

*A Review of Extra-syllabus Programmes of Government College of Teacher
Education, Trivandrum On The Eve of Its Centenary*

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Abstract

Most teacher education institutions in India have charted out programmes well in tune with the syllabus prescribed by the University to which they are affiliated. But some institutions have tended to tread a different path. These are institutions which are over fifty years old and have set a tradition of its own.

A closer study of older teacher education institutions would reveal that most of them have become role models for the various programmes they organize for the trainees. The Government College of Teacher Education, Trivandrum, [www.gctetvm.com] one of the oldest in South India, is now on the threshold of celebrating one hundred years of existence. On the eve of its centenary celebrations, the author reviews the extra-syllabus programmes organized in the college during the last two academic years.

Introduction

The Government College of Teacher Education, Trivandrum, [www.gctetvm.com] one of the oldest in South India, is celebrating one hundred years of existence. This much reputed college is today, the first preference for natives of Kerala who opt for a career in teaching. Like most teacher education institutions which have crossed fifty years, this college too has set a tradition in the kind of programmes it organizes for the trainees. This article is a review of the extra-syllabus programmes organized in the college during the last two academic years.

The beginnings

Several programmes are charted out during Staff meetings prior to the commencement of the academic year with the aim of improving creative performance and achieving academic excellence. This is in addition to a review of the activities performed by each

faculty, by the Principal and the members of the Quality Assurance Cell of the college. Suggestions are given to the Heads of all departments to modify programmes already implemented and to introduce new programmes wherever needed. Most of the programmes implemented during the last two academic years displayed a sensitivity to changing social and market demands.

On trainee quality enhancement

With a view to making teachers self-reliant and resourceful, training in production of teaching materials were given. For any teacher, mastery of teaching skill is absolutely essential. Hence Micro teaching sessions were introduced in some optional classes even though not mentioned in the Kerala University BEd syllabus.

During the last two academic years, Seminars, Workshops and Guest Talk were regularly organized by the departments. Another programme that deserves mention is the introduction of the Spoken Sanskrit classes.

With a view to fostering a sensitivity to the use of web-based learning, assignments related to the use of Internet were given. Online publication of trainee write-up was one notable activity. Please view : <http://cpstudent.blogspot.com/> and <http://cpteach2009.edublogs.org/>

Initiatives related to Innovation

Though all trainees are given training in production of Multi-media materials, trainees of the English optional excelled in this regard. The production of a video-based Advance Organizer for teaching a lesson prepared by the trainees of the English Optional 2008-09 won a prize at the Innovative Practices Competition held at S.N. Training College, Nedunganda.

The trainees of the Physical Science optional, prepared self-learning materials for the students of the Govt. Model High School.

Programmes organized to enhance quality in education

Most teacher education institutions work in a 'methodological isolation'. The practice of methods of teaching different subjects tend to vary with regard to procedure and there is no avenue for sharing of resources. To curb this trend, the Department of English, organized a Methodology Media Fest inviting teacher education institutions from the city. Joint presentations benefited both groups immensely as was evident from the Evaluation Schedule given to the participants of the Fest.

All the different optional subjects have their own Association which help foster the creativity of trainees. Most of the programmes organized by the various Associations aimed at a fuller and richer growth of the trainees and were distinctly different from the regular academic sessions. Hence trainees had shown a great deal of interest in the Association activities.

Association activities

English

The Association had for its objective the organization of activities aimed at developing the linguistic competence of trainees and to evoke an interest in the English language. The programmes organized by the English Association included:

- Better English : Every alternate day, during the college assembly, the trainees introduced a new word for the benefit of all the trainees of the college.
- Staging of two acts of an English Play.
- Publication of a trainee-edited Magazine entitled *Transcend*
- Maintenance of a Bulletin Board on ELT/ Education
- Viewing of Multi-media programmes on Methods/Models of Teaching and Thinking Skills.
- Viewing -cum- discussion of acclaimed films such as *My Fair Lady* and *Dead Poet's Society*.

Geography Association

Several activities were organized by the Geography Association. These include seminars and Quiz competitions aimed at knowledge-enrichment for all the optional trainees.

Sanskrit Association

The trainees of the Sanskrit optional offered to introduce a word of Sanskrit every alternate day during the College Assembly under their 'Saral Sanskrit' programme. Under the auspices of the Association, Sanskrit Day Celebrations and Vande Matharam recital competition were also held.

Natural Science Association

A Quiz programme aimed at knowledge enrichment of the trainees was conducted under the auspices of the Natural Science Association and the Eco Club. They also conducted an exhibition.

Physical Science Association

The students of Physical Science conducted a survey on environmental awareness. They also organized a Quiz competition and an exhibition.

Clubs

The following clubs functioned in the college and it helped to promote an ambience of creativity . They include:

Science Club

Trainees participated in the Poster competition organized by the Science Club. The club in association with the Kerala State Shastra Bhavan organized an Inter-Collegiate Quiz Competition and they also celebrated World Environmental Day.

Film Club

Activities of the Film Club included, talks related to Film Grammar and sessions on script writing. The screening of award winning films, discussion session with the

director of award winning films, and a week long Film festival were some notable programmes.

Eco Club

A notable programme organized by the club was a talk on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Programmes for academic improvement in performance of socially disadvantaged

Admission to the college, situated in the state capital, is solely on the basis of merit. A majority of trainees who get admission in the college are from socially disadvantaged sections. Several programmes have been introduced to address the needs of such trainees. These include:

- * Special tuition
- * Peer tutoring sessions for needy students closely monitored by teacher educators.
- * Subsidized Hostel facility
- * Financial assistance by the PTA to needy trainees.

Activities organized to show a sensitivity to Gender

Eighty percent of the trainees during each academic year are women. The programmes organized by the Women's Club are basically aimed at awareness creation of issues and problems women face in society. The Club organizes seminars and talks regularly in which members of the Vanitha Commission are invited as guests to address the trainees. Further, the men trainees are also invited to participate in debates and discussions focusing on issues related to dowry, marriage, women empowerment and several such 'volatile' topics.

Activities organized to show a sensitivity to differently-abled students

Several academic sessions and guest talks are arranged each year to sensitize trainees to the difficulties faced by the differently-abled. The teacher educators of those optional subject which have such trainees, organize special tutorial sessions and provide extra coaching.

Institutional Practices and Stakeholder relationship

Parents: Many parents have expressed satisfaction at the academic programmes and special activities organized by the college. This led to many parents who were initially reluctant to contribute liberally to the PTA fund, to make full contributions. Some parents have even offered to provide assistance in community-based programmes of the college.

Alumni: The support provided by the alumni have often proved useful for the college. The Demonstration classes engaged by the alumni and the interaction with the trainees is an invaluable service rendered by them.

Others: Many well-wishers of the college which include the local public and politicians have maintained a good relationship with the college. Quite recently they all gathered in the college to offer their help and assistance in organizing the College Centenary celebration.

Programmes organized with a focus on social responsibility

Some of the trainees offered free tuition for the inmates of the Sree Chitra Poor Home. Such classes helped the inmates studying in local schools to clarify doubts and to pass their term-end examination.

Field trips to study environmental pollution was conducted by a few optional students. They even offered remedial measures to curb pollution in those areas. The supply of clothes to orphanages, financial assistance to inmates of Poor Home and the Government Mental Health Centre are two humanitarian activities much appreciated by the general public.

Evidence of academic growth of students from disadvantaged section

In almost all optional subjects, trainees from a low socio-economic background secured a first class for the BEd degree examination. There was also an increase in the pass percentage in the Tamil Optional subject which usually shows a poor performance.

Evidence of satisfaction with regard to programmes organized

A clear indication of the usefulness of the academic programmes is the BEd result which shows a very high pass percentage. In the course-end evaluation almost all the trainees expressed complete satisfaction. A number of trainees were offered teaching positions on completion of the BEd course. Frequent visits to the college by some old students and their happiness at being well settled in their vocation, speaks volumes about the quality of the instructional programme provided in the college.

Summing up

Teacher education programmes in many advanced nations are trying to fall in line with the demands of a global society. Experience also tells us that it is imperative for teacher education institutions to focus on pedagogy and community. It is equally important to foster in students the ideal of 'learning to live with others'.

It is difficult to classify to which of the above category does the programmes organized in the Government College of Teacher Education show a pronounced focus. There is a little bit of every thing and interestingly enough a focus also on expansion of intellect. Some of the programmes do resemble the programmes organized in teacher education institutions in India. Perhaps this college needs to grow a bit more in terms of the community-based programmes. But at any rate the good academic result which the college produces each year ought to be appreciated.

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