

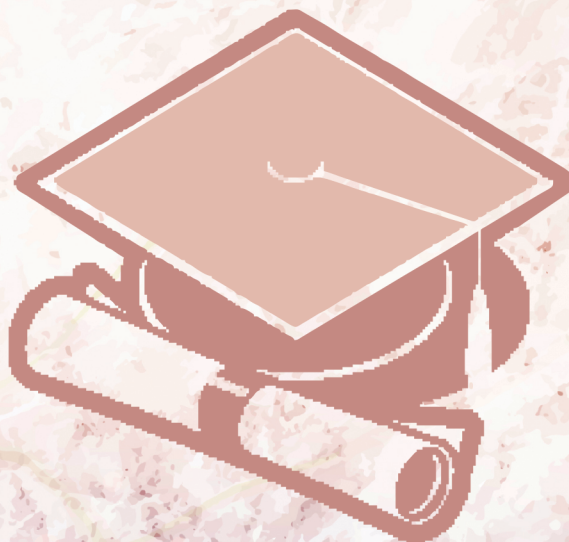
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Prof. Dr. Shreyashi Paltash Singh, Principal
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ROLE OF B.ED. CURRICULUM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS IN THE TEACHERS NEEDED FOR THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIFE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020

Riyanka Saha

Guest Lecturer, Indranidevi Institute of Education, Hooghly, West Bengal

Email ID: riyankasaha75@gmail.com

Abstract

Life skills are psychosocial abilities which equip an individual with the competencies to work and live effectively in the society. When teachers have sound life skills, they can instil those skills in the young minds. National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 has emphasized on inculcating life skills i.e., cooperation, team work, communication and resilience in the students via the instrument of education. This is a qualitative study that aims to find out what role B.Ed. curriculum plays in the development of life skills in the teachers needed for their professional life. For this purpose, the written curriculum for two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the Higher Education Department of the Government of West Bengal following NCTE regulations, 2014 has been considered. Total 19 teachers were selected as the samples through simple random sampling. A self-made structured telephone interview was applied to gather the opinion of the teachers. The results have revealed that the teachers have well developed self-awareness, empathy, creativity, effective communication and interpersonal relationship and stress management skills. For developing the skills of problem solving, decision making and cooperation among the students, the participant teachers use a wide range of teaching-learning methods. 94.74% teachers recommended team work for the students. According to 84.21% interviewees, they have been benefitted by studying psychology in the B.Ed. course as it has helped them in understanding themselves and their students.

Keywords: Curriculum, Life Skills, NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION:

In this challenging world where human relationships are becoming complex day by day, life skills act as an armour of the young minds. Skills are necessary to learn from life. Life skill education can connect basic functioning with capabilities. According to WHO, life skills are “The abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” Core life skills as identified in 1997 by WHO are: self-awareness, critical thinking, decision-making, empathy, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal skills, managing emotions and coping with stress.

A curriculum is all educational experiences of the learner in an academic course. According to Hilda Taba, a curriculum is defined as a plan of action or a document in the written form which comprises of the strategies to achieve the desired goals. It focuses on the holistic development of the students. Life skills in the curriculum facilitate systematization, stimulation and consolidation of the process of teaching and learning. Understanding the importance of life skill education, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has made life skill education compulsory in their curriculum. University Grants Commission (UGC) has also included life skills in their curriculum. National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 has emphasized the role of life skills education in the education institutions.

Like any other academic curriculum, B.Ed. curriculum includes several life skills. But the question remains how much the curriculum is able to transmit these skills in the students in reality. This study is qualitative in nature which aims to find out how the B.Ed. curriculum helps in the development of life skills in the teachers needed for their professional life.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Rassool and Sharifi (2008) conducted a research for the preparation of a curriculum of life skills for the Iranian high school students. It was found that their suggested model of curriculum of life skills strengthened the life skills of the students studying in high schools.

Monyangi (2010) studied the perception of the teachers towards the implementation of the curriculum of life skills education in public primary schools. The study revealed that life skills played an important role in preventing HIV/AIDS. It also found that the schools had learner- friendly teaching methodologies of life skills education, though the curriculum was not implemented in a organized way. There was lack of in-service training for the teachers teaching life skill education. The curriculum was taught like a co-curricular activity in the schools.

Jayaram (2019), in his quantitative study, discussed about the perception of the teachers regarding life skill development among the students studying at secondary level in Visakhapatnam. The results showed that the teachers had positive perceptions towards the formation of life skills among the students studying at secondary level. This perception didn't vary based on locality of the schools, community or the qualification of the teachers.

Saravanakumar (2020), in his paper, entitled 'Life Skill Education for Creative and Productive Citizens' discussed about life skill education, its aims, importance and benefits, how it can be imparted in the schools. According to him, life skills education can be inculcated among the students through brainstorming, classroom discussions, role play, group work, educational games, simulations etc.

Gupta and Awasthi (2021) made a comparison of life skills between male and female B.Ed. students in Sitapur city. Results showed that in science background, male students had better life skills in comparison with female students. While better life skills were observed in female B.Ed. students than male B.Ed. students in commerce background. Life skills were

almost similar in both the genders in the case of arts background.

Life Skills in National Education Policy (NEP 2020): NEP 2020 emphasizes on the life skills like team work, resilience, communication, decision-making, problem solving and analytical thinking. Experimental learning forms the basis of NEP 2020. It recommends to shift classroom interaction towards competency-based learning. It says that skills like scientific temper, creativity, innovativeness, evidence-based thinking, oral and written communication, citizenship skills, collaboration, gender sensitivity, digital literacy, ethical and moral reasoning have to be developed in the learners.

Objective of the Study: The objective of the study is to find out how the life skills in B.Ed. curriculum have helped in the professional life of the teachers.

Research Question: The study is based on the following research question-

How has life skills in B.Ed. curriculum helped in the professional life of the teachers?

Research Methodology: This study is based on a qualitative approach. For this study, the curriculum for two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the Higher Education Department of the Government of West Bengal following NCTE regulations, 2014 has been considered. A self-made structured interview was developed which was reviewed and validated by the experts. As the research technique, this interview was applied to 19 school teachers via telephone. The teachers who achieved B.Ed. degree from Baba Saheb Ambedkar Education University (Erstwhile The West Bengal University of Teachers'

Training, Education Planning and Administration) within 2020 and teaching, at present, in a private or government sponsored or government school were selected by simple random sampling and interviewed eventually. Total 4 male teachers and 15 female teachers were interviewed for this study. The advantage of interview technique is that it helps to get in-depth data. The opinions of the participants were put into written words verbatim. The questions were open ended which were favourable while interacting with the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the participants.

The participation of the participants was totally voluntary. Their statements along with their names have been mentioned in the paper with their consent. There were some limitations of this study. Small sample size might lead to erroneous generalization. Moreover, interview technique was time consuming. But the researcher was cautious enough to deal with these limitations.

Discussion and Findings: Eight dimensions of life skills were considered for this study which have been discussed below-

1. SELF-AWARENESS:

The teachers showed self-awareness by identifying the characteristics of themselves as a teacher. These are- teaching skills, subject knowledge, learner centered teaching, patience,

communication skill, friendliness, approachability, hard work, creativity, adaptability, collaboration, empathy, guidance skill, managerial skill, administrative skill, dedication, discipline, calmness, understanding ability, awareness about the society and the environment, problem solving skill, spontaneity, ability to encourage, assertion, listening skill, person of strong values, confidence, leadership skill, cooperation, helpfulness, enthusiasm, sincerity, ability to be organized, love for the subject of teaching, ability to make learning fun and positive attitude.

84.21% interviewees said that psychology in the B.Ed. curriculum has helped them to understand themselves and their students better. This was another criterion for understanding self-awareness.

In this context, Bidisha Dutta, an assistant teacher in a government sponsored school said “Yes, obviously. It has helped me to understand the psychological concepts, personality traits of the children. It has helped me to know that some children are extroverts while some are introverts and some are overactive...all these differential characteristics of the children and how to deal with them accordingly in the classroom. As a person, the qualities I lack, the areas in teaching e.g., communication skill, the ability of interaction where I need to improve...all these I have learnt from B.Ed. curriculum.”

Despite the differences of opinion, all the participants have agreed that they have learnt the life skills better while teaching in the schools than from theory.

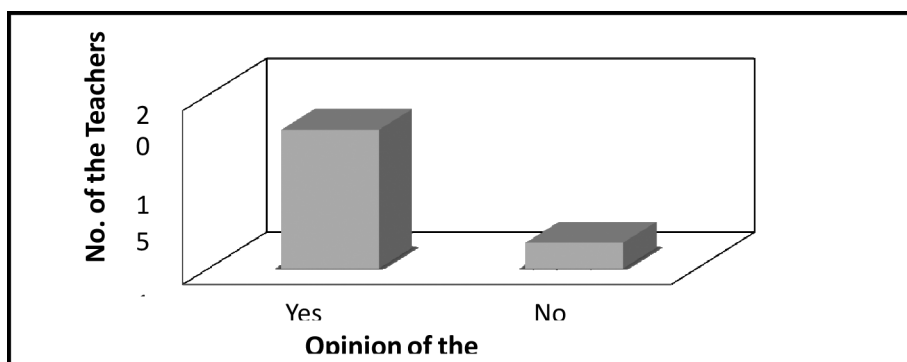


Fig 1. Bar graph showing the whether the psychology in B.Ed. curriculum has helped (Yes) the teachers to know the self and the students or not (No)

2. Effective communication and interpersonal relationship: All the teachers opined to have good interpersonal relationship in the school community.

Cooperation was one of the set criteria for measuring effective communication and interpersonal relationship. To develop cooperation among the students, the participant teachers use various group activities like project work, peer learning, group discussion, assignments, field work, sports, gardening, science club and group study.

Avik Dutta, an assistant teacher of a private school said, "Cooperation is the only way to develop the skill of cooperation among the students. As a teacher, if I cooperate with the students, they will learn to develop cooperation." His statement is a reflection of Social Cognitive Learning Theory of Albert Bandura where the children learn by observation.

To measure effective communication and interpersonal relationship, how the teachers interact with the parents was also taken into account. It has been found that parent-teacher meeting is the common way of communicating with the parents in every school. Very few participant teachers engage in other ways to communicate with the parents. Anindita Halder is one of them. She said, "There are some engagement activities for the parents. If the students are assigned project work, that is informed to their parents in parent-teacher meeting and suggestions and their involvement are invited from them. On the special days like foundation day of the school, the member parents from parents' committee play the role of the teachers in the classroom."

Whether the teachers advocate for team work or individual work was another basis for measuring effective communication and interpersonal relationship. 94.74% teachers opted for team work.

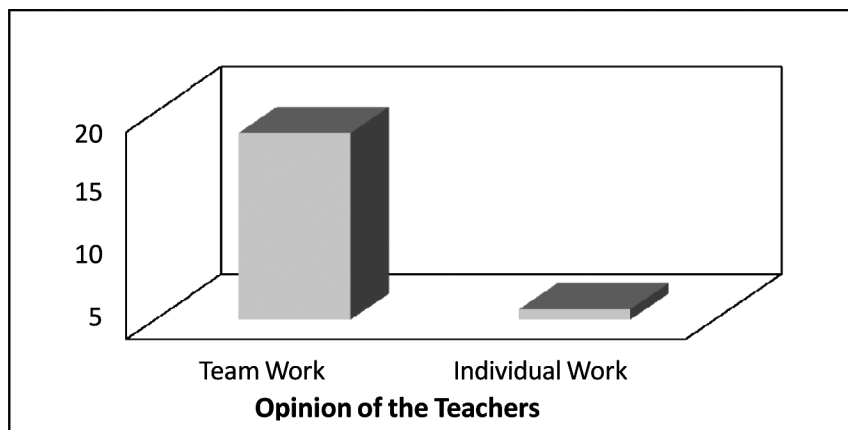


Fig 2. Bar graph showing whether the teachers opt for team work or individual work

- Problem solving and decision making:** For developing problem solving skill among the students, the participant teachers focus on giving problem situation, real life situation, trial and error method, games, project, role play, hands-on activities, brainstorming, mind map, peer learning, group discussion, cooperative learning and debate.

To develop decision making skills among the students, they rely on games, role play, brainstorming, group activities like group discussion and project work, debate. The teachers also allot responsibility to the students or provide real life or hypothetical situation.

4. **Creative thinking:** In case of bringing creativity in the teaching-learning process, the participants mainly used inductive method, role play, games, story telling, realia, working model, films, field work, debate, workshops and art integrated learning.
Joydeep Ghosh, an assistant teacher in a government sponsored school said, "The exterior angle of a triangle is equal to the sum of two interior opposite angles. For explaining this, I made a mathematical model. Using this model, the students could understand the theorem easily with the help of examples."
5. **Empathy:** To measure empathy, the participant teachers were asked about their point of view about the queer students. All of them showed positive attitude towards them.
Ranita Majumder, an assistant teacher in a private school said in this context, "It's very normal. They have individual existence. I don't have any problem with that."
6. **Coping with stress:** All the respondents showed positive attitude towards stress management.

CONCLUSION:

Life skills comprise psychosocial and interpersonal skills. From this study, it is seen that the teachers have shown well developed self-awareness, effective communication and interpersonal relationship, problem solving and decision making, creative thinking, empathy and stress management skills. These skills can be sharpened by continuing professional development and self-learning. Life skills are, in fact, interwoven in the B.Ed. curriculum. The development of the life skills among the teachers through B.Ed. curriculum depends on the execution of the curriculum.

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