

Development and Modification of Curriculum for Excellence in Teacher Education

Bandhana, Sr.Lecturer, KCS College of Education (Women), Jammu

E-mail:bandhana1@gmail.com

Abstract:

Today's competitive world demands quality education. Therefore Quality teacher education has become an enduring theme as we have to strive for better teachers for better education of children. The quality of school education has direct links to the knowledge, competence and skills of teachers and their initial training preparations. The quality and coverage of any system of teacher education is always decided by the content of teacher education curriculum and the operational modes used for its delivery by the system. Curriculum cannot be stagnant or once for all process of education. It is an evolutionary phase of education phase at all levels from KG to PG. It has to be in line with the changing goals of education from time to time and therefore meet the needs of the changing environment in which we have to live in future and compete for survival and success. Curriculum development and modification has to be rational but not emotional. Hence, for achieving excellence, it has to be in line with modern principles and practices in education.

Keywords: Curriculum development, curriculum modification, excellence in education

Introduction

The quality and coverage of any system of teacher education will be decided by the content of the teacher education curriculum and the operational modes used for its delivery by the system. For determining the quality of teacher education curriculum, we depend upon the general theories of curriculum development. We have to take note of the fact that curriculum of an academic or professional programme developed a point of time is likely to get outdated within a short period of time .Several new concepts and practices come into the field.

The existing literature on curriculum development mostly concerns the principles and practices relating to the school curriculum. The principle of governing curriculum development for teacher education is an area which has not been properly studied. Historically speaking the credit for determining the nature of curriculum for educating a child goes to Rousseau, more than 200 years ago. Later on, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Francis Parker set new traditions in curriculum theory .However, it was only at the beginning of the last century 1902, and i.e. John Dewey in the USA theorized the issue of curriculum in his treatise "The child and his curriculum". There has been a long history of experimentation, development and research in curriculum since then across the world with the result the teachers now require definite answers to several questions before planning a curriculum. The latest one has been the emergence of Modular Curriculum (Pratt, 1980) and Local Specific Form of Curriculum (James Diaz, 1980).

The curriculum, even the best available, will not be able to define all the expected learning experiences, assuming that curriculum itself stands for a document which helps an educational system to understand the different forms of learning experiences to be provided to the learners for achieving all the expected educational outcomes. We are forced to squeeze everything in a one year B.Ed course. The models used for defining the curriculum of the conventional academic year will not work for teacher education especially when we note that the main intension of the course is to develop teaching competencies in a wide range of instructional solution.

The issue: how comprehensive is a curriculum remains mostly unanswered? What are the components of modern teacher education curriculum? What are the core areas? Which are the specialization areas to be included? Should there be a separate training in communication? How can we accommodate all these to do full justice to them without increasing the duration of course? All these questions have to be answered within the new framework of educational expectations for the 21st Century Knowledge Society.

Vast changes are occurring in the concept of curriculum development. One such is the use of Local Specific Curriculum and another well known work of Ivan Illich –the “De-schooling society-exemplifies this new approach. He suggested popular theatre, puppetry or mural newspapers and local radio broadcasts for communication especially for communicating the the social messages.

In the history of curriculum-movement at least six different types of curriculum organization content have been identified by experts viz., (i) curriculum based on social content (ii)curriculum based on psychological content (iii)curriculum based on vocational work (iv)curriculum based on disciplinary work (v) curriculum based on environmental content and, (vi)curriculum based on the integrated or interdisciplinary content.

Till now, the country followed independent programmes of teacher education which varied from one system to another or from one university to the other university. The advent of certain national open bodies for controlling the teacher education has helped to achieve a certain degree of homogeneity. The NCERT, the NCTE, the UGC and the general policy formulation on education system have contributed to the evolution of a general consensus about objectives of teacher education.

Waters (2007) stresses that the curriculum should be treasured. There should be real pride in curriculum-the learning that the nation has decided should set before its youth a marvelous future. Teachers, parents, the wider education community, the media and the public at large should all see the curriculum as something they embrace, support and celebrate. Most of all young people should relish the opportunity for discovering and achievement that curriculum offers to them.

Teacher education and school education have a symbiotic relationship. Developments in both these sectors mutually reinforce the concerns for the qualitative improvement of the entire spectrum of education.

The teacher must now be equipped not only to teach but also to understand the student and the community so that children are regular in schools and interested to learn. The NCF 2005 requires a teacher to be facilitator for children’s learning in a manner that child is helped to construct his knowledge. The launch of the massive Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan in 2002 and the recent financial commitment and education access to augment UEE

mission have underscored the need to adequately prepare teachers to address the growing demand for quality education. Unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programmes during the past few years characterizes the teacher education scenario of today. The NCTE and NCERT over the past few decades have addressed the review of teacher education curriculum in the light of changing educational scenario and brought out a series of framework. These frameworks provide guidelines on the development of teacher education programmes incorporating current concerns as well as national and global developments. The pioneering effort of designing a curriculum framework for teacher education was made by NCTE in 1978. This was reviewed in 1988, subsequently it was followed by the development of a model curriculum by University Grants Commission's Curriculum Development Centre in 1990. When NCTE became a statutory body in 1995, it brought out curriculum framework for quality teacher education in 1998. Another framework, teacher education for future was brought out by NCERT to support the NCF for school education (2000). Two attempts have been made by NCTE to develop draft curriculum framework, the first in 2005 and the second in 2006 and two more draft frameworks, one in 2007 and other in 2008 have since been added.

Several initiatives have been taken in the country during the recent past to enhance the quality of teacher education curriculum for excellence. In the content of teacher education a quality curriculum stands for its ability to develop professionally competent teachers within the assigned time of its operation. The primary purpose of teacher education curriculum in the country is to prepare teachers for the different levels. A teacher working in a school has to perform a variety of roles. The "teacher role" should be one of the bases for the development of teacher education curriculum.

The curriculum of different teacher education programmes are generally conceived in terms of the broad components like, (i) Theory courses (ii) Content cum Methodology courses (iii) Practical work (practice teaching) (iv) Practical work other than practice training. Relevance and responsiveness are essential characteristics of a quality teacher education curriculum. It is now widely recognized that teacher should pay greater attention to the development of self learning skills rather than on the transmission of information and memorization of facts. This shift has to be reflected in the teacher education curriculum. UNESCO report called as Delors Commission (1996) has elaborated the new perspectives for teachers are expected to function in the 21st century classrooms. The four thrust areas of modern education spelt in report has to be reflected in new teacher education curriculum learning to know, learning to do learning to live with others, and to learning to be. Relevance and responsiveness are interrelated and interdependent concepts. Even with highly satisfactory curriculum, there is always a scope for improvement. Therefore, appropriate policies are to put in one place for timely revision of curriculum document to make it up-to-date and in conformity to emerging new needs. The changes have to be made on the basis of accepted professional practices i.e. (i) Critical Review of the Present Curriculum (ii) Review of Teacher Roles and Competencies (iii) Pedagogical Analysis (iv) Updating the Knowledge Base of Teacher Education (v) Culture Specific Pedagogies (vi) and New Evaluation Practices.

Barnett, Parry and Coate (2001) propose a model of curriculum that involves three domains- knowledge, action and self. Parker (2003) argues for a transformational curriculum suggesting that the Barnett et al model be expanded and concentrates on interaction of three domains. Such a curriculum which would engage the student's love of knowledge and re-inspire the teachers would ultimately develop a mature critical self nature.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or to the present are likely to miss the future. Therefore, it is necessary to handle the change due to globalization in a positive manner so that this change can be productive agent in the developing countries. Hence, the creation of an educational system capable of preparing people to live in the changing world is one of the crucial tasks of modern society.

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