

**Impact of Curricular Reforms on Educational Philosophy Courses in  
M.Ed Programmes**

**Paper**

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for

International conference

On

Teacher Education Practices and Innovative Trends

School of Education, Pondicherry University

August 20-22, 2014

## **Impact of Curricular Reforms on Educational Philosophy Courses in M.Ed Programmes**

### **Abstract**

*In the context of Vision of Teacher Education envisaged in National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, this study probes 'Do M.Ed programmes provide for the prerequisites of educational philosophy for teacher educators?' and 'whether the syllabi following credit and non credit pattern vary in their coverage of content of educational philosophy'. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the content of educational philosophy courses of M.Ed. programmes of 23 universities from across 14 states of India. The study categorized educational philosophy topics under 10 subareas – Meaning / scope; Metaphysics, Epistemology, Axiology; Orthodox philosophies in Indian culture; Heterodox philosophies in Indian culture; Other Indian philosophies; Traditional Western schools; Other Western schools ;Indian thinkers; Western thinkers; and Script based study- and further grouped under broad areas namely Basic concepts; Philosophies in Indian culture; Western schools; Educational thinkers; and Scriptures based study. Course objectives on Educational philosophy of many universities are stated in terms of content only, and they avoid specifying the cognitive and affective level at which educational philosophy content is to be learnt. Findings reveal significant differences in content coverage of educational philosophy courses in credit based system and noncredit based system. Together with the deficiency in content coverage in several areas, many a curricula are ambiguous on the level at which the future teacher educators are supposed to imbibe the philosophical reflection. The study calls for more comprehensible and deeper ways of laying down educational philosophy courses with unambiguous concern on the intentions of philosophy in educational practice.*

## **Impact of Curricular Reforms on Educational Philosophy Courses in M.Ed Programmes**

One of the tasks of becoming a good teacher is an attempt to realize the meaning of education. This task of understanding education is more significant for teacher educators who are assigned with the task of preparing the future teachers. The philosophy of education is an aspect of learning that prepares teachers, teacher educators and administrators. Philosophy helps educators to reflect deeply upon the experience, by acting as a frame of reference for effectively analyzing the reflective thinking (Elias & Merriam, 1980). Philosophy of education is important because it makes clear how educational theories come up, it reveals the way how theories complement or oppose each other, it sensitizes educators of the need to think clearly about what they are doing and to see what they are doing in the larger context of individual and social development and it guides the educators' attempt to develop their own educational theory.

### **Do M.Ed. Programmes provide for the pre requisites of educational philosophy?**

In its 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan on Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education, UGC (Prakash, Thyagarajan, Qamar, Srivastava & Sharma, 2012) strongly recommended choice based credit semester system as a part of academic reforms to assure the quality of higher education. Report of Kerala State Higher Education Council, by the Committee appointed by the HEC to study issues concerning the working of the Choice Based Credit System in the colleges affiliated to Universities in Kerala reported complaints from Social Sciences and Humanities that some subjects have very heavy syllabi and some too light (KSHEC, 2012). In this context this study scrutinizes the objectives of educational philosophy provided in M.Ed. curricula in the select universities in India. We also investigate if there is any impact of Choice Based Credit System on content coverage from educational philosophy in the M.Ed curricula.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted content analysis to categorize philosophical content in the relevant course in M. Ed. Syllabi. The number of concepts in each category was counted. Chi –square test and Mann-Whitney U-test were employed to test whether the credit/non-credit courses differ in their coverage of educational philosophy content in the sub categories and in total.

### **Sample**

M.Ed syllabi of 23 universities (from fourteen states of India), of which fourteen have credit based system and nine followed noncredit system (see appendix) were studied.

## Analysis of Curricular objectives of the selected universities

The analysis of curricular objectives stated in the relevant part of M.Ed. curricula helped in stitching together the following as the possible objectives of teaching educational philosophy.

The skills supposed to be achieved by learning educational philosophy were identified from the analysis. They can be concluded as: understanding, partial and holistic comparison, analysis, logical analysis, interpretation, independent reflection, critical examination, evaluation, synthesis, and insight, along with sensitizing and developing attitude, and synthesis, and appreciation. The analysis of the course objectives revealed that many universities state objectives in terms of content only, and avoid specifying the cognitive and affective level at which educational philosophy content is to be learnt. It is clear that many a curricula are ambiguous on the level at which the future teacher educators are supposed to imbibe the philosophical reflection. This will naturally lead to teaching them only in peripheral level. This will not help the original purpose of teaching philosophy.

As for course content, all the universities together provided the following list of contents in the educational philosophy course in their M. Ed programme. They are: linkages between theory and practices, fundamental questions concerning theory and practice of education, philosophy as a discipline, discourse in education, major educational issues, ultimate questions of life and the role of philosophy, concepts and fundamental postulates of the disciplines of philosophy, assumption about educational phenomenon, functions and branches of philosophy of education, interdisciplinary nature of education, education from the philosophical perspectives, philosophical method, nature and functions of philosophy of education, philosophical enquiry, role of education, principles and developments of the major Indian schools of philosophy, human values and role of education, principles of various schools of philosophy, major modern educational philosophies, western schools of philosophy, education suggested by vision of Indian and western educational thinkers.

The above content was categorized as five major groups and ten sub groups as follows, for quantification of the content coverage by the 23 universities.

**Table 2:**

	<u>Basic concepts</u>	<u>Philosophies in Indian culture.</u>			<u>Western schools</u>		<u>Educational thinkers</u>		<u>Scriptures based</u>
Meaning/ scope	Metaphysics Epistemology Axiology	Orthodox	Heterodox	Other	Traditional	Other western	Indian	Western	Scriptures

## Results

### Basic concepts of educational philosophy in M.Ed Syllabi

Meaning, scope, nature, aims of educational philosophy occur in 21/23 syllabi, while it is not present in 2/23 syllabi. Both the syllabi without *meaning, scope, nature, aims of educational*

*philosophy* belong to credit semester category. The difference in inclusion of Meaning, scope, nature, aims of educational philosophy in credit vs. non credit syllabi is not significant,  $\chi^2 (1, N=23) = 1.41$ ,  $p>.1$ .

*Concept of Metaphysics, axiology and epistemology* occur in 19/23 syllabi, while it is not present in 4/23 syllabi.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the syllabi without *Concept of Metaphysics, axiology and epistemology* belong to credit semester category. The difference in inclusion of *Concept of Metaphysics, axiology and epistemology* in credit vs. non credit syllabi is not significant  $\chi^2 (1, N=23) = 41$ ,  $p>.15$ . There is no significant difference between credit and non-credit syllabi in the frequencies of topics from the basic concepts of educational philosophy.

### **Indian philosophies in M.Ed syllabi**

Under the head orthodox philosophies, the sampled universities teach zero to seven topics. Under heterodox philosophies, the syllabi studied here included zero to three topics. From heterodox philosophies credit based syllabi mostly include no topic, while non credit based syllabi include mostly 2/ 3 topics. From other philosophies again, credit based syllabi mostly include zero topics, and non credit based syllabi include 2/3 topics. However, there is no significant difference between credit and non-credit syllabi in the frequencies of topics from orthodox philosophies  $\chi^2(2,N=23)=.51$ ,  $p>.1$ , heterodox philosophies  $\chi^2(2,N=23)= .56$ ,  $p>.1$  or other philosophies  $\chi^2(2,N=23)=.26$ ,  $p>.1$ .

### **Western schools of philosophy in M.Ed syllabi**

Generally, zero to four traditional western philosophies are taught in M.Ed. syllabi. Credit based syllabi in general include zero and non credit syllabi mostly include 4 topics from this category. Credit based syllabi in general include significantly less number of topics from traditional western philosophies than non credit syllabi,  $\chi^2 (2, N=23) = 6.30$ ,  $p< .05$ . While 7/9 of the non-credit syllabi incorporate 4 or more traditional philosophies, only 4/14 credit syllabi incorporate that much topics from this area. There exists significant association between type of syllabus and weightage of content in western traditional theories.

The number of other western philosophies than traditional ones taught in M.Ed. syllabi ranges from one to eleven. Median frequency of other western philosophies in credit based syllabi is one and for non credit syllabi it is two. However, there is no significant difference in inclusion of other western thoughts between credit based syllabi and non credit syllabi  $\chi^2 (1, N=23) = 1.37$ ,  $p>.05$ .

### **Content on educational thinkers in M.Ed. syllabi**

From among 11 Indian thinkers taught by various universities, the median number of thinkers in credit based syllabi is 0 and for non credit based syllabi is 6. While 6/14 credit syllabi do not include any Indian thinker in their M.Ed syllabus on educational philosophy, all the non-credit

syllabi studied have included at least one or more Indian thinkers. Likewise, while only 3/14 credit syllabi include 5 or more Indian thinkers in their M.Ed syllabi, 4/9 non credit syllabi have 5 or more Indian thinkers in their M.Ed syllabi. There exists significant association between type of syllabus and weightage of content in Indian thinkers,  $\chi^2(2, N=23) = 5.31, p < .1$ .

Western thinkers included for study in educational philosophy syllabi range from 0 to 11. In both credit (7/14) as well as non-credit (3/9) categories, a good proportion of syllabi do not include this content in their educational philosophy course for M.Ed. programme. Moreover, while only 2/14 credit syllabi include 5 or more western thinkers in their M.Ed syllabi, 4/9 non credit syllabi have 5 or more western thinkers in their M.Ed syllabi. However, difference in number of western philosophers included in educational philosophy in syllabi following credit/non-credit pattern is not significant,  $\chi^2(2, N=23) = 2.59, p > .1$ . Likewise, difference in number of western plus Indian philosophers included in educational philosophy in syllabi following credit/non-credit patterns is not significant,  $\chi^2(2, N=23) = 4.11, p > .1$ .

### **Text based philosophies**

Script based studies included in educational philosophy content of M.Ed. programme range from zero to four. While majority of the syllabi, from both credit and non-credit category have none of the texts for study, nearly one third of both the type of syllabi include one or more texts. Difference in number of texts for study included in educational philosophy in syllabi following credit/non-credit pattern is not significant  $\chi^2(1, N=23) = .01, p > .1$ .

### **Credit syllabi has lesser educational philosophy content**

The total content in the philosophy of education were subjected to analysis using Mann-Whitney U-test. The topics taught in the philosophy of education were rank ordered and Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the rank for non-credit programmes (N = 9) versus credit programmes (N = 14). The results indicate significant difference between the two types of curricula (U = 30, p = .04). Mean rank for credit programmes equals 14.36 and mean rank for non-credit programmes equals 8.33. Non-credit syllabi in general rank higher than syllabi following credit pattern on the inclusion of content on educational philosophy course for their M.Ed programme.

The observation of the syllabi revealed some lacunae in them. 5/23 syllabi didn't incorporate the category Indian schools of philosophy. Six syllabi include no Indian thinkers. Western thinkers are not included in 10/23 syllabi studied. 5/23 syllabi has no content on educational thinkers. Text based studies are absent in fifteen syllabi. NCFTE (2009) recognizes that the ideas of educational thinkers such as Gandhi, Tagore, Dewey, Krishnamurti, Montessori and others examined in their socio-historical contexts would provide the philosophical basis to engage with these questions and

stipulates that one or more courses be focused on philosophical thinkers in education, theoretical constructs that help to question and debate issues around aims of education. NCTE (2010) suggests that the critical examination of these concerns arises from vision of school education and teacher education and also the vision of great educators. But the available data shows insufficiency of that area in the present M.Ed curricula.

Findings indicated significant difference between the two types of syllabi- credit vs. non-credit - in the number of topics taught in their educational philosophy courses, especially in the content areas on Indian thinkers and western traditional theories. The trend towards credit based system of syllabi causes decline in the weightage to educational philosophy content in M.Ed programmes. Curricular objectives (in the syllabi) need to be expressed in more comprehensible and deeper ways and should have unambiguous concern on the goals of philosophy. Many universities state objectives in terms of content only, and avoid specifying the cognitive and affective level at which educational philosophy content is to be learnt. Many of the curricula are vague on the level at which the future teacher educators are supposed to absorb the philosophical reflection. This will result peripheral level teaching only and will not help the real purpose of teaching philosophy.

### **Conclusion**

This study categorized philosophy content of the syllabi as five major groups and ten sub groups and also found there is deficits in the stated content part. To serve the real purpose of philosophy - to engage in philosophical inquiry is to understand, to interpret, to appreciate, create an attitude, to analyze, to critique, to raise questions on which we are investigating- decline in inclusion of educational philosophy content in teacher education syllabi be arrested. This is to be along with philosophical expansion of understanding of education of all who strive to build the foundation for future generation through their investment on future teachers.

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## Appendix

**Table 1:** *M.Ed Syllabi sampled for the study*

Name of the University	Year	State	Credit Based or not
Osmania University	2013-14	Andhra Pradesh	Y
Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University	2012	Delhi	Y
Gujarath University	2011	Gujarat	Y
Kurukshetra University	2011-12	Haryana	N
University Of Kashmir	2011	Jammu & Kashmir	Y
University Of Jammu	2009	Jammu & Kashmir	Y
University Of Mysore	2013	Karnataka	N
Tumkur University		Karnataka	Y
Mahatma Gandhi University	2011-12	Kerala	Y
Kannur University	2006	Kerala	N
University Of Calicut	2013	Kerala	N
Devi Ahilya Viswavidyalaya	2012	Madhya Pradesh	Y
University of Pune	2013	Maharashtra	Y
University Of Mumbai	2012-13	Maharashtra	Y
North Eastern Hill University		Meghalaya	Y
Panjab University	2011-12	Punjab	Y
University Of Rajasthan	2011-13	Rajasthan	Y
Bharathiar University	2007-08	Tamil Nadu	N
Tamilnadu Teachers Education University		Tamil Nadu	N
Periyar University	2012-13	Tamil Nadu	Y
SRM University	2007-08	Tamil Nadu	N
Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University	2013-14	Uttar Pradesh	N
Banaras Hindu University	2013-14	Uttar Pradesh	Y