

Are the Pre-service Teacher Training Degree Courses Preparing Teachers for Addressing the Needs of Inclusive Classrooms?

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ABSTRACT

The pre-service teacher education degree course or B.Ed. is one of the most sought after pre-service professional course. Pre-service teacher education degree courses prepare an individual for working as a:

- Subject teacher for teaching English, Hindi, Mathematics, Social sciences etc. after completing B. Ed
- Special education teacher for taking care of special educational needs of students who have difficulty in seeing, speaking, hearing, social interaction etc, after completing B. Ed. special education
- Physical education teacher after completing Bachelor in Physical Education (B. P. Ed)

All the three types of professionals, i.e., the subject teachers, the special teachers and the physical education teachers are required to work in collaboration in the same work setting, the regular school. The regular schools are becoming inclusive by opening their doors for the children with disabilities and children belonging to socio-economic disadvantaged conditions. In this context, following questions are worth asking:

- How the teachers are being prepared for their role and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms?
- Are the pre-service teacher education degree programs fulfilling their roles and responsibilities towards preparing teachers for working in inclusive classrooms?
- Does the pre-service teacher education degree programs, require any modifications or changes for preparing teachers empowered to work in inclusive classroom?
- In what ways inclusive pedagogy is made a part of the pre-service teacher education degree programs?

In an attempt to find answers for few of these questioned, the present study was initiated with the following objectives of analyzing the pre-service teacher training degree programs from the lens of inclusive education, identifying the existing lacunas (if any)

and to list suggestions and modifications for making pre-service teacher training degree programs inclusive.

An analysis tool was prepared and vetted by an expert group from the field. With the help of experts a five point criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher training degree programs was developed. A sample of pre-service teacher training degree programs (20 programs of general education 10 programs of special education and 10 programs of physical education) were analyzed using the tool and the analysis criteria.

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None of the programs studied could satisfy all the five points of the criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher training degree programs. The situation was found to be extremely poor in the programs of physical education as compared with the programs of general education and special education.

The pre-service teacher training degree programs need to incorporate many changes like making inclusive pedagogy a significant part of the pedagogy courses, student teaching in inclusive classrooms, visit to special schools, learning to work in collaboration with other professionals and fellow colleagues and addressing special needs in group setting instead of one to one mode after pulling the child with special needs out of the regular classroom.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher training, inclusive classrooms

“Hey! I am through with the planning of my science lesson for external supervision tomorrow”, shared an excited Meetu with her friends. “Oh wow! But do you know who is coming tomorrow as external supervisor?” Rohit asked. “No, but why it should be a cause for concern? I am through with my preparations”, replied Meetu. Punita retorted, it should be if I am teaching the class having a child with special needs, in the presence of Prof. Maitra! And you my dear, the fortunate one, as you do not have to face her criticism for not taking care of Meena, a blind girl in the class to whom I will be teaching mathematics tomorrow. Hearing this, Manoj became a little worried and politely asked even if my lesson has been discussed with the social science pedagogy teacher and he is satisfied and suggested no action in this aspect, how am I supposed to deal with the situation. And I am not even in Prof. Maitra’s optional course class!

The discussion among this group of pre-service teacher trainees continued.

The conversation exemplified above raises many questions related to the design of pre-service teacher training courses and expectations of teacher educators from teacher trainees or would be teachers. As far as course curriculum is concerned the expectations may be in black and white but the expectations of individual teacher educator from trainees may differ on the basis of his/her area of interest and passion.

This raises pertinent questions like; does being a teacher give me freedom to demand what I feel right and good from students? Are the student teachers being trained to teach in the diverse classrooms post Right To Education (RTE) Act 2009? The first question cannot be answered as right or wrong because it involves inputs from moral ethical aspects also, thereby adding subjectivity to the answer. The second question on the other hand can be answered objectively by adopting systemic efforts to

find answers. The present paper is a humble attempt in this direction.

In this study, the lens through which pre-service teacher education programs were looked has basic assumption that inclusion means including all irrespective of abilities, disabilities, social and economic advantages or disadvantages.

Rationale for the study

An inclusive school is one where conscious effort is made by the school system to accommodate the learning needs of all by making some adjustment in the daily process and activities of school and classroom. Most of the existing schools in the country are inclusive in terms of student population, i.e., students from all backgrounds are accepted and enrolled to achieve the goal of inclusion but the lacuna related to adopting and following inclusive practices needs to be addressed.

In an inclusive school, all stakeholders in education work together to make schooling comfortable for all. Each stakeholder, the educational administrators (principal, administrative staff etc.), teachers (both regular and special), parents, students or the support staff (ayahs, peons etc.), not only understands special needs but are also able to modify their professional practices to cater to the special needs.

In an inclusive school, the special educator works hand in hand with regular teachers so that special educational needs are met within the school premises itself. The regular teacher is ready to modify the teaching learning content as per the suggestions and advice of the special educator and parents whereas the special teacher works in close collaboration with the regular teacher to meet the academic goals of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) and other learners.

The foremost requirement of inclusive school in the present scenario is teachers trained in inclusive pedagogy and practices. Most of the regular teachers presently employed require training in inclusive education at the level of capacity building, skill enhancement unlike traditional training focused at sensitization and awareness creation.

True inclusion consists of physical inclusion, social inclusion, psychological inclusion and academic inclusion. At present, it may appear to be a distant dream for the education system in India, but the system is moving in the right direction as evident from the increasing enrollment rate of CWSN in schools. CWSN enrollment at secondary stage of schooling under scheme Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) has increased from 76,242 in 2009-10 to 2,22,957 in 2013-14 (RMSA) ¹.

The pre-service teacher education degree course or Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) is one of the most sought after pre-service professional course. Yadav (2011)² observed that during the B.Ed programme, more emphasis was laid on teaching learning of theory rather than on the practical (schools experience programme) aspects. Pre-service teacher training degree courses prepare an individual for working as a:

- ❑ Subject teacher for teaching English, Hindi, Mathematics, Social sciences etc. after completing B. Ed (General)
- ❑ Special education teacher for taking care of special educational needs of students who have difficulty in seeing, speaking, hearing, social interaction etc., after completing B. Ed. (special education)
- ❑ Physical education teacher after completing Bachelor in Physical Education (B. P. Ed)

However, in the schools, the so called inclusive schools, where a teacher is employed after completing the degree course, the:

- ❑ CWSN are seated in the classroom along with regular (non-CWSN) students
- ❑ Regular teachers do not know how to:
 - Identify and understand the learning needs of CWSN

- Adapt teaching learning practices so that it meets the special needs of every child in class.
- Work in collaboration with the special teachers and therapists
- ❑ Special teachers are not skilled to
 - Link Individualized Education Plans (IEP) with regular class curriculum being followed by regular students
 - Understand that CWSN needs to learn in regular classroom with support from resource room, special teacher and therapists
 - Work in collaboration with regular teachers in regular school setting i.e. in inclusive classroom
 - Manage diverse learning needs in large group setting, i.e., more than 5 children
- ❑ Physical education teachers lack awareness about strategies to take care of children with special needs in the sports ground and neither do they feel competent to make changes in the physical education activities to include CWSN.

The three types of teachers (special, regular and physical education) are not able to perform the tasks listed above due to deficiency in the system of teacher training. Pre-service teacher education failed to prepare student teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms (Moran)³. Dyer (2004)⁴ observed that the teachers face lot of problems in transferring what is learnt in training to actual diverse classroom learning situation this might be happening due to the mismatch between the teacher training curriculum and the schools realities. Directorate of Teacher Education Research and Training (Perumalsamy (nd))⁵ Chennai identified seven factors for assessing the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training. These include learning resources and capacity building, performance in the classroom and pedagogical aspects among others.

All the three types of professionals, i.e., the subject teachers, the special teachers and the physical education teachers are required to work in collaboration with each other in the same work setting, the regular school. These regular schools are becoming inclusive by opening their

doors for the children with disabilities and also due to the presence of children belonging to socio economic disadvantaged conditions. In this context, following questions are worth asking—

- ❑ How the teachers are being prepared for their role and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms?
- ❑ Are the pre-service teacher education degree programs fulfilling their roles and responsibilities towards preparing teachers for working in inclusive classrooms?
- ❑ What methodologies are being followed in the pre-service teacher training degree programs?
- ❑ Does the pre-service teacher education, degree programs require any modifications or changes in order to prepare teachers empowered to work in inclusive classroom?
- ❑ What modalities are being followed in the student teaching during pre-service teacher training degree programs, so that the required skills are built?
- ❑ In what ways inclusive pedagogy can be made a part of the pre-service teacher education degree programs?

In an attempt to find answers for few of these questions, the present study was initiated with following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

- ❑ To analyze the pre-service teacher training degree programs from the lens of inclusive education
- ❑ To identify the existing lacunas (if any) in the existing programmes of pre-service teacher training
- ❑ To list suggestions and modifications for making pre-service teacher training degree programs inclusive

Methodology

Sample

- ❑ 20 programs of general education
- ❑ 10 programs of special education
- ❑ 10 programs of physical education

Tools

1. Researcher made pre-service teacher education programme analysis tool, from the lens of inclusive education.
2. A five point criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher training degree programs.

The analysis tool and the criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher training degree program were vetted by an expert group from the field.

Data

The data for the study comprise of the information collected from the sample universities about the B.Ed. programme running in the universities. Details including, the course curriculum, duration of teaching practice, assignments, schools visit, lesson planning etc, regarding the pre-service teacher education degree programme, in special education, physical education and general education was sought from the sample universities, selected randomly.

Data Analysis

The collected data was qualitatively analyzed using pre-service teacher education analysis tool from the lens of inclusive education. The course content of each course (theory, assignments, projects etc.) or experience (teaching practice, action research, field visit, etc.) provided to the teacher trainees as part of the pre-service teacher education programme was analyzed with the help of qualitative statistical methods. The overall experience gained by the student teacher was assessed against the five point criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher education programme (the criterion is mentioned in the analysis). All the three types of programmes that is B.Ed., B.Ed. (special) and B. P. Ed., were treated with the same analysis tool and assessed against the same five point criteria.

Delimitations

The study was limited to the pre-service teacher education programmes.

The study was limited to only degree programmes.

Inferences Drawn

For ease of understanding and sake of clarity, the inferences are divided into various subsections such as objective of the theory courses, teaching practice, generating awareness about children with Visual Impairments (VI) etc.

Analysis of objectives of B.Ed. Programme of universities under study

- ❑ In 19 out of the 20 B.Ed.(General) programs analyzed, inclusive education was not mentioned in the aims and objectives of the program being offered. This require attention of the program planners, as the program structure and objectives etc. are usually circulated among the course designers of all the universities, who design syllabus and include units and topics keeping in mind the aims and objectives, duration and target group of the program. Lack of mention of inclusive education and concerns of CWSN in the aims and objectives of the program may lead to lacuna in addressing the same in the theory as well as activities designed as part of pre – service training program.
- ❑ None of the programs analyzed in physical education (B.P. Ed.) mentioned inclusive education in the aims and objectives of the program offered.
- ❑ 60 % of the B. Ed. (Special) programs analysed have mentioned inclusive education in the objectives of the program.

Analysis of Objectives of Courses Taught to Teacher Trainees in B. Ed. Programmes, under study

- ❑ Despite of 19 programs out of the 20 B.Ed. programs analyzed, were found to have no mention of inclusion or CWSN concerns in their objectives yet the individual theory course objectives of many of these programs had objectives voicing the concerns of inclusion in education.
- ❑ In the ten B.P. Ed. programs analysed, most of the theory courses lacked explicit objectives.

The objectives of the theory courses wherever stated didn't mention about the CWSN or inclusion in education.

- ❑ In the B.Ed. (Special) program, 28 courses out of 35, spread across 10 programs, were found to have some scope of making their objectives in coherence with inclusion in education.
- ❑ All of the courses and their objectives, in B.Ed. (Special) program, are geared toward CWSN and special education directly but they need to be made more explicit in their focus towards inclusion i.e. the orientation needs to shift from special education to inclusive education.

Content sifting of the courses with respect to inclusive education

The course content has been analyzed with the two assumptions. The foremost being finding scope for making content directly related with CWSN and second to list the content dealing with inclusive education.

- ❑ In B.Ed. programs, inclusion in education was also observed to be in courses where the same was least expected like a course on Foundations of Physics Education, Extension Education and Rural development, Issues of Conservation and Environmental Regeneration, Education for Peace etc.
- ❑ The analyzed pedagogy courses of 20 B.Ed. program contains topics and themes related to CWSN like multilingualism, new trends in teaching methods, planning for teaching different students, diagnostic and remediation in teaching etc. The few pedagogy courses where required emphasis was noticed were pedagogy of science (physics, chemistry, and physics), mathematics, languages (mother tongues and English) and social sciences.
- ❑ In the analyzed B.Ed. programmes, different pedagogy courses were addressing different issues say for example gifted children were mostly addressed in science pedagogy along with slow learners. Pedagogy of English was dealing with the concerns of multilingualism, social and economic deprivation.

- ❑ The course content of 7 theory courses in B.P.Ed. program were observed to address concerns of inclusive education in terms of , role of physical education in preventing maladjustment & promoting mental health, individual differences and their implications in physical education and sports, social stratifications, women’s participation in physical education etc.
- ❑ The course content, in 10 B.Ed. Special programs were found to be geared toward teaching children with disabilities (the disabilities, as mentioned in the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) Act) by adopting special educational practices. However, they need to be made more inclusive, taking into consideration the socio-economic landscape of India and the various issues of gender, caste and class that permeate it.

Analysis of Assignments/Projects in B.Ed. w.r.t. Inclusive Education

Assignments and projects provide the much needed linkage between the theory and the practice hence the nature of assignments and projects should be predominantly experience based so that the skill of the trainee teachers is build in the practices of inclusive education.

- ❑ Only 23 courses out of the 90 course spread across 20 B.Ed. programmes analyzed had assignments or projects with direct or indirect relation with CWSN or inclusion in education. For example, the course on guidance and counseling had an assignment expecting the trainees to study the problems of school children that can be addressed through a teacher counsellor. Theory course titled “Secondary Education in India: Status, Challenges and Strategies” had a prescribed project related to “Survey of educational needs of disadvantaged/disabled”.
- ❑ Out of the 33 courses from the 10 analysed B. P. Ed. programs, only 4 courses were found to have relevant assignments or projects for CWSN, having flavour of inclusion in

education. Example include visit/prepare of wellness programme for various sections the society: (i) slums, and (ii) neighbourhood areas, prepare report on common posture deformities and corrective exercises for postural defects etc.

- ❑ It was observed that all courses, in B.Ed. Special did not have specified assignments. 14 out of the 35 courses across the ten analysed programmes had assignments that focussed on CWSN despite the fact that these were B.Ed. (Special) courses.

Analysis of Suggested Reading In B.Ed. Programs

During the tool finalization workshop it was suggested that many a times the topic may not have been mentioned in the objectives or in the content/theme/units but we may find some relevant reading in the suggested list of readings indicating the intent of the planners of the course. Hence suggested reading list was also observed closely.

- ❑ Only 11 theory courses in the 10 analyzed B.Ed. programs, had suggested readings related to inclusion in education.
- ❑ Almost 50 % of the courses analyzed in B. P. Ed. programs lacked suggested reading list.
- ❑ The courses in B. P. Ed. that had the reading list were studied for relevance to CWSN and inclusion in education. Only 4 theory courses had some readings relevant for inclusion in education. The issue of disaster management and women were observed to occur frequently in the suggesting reading list titles.
- ❑ In B.Ed. Special programme, 18 out of the 35 courses had readings connected to the concerns of CWSN. The reading list had very few books on inclusion in education, most of the books were disability specific and very few were found addressing the concerns of gender and socio economic disadvantages.

Generating awareness about Blindness and Low Vision

- ❑ The awareness generation was attempted via only 6 theory courses in the sample 20 B.Ed.

programs. These courses include guidance and counseling, inclusive education, addressing special needs in classroom, foundations of higher secondary education, psychology of learner, learning and instruction and educational administration. No pedagogy course was observed to address the learning issues of blindness and low vision.

- ❑ In 10 B. P. Ed. programs, only 2 courses were found to have a topic attempting generating awareness about the children with blindness and low vision. These were adapted physical education and sports for all.
- ❑ In B.Ed. Special almost every programme discussed Blindness and Low Vision as a single unit or as part of a unit but the amount of information is too little and of introductory nature only.
- ❑ The topic of Visual impairment was dealt within the programs of teacher training in special education just like the topic of children with special needs was dealt within the teacher training programs of general education i.e. a single topic or unit as part of a theory course.
- ❑ The specialized programmes like B.Ed. Special (VI) had three papers dedicated to visual impairment aiming to build skills for working in special schools.
- ❑ Specialized programmes, such as B.Ed. Special Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder also observed to discuss Visual Impairment in an attempt to provide knowledge about all disabilities there by creating awareness and skills to deal with a situation having children with multiple disabilities.
- ❑ The pedagogy courses in B.Ed. Special (VI) was found to deal more with the subject content and its pedagogy in the general context that is just like in B. Ed. general, instead of trying to build the skills of trainees teachers in adapting the curriculum to cater to the needs of children with VI.

Generating awareness about Hearing and Speech impairment

- ❑ The awareness generation was attempted via only 6 theory courses, in 20 B.Ed. programs. These courses include guidance and counseling, inclusive education, addressing special needs in classroom, psychology of learner, visions of Indian education and educational administration. No pedagogy course was observed to address the learning issues of blindness and low vision.
- ❑ In 10 B. P. Ed. programs, only 2 courses were found to have a topic attempting generating awareness about the children with hearing and speech impairments. These were adapted physical education and sports for all.
- ❑ Hearing and Speech Impairment was mentioned in almost every programme of B.Ed. Special analysed.
- ❑ The specialized programs in HI were aiming to prepare experts in Hearing Impairment (HI) whereas the other training programs were making the trainee teachers aware of the issue and concerns of HI without attempting to build skills to work with children with HI. For example B. Ed. Special programme on Mental Retardation also discuss HI as an associated disability.

Generating awareness about Loco-motor disability and Leprosy arrested

- ❑ In B. Ed. programs, apart from the course on guidance and counseling, inclusive education and other course attempting to spread awareness about children with VI and HI, the course content in pedagogy of biological and physical science mentioned about children with loco-motor and leprosy cured. In all only seven theory course mentioned about children with loco-motor and leprosy cured.
- ❑ Only 3 theory course across ten B. P. Ed. programmes analysed have tried to sensitise trainees about the needs of children with loco-motor disability and children cured from leprosy.

- ❑ Almost all pre-service special teacher education courses analysed have given their trainees an orientation to loco-motor disability and leprosy arrested as part of their syllabus. However, no specialisation courses are offered at the B.Ed. level in this area.
- ❑ The specialisation course on multiple disabilities discusses loco-motor disability and leprosy arrested in a comparatively substantiated manner and so does the specialisation course in Mental Retardation (MR) as part of associated impairments.

Generating awareness about Cerebral palsy and Muscular Dystrophy

- ❑ In 20 B.Ed. programs analyzed, children with cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy found mention in only three theory course; inclusive education, addressing special needs in classroom and psychology of learner.
- ❑ In B. P. Ed. programs children with cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy found mention in only 1 theory course that is adapted physical education.
- ❑ Cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy being one of the most visible challenges within the disability categories, finds mention in 9 out of ten B.Ed. Special programs analysed as part of an introductory course on disabilities.
- ❑ No pedagogy course, in B.Ed. Special programs, mentions the academic challenges faced by children with cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy.

Generating awareness about Autism, intellectual disability and mental illness

The invisible disabilities like autism and mental illness etc. require more focus and sensitization as they are often left undetected.

- ❑ The mention of children with autism, intellectual disability and mental illness were found in the course content of only 8 courses, from the 20 B.Ed. programs analyzed. No pedagogy course included.

- ❑ In B.P. Ed programs the children with autism, intellectual disability and mental illness were found to be mentioned in only 3 courses.
- ❑ In B.Ed. Special programs, introductory courses across all programmes and the specialisation programs on MR, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and multiple disabilities discussed autism, and intellectual disability. Again, no pedagogy course mentioned any of the above across the board.

Generating awareness about Multiple Disabilities, Deaf Blindness and Multiple Sclerosis

- ❑ The mention about multiple disabilities, deaf blindness and multiple sclerosis were found in only 3 theory courses, across 20 B.Ed. programs analyzed. Absence of these challenges from the large number of teacher training courses doesn't mean that the condition doesn't exist and the teachers need not to plan and execute intervention.
- ❑ In B. P. Ed. programs the children with multiple disabilities, deaf blindness and multiple sclerosis found mention in only one theory course that is adapted physical education.
- ❑ Except for the standalone specialisation course on multiple disabilities offered by National Institute for Education of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, the B. Ed Special with specialization in MR and VI, were found to be the only other courses discussing the presence of multiple disabilities in student population.

Generating awareness about Learning Disability

Learning disability is also one of the invisible disabilities which are difficult to identify as the characteristics and symptoms have over strong resemblance with learning difficulties.

- ❑ Learning disabilities were observed to find its place in the content of only 4 theory courses, across 20 B. Ed. programs. No pedagogy course included.
- ❑ In B. P. Ed. programs the children with learning disabilities found mentioned in only one course.

- ❑ Learning Disability, which was discussed in introductory courses on disability in all the 10 B.Ed. Special programs analyzed. Learning disability was also the only disability which found significant discussion in the pedagogy courses.

Generating awareness about Gifted & Talented learners

- ❑ This group of challenges was found to be mentioned in 11 theory courses from 20 B. Ed programs. Out of these 11 courses three were pedagogy related courses.
- ❑ In 10 B. P. Ed. programs analyzed, students with giftedness and talents found mention in only one theory course.
- ❑ Only two instances were found in all of the ten B.Ed. Special programmes analysed, wherein the needs of gifted and talented learners were addressed. This is a huge lacuna observed in the training programs analysed as children with disabilities might quite easily fall in this category, and their needs must be understood so that their achievements match their potential.

Generating awareness about Slow Learners

The group of children with slow learners is another invisible group having hidden challenges which requires due significance and place in the teacher training curriculum. Slow learners are often confused with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities and difficulties. Strategic intervention and management approach will help in preventing the wastage of potential.

- ❑ In B.Ed. programs analyzed, their mention was found in only 9 theory courses which also include two pedagogy courses; pedagogy of biological and physical science.
- ❑ In B. P. Ed. programs, an attempt was made to spread awareness about slow learners via one theory course, adapted physical education.
- ❑ There was very little discussion about the needs and challenges faced by the children who learn slowly, across the B.Ed. Special programmes analysed.

Generating awareness about Scheduled castes; Scheduled Tribes & Minorities

The socially and economically disadvantaged section of society is usually addressed under SC, ST minorities and marginalized groups. This group has its own requirements in the form of curriculum contextualization, multilingualism and establishing linkages between the prescribed curriculum and the day to day life. These needs to be reflected in the curriculum and teacher trainees should be provided enough skills to deal with diversity with respect to this group.

- ❑ The learning issues related to this group found mention in 14 theory courses of 20 B.Ed. programs, which include one pedagogy course also; pedagogy of English.
- ❑ In B. P. Ed. it was observed that no course (theory or practical) discuss about the problems and challenges faced by children belonging to social minorities, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The issues related to the children coming from socially disadvantaged background needs to be addressed as they play a vital role in the formation of the identity of learners. The discrimination based on belongingness to a particular caste or community is a widespread phenomenon requiring attention. Thus, student trainees' competencies must be enhanced via pre service training to deal with this diversity and its issues.
- ❑ Only one course of one programme out of the ten B. Ed. programs analysed mentioned the problems faced by Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities despite the fact that they are a substantial part of our student population. Children with disabilities may also belong to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes or minorities there by making them doubly disadvantaged, this needs to be discussed among trainees teachers.

Generating awareness about Economically Deprived

Economic deprivation closes many doors early in life, including that of education and enjoying childhood. Right from childhood, the children are expected to work

and earn so that the daily requirements of life may be met. Economic deprivation leads to malnutrition and lack of qualitative educational opportunity due to cost.

- ❑ The trainee teacher pursuing B.Ed. need to understand the challenges associated with economic deprivation and its effects on education and schooling. Yet the issue found mention in the course content of only 11 courses spread across 20 B. Ed. programs.
- ❑ The B.Ed. Special and B. P. Ed. programs lack any discussion on the issues of economically weaker sections.

Generating awareness about Multilingualism

In the country like India which has more than 25 officially recognized languages and uncountable dialects, the issue of multilingualism is one of the major issues which needs to be addressed via education.

- ❑ The trainee's teachers need more orientation and skills to teach in the classroom which is diverse due to language. In B. Ed. programs the issue of multilingualism can be easily discussed as part of the language pedagogy course and also in courses like schooling and socialization, basic in education etc. Only 6 B.Ed. programs, out of the 20 analyzed, have attempted to raise awareness of trainee's teachers via pedagogy of language courses.
- ❑ No course content in any of the ten B. P. Ed. programs analysed were found to have any theme or topic discussing multilingualism.
- ❑ Only four courses across ten B.Ed. Special programmes analysed mentioned concerns of multilingualism in their course content.

Generating awareness about Gender

Gender is more than the issue of girl's. First the teacher educators need to understand this and then the same needs to be passed on to the teacher trainees.

- ❑ In 20 B.Ed. programs analyzed, gender concerns were observed to be mentioned in the course content of 23 theory courses. Few of these include pedagogy courses (chemistry,

biological science, language, and social science), gender issues in school, inclusive education, Political science comparative government and politics etc.

- ❑ In 10 B. P. Ed. programs analyzed, gender concerns were addressed via 5 theory course.
- ❑ Only three courses across the ten B. Ed. Special programmes analysed mentioned gender. Girls with disabilities belonging to the socially and economically disadvantaged communities are multiply disadvantaged. Girls with disabilities are more prone to exploitation, abuse and harassment hence it requires more focus in the teacher training programs.

Practice Teaching

- ❑ In B.Ed. and also in B. P. Ed. programs it was found that no program was attempting to encouraging practice teaching in inclusive schools.
- ❑ Four programs out of the ten B.Ed. Special programs analysed recommended inclusive schools as sites of practice teaching.

School based project work/assignments

- ❑ In B. Ed. working with community or school based projects and assignments were found to be part of all the programs of pre-service teacher training in general education yet it was observed that only 3 programs out of the 20 analyzed, had recommended dedicated work in inclusive education. The expected task include, identification of any two children who are having poor performance/achievement in assessment conducted, diagnosis of the learning problems for the errors committed by these children and also finding their personal/social and health problems, if any, organize remedial measures to overcome the learning problems of the selected children, survey of parent's attitude towards education of their child and identification of problems and organization of non-formal education centers for dropouts and out of school children in a locality.

- ❑ No school based work that had anything to do with inclusive education was mentioned in the course content of the ten B. P. Ed. programs analysed.
- ❑ 6 out of the 35 (less than 20%) courses of the ten B.Ed. (Special) programs analysed had provisions for school based project work or assignments that had an inclusive bent. Example includes 18 observations for children in special schools & 18 observations for children in an inclusive education set up, report on resource room teaching of children with learning problems in regular schools or inclusive schools etc.

Criteria for inclusive pre-service teacher-training program

	Is the course preparing a teacher to		
	B. Ed.	B.P. Ed.	B. Ed. Special
1 Identify the learning needs of students arising due to disabilities, gender, social and economic disadvantages	Yes =6 No =14	Yes =0 No =10	Yes =0 No =10
2 Do modifications in teaching learning activities based on the needs of students	Yes =1 No =19	Yes =0 No =10	Yes =9 No =1
3 Teach in inclusive classroom rather than in segregated setting	Yes =1 No =19	Yes =0 No =10	Yes = 4 No = 6
4 Make teaching learning and assessment activities accessible to all the students	Yes =0 No =20	Yes =0 No =10	Yes =1 No =9
5 Work in collaboration with the special educator/resource/general teacher	Yes =0 No =20	Yes =0 No =10	Yes =8 No =2

Result

Special education programs appeared to be inclusive at first glance but course content analysis revealed that the focus was on creating expertise in dealing with only one disability, for instance, the nomenclature of the program was B.Ed. Special in HI, VI, etc. The compulsory courses attempted to generate awareness about all disabilities

but at the end of the program the trainees were expected to acquire skills of teaching children with one disability, either in one to one setting or in small group. As a result, a special teacher might not be trained to handle all categories of CWSN. For example, an economically disadvantaged HI child who cannot afford hearing aids or learning needs of a child from socially disadvantaged sections of the society. The pre service teacher training in special education is under the purview of Rehabilitation Council of India. All the ten programs analysed require the trainee teachers to study the core theory courses on nature and needs of disabilities, education in India, educational psychology, educational planning and management, methodology of teaching etc. None of the ten programme analysed met all of the criteria for an inclusive program: 90% taught teacher trainees to modify teaching learning activities based on the needs of the student but only 40% trained them to teach in the inclusive classroom rather than in the segregated setting. While 80% of the programs emphasized collaborative work between special educators and general teachers, only one program out of the ten analysed (10%) trained the student teacher to make need based TLM and assessment accessible to all students.

Physical education, games and sports are an essential part of schooling process and hence, the physical education training programs must aim at preparing physical education teachers capable of handling special needs in the inclusive schools. The course content in B. P. Ed. program dealt with the injuries during sports and games, which may lead to disabilities. However, all the programs studied lacked discussion about including children with special needs in games and sports, how to modify the rules of the games so that opportunities of participation are equal for all including children, organizing inclusive sports events, etc. Inclusive teacher education requires organization of practice teaching in a variety of schools and classrooms, including special and inclusive and ensuring that knowledge is developed around evidence based teaching strategy that facilitates learning of diverse students. It should also attempts to develop skills of collaboration and reflective practice among future teachers (Graham & Scott, 2016)⁶

Pre-service teacher training degree courses were not engineered to train for teaching in inclusive classroom, despite the same being strongly advocated in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Educators (NCFTE) 2010 prepared by NCTE. The content of pedagogy related courses in general education programme, were found to lack required emphasis on addressing the special educational needs in the inclusive classrooms.

The results are in tune with the observations of recent (2012) report of the Justice Verma Committee⁷. The commission states that pre-service teacher education suffers from poor quality due to lack of prestige given to it as a professional preparation stage of teachers, due to poor quality of the entrants in the teacher training institutions, and the lack of rigorous method of preparation with a robust teacher education syllabus. All pre-service teacher education programs need to be aligned with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, National Curriculum Framework Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 and Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009, so that the classrooms have happier and actively learning children. The international seminar on teacher education 2010 recognized that the curriculum of teacher education should focus on applying theoretical knowledge so that student-teachers are able to make appropriate choices and create new strategies as well as directions. The teacher education curriculum should prepare a teacher who can understand children within their social, cultural and political contexts, design activities/learning tasks that will engage all learners in a heterogeneous setting and create an enabling learning environment (Donnelly⁸, MHRD⁹) In pre-service teacher education programs inclusive education should be taught as a standalone courses and also be infused into the other course of the program specially those related to pedagogy (Harrup, Walten & Andrews)¹⁰.

In nut shell it may be said that the analysis of the above-mentioned three categories of courses led to the understanding that pre-service teacher training degree programs are not inclusive in their current format as they fail to prepare teacher trainees to:

- ❑ Identify the special educational (learning) needs of students

- ❑ Modify the teaching learning strategies
- ❑ Implement the modified teaching learning strategies in inclusive group setting instead of small group setting
- ❑ Work in collaboration with co teacher (special, regular and physical education)
- ❑ Plan and conduct ability based assessment

Recommendations of the research

- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs require a revamp in their structure to make inclusive pedagogy an essential part of the entire curriculum and not to merely add a cosmetic value to the curriculum.
- ❑ The theme and various issues related to inclusion in education needs to find their due place in the existing course structure. No new course needs to be added to the existing large number of courses in the pre-service teacher training degree programs.
- ❑ The pedagogy courses need to address the issues related to inclusive pedagogy and taking care of specific subject related special education needs of children during teaching learning of school subject.
- ❑ The role of special educators needs to be changed from the one planning and implementing intervention for a small group of children with special needs by mostly pulling CWSN out of the regular classrooms to the one providing handholding to the regular teachers so that the special learning needs of various children gets addressed in the regular class itself.
- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs need to build skills for making parents active partners in their child's learning and not passive recipient of knowledge.
- ❑ Instead of understanding the special educational needs in pieces the pre-service teacher training degree programs required to work for building wholistic approach towards acknowledging the special educational needs and also recognizing that instead of focusing on addressing the special educational needs,

the child as a whole should be the focus of all efforts.

- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs should incorporate hands on training of inclusive pedagogy practices in realistic situations.
- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs in physical education should train their students in identifying the required adaptations for accommodating children with special needs into various physical activities and games and sports.
- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs in physical education should also focus training in organization of games and sports for all.
- ❑ The pre-service teacher training degree programs of all the three kinds need to focus on building collaborative and team building skills among their trainees.
- ❑ In B.Ed. programme, the theory course on environmental education may have a project on identifying the difficulties faced, during science exhibition by children having visual impairments, hearing impairments, using wheelchair, using crutches, speech impairments, children from marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society.

Conclusion

Understanding of inclusion needs to be extended to children belonging to social and economic disadvantaged sections of the society. At present inclusion is perceived only in connection with children with disabilities.

The pre-service teacher training degree programs needs to incorporate many changes like making inclusive pedagogy a significant part of the pedagogy courses, student teaching in inclusive classrooms, visit to special schools, learning to work in collaboration with other professionals and fellow colleagues and addressing special needs in group setting instead of one to one mode after pulling the child with special needs out of the regular classroom.

The advocacy about empowering the regular teachers in taking care of special educational needs nowhere indicates that special educators are not needed; rather it only suggests that they are very much required but may be in different capacity.

In the inclusive school, the role of special educators would change from, the one who works on increasing the educability of CWSN to absorb them into the mainstream education system, to the one owning responsibility for meeting the needs of CWSN in the regular school by collaborating with the regular teacher, and spreading their work beyond the resource room to the regular classroom. Furthermore, special educators would be needed to take care of those CWSN that lie on the far end of the continuum of disabilities and those with multiple disabilities. This population of CWSN would still need highly specialized care either in inclusive schools or in specialized institutions.

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