

# AN EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULA OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OF BANGLADESH

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The present study was an attempt to examine the relevance of the curricular offering of the teacher education programmes of Bangladesh, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes, the practices and the ideas and contents so that a rational basis for improvement of the curricula could be discovered.

The curricula of teacher education programmes offered by Primary Training Institutes (PTI), Colleges of Education, Teachers' Training Colleges, the Technical Teachers' Training College, and the Institute of Education and Research were included in the study.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study were:

- (a) to evaluate the Teacher Education Programmes in order to determine their effectiveness in terms of their respective objectives;
- (b) to suggest necessary measures for improvement on the basis of the evaluation.

In order to achieve these objectives the following questions needed to be answered:

1. What were the stated and implied Curriculum objectives of the teacher training institutions?
2. Did the stated objectives of the teacher education programmes serve the need of education of the country at different levels?
3. How far were these objectives being reflected in the content and instructional practices of the institutions under study?
4. How far were these objectives being realized by the teacher education programmes?
5. How far did the theories of teacher education programmes differ from their practices?
6. What would be the appropriate measures for improvement of the present teacher education programmes?

## METHODOLOGY

The following methodology of research was used in order to determine the probable solutions for the problems involved:

1. Analysis of documents for description of the existing objectives of teacher education programmes.
2. Analysis of contents of syllabus, instructional materials, available research studies, prospectuses, annual reports, seminar reports and methods of instruction used.
3. Survey of teachers of teacher training programmes, trainees, graduates, and educational specialists for their opinions.
4. Analysis of facilities and practices in teacher training institutions and places of employment of graduates.
5. Analysis of international trends in curriculum practices (document and content analysis).
6. Trend analysis and projections.

### DATA-GATHERING PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

Relevant documents and content materials, published and unpublished, were gathered from either publishers or other available sources. In the case of data concerning other relevant informations or opinions of people, efforts were made to gather them by personal interview. For personal interview such tools as schedules, questionnaires, opinionnaires, and inventories were developed and administered to respondents. While using the technique of personal visit and observation of practices and facilities, the observer used rating scales, schedules, and inventories.

An attempt was made to draw representative samples of respondents. An attempt was also made to prepare comprehensive data-gathering instruments so that each of them could be administered to several different types of respondents or could be used for a variety situations.

For the purposes of the survey of institutions and interviewing persons, the following instruments were used:

- (1) Inventory of information on teacher education programmes.
- (2) Questionnaire for teachers in teacher education institutions.
- (3) Special questionnaires for: teachers of primary training institutes, colleges of education, technical teachers' training colleges, teachers' training colleges, and the Institute of Education and Research.
- (4) Questionnaire for students, (graduates of teacher education programmes currently engaged in the teaching profession).

The members of the study team (faculty members of the Institute of Education and Research) and four field assistants (graduates of IER) specially

trained for the purpose worked as data-collectors by visiting 60 teacher education institutions and neighbouring schools, polytechnics and commercial institutes and interviewing 357 teacher educators, 832 graduates of teacher education programmes and the concerned officials in the teacher education institutions throughout the country in accordance with a specified sampling scheme and procedure for administering the instruments.

International comparison of educational programmes often provides significant criteria for evaluation of curricula and corresponding practices. In order to enrich the evaluative attempt as conceived in this study a comparative review of the curricula of the current teacher education programmes of India, U.K., U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Sweden, Cuba together with a brief description of those of Bangladesh was undertaken. It was thought that these programmes would represent the major systems of and trends in teacher education in the world.

## MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Comparative Study

Teacher education programmes vary from country to country. Even within the same country, occasionally and for good reasons, there may be regional or institutional variations. These international and also regional variations are mainly due to socio-economic and cultural differences among nations and regions. This is revealed quite explicitly through the review of teacher education programmes of seven countries, namely India, U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Sweden, Cuba, U.K. and Bangladesh. However, it may also be seen that these programmes of teacher education are similar in many important and vital ways.

In all these countries, the society tends to attach some importance to the continuous education and training of school teachers beyond the level of initial education but with variation in emphasis on different aspects and approaches.

While the initial education before pre-service training for primary school teachers in India and Cuba appears to be less than that of primary school teachers of Bangladesh in terms of years of schooling, it is much higher in the four other countries under review than that of primary school teachers in Bangladesh. The duration of teacher education programmes for primary education or elementary education is obviously much longer in all these countries including India and Cuba than the duration of the same for primary school teachers in Bangladesh.

In terms of number of years of pre-service schooling, primary school teachers in all the countries under review have to undergo a longer period of preparation than their counterparts in Bangladesh. It seems that the programmes for teacher preparation in those other countries consist of more rigorous and intensive curricular offerings in content as well as pedagogical subjects. Although at transitional periods the countries are known to have relaxed the pre-service education requirements for all types of teachers generally and for primary school teachers particularly, they tend to realise that teachers need continuous education. Those countries have eventually developed efficient programmes for in-service education for teachers. Bangladesh is yet to develop a regular system of in-service education for teachers.

In the industrially developed countries, there is little distinction between preparation and status of primary and secondary school teachers. Aptitude and interest rather than lower educational preparation alone determine the placement

of intending teachers in training programmes as well as teaching positions. But in a developing country like Bangladesh the determining factor is the level of pre-service education alone in this respect. The incorrect notion, that the lower the level of education at which a teacher works the lower should be his qualification and status, does not really hold in those societies. In Bangladesh the predominant thinking is that the less qualified and ill-equipped teachers should be placed at the lower levels of education.

The trends in teacher education in the advanced countries indicated that teacher education is being gradually assimilated and often inseparably merged with higher and university education. In Bangladesh, and also to some extent in a developing country like India, the teacher education programmes are yet to be integrated with university education. While in India there is a conscious effort for such integration, in Bangladesh the educational leaders are sceptical about the feasibility of such an assimilation, in spite of the recently introduced casual degree programmes of the Colleges of Education. These colleges lack the basic requirements of degree colleges in many ways.

It may be seen that the more advanced nations do not tend to isolate the teacher education programmes for primary education from those of secondary education, that in some of the advanced countries teacher education programmes are geared to the needs and talents of the trainees, that industrially developed nations or socialist countries tend to put more emphasis on technical or technological education as part of teacher education, that physical and health education is a part of teacher education and that special provisions are available for the training of teachers for special education.

#### Teacher Preparation for Secondary Education and Leadership in Education

It would appear from a review of the systems of teacher education under consideration that quite rich and elaborate programmes for teacher education, backed by educational experimentations and innovations, have been developed in the richer countries and are being developed in the other countries. A variety of degree programmes and specialisations has been evolved, depending upon the needs of the countries. These programmes are mainly meant for preparation of secondary school teachers and administrators. There are also special programmes for preparation of teachers of teacher training institutions, specialist teachers, teachers for technological institutions, educational research specialists, planning experts, educational psychologists and so on. The programmes range between the Baccalaureate to the Doctorate or even post-doctorate degrees. Many of these programmes are specifically directed towards preparation of educational leaders and experts. In the richer countries the discernible trend is to merge these programmes with university education or to administer them through highly specialised centres of learning.

In some of the countries under review, special agencies or centres like Institute of Education, National Council for Educational Research and Training, Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and a variety of professional organizations have been vested with the responsibility for conducting educational research and experimentations, developing innovative curricula for various levels of education, reviewing the progress of educational developments, planning for education, setting up special committees or commissions, holding seminars and conferences on special problems and issues, and so on. Often international organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, etc., co-operate with these national agencies in their efforts for improvement of education.

To a great extent the main responsibility for preparation of different categories of secondary school teachers in Bangladesh rests on the Teachers'

Training Colleges, the Colleges of Education (set up only very recently), the Technical Teachers' Training College, the College of Physical Education and the Institute of Education and Research.

But the supply of such teachers for secondary schools from these institutions is so meagre that an abnormally long time will be needed by these institutions to produce a sufficient number of teachers for the existing 8,000 secondary schools of Bangladesh. Their combined impact on the education system is so small that even today not more than 30% of secondary school teachers are trained. Besides, for obvious socio-economic reasons the trained graduates of these programmes are concentrated in the urban secondary schools (run mostly by the Government or public bodies). This is the situation in Bangladesh in spite of the fact that the degree programmes of the institutions, which are directed towards the fulfilment of this purpose, are merely one-year programmes beyond 14 years of schooling, whereas in most of the countries under review such degree programmes are usually of a duration of at least two years after 16 years of schooling. In those countries specialist secondary teachers have to undergo training for further periods beyond the initial preparation. Besides, somehow these teacher education institutions in Bangladesh, with few exceptions, have been reduced to merely degree giving institutions rather than real centres of learning and innovation.

#### Institutions Concerned with Teacher Education

Curricular and physical facilities at the Primary Training Institutes appear to be too poor to produce efficient teachers for primary schools. In the recently established Colleges of Education the physical facilities appear to be moderately adequate for present purposes, but in respect of equipment and reading materials these colleges are still poor. The Colleges of Education are yet to really achieve the status of degree colleges, although their programme reflects a genuine effort for integration of teacher education with higher education.

The Technical Teachers' Training College, the only one of its kind in the country, has a shortage of staff and lacks many of the basic necessities of a good training programme for education of teachers of Polytechnic Institutes.

The teacher education programmes of the six Teachers' Training Colleges appear to suffer for lack of physical facilities, adequate supply of books and other appropriate reading materials and trained personnel to handle and produce aids and equipment.

Although there are inadequacies in minor details, the physical facilities and equipment for the programmes of the Institute of Education and Research seem, on the whole, to be adequate. Of course, there is ample scope and need for their improvement. The library services and supply of materials in the library need improvement.

#### Conclusions on the Basis of Interviews

The stated or implied curricular objectives of the institutions dealing with teacher education programmes in Bangladesh were found to be only partially realised through the curricular practices, activities, and provisions. The curricular objectives of the programmes are not quite consistent with the socio-economic demands of Bangladesh today. Although some aspects of the programmes satisfy the present needs of the country, there are aspects of the programmes which satisfy neither the objectives for which they were set up nor the needs of the society.

In respect of the duration of the programmes, there was agreement by teachers and graduates that it should be extended. The methods of teaching, supply of books, evaluation systems, aids and equipment, scope for innovation and experimentation, need to be modified so that they conform to the objectives as well as the needs of education in the country.

Although the programmes are producing efficient teachers for schools in Bangladesh to some extent, the specialised programmes of the post-graduate level have so far failed to produce educational leaders, such as efficient educational planners and administrators, educational counsellors and guidance workers, educational researchers, curriculum specialists, and other experts in the field of education.

There is need to assimilate teacher education with higher education (university education) and thereby bring teacher education programmes into the mainstream of university education. At present the teacher education programmes are very much traditional and isolated from other programmes of education in the country.

### General Considerations

The impact of the teacher education programmes of Bangladesh is still felt very little on the education system. A large number of teachers, especially in the secondary level, are untrained, in spite of the fact that the durations of the programmes are generally quite short (one academic year). The curricula of these teacher education programmes are bound to be limited in scope mainly because of this. Any effective improvement of the curricula can be made if this limitation is removed. At present the duration of the programmes cannot be increased very soon as the country has to produce a sufficient number of trained teachers for the schools. However the situation may be improved a little by introducing a system of in-service training for all teachers and ensuring a continuous education for them.

In Bangladesh trained teachers find very little scope to apply properly the methods and techniques of teaching they learn through the teacher education programmes. The school authorities, the education department, and the training institutions should make co-operative and joint efforts to ensure such application.

It was observed that the higher the level of teacher education the less is its possibility for application in the educational institutions in this country. The applicability of teacher education may be improved by incorporating contents in the programmes which are more consistent with the objective conditions of the country as well as the life of the people. Otherwise, much of teacher education will add to wastage in education.

Properly equipped institutions and organizations should be set up for the purpose of conducting educational research in Bangladesh. The institutions concerned with teacher education in this country should co-operate with such research organizations. This set-up should develop or discover methods and techniques of teaching and effective learning, equipment and aids, evaluative instruments, planning models, etc. The educational institutions should use the outcomes of such research work for improvement of their practices.