new vision to the education by expecting a teacher to be the facilitator of students' learning and shifting the whole pedagogical approach of teacher education programme from traditional teacher-centric to learner-centric discourses. Taking the perspectives of NCF-2005, the *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009* was developed by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), which tries to ensure that teacher education courses are reoriented to cope with the epistemological shift envisaged in NCF-2005. Considering the importance of reciprocal relationship between school education and teacher education, there is a need to analyse and review the teacher education programmes in the light of school curriculum renewal.

### **Review of Literature**

Teacher Education has become a more responsive activity in terms of what is needed and desired in elementary, middle and high schools as well as remaining a potentially powerful lever for change in schools (Griffin, 1999). It is argued that schools will not change unless there is change in the ways in which teachers are educated (Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). It is, however, reported (Gupta & Gupta, 2003) that the objectives of teacher education did not keep pace with the objectives of school education and the socio-cultural contexts and concerns had not been reflected fully in the objectives of teacher education programmes. Yadav (2011) found many variations in implementation of NCF-2005 in terms of structure, working hours, recess periods, teaching of different subjects, evaluation pattern etc. at primary, upper primary and secondary stages in different States/UTs. Goel (2009) analysed elementary teacher education curriculum in terms of its scope for the development of evaluation competencies in pupil teachers and found that there was narrow understanding of

concept of evaluation in pupil teachers which may be because the sub-components related with concept of evaluation have not been stated explicitly in ETE curriculum. In another study, Yadav (2012) examined the status of implementation of pre-service teacher education curriculum at elementary stage in various States and union territories in India. He (Yadav, 2012) reported that academic subjects were given considerably more weightage in comparison to the co-scholastic areas and the integration of theory and practice, content and methods and use of ICT in teaching learning process were not reflected clearly in these courses. Kamath (2011) mentioned that *National Curriculum Framework* 2005, the syllabus and the textbooks are already in the school system and they are being followed by the existing teachers. Though teachers have been oriented towards the new textbooks, there is a need to bring changes in the teacher education system itself especially in the pre-service education. Yadav (2012), while assessing the in-service training (INSET) training packages used by different states, in terms of quality and relevance to the school curriculum, especially NCF-2005, in the States, found that constructivist approach to teaching as advocated in NCF-2005 was not addressed in the training packages.

As regards in-service training, it has been reported to be less effective in enabling teachers for constructivist teaching-learning, which seemed to arise from organisational issues and motivation of teachers (Sen Sharma & Sharma, 2009). It was also found (Yadav, 2012) that constructivist approach to teaching as advocated in NCF-2005 and SSA Framework 2008 was not reflected in in-service training packages.

### ***Rationale of the Study***

As school education has witnessed reforms in curriculum, the introduction of new syllabi and textbooks necessitates consequent restructuring in the teacher education programmes. It is argued that radical change in the school curriculum without changing the central reality of teachers in Indian classrooms through teacher education programmes can do little to alter educational processes and outcomes (Batra, 2005). The emphasis on pre-service education of teachers has been further intensified by its inclusion in the *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act) 2009*, as the act mandates the presence of trained teachers (those who have undergone pre-service education). The Act also describes the

way teachers are expected to encourage learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child-centred manner and make the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety, and help the child to express views freely. Thus, the need arises to study in detail the pre-service teacher education programme in order to know how far the initiatives have been taken by the pre-service teacher education programme for adopting the ideas of construction and contextualisation embedded in NCF 2005. In this context the following issues arise in the area of teacher education:

- Whether the present teacher education programme is adequate to meet the challenges of school curriculum reforms?
- Whether adequate linkage has been established between school education curriculum and pre-service teacher education curriculum?

The present research makes an attempt to address the above issues taking sample from Delhi, as 'the Delhi based DIETs, has begun their curriculum revision process in 2008' (Farooqui & Kaur, 2012) in accordance with NCF 2005. It was one of the felt needs to know the existing status of curriculum transaction process as well as problems in the implementation of the elementary teacher education programme. It attempted to answer the question as to what extent the elementary pre-service teacher education programme in Delhi reflect the ideas of *National Curriculum Framework 2005*? The main objectives of the study included the followings.

- To analyse the pre-service teacher education curriculum in light of the ideas contained in NCF 2005 regarding the teacher education programme.
- To identify the infrastructure and learning activities of the teacher education institutions for facilitating the training of student teachers.
- To study the opinion of teacher educators and to identify the problems (if any) faced by them in transacting the teacher education curriculum.
- To seek suggestions from the teacher educators regarding the improvement of teacher education programme.

### **Method**

The study employed the mixed methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection.

### **Population and Sample**

The population comprised of all 32 teacher training institutions of Delhi including nine District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), 22 self-financed institutes under SCERT, and IASE of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) that provided diploma in elementary teacher education (ETE) in Delhi in the academic session of 2012-2014.

Stratified random sampling was used for selecting the teacher education institutions on the basis of management (university based, DIETs and self-financed) and criterion sampling was used for selecting teacher educators. The selected institutions were IASE of JMI; DIET (South) Moti Bagh; and Institute of Vocational Studies, Sheikh Sarai. Using the criterion sampling, all the elementary teacher educators and students teachers of the sampled teacher training institutes were covered in the study.

### **Tools**

The data were collected using both qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (survey) methods. The qualitative content analysis with a deductive form was used for analysis of syllabi in the light of NCF- 2005. The following tools were used.

- Categorisation Matrix for content analysis of syllabus.
- Check list of educational facilities
- Questionnaire for teacher educators

The categorisation matrix contained the main categories as Learner-centric learning, Facilitation in learning, Knowledge as a continuum, Education in wider social context, and Continuous and multifarious evaluation. The main categories were again categorised into generic categories and sub categories. Coding agenda was attached for further clarification of sub category. The check-list consisted of items regarding facilities available aiming at identifying the status of material and physical resources and other facilities in the selected institutions. The questionnaire for teacher educators comprised the components like professional involvement, curriculum transaction process, problems of curriculum transaction process, positive and negative aspects and suggestions. The reliability and validity of the tools were established.

### **Data Collection**

The ETE syllabus used in IASE, JMI was collected from the department office. As self-financed institutes and DIETs follow the syllabus prepared by the SCERT, only one syllabus was collected on behalf of these institutions. The researcher filled the checklist herself by asking the questions/statements to the programme coordinators. The researcher herself contacted all teacher educators and requested them to fill up the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

The descriptive statistics (percentages and means) was used to report the responses for surveys. The syllabi were content analysed independently by the researcher, followed by the review consensus on whether or not every elements in the syllabus were evident. The quantitative data and qualitative data collected from different levels were analysed separately by level.

### **Results**

#### ***Pre-service Teacher Education Curriculum in the light of NCF 2005***

Results showed that that the concerns of NCF 2005 were reflected to a very little extent in the syllabi. Since the syllabus of JMI was not revised since 2001, the new concepts and ideas developed in NCF 2005, RTE Act 2009 and NCFTE 2009 were totally missed in the syllabus. In case of SCERT, the revised syllabus was not implemented in the session 2012-2014; resulting in missing the ideas of NCF 2005 on teacher education programme in existing syllabus.

With reference to 'Learner centred learning', the generic categories of 'Child and development', 'Child and Health' were reflected to a little extent and 'Art appreciation and Art education' to a very little extent in both the syllabi whereas 'Learner and learning process' were reflected to little extent in syllabus of JMI and a very little extent in syllabus of SCERT.

With reference to the main category 'Facilitation in learning' the generic categories of 'Teacher identity' in school was not reflected in the curriculum; Teaching-learning process was reflected to a little extent in the curriculum; 'Understanding pedagogy' and 'Pedagogic practices' were reflected to some extent in both the syllabi.

- With reference to 'Knowledge as continuum' the generic categories of 'Interlinking Education, Society and Curriculum'

was reflected to a little extent in both the syllabi. 'School Culture, Leadership and Change' was reflected to a little extent in syllabus of JMI but was reflected to a very little extent in syllabus of SCERT.

- Pertaining to the main category 'Education in wider social context', the generic categories of 'Social context of education' and 'Inclusion in Education' were reflected to a very little extent in both the syllabi. 'Exposure to community' was reflected to some extent in both the syllabi. 'Context of child' was reflected to a little extent in the syllabus of JMI, but was reflected to a very little extent in syllabus of SCERT.
- With regard to 'Continuous and multifarious evaluation' the generic category of 'Evaluation in pedagogy courses' was reflected to a very little extent in both the syllabi. 'Basic ideas on evaluation' was reflected to some extent in the syllabus of JMI but was reflected to a little extent in the syllabus of SCERT, Delhi.

From the content analysis, it was found that both the syllabi were not updated. No aspect of constructivism approach was present in any of the syllabi. However some basic aspects of the contents reflect the ideas of NCF 2005 in a very mechanical form. Further the question arises relating to the extent of its transaction and learning activities in teacher training institutions.

### ***Infrastructure and Learning Activities in the Teacher Education Institutions***

The data relating to the availability of infrastructure and learning activities revealed that there were minimum infrastructure facilities, i.e. physical infrastructure like Principal's room, classrooms, multipurpose hall, computer room, furniture and equipment, games facility, arrangements for maintenance of physical infrastructure, separate rooms for faculties, office room, toilets and library; other instructional facilities like educational technology laboratory, instructional materials and science laboratory, and human resources like teaching and non-teaching staffs in all the selected institutions. The infrastructure facilities were insufficient in regard to the number of students. Although all the selected institutions conducted various activities like orientation programme for new entrants, extension lectures on educational issues and educational excursion to places of educational importance in addition to curriculum transaction, the learning activities conducted as per their syllabi were very mechanical and formal. The activities conducted had no base of constructivism and reflective practice.



From the personal contact of researcher with student teachers it was found that there were inadequate library facilities, canteen facilities and computer lab facilities in all the selected institutions. There is need of more and improved infrastructure facilities in all the institutions.

### ***Teacher Educators' Perception in Transacting the Teacher Education Curriculum***

- Regarding the professional involvement of teacher educators, majority of teacher educators were involved in developing curriculum/syllabus and preparation of question papers and evaluation of answer scripts. Majority of teacher educators were involved in participation of professional training; contribution of articles to professional journals and participation in faculty meetings. However, no teacher educator has experience in teaching elementary school students.
- With reference to the classroom transaction process, lecturing and discussions were frequently used for transaction of theory papers. Regarding use of the technological devices (ICT) for classroom transaction, personal computer, internet and power-point presentations were used randomly and interactive whiteboards, audio equipment and digital video cameras were never used. As regards the academic climate of the institution, openness and cooperativeness, pedagogical competencies, work culture and transparent evaluation system were rated as average. ETE curriculum was rated as adequate in promoting learner-centric training experience; providing for facilitating role of teachers; providing for active participation of learners; establishing integration between theory and practice; providing multiple exposures to student teachers and providing scope for continuous and comprehensive evaluation, whereas it was rated as weak in reflecting knowledge in wider social context. About practice teaching aspect of the programme, majority of teacher educators had rated organisation of demonstration lessons, micro teaching approach to initiate teaching, number of student teachers assigned to teacher educators, evaluation of practice teaching, feedback mechanism and co-operation of school authorities as average; whereas they rated lesson planning-guidance and supervision and reflective analysis of practice teaching as below average. Majority of teacher educators positively responded to adequacy of prescribed period of school experience programme (SEP).



- The difficulties encountered by the teacher educators in transacting theory papers were non-availability of reference materials, heavy load of work and lack of revision of curriculum. The difficulties in supervising student teachers during SEP were lack of sufficient time and overload with duty of supervising large student teachers. The difficulties in organising practical activities for student teachers were inadequate infrastructure facilities and more emphasis on teaching of theory courses. The problems in evaluating student teachers in various activities were non-availability of adequate parameters for evaluation, amount of teaching load being on the higher side, and shortage of teachers for evaluation of students in various activities. The weaknesses in current evaluation system in the teacher education were verbalised as going more importance on term end examination, use of outdated and traditional techniques for evaluation, and tendency of inflated marking by some teachers. The student teachers faced organisational problems and classroom problems during school experience programme.
- The strengths/positive aspects of present teacher education programme as identified by teacher educators were the curriculum providing basic concepts of teaching profession; theory and practical works being helpful in preparing primary teachers; courses according to the cognitive ability of students; preparing teachers to understand learners and making efficient in classroom management and time management; providing all round development of student teachers. The weaknesses/negative aspects of the present ETE programme as identified by the teacher educators were not-updated curriculum; prevalence of traditional evaluation pattern; no specification/parameter on evaluation in practice teaching and work experience; shortage of teachers; no appropriate mention of practical component in each paper; lack of orientation/training on new teaching methods; no importance on application of ICT in learning.

### ***Suggestions of Teacher Educators for Improvement of Teacher Education Programme***

- The suggestions of teacher educators regarding curriculum included revision of syllabus in case of JMI and implementation of revised curriculum in case of SCERT; inclusion of inclusive education and ICT in teaching learning as compulsory subjects; involvement of experienced teacher educators in preparation

and revision of syllabus; practice of new methods of teaching; discussion on the current issues in education; improvement in practice teaching and preparation of modern teaching learning aids to be the focus area; presence of flexibility and avoidance of behaviourist paradigm.

- As regards classroom transaction, the teacher educators suggested to include practice of new strategies of teaching; improvement in the application of ICT; practice of open discussions and promotion of collaborative and co-operative learning.
- Their suggestions regarding practice teaching included having longer period of practice teaching; preparation of daily plans and unit plans; maintenance of reflective journal; incentive to practicing schools for more co-operations; in-campus teaching; fixed number of students to be assigned to teacher educators; mentoring practice of co-operating teachers; more organised; proper evaluation and feedback; involvement of student teachers in all school related activities; counselling sessions after practice teaching; identification of parameters for lesson plan as well as proper evaluation scale for observation of practice teaching and exposure to teaching-learning process of different types of schools.
- The teacher educators wanted to have more number workshops; more facilities for practical work; proper sketch of practical work in each subject; specification of proper working hours for conducting practical work; linkage between theory and practical work; well distribution throughout the session.
- The teacher educators wanted that evaluation of theory papers should have scope for flexibility; evaluation to be related to application level; inclusion of objective type question; practice of formative evaluation.
- The evaluation of practice teaching should have proper parameters for evaluation; focus on constructive teaching practice of student teachers and provision of proper feedback; having proper observation schedule for observation of practice teaching; introduction of internal and external evaluation; involvement of school teachers in evaluation of practice teaching.
- Their suggestions regarding evaluation of practical work included introduction of grading system, proper parameters for evaluation of practical work and introduction of internal and external evaluation.

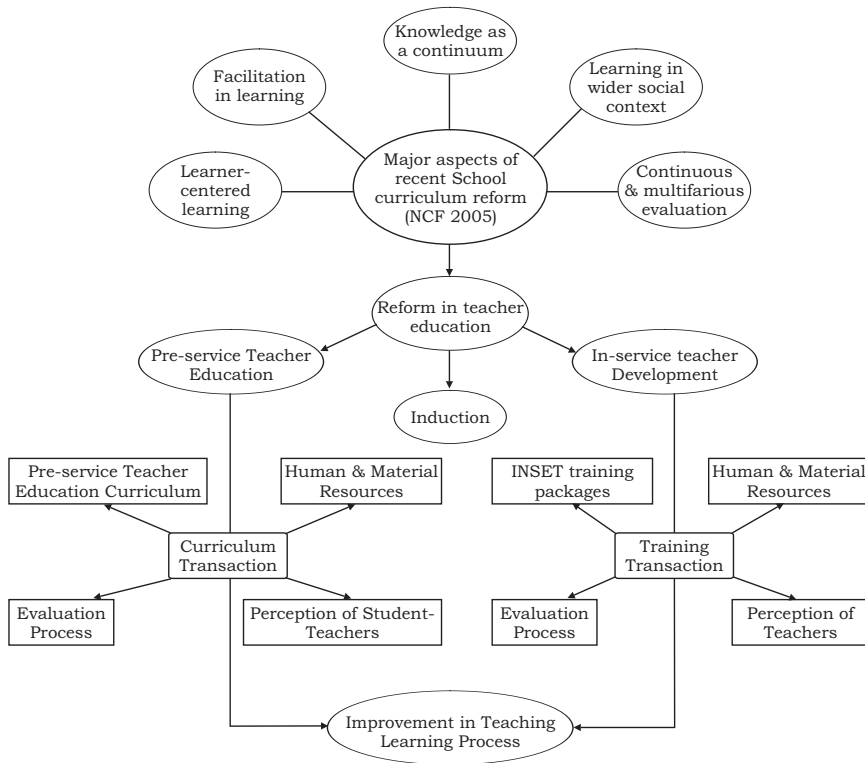
- The teacher educators wanted instituting school as a part of teacher education institution; encouragement for more practical work and field work; focus on development of positive attitude among student teacher for children and teaching; frequent interaction among teacher educators from different institutions; organisation of seminars and workshops on latest teaching methods and techniques for teaching.

### **Discussion**

The central objective of this study was to study the elementary pre-service teacher education programme in Delhi in the context of NCF-2005. The content analysis of ETE curriculum of both the organisations indicated that no aspect of constructivist approach was present in either of the syllabi. This is in support of previous findings as the PSTE curriculum has not been revised in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Goa for more than fifteen years (Yadav, 2011). There was no dearth for infrastructure facilities in teacher education institutions. Although library and computers were available in the institutions, their usage was grossly inadequate as evident from the interviews with students. This is in support of previous findings (Government of Karnataka, 2011). Lecturing and discussion methods dominated the classroom transaction process. The use of the technological devices (ICT) for classroom transaction was scarce. In case of practice teaching, the guidance and supervision of lesson planning and reflective analysis of practice teaching were weak. The teacher educators felt difficulties like non-availability of reference materials for reading, heavy work load and lack of revision of curriculum. Similarly, in supervising student teachers during SEP, the difficulties faced were lack of sufficient time and overload with duty of supervising large student teachers. In organising practical activities for student teachers the difficulties were inadequate infrastructure facilities and more emphasis on teaching of theory courses. The problems related with evaluation of student teachers were non-availability of adequate parameters for evaluation, heavy work load and shortage of teachers. The weaknesses in current evaluation system in the teacher education institution were importance on term end examination, use of outdated and traditional techniques for evaluation and tendency of inflated marking by some teachers. The problems that student teachers face during SEP were organisational problems and classroom problems. The weaknesses/negative aspects of the

present ETE programme as identified by the teacher educators were not updated curriculum; prevalence of traditional evaluation pattern; no specification/parameter on evaluation in practice teaching and work experience; shortage of teachers; no appropriate mention of practical component in each paper; lack of orientation/training on new teaching methods; no importance on application of ICT in learning. The findings were commensurate with the previous findings by Goel (2009), NCERT (2009), Yadav (2012), and Govt. of Karnataka (2011).

There is a need for complete reform in the teacher education sub sector. Reforms in teacher education are needed in accordance with the school curriculum reform in order to realise its objectives. The modifications are needed through the processes of both pre-service & in-service teacher education (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Teacher Education Supporting Major Aspects of Recent School Curriculum Reform**

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

A longitudinal study that compares status of pre-service teacher education and school curriculum reforms over a long period of time is warranted. Other types of teacher education programmes that prepare professional teachers should also be examined. A broader study could also compare status of pre-service teacher education in different states and their conformity to NCF 2005. Additionally, future studies could focus on the different types of pre-service teacher education programmes. These types of studies will expand information on the overall responsiveness of pre-service teacher education programmes to school curriculum reforms.

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