

Pre-service Teacher Education Programme at Elementary Level in Odisha : An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Pre-service teacher education programme plays an important role for quality improvement of school education. This piece of work analyses the problems and prospects in present curriculum structure, infrastructural facilities, teacher composition, classroom transaction and evaluation strategies available in different pre-service elementary level teacher education institutions in Odisha. Adopting a descriptive survey research, 13 pre-service elementary level teacher education institutions were selected purposively as sample and data collected from student-teachers, teacher-educators and Principals. The findings of the study revealed that, the curriculum prescribed for pre-service elementary level teacher education programme in Odisha is relevant but needs to incorporate some modern and emerging concepts. Internship or practical classes are to be given much more importance at par with theory. The infrastructural facilities available in the institution are not appropriate and adequate. Teacher-educators posted in the institution are well qualified, but they need some refresher and orientation courses for their professional development with reference to the use of modern technologies and pedagogy. Discussion method, activity based learning, assignment method, project methods, etc. were used for classroom transaction. Teacher educators of these institutions are well qualified, and the enrolled pupil teachers are of good standard. Regarding assessment both student teachers and teacher educators agree that present evaluation system is not adequate as it does not focus equally on theory and practical. Based upon the findings the paper presents educational implications.

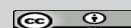
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Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of school teachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge. Teacher education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of the society. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be upgraded. Basically, teacher education is provided to make an individual competent not only to teach their students but also to make them a good citizen of the country. So, for that purpose, the person needs to be professional in the field of teaching.

For a nation their citizens are important, for good citizens the education system is important and to develop good education system the teachers are one of the most important pillar. Elementary education, which makes a significant contribution to national development, occupies a crucial position in the system of education. The teacher not only teaches academics, but also teaches moral values, honesty, guide the students for their future and teacher education provides the skill to become a

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good teacher by applying all the theoretical and practical knowledge in to practical field. Teaching is a professional field and the person who imparts knowledge to students should be competent enough in teaching, pedagogical knowledge, psychological skills, ICT tools and lesson planning etc. So, to make an ordinary person a great teacher we need to train them and that's why teacher education is important. But, in the process of teacher preparation through pre-service teacher education institutions different issues come to the forefronts which are reflected in some studies. Studies conducted by Adu-Yeboah and Yaw Kwaah (2018) showed that on campus experience offers trainee the opportunities to improve their knowledge and practice of general pedagogical skills and the use of teaching learning resources. Further, Ganai, Andaya and Guiab (2015) studied the problems and challenges faced in practice teaching were classroom management, instructional materials, communication skills, lack of supervision and demonstration classes etc. The pre-service elementary teacher education institutions (DIETs, ETEIs and BITEs) in Odisha are playing vital role in producing elementary teachers.

Keeping in view the context discussed above, the present study intends to analyze the pre- service elementary level teacher education programme running in Odisha.

Conceptual Framework

Pre-service teacher education programme is very essential for every individual seeking to have his career in teaching particularly with reference to school education. Because teachers will be prospective and resourceful if they would receive the pre-service teacher education programme properly. The teacher education programme which is received by the individuals as student teachers before their entry into the teaching programme is called as Pre service teacher education programme. This programme is highly essential in order to enable the student teachers how to become efficient and effective by being acquainted with the theoretical and practical orientation pertaining to classroom teaching and management, organization of co-curricular activities in the school, to establish and maintain healthy teacher-taught relationship, use of appropriate pedagogical practices in the teaching-

learning process, to maintain and strengthen the correspondence of school with the community through the organization of community based activities and programmes.

Elementary education which makes a significant contribution to national development occupies a crucial position in the system of education. It admits mainly the children coming after completing pre-school education. Pre-service elementary teacher education programme is a programme that prepares the student to become eligible to teach at elementary school. The very purpose of pre service elementary teacher education programme is to develop among the prospective teachers new knowledge, skills and favourable attitudes to meet the present needs. In Odisha, Pre-service elementary teacher education programme is provided as Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education (D.El.Ed.) Programme. Presently, this programme is running by 67 elementary teacher education institutions. There are 30 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), 33 Elementary Teacher Education Institutes (ETEIs) and 04 Block Institutes of Education and Training (BITEs) providing the D.El.Ed. Programme in Odisha.

Statement of the Problem

The courses of study for pre-service elementary teacher education programme have been developed based on the visions and provisions of three major National documents as well as the reflections made in the NPE 1986/1992. These three documents are the NCF 2005, NCFTE 2009 and the RTE Act 2009. With regard to elementary teacher education programme a lot of studies have been conducted. Teacher educators were not competent and up to date as per the guidelines of DIET (Jena 2015, Acharya 2008). Lack of personnel, facility and equipments at the DIET affected in multivarious ways like student's motivation, studies, teaching and perception of the learners (Akai 2013, Kikon 2020). Ramchand (2011) and Jena (2015) viewed teacher educators had less participation in professional training. Though a number of researches have already been conducted on elementary teacher education but still there exists a large research gap.

Operational Definitions

1. Pre-service Elementary Teacher Education Programme

In the present study, pre-service refers to the training which a teacher gets before joining the teaching profession. In the present study, elementary teacher education refers to full time two year diploma course named as Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education Programme (D.El.Ed.) which is provided by District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Elementary Teacher Education Institutions (ETEs) and Block Institutes of Teacher Education (BITEs) for preparation of elementary teachers after completion of their higher secondary stage.

Objectives

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To analyze the curriculum structure of pre-service elementary teacher education programme in Odisha.
2. To find out the infrastructural facilities and teacher composition in pre-service elementary teacher education institutions in Odisha.
3. To study the process of transaction of curriculum of pre- service elementary level teacher education programme in Odisha.
4. To analyze the evaluation process practiced in the pre-service elementary level teacher education programme in Odisha.

Research Questions

- (i) How much qualitative is the intended curriculum meant for prospective teachers?
- (ii) How well equipped are the pre-service elementary level teacher education institutions of the state in terms of infrastructural facilities and teacher compositions?
- (iii) How is the pre-service elementary level teacher training curriculum transacted?
- (iv) How is the pre-service elementary level teacher training curriculum evaluated?

Method and Procedures

Design

The present study is a descriptive survey type research which was intended to collect detailed description of various aspects in pre-service elementary level teacher education programme in Odisha.

Population

The population of the study consists of all elementary level teacher training institutions of the state (DIETs, ETEs and BITEs). There are total 30 DIETs, 33 ETEs and 4 BITEs all over Odisha.

Sample

The researcher has adopted random sampling procedure to select the sample from the population. Three revenue divisions as from northern, central and southern region were selected purposively. From each region, one district was selected randomly and from each district one DIET and one ETE were selected. Further, out of 4 one BITE was selected randomly. Thus, in total 7 elementary level teacher education institutions (3 DIETs, 3 ETEs and 1 BITE) were selected. Further, 2 teacher-educators and 5 student-teachers from each institute were selected randomly. 7 Principals, 14 teacher-educators and 35 student- teachers were the participants in the study.

Tools Used

For the present study, the following self-developed tools were used to collect data from the above selected sample such as Institution Profile, Questionnaire for Principal, Questionnaire for Teacher-Educators and Questionnaire for Student-Teachers.

(i) Institution Profile: This schedule was prepared to obtain information from the Head of the Institution with respect to availability of infrastructural facilities and learning resources, details of school internship/ practice teaching and assessment process.

(ii) Questionnaire for Teacher Educators: This schedule was designed to obtain the perception of teacher educators about different dimensions of quality teacher education such as curriculum, classroom transaction, availability of physical

resources, learning resources, human resources and assessment strategies.

(iii) Questionnaire for Student Teachers: This schedule was designed to obtain the perception of student teachers about different dimensions of quality education such as curriculum, classroom transaction, availability of physical resources, learning resources, human resources and assessment strategies.

Pilot Study

The tools developed by the researcher for the purpose of research work were piloted at DIET, Puri with the permission from the Principal, DIET, Puri and collected the data. This helped the researcher to make corrections and modifications of tools developed for the intended research study.

Data Analysis

The data collected with the help of above tools were analyzed by using mean and percentage.

Ethical Principles Followed

The researcher collected the data from the field by visiting different institutions as per requirement and maintained the confidentiality of data throughout the research process.

Major Findings

Curriculum

Majority of student teachers (93.8%) said that the papers in the foundation course like understanding the learner, pedagogic process in elementary education and education for holistic development appeared to be suitable. 65% of faculty members reported that understanding the learner content is adequately reflected. 67% of teacher educators reported that Contemporary Issues in Elementary Education and Curriculum planning and transaction content appeared to be suitable. 54.5% of teacher educators mentioned that the present curriculum of D.El.Ed. programme will impart an adequate knowledge of the subject matter. 84% of the student teachers agreed that the curriculum will develop the necessary pedagogic skills. Majority of teacher educators told that one action research for student-teachers was assigned in the curriculum per year. 64% of teacher educators said that the present

curriculum is helpful for developing creativity among student teachers. To sum up, the curriculum meant for pre-service elementary teacher education is relevant. But the curriculum lacks the integration of ICT in to subjects for better achievement and effectiveness of teaching learning process. There is least scope in the curriculum for understanding the self and others, one's beliefs, assumptions, emotions and aspirations.

Infrastructural Facilities and Teacher Composition

Majority of student teachers (76%) and teacher educators (82%) revealed that the teacher training institutions have availability of adequate infrastructural facilities. Majority of teacher educators (86%) and student teachers (83%) revealed that there is a need of more teaching and non-teaching staff. In case of learning resources, majority of student teachers (86%) and teacher educators (94%) reported that the institutions have not sufficient number of textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, teachers' hand books etc. Majority of student-teachers (70.45%) and teacher educators (64%) disagreed about the availability of psychology lab, language lab, science lab and social science lab etc. in their institutions. Most of student teachers (85%) and teacher educators (94%) were agreed about the adequate number of audio-visual equipments and photo copying machines available in their institutions. To sum up, as per majority of teacher educators and student teachers there is a need of a greater number of teaching and non-teaching staff who plays a key role in academic and official activities of an institution. There is the need of CWSN friendly toilet in each teacher training institution for the easy accessibility of disabled children. There should be the availability of canteen facility in each institution as the basic amenities. The reference books available in library does not meet the requirement of students as per the current syllabus as they are outdated.

Classroom Transaction

Majority (95%) of teacher educators and student teachers (93%) reported that Discussion method and activity learning method was mostly used in classroom. Most of the teacher educators reported that project method and seminar method were used

sometimes only in the classroom. Micro-teaching and Demonstration method were used very less. 58% of teacher educators did not employ ICT tools and techniques in classroom transaction. 86% of teacher educators feel that present curriculum develops teaching competencies among the student teachers. To sum up, there was lack of teaching practice to develop teaching learning competencies among the future teachers and lack of trained personnel to handle the ICT tools and technology. Lack of trained, adequate, skilled and competent teachers and lack of orientation programme for teacher educators were the challenges in bringing necessary changes in prevailing methods for classroom transaction of elementary teacher education institutions in Odisha.

Assessment Strategies

Majority of student teachers (90%) agreed that the present curriculum is giving equal weightage to theory and practice. Majority of teacher educators (92%) revealed that they mostly adopt achievement test and unit test for continuous assessment. Most of the student teachers (74.73%) reported that achievement test and observation schedule were used to identify different categories of learners in the classroom. 65% of student teachers were of the view that there is the need of orientation programme for practice teaching. To sum up, evaluation has an effect on regulating self-learning. The time allotted for practical courses is insufficient in comparison to theory courses whereas the practical courses play the major role. There is no scope for student teachers to evaluate themselves at the time of practice teaching and school internship programme.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the syllabus partially confirms to the guidelines prescribed by NCFTE 2009 and NCTE Regulations 2014. The existing curriculum lacks modern and emerging concepts as well as use of technology so as to make it more attractive and effective one. The study conducted by Kikon (2020) also revealed the same thing that the D.El.Ed. Curriculum was moderate. Some of the pre-service elementary teacher education institutions do not have the adequate number of classrooms and other physical facilities like office room, staff room, resource room, ICT room, room

for different laboratory work, residential facilities for principals, teacher educators and hostel facilities for student teachers etc. The existing curriculum is helpful in nurturing creativity and developing life skills among the student teachers but it lacks realism and applicability in real life situations. The findings have been going as per the findings of many previous studies like Akai (2013), Suresha (2021), Swain (2022) and others. While modifying the syllabus this may be taken into consideration.

Both student teachers as well as teacher educators agree that the syllabus need to be revised as per the present scenario and the teacher training institutions should be equipped with necessary resources for effective transaction of the curriculum.

CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. While framing curriculum for pre service elementary teacher education, the curriculum framers should maintain a balance between theory and practical in terms of content weightage as well as marks distribution.
2. A proper balance needs to be maintained among the pedagogical theory, language and content-cum-methodology papers taking into consideration the socio-cultural and national ethics.
3. The present curriculum needs incorporation of some innovative and practical topics reflecting different social issues to make it more relevant and effective one.
4. Adequate number of teacher educators should be made appointed in the pre-service teacher education institutions of Odisha so as to cater the needs and better functioning of these institutions.
5. All types of infrastructural facilities need to be made available for the smooth functioning of these institutions.
6. Different technological and digital facilities must be made available in the pre-service elementary teacher education institutions to fulfill the demands of prospective teachers.
7. Since lecture-cum-discussion and question and answer methods were some of the most prominent methods in transacting D.El. Ed. curriculum, there is an urgent need to

orient the teacher educators on process-based teacher education programme and its modalities.

8. Teacher educators must make an effort to link theory and practice through field-based activities and make field-based assignments as well.
9. Steps have to be taken to incorporate reflection in all the activities of the teacher education programme.
10. Training programmes on the integration of ICT resources in teaching learning process may be designed for teacher educators.
11. Teacher educators need to be oriented on research methodology with specific focus on action research.
12. Self-Development workshops should be organized during teacher preparation programme to help the prospective teachers for self-evaluation.
13. Maintaining reflective diaries during school experience programme need to be made compulsory as these will help the future teachers in becoming reflective practitioners.
14. There must be necessity of different type of incentives for prospective teachers.
15. There must be necessity of proper strategic plan and sufficient fund for implementing D.El.Ed. Course in a better way.
16. While implementing the curriculum of teacher education, it should be kept in mind that the institution has provision of adequate staff, infrastructure, provision of target-oriented teaching- learning materials and textbook.
17. Efforts should be made to develop a sense of confidence among the teacher-educators to transact the curriculum.
18. The teacher-educators should be well acquainted with the emerging trends and technologies to make the teaching-learning process more effective and interesting.
19. The grass root level functionaries of teacher education programme like teacher educators, student teachers should be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of present teacher education curriculum.

20. The findings of the study will help the teacher educators to know the constructivist principles which have been envisaged in NCFTE 2009 and National Education Policy 2020.
21. It will motivate the teacher educators to use different innovative classroom practices and help the students to construct knowledge of their own.

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