

Policy Perspectives and Student Teachers' Perceptions towards B.Ed. Programme

MONI YADAV* AND SUNITA SINGH**

Abstract

Teacher education programmes occupy a significant place in the education system, which encompasses teaching skills, pedagogical, theoretical, and practical understanding along with necessary professional skills to the student teachers through a variety of programmes like B.Ed., B.El.Ed., D.El.Ed. and others. Its curriculum includes many foundational and perspectives papers such as sociological, philosophical, and psychological, along with different pedagogical disciplines and liberal arts. These perspectives and foundation papers create a holistic and reflective teacher. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of student teachers toward teacher education programmes and their nature, various aspects and approaches of the teacher education curriculum, which were categorised as perspectives in education, disciplinary and pedagogical understanding, and their engagement with the field—self, community, and school. Through purposive sampling, 47 participants (student teachers) were taken as samples from the second year of the B.Ed. programme. The researcher opted for descriptive survey design. A self developed perception scale was used for the collection of data, and Cronbach's alpha reliability (internal consistency) was measured as 0.841. Percentage analysis was used for data analysis. The study revealed that most of the student teachers are in favour of the curriculum, pedagogy, and engagement with self, school and community. It also demonstrates that this two-year course is well organised in terms of theoretical and practical practices for their professional development and develops them as reflective practitioners.

*Research Scholar, Department of Education (CIE), University of Delhi, New Delhi.

**Assistant Professor, Department of Education (CIE), University of Delhi, New Delhi.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is essential for the inculcation of new knowledge, the manifestation of global competencies, and the development of different innovative pedagogical methods among student teachers. Like other professions such as engineering, medicine, law, etc., teacher education also requires a very high standard of training for capacity building to attain teaching skills and managerial attributes that promote the teaching competencies of student teachers. So, in the contemporary context, teacher education programmes aim to prepare student teachers with 21st century skills to bridge school education with them. Teacher education is a continuous process in which the pre-service and in-service phases are complementary to each other. Besides this, it is meant to be involved in various community programmes and extension activities along with non-formal education programmes, literacy, and development activities of the society. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to raise education standards in the nation is to strengthen the teacher education programme and take initiatives to leverage it.

For more feasibility in teacher education, the NCTE was established in 1998 and developed a national curriculum framework for teacher education (NCFTE) in 2009. It elaborates on the context, concerns, and vision, underscoring that the teacher education and

school education have a symbiotic relationship.

The success of any educational programme depends on the teacher's efficacy, teaching aptitude, attitudes, professional education and training, personality, knowledge, and many other elements. So, one of the most effective ways to raise the standard of teacher education programmes is "renewal of its curriculum, include the most recent techniques in pedagogy, including pedagogy with respect to foundational literacy and numeracy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, use of educational technology, and learner-centred and collaborative learning" (NEP 2020). Therefore, enhancement of the programme requires sufficient time and space to develop an educational perspective, and understanding of the subject and pedagogy, along with an identity as a teacher. Therefore, the preparation of teachers is an activity that requires a multi-disciplinary perspective and knowledge, the formation of dispositions and values, and the development of practices.

Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, ethos, knowledge, and traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy. In order to prepare professional and compassionate teachers, the two-year B.Ed. programme has intrinsic accountability for the overall development of the teacher trainees, which includes professional

competencies, pedagogical teaching and learning, reflective teaching, etc., (Khan, 2017). The two-year B.Ed. programme, through different courses such as the conceptual foundations of education, understanding knowledge and discipline, psychological, sociological, and philosophical understandings of education, develops a critical, analytical, and comprehensive understanding of school education and society. Along with this, different perspectives and elective papers, such as gender education and society, assessment for learning, human rights, peace education, etc. enhance the democratising harmonious critical perceptions of pre-service teachers towards various social issues, such as equality, justice, democracy, and gender issues.

This study comprises different policy perspectives, various initiatives taken by the Indian government, and perceptions of student teachers toward a two-year B.Ed. programme. The study intends to explore the proper information for educational planners and administrators for further investigation and information about student-teacher perceptions on the two years teacher education programme.

Policy Perspectives in Teacher Education Programmes

After independence, there were a lot of policies and programmes planned for quality attainment in teacher education. It ensures the highest quality training in content, pedagogy, and practices by moving

the teacher education system into multi-disciplinary colleges and universities and by establishing a 4-year integrated degree for all school teachers (NEP 2020). In light of the above backdrop, the purpose of this study was to analyse the various policies, commissions, and committees with reference to the teacher education programme.

The policies are derived for the quality enhancement of the teacher education programme. For the development and strengthening of the teacher education programme, the University Education Commission (1948) observed that there was a need to fulfil the gap between the theory and practicum offered in various teacher-training colleges. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) analysed the problem of teachers and training programmes. The Commission recommended that teachers be the most important factor in educational reconstruction. Their personal qualities, educational qualifications, and professional training play a vital role in shaping the school and community. It has been documented that the professional preparation of teachers has been crucial for the qualitative improvement of education since the 1960s but very few concrete steps have been taken in the last three decades to operationalise these norms.

The Kothari Commission (1964–66) observed that the need for a sound professional teacher

education programme was essential for the qualitative improvement of school education. The Commission recommended on subject orientation and the introduction of integrated courses and professional education and teacher education programmes. The commissions strongly believed that the entire teacher education programme needed to be redesigned to find a better balance between theory and practice and better assessment of performance.

The Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1983–85) recommended a five-year training programme, which should be started after the completion of Class XII and recommended for the beginning of an effective and qualitative teacher education programme, i.e., a four-year integrated programme. The National Policy on Education (1986) rightly stated, “No people can rise above the levels of its teachers.” The policy stresses the upgrading of training schools to the District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), and training colleges were upgraded into colleges of teacher education (IASEs). There were provisions for research and innovation in IASEs.

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on ‘Learning Without Burden’ noted that “inadequate programmes of teacher preparation led to an unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools.” The programme should restructure the content to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis

in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to gain the ability for self learning and independent thinking.

The National Commission on Teachers (1985) suggested a minimum two-year B.Ed. programme. The Yash Pal committee (1993), the Justice Verma commission on the vision of teacher education (2012), and the Poonam Batra committee (2014) have also suggested a two-year B.Ed. programme. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) also presents a curriculum for two years B.Ed. programme. After the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) regulation 2014, B.Ed. programme became two years across India. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has to start taking suitable measures to make teacher education at various levels responsive to such developments and to quality concerns in the future.

The National Education Policy (2020) “recommended integrity in the teacher education programme by moving teacher education into multi-disciplinary colleges and universities.” The policy suggested the closure of a substandard functional teacher education institute through rigorous monitoring and review of the clean-up of the teacher education sector. The policy also creates a connection between education departments at higher education institutions (HEIs) and school complexes. The policy recommended

that by 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be 4 years integrated B.Ed., the degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy along with strong practicum training as student-teaching at local schools. The policy also describes that all B.Ed. programmes will include training in time-tested as well as the most recent techniques in pedagogy, including pedagogy regarding foundational literacy and numeracy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, teaching children with special interests or talents, use of educational technology, and learner-centred and collaborative learning. It will also appropriately integrate environmental awareness and sensitivity towards its conservation and sustainable development so that environmental education becomes an integral part of school curricula.

The primary focus of the policy planners was to bring about a qualitative improvement in the teacher education system along with a quantitative expansion of the facilities for teacher training, according to the analysis of the recommendations of various commissions, committees, and the Indian education policy.

Recent Government Initiatives to Empower the Teacher Education Programme

The NEP 2020 seeks to totally restructure the teaching profession in order to develop a strong merit-based

framework of tenure, remuneration, and promotion that incentivises and honours exceptional teachers. Following are the recent initiatives to leverage the teacher education programme—

- The minimum degree requirement for school teachers is the 4-year integrated B.Ed., which is designed as a multidisciplinary and integrated dual-major bachelor's degree in Education and a specialised field.
- The National Testing Agency will administer appropriate academic and aptitude exams for admission to this degree (NTA).
- By 2022 a set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be created to influence all factors related to managing a teacher's career, such as tenure, attempts at ongoing professional development, promotions, wage increases, and other honours.
- In order to improve the quality of their B.Ed. programme, teachers have to do cutting-edge research in a variety of educational areas.
- At regular intervals, teacher audits or performance reviews will be conducted for performance evaluation.
- Every year, school teachers are required to complete 50 hours of CPD activities, such as workshops or online teacher development programmes.
- School principals must also complete CPD in leadership, school

management, and competency based learning modules.

- Additionally, NCERT would research, identify, and suggest international pedagogical techniques for integration into Indian pedagogical practices through CPD.

All these changing initiatives have been taken by NEP 2020 to hold the conditions of teacher education, deployment, recruitment, and service conditions responsible for encouraging the motivation of the teachers and their teaching quality.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Large number of studies were done on the perceptions of student teachers towards the teacher education programme, and the teaching profession. But teacher education programmes are still a point of concern and a contentious issue among academics and researchers. Supporting the concern of teacher education, Thakur and Chawla (2016) conducted a study, i.e., a comparative study of emotional competence and teacher perceptions of B.Ed. trainees towards the teaching profession and find out the significant differences in the perceptions towards the teaching profession of B.Ed. trainees in terms of their sex, subject, and locality. Anandakumar, TK and Kalaiyaran (2017) conducted a study on the perception of teacher trainees on 'Quality Training' in the District Institute of Education and Training concept of teacher education. The findings of this study showed that

some qualities are lacking in our teacher training institutions. Physical infrastructure, learning materials, course content, administration, and benefits from the institution are present at a highly significant level, rather than the other two qualities like internships and co-curricular activities. Adhikari (2017) concluded in her study that, for preparing teachers, two years duration is ideal. Sharma (2021) discussed policy and regulatory changes to reforms in teacher education in India that have taken place in the last decade. The article focuses on the challenges of expansion and assurance of quality in the school education system and discusses the reform of the curriculum, duration of the teacher education programme, reformulation of the regulatory mechanism, and upgrading the teacher education programme. It was suggested that recent developments are mere omissions and responses to some needs and will further help in understanding how teacher education policy and regulatory decision-making in India are not merely a natural domain of knowledge but rather essentially political and constantly under contestation.

This study will add to the wealth of research already done in the area of teacher education, particularly with regard to how teacher education programmes have changed structurally through time, how long they have been in existence, how innovative and pedagogical they are, etc.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Yet many studies had been conducted on the teacher education programme which focuses on the perceptions of pre-service teachers toward B.Ed. programme, i.e., Adhikari, (2017) on the perception of trainee teachers toward B.Ed. programme in Assam. Bhargava and Pathy (2011) on the Perception of Student Teachers about Teaching Competencies and Pakira and Khan, (2018) regarding the perception of trainee teachers toward two-year B.Ed. programme. All the studies have shown that very few efforts have been made in this region to investigate and examine such an important concern. This study shows the student teachers’ perceptions towards the B.Ed. programme that they have undergone in a contemporary setting. In addition to knowledge, curriculum, and pedagogical understanding, the study reveals the perceptions of student teachers about many facets and techniques of the teacher education programme and illustrates the engagement of student teachers with the field—self, community, and school and its consequences for the prospective school teachers. This study will also help the stakeholders

to uphold appropriate conduct and implement the necessary changes in relation to curriculum coverage and students’ acquisition of professionalism to improve secondary teacher education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the perceptions of student teachers towards the two-year B.Ed. programme?
2. What are the perceptions of student teachers towards the nature and perspective of two-year B.Ed. programme?
3. What are the perceptions of student teachers towards discipline curriculum and pedagogy studied in B.Ed. programme?
4. What are the perceptions of student teachers towards engagement with the field—self, community, and school?

METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study was to identify the perceptions of the student teachers towards the B.Ed. programme. The present study is quantitative in nature. Table 1 provides the comprehensive understanding of the methodological framework adopted by the researcher.

Table 1: Framework of the Research Design of the Present Study

S. No.	Structure	Description
1.	Type of research design	Descriptive research design
2.	Method of study	Survey method

3.	Research tools	Self developed questionnaire on the perceptions of student teachers towards teachers education programme (Five Point Likert Scale)
4.	Sample size	47 Student teachers (2nd year)
5.	Sampling techniques	Purposive sampling techniques
6.	Statistical techniques used	Percentage analysis
		Descriptive analysis

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Primarily, researchers visited the institution with prior permission of the head of the department. Data was also collected through Google Forms. The quantitative data were analysed

by using percentage analysis, which was calculated using SPSS software. Data from Table 2 explain the perceptions of student teachers towards the B. Ed. programme on the Likert scale, i.e., strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (DA), and strongly disagree (SDA).

Table 2: Perceptions of Student Teachers towards the B.Ed. Programme

S. No.	Statement related to B.Ed. programme	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1.	B.Ed. programme has a multidisciplinary approach	38.3	48.9	6.4	2.1	4.3
2.	B.Ed. programme enhances the professional capacities of student teachers	48.9	34	12.8	4.3	0
3.	B.Ed. programme develops the understanding and competencies of effective teaching and learning processes	42.6	46.8	6.4	4.3	0
4.	B.Ed. programme provides opportunities of sharing experiences gained by practicing teachers	31.9	42.6	17	4.3	4.3
5.	B.Ed. the programme develops an understanding of areas such as assessment etc.	21.3	47.4	12.8	4.3	4.3
6.	B.Ed. programme develops skills involved in selecting, developing, and using evaluation tools	31.9	48.9	17	2.1	0

7.	B.Ed. programme helps to acquire knowledge and develop an understanding of various aspects of school management	27.7	53.2	10.6	4.3	4.3
8.	B.Ed. programme develops an understanding and appreciation of the role of the teacher in the prevailing socio-culture and political system in general and the educational system in particular	31.9	51.1	14.9	2.1	0
9.	B.Ed. programme helps to systematise experiences and strengthen professional competencies	27.7	57.4	10.6	2.1	2.1

Table 2 reveals that most of the student teachers agreed with the statement, i.e., the B.Ed. programme has a multidisciplinary approach, enhances the professional capacities of student teachers, develops the understanding and competencies of effective teaching and learning processes, provides opportunities for sharing experiences gained by practicing teachers, develops an understanding of areas such as assessment, etc., develops skills involved in selecting, developing,

and using evaluation tools, helps to gain knowledge and develop an understanding of various aspects of school management, helps to develop an understanding and appreciation of the role of the teacher in the prevailing socio-cultural, political system, and the educational systems in particular, and helps to systematise the experiences and strengthen the professional competencies and helps to systematise the experiences and strengthen the professional competencies.

Table 3: Perceptions of Student Teachers towards the Educational Approaches of Teacher Education Programmes

S. No.	Perspective in educational approaches	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1.	B.Ed. programme engages student teachers with studies on Indian society and education and helps to acquire conceptual tools of sociological analysis	36.2	42.6	14.9	6.4	0
2.	Develop a conceptual understanding about issues of diversity inequality and marginalisation in Indian society	29.8	53.2	12.8	4.3	0

3.	Focus on the aspects of social and emotional development, self and identity, and cognition and learning	27.7	61.7	10.6	0	0
4.	Address the theoretical foundation of school knowledge from a historical, philosophical and sociological perspective	27.7	48.9	14.9	6.4	2.1
5.	Develop an understanding of the cultures, policies and practices	27.7	44.7	19.1	8.5	0

Table 3 shows that the majority of teachers favour the statement, i.e., B.Ed. programme engages student teachers with studies on Indian society and education and helps to acquire conceptual tools of sociological analysis, develop a conceptual understanding of issues of diversity, inequality, and marginalisation in Indian society, and focus on the aspects of social and emotional development, self and identity, and cognition and learning.

Table 3 also reveals that most of the teachers do not agree that, "B.Ed. programme addresses the theoretical

foundation of school knowledge from a historical, philosophical, and sociological perspective and develops an understanding of the cultures' policies and practices."

Table 4 reveals the perceptions of student teachers towards curriculum and pedagogy studies in teacher education programmes. It shows that the majority of teachers agreed with the statement that the B.Ed. programme develops a critical understanding of the school curriculum, links school knowledge with community life, and constructs subject knowledge of the pedagogy

Table 4: Perceptions of Student Teachers towards the Curriculum and Pedagogy Studies of Teacher Education Programmes

1.	Curriculum and pedagogy studies	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
2.	Develop a critical understanding of the school curriculum	31.9	48.9	17	2.1	0
3.	Linking school knowledge with community life	23.4	51.1	19.1	6.4	0
4.	Constructs subject knowledge through pedagogy process	17	55.3	17	6.4	4.3
5.	Design of the programme enables a student to specialise in one subject area	21.3	38.3	14.9	21.3	4.3

process. Table 4 also reveals that 21.3 per cent of student teachers disagree with the statement, i.e., the design of the programme enables a student to specialise in one subject area.

Table 5 demonstrates the perceptions of student teachers towards their engagement with the field—the self, community, and school of teacher education programmes. It can be observed from the table that the majority of student teachers agreed with the statement, i.e., if student teachers engage with the field, it will enhance collaboration with the community, and professional capacity, enabling students to use

information and communication technology (ICT), engage students in self-actualisation and enhance the professional capacity of history through the play way method.

Table 5 also reveals that the B.Ed. programme promotes reflective thinking among student teachers and sharpens the student’s perception of the concepts involved in educational practices. It can also be illustrated from Table 5 that some student teachers show neutral perceptions towards the statement, “This programme enhances the capacity of student teachers to plan responses to the reality of education.”

Table 5: Perceptions of Student Teachers towards their Engagement with the Field—the Self, Communities, and School of Teacher Education Programme

S.No.	Perspecting on engagement with the field—the self, community and school	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SDA (%)
1.	Enhance the collaboration with the community	21.3	59.6	14.9	0.3	0
2.	Enhance the professional capacity	34	53.2	4.3	4.3	4.3
3.	Enable students to use the Information and Communication Technology	21.3	55.3	19.1	4.3	0
4.	Engage student with self actualisation	25.5	51.1	12.8	10.6	0
5.	Enhance the professional capacity of history and by play way method	14.9	38.3	40.4	6.4	0
6.	This programme promotes reflective thinking among student teachers	31.9	57.4	6.4	4.3	0
7.	This programme sharpens the students’ perceptions towards the concepts involved in educational practices	25.5	68.1	2.1	4.3	0
8.	This programme enhances the capacity of student teachers to formulate responses to the realities of education	23.4	55.3	14.9	2.1	4.3

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers looked at how student teachers felt about the perspectives in education, curriculum, and pedagogy studies of the two-year B.Ed. programmes. This research found that—

- Most of the student teachers have constructive opinions towards the teacher education programme.
- Student teachers are in favour of the curriculum and pedagogy, engagement with the self and school and they believe that it is for their professional development, uplifting of their knowledge and understanding in the future.
- Student teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the teacher education programmes as it is multidisciplinary.
- Student teachers agreed that the training quality of prospective teachers will be improved by the two-year B.Ed. programme (Nataraja, 2014), and they understand the ideas of practice and implement theoretical understanding during school education programmes.
- Majority of student teachers comprehend assessment and evaluation tools and techniques and enable them to understand school management and administration.
- Majority of the student teachers understood that the B.Ed. programme built the capacity to understand education in

socio-cultural and political domains.

- Student teachers agreed that the two year B.Ed. programme is also responsible for the holistic development of student teachers because it provides opportunities to link with self, community, and school.
- It was also found that the majority of the student teachers agreed in relation to different pedagogical understandings in the B.Ed. programme.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Teachers are the backbone of the nation. To construct the strength of the nation, they must be highly proficient for the development of the forthcoming generation. According to the National Policy on Education (1986), pre-service and in-service teacher education are integral parts of a continuous process, and pre-service programmes are the first step in a teacher's professional development. Based on the findings, the study concluded that students have positive perceptions and a liberal approach toward the two-year B.Ed. programme (Hoque, Tarafdar and Laskar, 2020) which integrates all the required domains of teacher education. Additionally, the curriculum covers effective pedagogical methods for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, learner-centred and collaborative learning, and multi-level instruction and assessment. It was highlighted

in the study of Hollingsworth (1989) that the foundation of good teaching lies in the content, knowledge, and ability to communicate. The outcomes of the many dimensions made it clear that B.Ed. students had the least favourable experiences with the execution of the curriculum (Khan, 2017) because the nature of teacher education programmes helps to integrate the perceptions of student teachers towards nature and foundational knowledge about the areas of teaching and learning. They also accept that the teacher education is a noble profession that may enable the teacher trainees to develop and enhance teaching competencies (Gupta and Rakwal, 2020). It is concluded that the teachers ought to be knowledgeable about the most recent advancements in their field, and the curriculum of the B.Ed. programme fulfils the norms and objectives of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). Because of this, the Government of India has periodically highlighted the concerns for quality improvement and assimilation of teacher education have been key goals of educational planners since independence. Various viewpoints and elective course papers expose student instructors to multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary perspectives. To inculcate these issues within it is necessary to receive ongoing training throughout their careers to keep them updated with new knowledge and information in the field of education (Gupta and Rakwal, 2020).

Therefore, to conclude this study, it is demonstrated that a two-year B.Ed. programme enhances collaboration with the community, and professional capacity engages students with self actualisation and promotes reflective thinking among student teachers.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

In view of the results of the present study, the researcher laid down the following educational suggestions—

1. There is a need to organise seminars, workshops and refresher courses for the trainee teachers to improve their perceptions towards the teaching profession along with the improvement of communication, and analytical skills among student teachers.
2. It is also needed to remove the discrepancies in the curriculum of different teacher education programmes undergone in the education system.
3. The security of life after completion of the course of study or after training, proper placement for the trainee teachers is required. There were many students not getting jobs after completing the course or being trained.
4. There is a need to reform the curriculum and its approaches regarding multidisciplinary exposure.
5. It is also needed to re-organise and revisit the teacher education programme to remove drawbacks that are reflected as a hidden curriculum.

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