

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS THE RESTRUCTURED CURRICULUM

AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL IN KERALA

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Abstract

Reforms in curriculum and instructional practices demand the wholehearted cooperation and support of the teachers. The steps taken by the authorities to enhance and improve the quality of higher education in the state have to be accepted by the teachers in their true spirit. The purpose of the present study is to analyze the perception of teachers toward the restructured curriculum and its practice at the under graduate level in Kerala. The study uses primary data collected from the teachers working at the under graduate level in various colleges in the state. The study reveals that the teachers have a positive attitude towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala. But with respect to evaluation practices there are different opinion. The study indicates that the curriculum reforms must be a continuous and dynamic process. The authorities must take steps to eliminate even the minor limitations in the restructured curriculum at under graduate level. Then only the higher education of the state can withstand the challenges of the globalised era.

Key words: *Restructured Curriculum, Perception of Teachers, Undergraduate Level, Choice*

Based Credit and Semester System

1. The Context

Any change in the curriculum and its practice is successful with the wholehearted cooperation and support of the teachers, who are suppose to implementing the changes at the grass root realities. The teachers are the instruments through which the curriculum is to be transacted and fulfilled. Hence, the attitude and perception of teachers with respect to curriculum and its implementation is very significant.

In Kerala, drastic changes are experimenting in curriculum and instructional practices in different levels of education. The changes in the school curriculum and pedagogic practices in Kerala has been noted worldwide. But the curriculum at the higher education in the state remains static for a long period of time. Even though the gross enrolment rate at the higher education level in Kerala is comparatively higher, the system has been severely criticized for its declining quality. Major criticism faced by the higher education sector of the state are with respect the (i) Curriculum, (ii) Instructional Practices and (iii) Evaluation system. Hence, the government of Kerala initiated some steps in this direction to enhance the quality and productivity of the higher education in the state. During the year 2008, remarkable changes in the instructional and evaluation practices at the undergraduate level have been initiated by the authorities like Kerala State Higher Education Council and the government of Kerala.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

Even though the Gross Enrolment Rate of students at higher education level is comparatively higher in the state of Kerala, the system has been severely criticized for its declining quality. Major criticisms faced by the higher education sector of the state are with respect to the out dated curriculum, lack of innovative instructional practices and traditional narrow and partial systems of learner evaluation. Hence, the government of Kerala initiated

some steps in this direction to enhance and improve the quality and productivity of higher education in the state.

The steps taken by the authorities to improve the quality and productivity of higher education in the state require acceptance and cooperation of teachers, who are the instrument for its implementation, for its realization. The attitude is the important aspects which determine the attitude, involvement and the realization of the objectives and goals. Hence, in this study, the attitude and opinion of teachers with regard to the restructured curriculum at under graduate level has been analyzed.

3. Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To analyze the attitude of teachers towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala.
2. To compare the attitude of different sub samples of teachers towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala
3. To analyze the opinion of teachers toward the different aspects of the restructured curriculum practices at under graduate level in Kerala.

4. Methodology

The present study is a descriptive one based on empirical data with cross sectional design. The study uses primary data which have been collected from the teachers working at the under graduate level in various colleges in the state.

The data required for the study has been collected by administering a likert type scale developed by the investigator. The scale consist of items to assess the perception of teachers with regard to the various aspects of the restructured curriculum and its practice at the under graduate level. It include items related to the scope for learner participation, evaluation related aspects, dynamism of the curriculum etc. The scale also provide for making other

related open remarks about the restructured curriculum and its practice at the under graduate level in Kerala. The validity and reliability of the scale has been ensured. The reliability of the scale has been established by estimating the Cronbach alpha, which is found to be very high. (0.898). The scale extract 86.67 percentage of the perception of the respondents. The sample required for the study has been selected by accidental sampling techniques. The sample size is 135.

5. Results and Discussion

The collected data has been analyzed using statistical techniques like one sample t test, independent sample t test, one way ANOVA etc.

Hypothesis 1: The teachers have a positive attitude toward the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala.

The attitude scores of teachers has been computed and the same had been compared with the score indicating the neutral attitude (45) using one sample t test. The result is presented in table1.

Table 1: Attitude of teachers toward restructured curriculum at under graduate level

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t Value	P Value
Attitude	135	48.622	8.136	5.173**	< 0.001

** Significant at 0.01 level

(Source: Personal Investigation)

The table 1 shows that the teachers have a positive attitude towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala. The mean attitude of teachers towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level is 48.622 with standard deviation 8.136, which is higher than the neutral attitude score 45. The difference is statistically significant at 0.01 and hence the hypothesis has been accepted. It is a good indication that the teachers

working at under graduate level in the state have an acceptance mentality towards the changes in the higher education sector.

Hypothesis 2: *The attitude of teachers toward restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala differ significantly with respect to gender, age, teaching experience and types of management of institution.*

The table 2 present the results of the comparison of the of attitude of different sub samples of teachers toward the restructured curriculum at under graduate based on gender, age, teaching experience and types of management of institution.

Table 2: Attitude of different Sub Samples of Teachers toward the restructured curriculum at under graduate level

Sub Sample		N	Mean	SD	CR	P Value
Gender	Male	57	50.368	8.23	2.161*	0.033
	Female	78	47.346	7.875		
Age	Below 30 Years	27	51	6.481	2.18	0.177
	30-45 Years	69	47.26	8.12		
	Above 45 years	33	49.18	9.356		
Experience	Less	78	48.577 ^{ab}	8.846	3.964*	0.021
	Medium	30	51.5 ^a	7.181		
	More	27	45.55 ^b	5.71		
Type of Management	Government	72	49.917 ^b	8.113	3.883*	0.023
	Aided	42	46 ^a	8.124		
	Self Financing	18	50.888 ^b	6.939		

* Significant at 0.05 level

Different alphabets denote difference in Turkeys HSD test.

(Source: Personal Investigation)

The mean scores of attitude towards the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala for the male teachers is higher (50.368) than their female counter parts (47.346). The difference is statistically significant. The age of teachers is not a significant factor influencing the attitude of teachers towards the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala. But the teachers differ significantly in their attitude towards the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala with respect to their length of experience. Medium experienced teachers possess a significantly higher level of positive attitude (51.5) compared to more experienced teachers (45.55). Teachers working in government and self financing institutions possess a significantly higher level of positive attitude (49.917 and 50.888 respectively) compared to teachers working in aided institutions (46).

The analysis show that attitude of teachers toward restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala differ significantly with respect to gender, teaching experience and types of management of institution. But age is not a differentiating factor of the attitude of teachers toward the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala. Hence the second hypothesis is partially substantiated.

Hypothesis 3: The teachers have a positive Opinion with respect to learner participation and evaluation practices of the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala

Opinion of Teachers on Learner Participation and Evaluation Practices of the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala has been computed and analyzed using chi- square test for significance of differences and the results are presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Opinion Teachers with respect to Learner Participation and Evaluation
Process under Restructured Curriculum**

Opinion of Teachers with respect to evaluation practices	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	CR	P Value
Ensure learner participation, learners' enjoyment and their multi-dimensional development	64 (47.4)	28 (20.74)	43 (31.85)	14.533**	0.0007
Evaluation process is learner friendly	88 (65.18)	30 (22.22)	17 (12.59)	25.2**	0.0001
Term end questions are in tune with the philosophy of new curriculum	63 (46.66)	54 (40)	18 (13.33)	25.2**	0.0001
Grading of answers can be accurately done	54 (40)	63 (46.44)	18 (13.33)	25.2**	0.0001
The question paper pattern under the restructured provide for the evaluation of the multi-dimensional talents of learners	54 (40)	60 (44.44)	21 (15.55)	19.6**	0.0001

** Significant at 0.01 level
(Source: Personal Investigation)

Lack of learner participation is one of the important criticisms faced by the higher education system in Kerala. The new initiatives in the curriculum reforms at under graduate level in Kerala aims at enhancing the learner participation in learning process. A significant number of teachers (46.66%) have the opinion that the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala facilitates learners' participation, learners' enjoyment and ensure their multi-dimensional development.

65.18 % teachers opined that evaluation process is learner friendly and 46.66 % opined that the term end questions are in tune with the philosophy of the new curriculum. But 46.44% opined that the grading of answers cannot be accurately done as per the new evaluation practices. 44.44% teachers are of the opinion that the question paper pattern under the restructured curriculum does not provide for the evaluation of the multi-dimensional talents of learners.

The analysis of the responses show that 80% of the teachers opined that the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala demand creativity from the teachers and 60% of teachers admitted that the new curriculum practices provide academic freedom to teachers. 55% of teachers opined that working under the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala provide job satisfaction to them.

A female teacher with 4 years of experience remarks that even though the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala is ‘not bad’, the practice of the same is not so easy. But the teacher not explained the practical difficulties with respect to the new curriculum.

A few teachers (around 1%) remarked that the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala does not taken into account the talents, caliber and capacity of learners. The reason for such remarks is unknown.

6. Findings and Suggestions

The study reveals that the teachers have a positive attitude towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala. While comparing different subsamples, it shows that the male teachers than the females, medium experienced teachers than the more experienced, teachers working in government and self financing institutions than the teachers in aided institutions have a higher level of positive attitude towards the restructured curriculum at under graduate level in Kerala. A majority of the teachers are of the opinion

that the Teachers of the that the restructured curriculum at undergraduate level in Kerala facilitates learners' participation, learners' enjoyment and ensure their multi-dimensional development, evaluation process is learner friendly and the term end questions are in tune with the philosophy of the new curriculum. But a substantial portion of the teachers opined that the grading of answers cannot be accurately done as per the new evaluation practices and the question paper pattern under the restructured curriculum does not provide for the evaluation of the multi-dimensional talents of learners.

The study reveals that one of the critical areas which requires further refinement and reforms are the evaluation related aspects of the curriculum. Many teachers informally opined that the new curriculum does not directly influencing the teaching learning process. Another factors noticed by the investigator while interacting with the teachers is that majority of them are not aware of the philosophy behind the restructured curriculum at the under graduate level and the trend of curriculum reforms occurring in the state.

The authorities has to give mass orientation programme to the teachers with respect to the restructured curriculum, its philosophical, psychological and educational background and there by create a atmosphere to accept positive changes in the field.

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