

Curriculum for Rural Engagement Course in Teacher Education

National Council of Rural Institutes
Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India

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Introduction

The proposed curriculum has been developed as a part of group discussions held with Teacher Educators from across nine Telangana State Universities. The teachers increasingly work in rural schools in the current scenario. They need to be groomed to handle the rural communities which send their wards to the schools. Hence curriculum inputs designed to equip trainee teachers or students of teacher education programmes to engage with the rural communities' forms an important input in teacher education curriculum. This could be offered as a compulsory practical course to all the students in order to bridge the gap between the expectations and actual practices of teachers in rural settings. It is felt important, in the context of National Curricular Framework for Teacher Education 2005 as well as National Curriculum Framework 2005, focusing on construction of knowledge, there is a need to integrate the two important aspects viz., living and learning.

Unlike the other forms of education, teacher education has a variety of objectives that makes it a unique and a practicing profession to be pursued with intensive involvement with local communities apart from the students. Imparting adequate knowledge on the subject matter, equipping the prospective teachers with pedagogic skills, enabling the teacher to acquire understanding of child psychology, developing proper attitudes towards teaching, enabling teachers to make use of proper instructional facilities, enabling the teachers to understand the significance of individual child differences and take appropriate steps for their optimum development and development of children's ability to provide satisfaction to the parents are some of the major objectives of teacher education. This is facilitated by community engagement and orientation in community engagement.

Characteristics

The following core characteristics form the basic framework of the community based learning model. They are prime factors which are considered while developing the curriculum for rural engagement of students of teacher education.

1. Mutual respect for teacher, student and community
2. Creating a sense of community belongingness in the class room
3. Ability of being warm, accessible, enthusiastic and caring
4. Setting up a higher standard than the usual in community engagement
5. Perennial love for learning the context
6. Ability of being a skilled leader in engaging with the community
7. Ability to shift gears as per the community response
8. Collaboration with the counterparts on a continuous basis
9. Ability to maintain professional decorum

Curriculum Design

- Objectives
- Module Development
- Methodology
- Assessment
- Outcomes

Objectives

The following objectives have been framed for the proposed curriculum for teacher education.

1. Understand the concept of community engagement in teacher education
2. Explain the community engagement aspects of Indian Constitution
3. Know the school education programmes and policies of Telangana State which have community engagement aspects
4. Discriminate traditional from constructivist approaches of community engagement
5. Train in usage of dialogic method of community engagement
6. Train in usage of organic intellectual approach for community engagement
7. Experiential learning of best practices in community engagement
8. Participate effectively in the community service

Core Competency Development

Community engagement - Students develop an intellectual understanding of the civic engagement field. Experience, coupled with critical reflection, provides opportunities for transforming our perspectives.

Community-based research - Students learn to analyze community and organizational problems and needs, and to develop creative solutions. Respect. Meeting people where they are. We are all learners. We all have the capacity for greatness.

Social justice - Students learn about social justice issues from local and global perspectives and develop a nuanced understanding of the history and political and cultural contexts of these issues. Educating ourselves and our community in order to understand power, privilege, and oppression and to collectively envision and build a more equitable and just society.

Appreciation of diversity and capacity to work with diverse constituents - Students consider their own and others' social and cultural group identities. Students develop interpersonal and intercultural competencies to work effectively with people from a broad range of backgrounds. All people, including students, faculty, staff, and community members, have a wide range of social identities. Welcoming people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives prepares us for global citizenship.

Leadership - Students hone their skills in facilitating and working within teams. They learn and practice networking, conflict resolution, consensus-building, and negotiation skills, facilitating relationships and supporting community-building processes

Experience: Experience, coupled with critical reflection, provides opportunities for transforming our perspectives. The Community Engagement Program is one step along the journey of lifelong learning.

Dialogue: Learning occurs through the exchange of ideas, active listening, and challenging assumptions.

Assets-Based Perspective: Actively seeking the strengths in people and in communities and working to develop those strengths. Pursuing positive changes in ourselves, our institutions, and our communities.

Rationale

Community engagement of teacher educator is essential as the students of teacher education are to be equipped with required skills to engage meaningfully for learning skills required professional teacher education. They lack empathy and compassion and end up being indifferent. Hence, this course would make the B Ed education contextual and effective with the community setting with social relationships taken into consideration. The teachers transacting the curriculum need to contextualise the subject matter and empathise with the learning context of students in their community.

Proposed Model of Curriculum

This is designed as a two credit course of one semester and comprises of one credit for theory and one credit for practicum with fifty marks.

S.N	Module Title	Module Content	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	Number of Classes
I	Conceptual foundations of community engagement	Present context of community engagement of students in rural Telangana	Lecture, Demonstration, field visit	2
1.	Indian Constitution	Diversity and Social Justice, Realisation of Democracy, Socialism, Secularism and Panchayat Raj System and Rural Setting	Group Discussion	2
2.	Community Engagement	Theory of Community Engagement School, Family and Community Partnership, Government Programmes for Education Development Literacy, Gender and Generations in Learning,	Observation, Participation, Field visit	2
3.	Learning Groups and Empowerment	Establishing village education committees and taking help of self help groups in education.	Observation. Interview, Participation	2
II	Traditional and Constructivist Approaches	Different approaches	Demonstrative, Lecture, Interview, Field Mapping	2

1.	Paulo Freire Dialogic Method	Praxis, Characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of the Paulo Freire dialogic method of changing social relations.	Demonstration and Practice	2
2.	Gramsci Organic Intellectual Approach	Characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of the Gramsci Organic Intellectual Approach for Practicing Community Engagement & Social Change	Field Visit	2
3.	Best practices in Community Engagement	Engaged Transaction of Rural Teachers in State, National and International levels, Teachers as Community Resource Persons	Case Studies	4
4.	Practicum	Community Project and Participatory Rural Appraisal and Action Research with Community Organisation On Field Learning	Field Visit, Coaching, Mentoring Facilitation	36 hours

Practicum details

Every Saturday for six Saturdays or continuously for a week, students are engaged in the rural community to take up the following activities

1. Study of special distribution of various social and occupational groups in the village
2. Application of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques of resource mapping and social mapping
3. Awareness program involving school community, development specialists and villagers in developing Village Development Plan.
4. Involving high school students in the education programmes of selected villages.
5. Conducting capacity building programmes with self help groups and government officials for different vocations and developing necessary locally relevant learning skills.
6. Conducting field visit and field interaction with the help of school resources of the village and Self Help Groups and Village Resources for the students.
7. Orienting school education committee members in the village with the help of village level officers.
8. Conducting / facilitating school-community health camps.
9. Reporting the health concerns of the school-village, drainage system of the school-village and health habits of the school students-villagers to the concerned authorities.
10. Organizing Vanamahotsvam with school-community participation a fest for creating awareness of trees and planting of saplings.

11. Creating awareness about the climatic change hazards with the help of students in the village and inputs on how to address the same.
12. Organizing awareness programmes relating to sanitation, water, soil fertility management, biomass energy and means of producing wind and solar energy.

Assessment

This is a two credit course of one semester and comprises of one credit for theory and one credit for practicum with a maximum of fifty marks. The grading plan could be continuous and periodical through checking of participation and involvement and for optimal outcomes. The emphasis is to be more on the practical orientation of the student.

Outcomes

After completion of the course the student will be able to

- Understand the social, economic, political and cultural framework of the rural education
- Address the challenges with suitable responses for the identified rural education issues
- Engage in the capacity building for management of the school-rural community education management

Career Options

A career in the Teaching and Education Management in Rural Area

A career as a Teacher Educator in Rural Education

Capacity Building roles in Rural School-Community Programmes.