



# Strengthening Teacher Education Curriculum

Dr. Subhashbhai Vitthalbhai. Makwana,  
Assistant Professor,  
N. H. Patel College of Education, Anand  
Bhalej Road, Anand, Gujarat, India- 388001

## Abstract

The curriculum at any stage of education provides platform to carry out teaching-learning process in classrooms. The curriculum receives inputs from various fields of the society and its formulating bodies. The curriculum for preparation of teachers in TEP is essential for school education and other stages of education. Efforts at global and National levels were taken for strengthening curriculum of TEP. Even the UGC, NCTE, NCERT, NAAC etc. are providing inputs in the curriculum in different ways. The NEP 2020 also indicated and recommend for Teacher Education Curriculum along with school education curriculum. Formulation and strengthening curriculum of TEP require to consider SDGs, STEAM, removal of Social Problems, Integration with other levels of Education, Teacher Education for Higher Education, Career Guidance, Stipend to Student-teachers for Internship etc. Curriculum strengthening through such aspects must lead to well preparation of student-teachers and their better performance in school education.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Student-teacher, Teacher Education Programme, Curriculum frameworks

## Introduction

Education is inevitable in life. The process of 'Education' is dynamic in nature and its journey is lifelong from womb to tomb. It is opening the doors of knowledge and uplifting the human society. It is emphasized for the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of individual, which results in development of society, nation and human race. It is central in world of peace, dignity, justice, equality, brotherhood, humanity and foundation of all societies and global competitive economics. It reduces poverty and inequality, and improves health. It expands knowledge and updates the human being for quality life. The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) (1996) gave four pillars of education as 'Learning the Treasure Within' i.e. Learning to be, Learning to know, Learning to do and Learning to live together.

The importance of education has been known and recognized by the human society since ages. It plays a vital role in bringing social and political changes. Most social and religious reforms in India were brought through education. The removal of social evils became possible through education. This may be evident that education plays a significant role in society construction and national development. The

standard of education in country brings rapidness of development. Educational activities can solve national problems and achieve national goals. It plays an important role in improving national economy. Schultz (1961) found that expenditure on education is not consumption but an investment resulting in “Increased capacity of labour to produce material goods”. Hansen (1963) indicated that the rate of returns to investment in education is higher than the rate of physical capital.

People of the society are receiving education in various modes like informal, Non-formal and formal way, where the formal way of education emphasized more by the society and States. The formal way includes institutions of pre-primary, elementary, secondary and Higher Education (HE) as well as professional courses. The teachers are the key persons for education of the students at every stage of schooling as well as higher education.

### **Teacher Education**

The education system in India has a very long journey from Caste to Mass and Indigenous to Community education. It was influenced by religion, state, invaders, external civilizations and reached to the present education system of education. Affecting through such general education system, the teacher education passed through monitorial system to teacher training and at last to teacher education. The teachers are performing their task on the bases of their learning and practices during the Teacher Education programme. It is preparing the Student-teachers for formal teaching in schools. The students’ learning and development via school is rendered by the teacher education programme (TEP) only. UNESCO (1966), “The purpose of a teacher-preparation programme should be to develop in each student his general education and personal culture, his ability to teach and educate others, an awareness of the principles which underlie good human relations, within and across national boundaries, and a sense of responsibility to contribute both by teaching and by example to social, cultural, and economic progress.” So, the programme must be strong enough for the efficient learning of the Student-teachers.

The National Education Commission (1966) rightly stressed as, “Investment in teacher education can yield very rich dividends because the financial resources required are small when measured against the resulting improvements in the education of millions.” The TEP has very greater importance than the other fields of society. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) (1993) defined the term ‘Teacher Education’ as, “Programmes of education for training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary & secondary stages in schools, and includes non-formal, part time education, adult education and correspondence education.” The teacher education courses are pre-service and in-service varied in nature as general, integrated with subjects, special education, distance mode etc. NCTE (2014) listed and uploaded 15 Teacher Education Programmes (TEPs) along with their norms and regulations for functioning in India. The two years regular full time TEP is the most demanding programme, which is preparing teacher for secondary schools.

## Curriculum of Teacher Education in India

The curriculum of Teacher Education is for the schooling i.e. Pre-primary to Secondary Schools. It includes Philosophical, Psychological, Historical, Sociological foundations of education with perspective of learning of student-teachers. Along with it specific teaching of subjects, pedagogy, methods, techniques, value education have been focused as theory in Elementary Teacher Education and Secondary Teacher Education in India. The TEIs provides opportunity to Student-teachers to learn through Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra Curricular activities in their own college or in practicing schools. Besides it, the TEIs are establishing various Committees and Clubs to provide opportunities to learn. Even the student-teachers have to go for practical works in terms of assignments and presentations. In this sense fully fledged atmosphere has been providing t the student-teachers to learn at an extent.

The NCTE has taken an initiative to expand the duration of Secondary Teacher education from One year to two years as well as intake, teaching methods, course papers and modification in its curriculum. These changes are in talks of the Teacher Educators, Educationists and Society. It is provision of all round development and learning of student-teachers has been focused and it is at the doors of the Secondary Teacher Education Institutions (STEIs). Such initiatives are for the removal of unnecessary hurriedness and quality improvement in teacher education. For the quality improvement and management the University Grants Commission (UGC), NCTE, National State Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Universities as well as the teacher education institution itself are working under guidance of NCTE and Affiliating University.

### National State Council of Educational Research and Training

Kumar (2021) mentioned role and Impact of NCERT in Promoting the Quality of Teacher Education and indicated that the NCERT is an Advisory body of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India. It is functioning for school education in India. It is providing inputs of quality improvement in schools education by publication of textbooks hand-books, guide books, children's literature and supplementary reading materials. It is running teacher education in Regional Institutions of Education in India. It functions through its SCERTs in States and District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs). It has Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which is affiliated to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sanghatan (KVS), the Navodaya Vidyalaya Sanghatan (NVS) and other central schools in India. NCERT (2024a) indicated its other initiatives- learning outcomes, eResources, ICT Initiatives, journals, library, inclusive-accessible education, educational survey, National Talent Search Exam (NTSE), events, Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and partnerships. NCERT is formulating and recommending Curriculum framework for schools education. In the year 2005 the NCERT has formulated National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) for school education. In collaboration with NCTE, the NCERT has revised the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2009). NCERT (2024b) shown the recent formulation of the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022 (NCF-FS, 2022) and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE, 2023) by NCERT. Even the NCERT will formulate and publish the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) and National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE).

NCTE is a statutory body of Government of India and it has established norms and regulations for teacher education. It is functioning for governance and coordination of regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards for teacher education. It is formulating regulations for recognition and recruitment in TEIs, and recruitment of teachers. It is coping up with global trends for effective functioning of TEP in India. It is on path of implementing initiatives of Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and National Mission for Mentoring (NMM). It envisioned quality school education with pre-service and in-service teacher education.

### **NAAC and curriculum of Teacher Education Programme**

The TEIs are transacting curriculum and try to maintain quality education for the sake of school education. These institutions are undergoing through self-quality management through Self-Appraisal Report and Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC. The NCTE is giving Curriculum to the TEIs, while NAAC is assessing quality of TEIs through Assessment and Accreditation (AA). The accreditation has been made mandatory by UGC for all universities and colleges, which will force the HEIs to improve quality in order to attract students. NAAC has a separate procedure and manual for AA of TEIs. The AA is beneficial to TEIs for identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation; acknowledgment about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges through an informed review process; promotion of intra and inter-institutional interactions; and indication to a new sense of direction and identity.

The manual for AA by NAAC applied from the year 2019 includes seven criteria, where the Criterion-I is Curricular Aspects, which contains 105 weightage out of total 1000. The Criterion 'Curricular Aspects' includes four Key Indicators- Curriculum Planning, Academic Flexibility, Curriculum Enrichment and Feedback System. These Key Indicators further distributed in inquiry about qualitative and quantitative metrics. Curriculum is the foundation for transacting the TEP and its activities. The NAAC is assessing the different aspects of curriculum functioned by TEI and states its quality measurement and quality status in terms of description and weightage. Critical analysis of the points of curricular aspects drawn by NAAC Peer Teams will also draw concluding remarks to be included in curriculum of Secondary TEIs.

Makwana and Kothari (2019) studied the curricular aspects of NAAC 'B' graded teacher education colleges transacting Secondary Teacher Education Course in Gujarat. The study found that the teacher education colleges less approved the vision and mission by NAAC. Representatives from every TEIs and educationists have been required of the curriculum formation. Academic flexibility also found in it. The internship programme was not found with enough practice. The curriculum updation is focused, whereas computer education and vocational education are optional subjects. These subjects are need of the hour for every Student-teacher.

### **National Education Policy 2020 and Teacher Education Curriculum**

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) indicated for redesigning and renewal of Teacher education and ECCE curriculum for foundational literacy and numeracy. In relation to supporting gifted students and students with special talents, the NEP 2020 (2020) recommended to Teacher Education curriculum for recognition and development of methods for recognizing and promoting talents and interests of students.

The curriculum must be more revamping for making it more engaging and useful for girls and students from other socio-economically disadvantaged groups for decreasing the dropout rates and ensuring universal access of education. The NEP 2020 (2020) recommended the new 5+3+3+4 design for restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy for age group of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively. The curriculum and pedagogy of five years ECCE was recommended to transact in flexible, multilevel, and play/activity-based learning. The curriculum and pedagogy for three years of middle stage education was recommended for students' learning in sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities on the basis of learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts included in those subjects. The curriculum and pedagogy for four years of the secondary stage education must be based on the middle stage education along with students' choice of subjects in depth, critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations and flexibility. It must prepare them for entering to higher stage to pursue vocational or any other courses. Optimize learning of students was emphasized on their cognitive development. Development of the Nation and State-specific curricula was raised along with teaching-learning strategies at each stage. The inclusive education was strongly recommended to keep in sight in curriculum construction and transaction.

The Curriculum frameworks and transaction mechanisms for cognitive development were emphasized with character building and creation of holistic and well-rounded individuals with the advanced 21st century skills; opportunity for nurturing potentials; and development of stage specific sets of skills and values. Curriculum in each subject was recommended to reduce to its core fundamentals and to be more holistic based on learning critical thinking, inquiry, discovery, discussion and analysis. The teaching-learning process for transaction of curriculum must be interactive and inquiry along with fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities and experiential learning and practice-based. The curriculum transaction was emphasized on cross-curricular pedagogical approach through integration with Arts, Sports, story-telling, games and crafts. The curricular integration was also stressed amongst all subjects at all levels. Multilingualism, Sanskrit language, standard language and dialects were also indicated to include. Sanskrit Knowledge Systems (SKS) and Indian Knowledge System (IKS) were also indicated to develop. Curriculum from ancient scriptures and ancient knowledge were indicated to include with perspective to advanced societal trends in Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), etc. in vision with global and local context.

The NEP 2020 (2020) recommended to NCERT for construction of NCFSE with inclusion of representative of stakeholders and various organizations from all sections of the society and nation. The curriculum was expected to construct National textbooks along with local content and flavour. Flexibility was also expected in curriculum and pedagogy for reducing the weight of school bags and textbooks. Formulation of Curriculum Framework for all stages of new curricular and pedagogy structure is in process.

The TEP was indicated by NEP 2020 (2020) to move towards multidisciplinary colleges and universities till 2030 to be functioned with other subjects as a four-years integrated B.Ed. degree. The NEP 2020 (2020) stated about formulation of new and comprehensive 'National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)', in the year 2021. Its formulation will include stakeholders and concerned organizations. The curriculum and pedagogy of School education needs to be taken in consideration and addressed in formulation of NCFTE 2021.

### **Strengthening Curriculum of TEP**

The TEP is functioning in TEIs in consideration of educational policies and guidelines from its recognizing or monitoring bodies. Even the policies recommended curriculum to TEP and the Universities had applied in their departments of education and affiliated colleges. Curriculum transaction further needs inputs from Board of Studies and involvement of their stakeholders. In span of time, the curriculum formation and transaction needs to pay attention on concerned areas of teacher's education and learning needs of school students. Performance of teachers' role also draws attention of integration with different areas of society and learning. So the enrichment of teacher education curriculum is essential with respect to the advancing society and its trends.

#### **• Monitoring Authorities of TEP and Curriculum**

The TEP is providing a rigorous training for preparation of student-teachers to teach in schools. The TEIs or education departments are functioning under various governing and monitoring bodies like NCERT, NCTE, NAAC, SCERT, Commissionerate of Higher Education, Universities and Managing Trusts. The bodies are concerned with TEIs in one or another way. Involvement of the governing, regulating and monitoring organizations or bodies in in teacher education curriculum formation must strengthen the curriculum. Their integrated inputs and consideration of their initiatives must lead to quality TEP.

#### **• Inclusion of Recent Trends**

The TEP is at the base of all types of education and learning. It provides platform to all sections of the society to function in efficient manner. Both the society and education are influencing and fulfilling each other. The recent emerging trends in society and education also require in consideration at global level. The NEP 2020 has been implemented by GoI at national level, whereas its base i.e. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at global level must be considered for construction of teacher education curriculum. There are 17 SDGs to be achieved by global society as a collaborative effort of nations of the world. Those 17 SDGs must be included in the curriculum of TEP, which will draw to achievement of education goal and social goals. There are other emerging trends in education i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Education (STEAM); Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary education; and integration of education system and various sectors of the society; rapid technological advancement etc. Debetaz (2023) identified five recent trends in education- Tech trends in teaching and learning: gamification, blockchain, AI & more; Soft skills training: entrepreneurship, public speaking & leadership skills; Decreasing attention spans: the Nano Learning trend; Facilitating learning versus teaching; and Life-long learning. Thus the formulation of Teacher Education Curriculum must be included the recent trends of the society and strengthen the curriculum.

### • **Removal of Social Problems**

The society is suffering from various evils and problems like- poverty, unemployment, corruption, Crimes, alcohol, discrimination on the bases of caste, class, gender etc. Involvement of such social problems for learning in teacher education will prepare the student-teachers to integrate the textbook content with such problems, which must lead the students to be sensitive to the problems of the society and to find out and apply possible solutions. The curriculum will prepare teachers for providing learning experiences to the students in eradication of these problems.

### • **Integration with other levels of Education**

The TEIs are preparing teachers for secondary schools only. Even these institutions have included pedagogy of Accountancy, Economics, and Commerce from Higher Secondary Schooling too. The government is also recruiting such teachers in Higher Secondary sections of schools. The Primary schooling had Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.) or Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) courses for preparing teachers for elementary schools. Nowadays, this course is disappeared from teacher education institutions. Even the government is recruiting Primary or Upper Primary teachers, who were pass out from Secondary TEIs. The Post Graduate student-teachers have opportunity to teach in Higher Education Institutions after successfully completion of their teacher education course. Thus the teachers prepared from Secondary TEIs have to teach in primary school, secondary school or higher secondary school or higher education institutions. It leads to think about the learning and training of teachers in Secondary TEIs. They had learnt from the curriculum of secondary school teaching, whereas they have to teach in other levels too. So looking in the probabilities for their teaching in other levels of education, the curriculum must include these aspects to some extent from other levels too. Instead of unacknowledged about primary education, secondary education or higher secondary education or higher education, the teachers will be familiar to an extent about other levels of education.

### • **Teacher Education for Higher Education**

The professors are required to have Master degree along with completion of Ph. D or NET/SET. They recruit on this post, but they may not possess the knowledge and skills of teaching in the class room. So, it is necessary for them to learn about Teaching skills, methods and techniques. To fulfill this requirement the TEIs can provide such Teacher Education.

The UGC is organizing various updation programme for development of learning and skills of teachers through Orientation Programme, Refresher Course and various short term courses. It covers various concepts and teaching skills for learning to the Professors. They learn about students' psychology, their background, and prior learning. Its fully fledged programme of Teacher Education for teachers of Higher Education will prepare them in better manner.

## • Introduction of Career Guidance

It has been observed that the students are learning in schools and higher education institutions and competition the prescribed specific course. Here livelihood is required for own life and family. Sometimes the students are in vough due to unskilled or lack of vocational guidance. In respect of the students' livelihood, the teachers have to provide educational guidance as well as prepare them for various vocations and competitive exams. The schools or Higher education teachers have to be prepared and possess in-depth knowledge about educational guidance, including counseling skill, aptitude awareness along with the trends of education and vocation.

## • Stipend to Student-teachers for Internship

The NCTE has prescribed the two year secondary teacher education course. It has distributed the course considering the theory and practice. The practical aspects including the internship programme for nearly 16-20 weeks. It is better to student-teacher to receive real class room experiences. The internship programme should be just like doctors, technological skills etc. The student-teacher will give their time and teach in schools using their knowledge and skills. The government can take initiative for provision of stipend to these teachers for a longer duration. It is necessary to make it compulsory to schools to maintain a ratio of such teachers' pursuing internship. It suggested to student-teacher to keep formal contact with their TEIs from where they have learned. Besides it the teacher education will bridge the gap between schools and TEIs and theory and practice.

## Conclusion

The development of Nation depends upon the standard of Education, where the higher Education plays the major role. No system of Education can rise above the standard of its teachers. The fulfilled and quality TEP must prepare teachers for teaching-learning process with successful transaction of curriculum. A well-formulated curriculum prepared with due consideration of all aspects of students learning followed by their effective contribution in the society. It requires involvement of governing, monitoring or regulating bodies of Teacher Education. The probable performance of role of teacher in different levels of education is also required to consider for strengthening curriculum of TEP. Recent trends of SDGs, STEAM etc. in the society and education are also providing base in formulating curriculum. At the time of formulating and strengthening curriculum, it is necessary to enrich the curriculum through teaching and orienting the Student-teachers about Social Problems and their remedies, Career Guidance to School students, Stipend to Student-teachers for Internship etc. Such efforts will strengthen the learning of Student-teachers, which results in the efficient tarnation of school curriculum and development of students and it will fall in betterment of the human society and life of Human being.



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