



NECESSARY TEACHER TRAINING (NETT) –A PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME IN THE LIGHT OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER EDUCATION (NCFTE) 2009

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Abstract

Many non- governmental organizations (NGOs) have been making important contributions in the field of Education. Collaborating with Government machinery, they can do better for the cause of education in India. There are many NGO's working in the area of Teacher Education. Researches indicate that students' achievement is significantly related to the professional preparation of teachers. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 is a milestone in Indian education that focuses on the reform of teacher education by preparing professional and humane teacher. Humana People to People India (HPPI) is a not-for-profit development organization. It runs a Teacher Training Programme known as Necessary Teacher Training (NeTT) that focusses on improving the quality of teachers. The NeTT programme works in conjunction with Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.)- the two year pre-service teacher training course at District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). At present this programme runs in selected DIETs of Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh with the help of teacher educators of HPPI. This paper aims to focus on the NeTT programme and how it is inspired and guided by the NCFTE 2009.

Keywords: *Necessary Teacher Training (NeTT) Programme, Pre-service Teacher Training, Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.), District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009.*

INTRODUCTION

The vision of National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 is to develop teachers who are broad-minded, humanistic, professional; promote equity, inclusivity, social justice and have democratic values. The headline of NCFTE itself is

'Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher'. It wants to develop teachers who are competent in subject matter and pedagogy. They need to be groomed as introspective and reflective practitioners too.

Objectives of Teacher Education- The NeTT programme aims to educate teachers with a broad foundation personally and intellectually. It works for the larger good with the philosophy that all humans are here together. So it works on making the teacher trainees more humane. It focuses on enhancing teaching and professional skills in the trainees thus acting on the line of NCFTE- *'Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher'*. It prepares teachers who have compassion for children and society at large, have respect for people from all walks of life and who put children before curriculum. It helps develop the capacity of trainees who can engage shoulder to shoulder with people from all classes and layers of society.

The Necessary Teacher Training is intellectually demanding, stuffed with heart and soul food. It influences the kind of human beings that will come out of as a result of its teaching and learning. It helps culture personalities of trainees with collective abilities. The NeTT programme with its strong content prepares teachers with solid subject knowledge, general knowledge about geography, history of mankind, the universe, the world and our country. It focuses on the knowledge of child development understanding their psychological and sociological aspects.

The main objective of the NCFTE is to enhance teacher quality. It wants the teachers to understand the psycho-social and emotional needs of learners; the aim is to prepare teachers who can facilitate child-centric learning. They should own responsibility towards others and work to build a better society. The ultimate goal of the NeTT programme too is enhancing the quality of teacher education and thus this programme was introduced in DIETs. The programme realizes that first it is vital to understand the psychology of children, their socio-economic surroundings in which they grow, their needs, demands, their challenges and so on. It realizes the importance of child-centred education that is why it has its distinct pedagogy. It develops in trainees the virtue of accountability for themselves and others. It also has community action as an important feature where trainees work together with public to do something constructive.

Curriculum of Teacher Education- The habit of over-dependency on textbooks should be avoided as the only knowledge source for learning. There should be engaging teaching-learning material, children's literature, activity manuals etc. NCFTE recognizes the diversity

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of learning styles and learning spaces. Theoretical knowledge needs to be linked with community knowledge. Teachers should move beyond classrooms; view and use farm, community, home, workplaces as sites of curriculum.

The NeTT programme has its own unique curriculum, unlike traditional ones, that runs in alignment with D.El.Ed. training. It divides the total two-year D.El.Ed. curriculum into 22 periods; 11 periods per year. The duration of one period is one month. Every period comes with a headline focusing on a specific objective like studying humanity subjects, studying modern technology, mastering languages, teaching all ages all subjects, big issues of our times so on and so forth. Like NCFTE, it realizes that learners should not just do rote learning focusing merely on text-books so it has come up with its innovative curriculum and study material. It has been taken care that theory is connected to the common people hence it has community subjects in the curriculum. The curriculum of NeTT programme is not mere transacted in classrooms. Its basic principles are to go out to different places to accumulate and exchange experiences, to get closer and deeper to the thing to be learnt. It believes that the higher the degree of reality in the training, the more is learned. In this programme mobility and learning goes beyond school.

Pedagogical strategies- The main focus on NCFTE is on the pedagogy of teacher training i.e. how the teacher education curriculum is transacted. The dominant practice of teacher education is compared with the proposed process-based teacher education. Teachers should understand the socio-cultural and economic milieu of learners instead of just focusing on the psychological aspects. Teaching should not merely be text-book driven. Observations, experiences and theoretical engagement is important for learning. Theory should be linked with ground-realities.

Teachers need to understand that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge. They are actively involved in the process of knowledge construction. Teacher education should focus on linking theory with practicals and field experiences. Activity-based, learner-centred pedagogy should be the focus. Provide participatory learning experiences like discussions, dialogue, crafts, play, drama, projects, practicals, visits etc. Focus on hands-on-experience as a pedagogical medium is very important.

Learners need to be motivated for independent study rather than teacher-centred activities alone. At the same time they should also be given opportunities to study and work in teams. In teacher education, learners are adults so there is need to know about andragogy- the study of how adults learn. Adults have more knowledge and experiences as compared to children. So

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there is need to work on self-directed learning like giving projects, conducting seminars, case-studies and action researches.

In a technology-driven world teachers should also be able to integrate ICT in the teaching-learning processes.

The NeTT programme has a unique Pedagogical Framework for learning and teaching called Doctrine of the Modern Method (DMM). It is divided into Studies, Courses and Experiences. Study is done by the teacher trainees either alone by themselves or collectively in groups where the teacher educator acts a facilitator. Study material is available both in a digital form as well as on paper in print. Teacher educators complete the courses through lectures, giving presentations, conducting activities and many such engaging methods. Experiences matter a lot so the programme has a period of Travel where trainees move around the country visiting different states once in a year. They observe, interact with the locals and thus get to know about the socio-cultural, economic, political and other aspects of those places along with their education system. Field experiences gained through such visits go a long way. This is an example of experiential learning in education.

The DMM system of teaching and learning is activity based giving various participatory opportunities to trainees be it gardening, conducting awareness campaigns, going on tour, repairing and cleaning own institute, doing investigations and the likes. Teacher educators use different pedagogical methods like debates, dialogues, drama, projects etc. Hands-on-experiences is an important feature of this programme.

The NeTT programme does not believe in teacher-led classrooms. It has its own course material which the trainees can either study on their own or collectively in group. A unique element of the programme is that trainees learn in groups. There is a Function Group of 4-6 trainees and a large Core Group” of 25-50 trainees. It also motivates them for peer learning.

The philosophy of andragogy lies underneath the NeTT programme hence it includes self-driven projects, case studies, action researches and such activities.

Methods of Evaluation- NCFTE laments about the evaluation system in teacher education as it is mainly quantitative with focus only on annual tests or exams. Hence it calls for reform in this area too. The qualitative dimension of assessment is missing that needs to be worked upon. Professional attitudes, skills, habits and values need to be cultivated in the prospective teachers. Comprehensive and continuous evaluation is the need of hour.

The NeTT programme has a unique system of assessment having a DMM point system. Every DMM Unit is allocated a recommended number of hours for its completion. It can be

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compared to a credit system where these number of hours are converted into points. The teacher trainees can keep track of their production of knowledge through this unique point system. The programme has its focus on the qualitative dimension of assessment too. It works on developing professional attitudes and skills in prospective teachers.

CONCLUSION

Due to the changing demands of society, a teacher has to play multiple roles. And the NeTT programme realizes it very well hence incorporates different methodologies that help prepare professional and skilled teachers. It believes in the life-long learning as an important feature of any teacher preparation program. NeTT, the Pre-service Teaching Training Programme of HPPI has most of the elements which are mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009.

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