

Reflections on two year B.Ed. Curriculum of GGSIPU: Challenges and Suggestions

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Abstract

Education reforms invariably accord highest priority to improve teacher effectiveness. It requires consistent up gradation of teacher education programmes. Over the last two decades in India, the issue of curriculum renewal and extended duration of secondary stage teacher education has received serious attention. Indian education can no longer afford to remain a sleeping titan. 'Update or perish' is the need of the time. It was against this backdrop that the NCTE undertook a major exercise of developing a new National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in 1998 and for the first time made the recommendation for beginning a two year B.Ed. programme to prepare quality teachers and also recommended updated curricula for teacher education for various levels of school education from the primary stage to the senior secondary stage- for academic and vocational streams. Accordingly GGSIPU has developed curriculum for its two year B.Ed. programme which has been divided into four semesters and is implemented from the session 2015-17. The introduction of a new curriculum such as B.Ed. two year programmes poses a range of challenges to teacher educators and colleges. This paper reports on an attempt by colleges of GGSIPU to implement the same. Challenges to the curriculum implementation are identified like overload of papers; overlapping of content, lack of demarcation, unavailability of books etc. and suggestions to address these challenges are also described.

Keywords: Two years B.Ed. Curriculum of GGSIPU, Challenges, Suggestions, Updated Curricula, Teacher Education.

Introduction

Teacher education and school education have a symbiotic relationship. Developments in both these sectors mutually reinforce the concerns necessary for the qualitative improvement of the entire spectrum of education. Education reforms invariably accord highest priority to improve teacher effectiveness. It requires consistent up gradation of teacher education programmes. Over the last two decades in India, the issue of curriculum renewal and extended duration of secondary stage teacher education has received serious attention. A perusal of the reports of various commissions and committees indicate the preference for longer duration of B.Ed. programme. It was also endorsed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its judgement on 15 June 1993. "The Teachers Training Institutes are meant to teach children of impressionable age and we cannot let loose on the innocent and unwary children the teachers who have not received proper and adequate training. True, they will be required to pass the examination but that may not be enough. Training for a certain minimum period in a proper organised training institute is essential before a teacher may be duly launched." It was against this backdrop that the NCTE undertook a major exercise of developing a new National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education which is both

contextual and in tune with the emerging concerns and imperatives of the fast changing canvas of education both nationally and globally. Hence the NCTE prepared the curriculum framework for teacher education in 1998 and for the first time made the recommendation for beginning a two year B.Ed. programme to prepare quality teachers. Widely known as “NCTE Curriculum Framework-1998”, it took stock of the context and concerns of teacher education ranging from ‘constitutional goals’ to ‘commitment and performance in teacher education’; it emphasized the symbiotic relationship between pre-service and in-service teacher education and recommended updated curricula for teacher education for various levels of school education from the primary stage to the senior secondary stage- for academic and vocational streams. “Not to swim is to fall back” is a worthwhile and pragmatic approach to the task of curriculum updating. Indian education can no longer afford to remain a sleeping titan. ‘Update or perish’ is the need of the time. Accordingly, the two year B.Ed. course aims at a complete development of the student-teacher; particularly in knowledge and skills, in individual care of the learner and also in methods and evaluation designed to facilitate learning. The course is divided into two parts. It aims at developing understanding of and competence to render disciplinary knowledge into forms relevant to stage specific understanding of teaching-learning situation apprehended through intensive study of conceptual explanations, observation and analysis of live classroom situations as well as hand-on experiences and longer duration of field experience. Interactive processes, i.e. group reflection, critical thinking and meaning making have been encouraged. The syllabus retains the essence of student-teachers being active participants in the learning process and prepares the student-teachers for facing the emerging challenges resulting out of globalisation and its consequences.

As per the curriculum framework provided by NCTE, GGSIPU has developed curriculum for its two year B.Ed. programme which has been divided into four semesters and is implemented from the session 2015-17. Its two year B.Ed. programme promises good quality teacher education by including wide range of subjects, topics and practicals but at the same time it also poses some challenges in its implementation which are as follows:-

Challenges Identified

➤ Overload of papers and time restrictions

The numbers of papers are more in each semester which consists of core papers as well as practical papers. It has increase the work load instead of reducing it as all of them have to be covered in a particular semester. In each semester some days are also to be allotted to Preliminary School Engagement which further reduces the tuition time in college.

➤ Overlapping of content

Overlapping can be seen in the content of various core papers. Many of the topics like gender stereotype, inclusive education etc are repetitive in various papers.

➤ Lack of Logical sequencing of topics

Few of the units of core papers are not in proper sequence which restrict the proper flow of content like in childhood and growing up theories of development are given in first unit whereas their meaning and details are discussed in later units.

➤ **Content lacks demarcation**

The content given in the syllabus is vague in the sense that topics are not clearly demarcated or defined. Each teacher educator may cover the topic according to their individual interpretation which inhibits uniformity like in Language Across the Curriculum socio-cultural variations in languages: Accents and linguistic variations.

➤ **Practical**

Some of the aspects of practical also have overlapping with field works of core papers like in childhood and growing up paper field work demands B.Ed. trainees to collect data on multiple childhoods like marginalized children, slum children, street children etc and in understanding the self practical also they are required to do a seminar related to similar group. So it becomes difficult to demarcate the work clearly from internal and external viewpoint.

Similarly few workshops require them to do a number of observations which also overlapped with practical related to preliminary school engagement. It is also difficult for B.Ed. trainees to understand their relevance.

➤ **Field works**

Each core paper has some of the field works which are to be covered along with the theoretical content. These field works are more in number and difficult to be covered in the given time as theoretical content is vast and lesser time is available.

➤ **Teaching of Pedagogy**

Teaching of pedagogy has been divided into two semesters with teaching of pedagogy one in I semester and teaching of pedagogy two in II semester. The challenge related to this is that the B.Ed. trainees will lose touch with the pedagogy which they have studied in first semester as preparing lesson plans and delivering them will be part of third semester during internship. Moreover there are field works in pedagogy which can be done better during internship period like Achievement test record so they are difficult to be covered during earlier semesters.

➤ **Preliminary School Engagement**

Earlier it was called as School experience programme which used to be of 40 days. In two years curriculum it has been expanded into three semesters. First and second semester involves 15 days school engagement and third semester consist of 16 weeks internship in a school. Now the challenges related to school engagement is that although the duration has been increased but the activities which are supposed to be done are difficult to implement in schools. For example students need to observe regular class teachers of school in their classes and maintain written record of these observations which may create problems for some schools on ethical grounds.

Also during internships B.Ed. trainees need to be in schools for 16 weeks, schools are apprehensive about allowing trainees to be in schools for such a long period as many schools feel the performance of their students will be badly affected and it will affect the overall result and reputation of the school. Moreover as a matter of

fact many of the schools are not aware about the changes made in the B.Ed. programme as they have not been officially intimated regarding the same.

➤ **ICT**

The changing time demands teachers to be well equipped with modern technologies so that they can use them effectively in classroom for better teaching- learning process. Keeping this requirement in mind ICT have been made as an important part of teacher education. In two year course of GGSIPU this aspect has been included but challenges related to it is that it is included as one of the practical in second semester its not a part of core theory papers.

Another problem related to it is that almost all practicals require trainees to prepare e-portfolios and digital profiles of various activities to be conducted during practicals so they need to be well versed with computers and ICT, which highlights the importance of making ICT as an important part of core papers which is missing in present curriculum.

➤ **Unavailability of Books**

The two year course has introduced many new subjects like language across the curriculum, understanding discipline and subjects but the reference material and books related to them are not easily available. Suggested readings mentioned in the curriculum include books of mostly foreign authors which are difficult to access.

➤ **Teachers Content knowledge**

Teacher content knowledge does influence classroom instruction and the richness of learners' experiences. As many of the new subjects and new topics have been introduced in two year curriculum it is clear that the introduction of new topics is going to place a greater burden on these teachers because of the complex nature of the topics and teachers' unfamiliarity with the content. Teachers lack clarity on curriculum reforms as they were not part of the curriculum development process and they lack orientation which is needed for properly completing these courses.

➤ **Lack of Institutional arrangements**

In two year B.Ed. programme various practical have been introduced including Drama and Art in Education, Yoga etc which requires resource persons and experts in these areas and also proper institutional facilities and arrangements but most of the institutions do not have such experts and facilities and even recruiting such experts for one practical and making institutional arrangements also adds to their expenditure. Most of the colleges will assign the duties for such practical to their regular teachers who lack expertise in the field and it will also add to their work load.

➤ **Difficulties in Evaluation**

As most of the fieldworks involve variety of observations and digital aspects so it is difficult on the part of the internal and external evaluator to check the authenticity of these observations and field works. Also it is equally difficult to evaluate the digital profiles of all activities due to workload of teachers and lack of ICT arrangements.

Measures to be taken to address these challenges

- ✓ Number of papers need to be evenly distributed or reduced to reduce the curriculum load
- ✓ Overlapping of content can be reduced by correlating different subjects and covering them in proper sequence
- ✓ Content need to be specific and properly defined so that each topic can be delimited which will bring uniformity
- ✓ Overlapping of activities related to field engagement and practical can be reduced by combining them together
- ✓ Some of the Field work activities need to be made suggestive rather than mandatory
- ✓ Teaching of pedagogy should be part of one semester only and it should include some content knowledge along with its pedagogy
- ✓ School authorities need to be officially intimated regarding the expectations from schools according to the changed curriculum so that they can cooperate with the teacher education programmes. The viewpoints of school authorities need to be taken into consideration while implementing school engagement programmes
- ✓ ICT should be a part of core theory papers along with its practical aspect and it should be introduced in the first semester so as to remove the requirement on the part of learners to be computer literate at entry level
- ✓ Proper reference material and good quality books should be made readily available related to the new syllabus
- ✓ Detailed orientation related to new subjects and topics should be provided to the teachers

Conclusion

This paper illustrates the complexity of curriculum reform. We feel that many of the Issues and challenges discussed above apply not only to new content, but also apply to its execution and evaluation within a new framework. While the new Curriculum is appreciable but there are few teachers who will be able to translate the very complex and vaguely stated outcomes of the curriculum into appropriate learning programmes. In this paper we have attempted to illustrate the range of practical demands and challenges placed on teachers and colleges involved in making this curriculum successful.

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