



FUSION OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY: EXPLORING QUALITY INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN VISVA- BHARATI TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Abstract

Institutional environment is an integration of teacher-student relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, student-student relationship, classroom organization, teacher behaviour toward students. The study was conducted to examine the quality institutional environment in teacher education institution of Visva Bharati i.e. Vinaya bhavana, Department of Education. The objective of the study was to explore whether teacher-education institution's environment follows Tagore's educational ideas & perspective, to explore modern educational facilities included in institutional environment, to explore student's satisfaction towards institutional environment and to explore relationship between teacher education and institutional environment. The population of the study was all the teacher trainees of Vinaya bhavana and some 60 of them were selected as sample by using simple random sampling technique. The data was collected through observation Schedule and semi-structured interview. The findings of the study stated that the institution followed Tagorian perspective and ideology in high manner, the re but it should give emphasis on creating inclusive environment to meet the present needs of the learners.

Key Words: Teacher education institution, Quality Institutional Environment, Tradition and Modernity

1.0.INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the architects of our future. They are instrumental in identifying and nurturing the inherent potential that every child is born with. Through their guidance and care, teachers help students realize their capabilities. Hence, we can say that teachers play a significant role in the teaching-learning process as well as in the teacher education system.

Before teaching students, teachers must learn or acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching. For that, teachers must go through various professional courses like D.El.Ed, B.Ed, M.Ed, B.P.Ed, M.P.Ed, etc. These professional courses are not only for getting a job but also to enhance the teaching and guiding capacity of the teachers. As multi-taskers, teachers help students become self-sufficient and, most significantly, good human beings who can serve society as valuable resources. Therefore, the aims of teacher education are to develop skills, foster self-confidence, understand child psychology, recognize individual differences, cultivate a positive attitude towards teaching, and prepare the younger generation to be an asset to society. According to the NCTE (1998) in *Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education*: "The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for the implementation of the educational process at any stage."

The connection between effective teacher education and the broader role of educational institutions in shaping society is deeply intertwined. While teacher education programs focus on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge to guide and nurture students, the institutions in which this teaching occurs serve as miniatures of society. An institution is a miniature form of society where people with diverse credentials, standards, backgrounds, and groups meet and exchange their ideologies, principles, and theories. In this context, education is the most powerful weapon to overcome the evils that prevail in society, making us rational human beings and planting the seed of values and realizations within us. Institutions transmit cultural values to the next generation, and a child learns values, social culture, and many other important lessons in an institution (De, K. 2018).

Beyond the exchange of ideas, the physical and relational environment within an institution significantly influences learners' experiences. The physical environment of an institution has a significant impact on its pupils. The institutional environment is not only about the physical space; it also includes teacher-student relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, student-student relationships, classroom organization, and teacher behavior towards students. The institutional environment is essential for learners as it helps develop humanity, empathy, an inclusive mindset, adaptive behavior, and an understanding of what constitutes a good institutional environment, which aids them in their future workplaces (Srinivas, K. 2015).

Visva-Bharati, established by Rabindranath Tagore, embodies the integration of tradition with modernity. Tagore envisioned an educational space that emphasized learning

from nature, rooted in Indian traditions, while simultaneously embracing global perspectives and innovations. This unique vision has shaped Visva-Bharati's teacher education programs, which seek to balance the richness of traditional pedagogies with the necessities of modern teaching methods and technologies. Visva-Bharati is a place where Tagorian ideology is followed and transmitted from one generation to another through its curriculum and environment (Mondal, B. 2017).

The current study, "Fusion of Tradition and Modernity: Exploring the Quality Institutional Environment in Visva-Bharati Teacher Education Institution," aims to examine the various facets of this institution's teacher education environment. Specifically, it explores how traditional and modern approaches are integrated to create a unique learning experience. The study also investigates the role of the institution in promoting practical knowledge, co-curricular activities, inclusivity, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching.

Given the rising demand for modern pedagogical practices in an ever-evolving educational landscape, understanding how institutions like Visva-Bharati navigate the balance between tradition and contemporary needs is essential. The findings of this research will offer insights into how quality education is maintained and enhanced within a framework that honors its historical roots while adapting to current educational trends.

2.0. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. To examine whether or not, teacher-education institution's environment follows Tagore's educational ideas & perspective.
- 2.2. To explore modern educational facilities and student's satisfaction towards institutional environment included in institutional environment.

3.0.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it examines how Visva-Bharati's teacher education program integrates Tagorian philosophy with modern educational methods. By exploring this fusion of tradition and modernity, the study highlights the balance between cultural heritage and contemporary teaching technologies. It also emphasizes the role of a positive institutional environment in shaping future educators, focusing on how relationships, inclusivity, and teaching approaches influence personal and professional development. The findings of the study can help us to have an idea of ideal institutional environment and in future it will help the administrators and policy makers to create an environment with more acceptability and can

serve as a model for other institutions, contributing to broader teacher education reforms that aim to blend tradition with innovation to better prepare educators for modern classrooms.

4.0.METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology of the study comprises method of research, population, sample, tools, and procedures of data collection and procedure of data analysis. Considering the demand and nature of the study, the study was descriptive study. The research design was a qualitative approach. Population of the study were all the teacher trainees of Vinaya Bhavana, Visva Bharati. Sample of the study were 60 teacher trainees of Vinaya Bhavana, Visva Bharati, were chosen by simple random sampling. It includes 30 B.Ed students (considering 15 students of first year and 15 students of second year) and 30 M.Ed students (considering 15 students of first year and 15 students of second year). Participatory observation and unstructured interview were use as data collecting device. The analysis technique used in this study was thematic analysis. First, the data collected from participatory observation and unstructured interviews were coded to highlight key recurring ideas. These codes were then grouped into broader categories such as the integration of traditional and modern methods, use of technology, and inclusivity. Finally, the categorized data were interpreted to provide insights into the institutional environment, focusing on how effectively Visva-Bharati balances tradition and modernity in its teacher education practices.

5.0.DATA ANALYSIS

5.1.Nature-Based Learning and Limitations

- **Student Feedback:** Through this interview trainees informed that they get knowledge from nature for a certain period, but it was not possible to get every knowledge from nature in higher education. It's also mentioned that most of time the noise of the outside environment distracted them from their studies.
- **Researcher Observation:** The researcher observed that, teachers conduct their classes in open air classroom but in this present era teachers also use various kinds of teaching technologies (Audio visual aids, PPT presentation, use projector etc.) and that's not possible in open air classroom.

5.2.Emphasis on Practical vs. Theoretical Learning

- **Institutional Approach:** The institution places more importance on practical experience than theoretical knowledge, which was noted as a significant focus in the students' academic development.

- **Co-curricular Activities:** The researcher observed that institution promote various types of co-curricular activities like sports, yoga, music, dance, painting etc painting are integrated into the curriculum to enhance holistic development. It was found that the institutions promote vocational educational like art and craft, weaving, wood work, gardening etc. It helped the students for their livelihood and make them more creative.

5.3. Use of Technology and ICT in Education

- **Modern Facilities:** The institution embraces ICT and multimedia approaches for effective teaching, including the use of online platforms like Google Meet and Zoom when offline classes cannot be conducted. Students receive access to free internet, digital libraries, educational websites, and e-journals, though the number of modern facilities is less than the number of students.
- **Technological Integration Challenges:** Open-air classrooms limit the possibility of using digital tools, which hinders the integration of technology in such environments.

5.4. Inclusive Education and Diversity

- **Diversity Efforts:** It was observed that while the institution makes efforts to create an inclusive environment for learners from diverse states and backgrounds, there remains room for improvement in catering to differently-abled students. Despite their inclusive intent, the infrastructure lacks essential facilities such as accessible toilets for physically handicapped students, ramps for easier mobility, and Braille-related educational materials for visually impaired learners. Given that the institution offers courses designed for students of all abilities, a more comprehensive approach is necessary to truly meet the needs of every learner. This would enhance the overall accessibility and inclusivity of the educational environment.
- **Student Support:** The resecher observed that there is no student help desk for helping the students. But the administrative section cooperates with the student. Additionally, the teachers are highly approachable and cooperative. Students feel comfortable discussing their problems with their teachers, and in any challenging situation, the teachers are always ready to help and guide them through their difficulties. Teachers play an active role in resolving students' issues, ensuring that they feel supported and understood in the institution.

5.5. Internship and Skill Development

In the interview 70% students said that they are satisfied by the time duration of school internship programme but rest 30% also expressed that it will be better if they have some more time for the internship to develop their teaching skill better.

5.6. Sanitation and Infrastructure

Proper drinking water, sanitation facilities, and other basic infrastructure needs are met within the institution, ensuring a comfortable learning environment for students. However, it lacks accessible restrooms and other necessary accommodations for differently-abled students, creating challenges for their participation and independence. Addressing these gaps is essential to fostering an inclusive environment that supports all learners equally.

5.7. Peer Support and Cooperative Learning

Students demonstrate strong cooperation and are willing to help their peers in the learning process. Group tasks assigned by teachers promote teamwork and collaboration among students, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect among learners. Peer support not only enhances academic performance but also helps in developing essential social skills, empathy, and leadership qualities. The collaborative learning environment allows students to share knowledge, solve problems collectively, and grow through cooperative interaction.

5.8. Pedagogical Approaches

The institution follows the Herbartian and Bloom's Taxonomy approaches in lesson planning. However, modern life-skill-based and constructivist approaches in practice teaching were not observed. This indicates a traditional orientation in pedagogical practices that could be expanded to incorporate more contemporary methodologies.

6.0. FINDINGS and SUGGESTIONS

6.1. Objective I: The study revealed that the institution effectively embodies Tagore's ideology and perspective, striving to create a learning environment that aligns with Tagore's vision for education. The institution emphasizes holistic development and encourages learners to explore their potential through a diverse range of activities, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and a sense of community among students.

6.2. Objective II: The findings indicate that the institution has made significant efforts to provide modern facilities for teacher trainees. However, there is a pressing need to enhance the preparation of lesson plans and instructional objectives by adopting a constructivist

approach. This pedagogical shift would encourage greater student engagement and deeper understanding. Furthermore, the institution must prioritize inclusivity for differently-abled learners by establishing a more accommodating environment. Essential facilities should include ramps, a Braille library, accessible toilets, appropriate seating arrangements, a resource room, and specially trained educators to support diverse learning needs. While the institutional environment generally meets learners' needs, challenges arise due to the high student-to-teacher ratio, which can hinder the effectiveness of teaching facilities. Addressing these issues will ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities, receive the support and resources necessary for their educational success. Therefore, a more focused approach towards inclusivity and personalized education is essential for the institution to fulfill its mission.

Suggestions

- **Adopt a Constructivist Framework:** The institution should prioritize professional development for faculty on constructivist teaching methods. This will enhance lesson planning and instructional objectives, fostering a more engaging and interactive learning environment.
- **Enhance Inclusivity:** Invest in specialized facilities to support differently-abled learners, including: Ramps and accessible pathways, A comprehensive Braille library, Accessible toilets and seating arrangements, A dedicated resource room equipped with adaptive technologies, Recruitment of specially trained educators to address diverse learning needs
- **Reduce Student-to-Teacher Ratios:** Consider hiring additional faculty members to lower the student-to-teacher ratio. This will enable more personalized attention and support for each learner, improving educational outcomes.
- **Strengthen Support Systems:** Establish a mentorship program pairing experienced teachers with trainees to foster skill development and pedagogical expertise, particularly in inclusive education.
- **Regular Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement systems for collecting regular feedback from students and faculty on the effectiveness of teaching methods and available resources, allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation to meet evolving needs.

7.0.CONCLUSION

The study highlights the commitment of the Visva-Bharati Teacher Education Institution to uphold Tagore's educational philosophy, creating a nurturing environment

that fosters holistic development among learners. While the institution has made commendable strides in providing modern facilities and resources, challenges remain in effectively implementing a constructivist approach in lesson planning and instructional objectives. Additionally, the institution's efforts to accommodate differently-abled learners require further enhancement to ensure that all students have equal access to quality education. Institutional Environment is that part of an institution which help the learners to grow a healthy mental state to think positively towards the outer world. Tagorian ideology influence the learners to arise their innate beauty and also help to nurture those excellences. But Tagore also said to not bound ourselves in a way, we should promote changes towards the rules and norms where needed. Thus, with collaboration of Tagore's philosophy and ideology we should also brought some changes to meet the present needs of the students.

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