



A STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF TRAINING RECEIVED BY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ASSAM ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

Today, determination of world environmental quality is a significant problem. This problem has resulted in a global effort to include aspects of environmental education in school curriculum at all levels in an appropriate manner. However, the objectives of environmental education cannot be realized by simply by infusing environmental concepts into existing curriculum. The effective infusion of environmental education into school programme is possible only when teachers have the required orientation. Therefore Pre-service teacher training on environmental education is necessary to make the teachers aware of: the goals and objectives of environmental education, the scope of curricular content and subject matter, proper methodologies to transfer knowledge and skills to students, and evaluation methods necessary to assess the effectiveness of learning outcomes (Rebello, 1994). According to Rebello any effective environmental education programme for preservice and in-service teacher education should consist of three basic elements: (i) The education needs (ii) A functional knowledge of environmental education and (iii) A grasp of educational methods and professional skills needed to impart cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills to the students. It is the teacher who would interpret and transmit the message of EE to the students, whatever be the level of educational qualification one is concerned with. A teacher properly equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, become an essential prerequisites for successfully introducing any programme of EE in schools. Thus, proper orientation of teachers into EE concerns is a matter of vital importance (Govinda, 1994).



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In India, the implementation of environmental education has been less effective due to the traditional teaching approaches, inflexible curricula, a lot of content to be learnt and insufficient time for an in-depth approach to the study of environmental matters. It can be said that it is true that the traditional approach to teaching which is based on transmission of knowledge cannot help the learners to develop the skills and action competence necessary for taking action on the environment. Learners will be able to develop skills and action competencies if they are actively involved in hands on activities in the environment (Spiropoulou et al. 2007).

After the emphasis given to EE in the NPE-1986, the NCERT brought out detailed guidelines and syllabi to prepare practicing teachers at the primary and secondary levels (NCERT, 1991b, Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

and c). Training in-service teachers to teach EE was an important part of this curriculum. Through national initiatives such as the Programme of Mass Orientation for School Teachers (PMOST) and Special Orientation of Primary Teachers (SOPT), several thousand teachers have been introduced to the content and methodologies of EE. In response to the Supreme Court's directive on EE, the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE, 2005a) made an attempt to develop a curriculum framework in EE for the four levels of teacher preparation referred to earlier. This study has been devoted to ascertain the quality of training received by the Elementary School Teachers of Assam.

Key Words: Environmental Education, Elementary Schools

2. INTRODUCTION: The NCERT 2004, the following basic strategies required for strengthening both pre-service and in-service teacher education :

- Reviewing and modifying the existing pre-service and in-service education programmes in view of the need for making EE their integral part and providing theoretical and practical inputs specifically focusing on environment related issues and concerns;
- Familiarising teachers and student-teachers with planning, organising and conducting of projects, activities and case-studies in EE and enabling them to generate desired action amongst learners;
- Providing exposure to different kinds of projects already in progress in the community;
- Developing skills to establish closer school-community contacts; and
- Using co-scholastic activities in other subjects as a medium of teaching EE.

It is the teacher who is the key to the successful implementation of environmental Education in the classroom as he/she would ultimately be analyzing, interpreting and implementing it. If teachers (pre-service and in-service) do not possess the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills or commitment to environmentalize and transact the curriculum, it is very unlikely that they will be able to produce environmentally literate students. Given this central role of teachers, teacher education both at the pre-service and in-service levels becomes vital. Hence, UNESCO describes teacher preparation in environmental education as the "Priority of Priorities".

EE is an important study area at the school level and its effective implementation requires a change in the mindset of teachers from mere content transmitters to that of facilitators .It calls for

a shift in classroom practices from mere 'transmission of the content' to 'transaction of the content leading to transformation of behaviours' in children. Teachers, thus, become the key to the successful transaction of environmental education in schools. They play a central role in building necessary abilities and competencies in children for exploring, understanding, appreciating and participating in environmental protection and conservation. In order to achieve this, the teacher needs to be empowered to create awareness, attitude and concern in children and facilitate them in understanding and solving environmental problems.

The investigator has undertaken a study to know the present status of teacher training on environmental education at the elementary level in Assam considering the above facts.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY:

The environmental education as an integrated component in the school curriculum is a new approach to teaching and learning in the elementary schools in Assam. Therefore, it needs research input for its effective implementation. Research is important because it gives suggestions and new ideas for improving practice both for teachers and policy makers. Armed with the findings from research investigations, teachers can transact the syllabus into learning experiences appropriately, hence teach more effectively. Additionally, research in a dynamic field like environmental education is important. Research will also expose the gap between what is intended to be taught and what is actually being done as far as the implementation of the curriculum is concerned.

The researches on environmental education focused more on teaching and learning in complementary secondary schools and on the perception of stakeholders as to their participation in environmental education. Although these studies can be related to teaching and learning of environmental education in the elementary level, there is still a need to specifically focus on elementary level, because the context of the learners, age and even the content is different. In addition, there is still need to develop a strong environmental education base among the learners at an early age. At the elementary level there is need for research into how environmental education has been incorporated into the curriculum, contents on environmental education integrated in different textbooks at the elementary level, status of co-curricular activities environmental education, evaluation procedures on environmental education at elementary level and status of teacher training on environmental education .The findings from this research can

help in rethinking the way in which environmental education can be integrated into the school curriculum and teachers can be supported in its implementation.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training, Assam has been taking up the task of preparing the curriculum on environmental education and contents on environmental education to be integrated in subjects like – General Science, Social Science and Language for elementary level in Assam. The Government of Assam tried best to provide training to the teachers on environmental education through SCERT, DIET, SSA and other teacher training institutes of Assam. The Government of Assam also tried to provide necessary facilities along with the trained teachers to the elementary level schools of Assam. But, how far these efforts have been successful yet to be analysed and evaluated. Recent evidences of environmental problems prevailing in our society indicate that the teaching of environmental education needs some changes based on research works. Evidences of environmental degradation in the form of soil erosion, poor waste management, water pollution and many other problems can still be observed in many schools and also in the communities around the schools. The school is part of the community surrounding the school, therefore it is expected that what the pupils learn in school should be reflected in society. This situation opens a door for a comprehensive study to analyse the Curriculum on Environmental Education at the elementary level in Assam. But till now no comprehensive study has been made to appraise the effectiveness of Environmental Education Curriculum at the elementary level in Assam. It has been felt that if a research study could be carried out on environmental education curriculum, contents on environmental education integrated in different subjects, status of teacher training, it might help to know both the strong and weak points associated with it which would definitely help in future development of Environmental Education . The purpose of this is to find out the problems involved in implementing the Environmental Education.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER: To Study the Present Status of Teacher Training Received by the Teachers of Elementary Schools of Assam.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY: Considering the nature of the study, descriptive survey method was used.

5. POPULATION: All the Elementary School Teachers who teach Environmental Education was considered as population of the study.

6. SAMPLE: To make the sample is a representative one, fifty assistant teachers from each districts was selected purposively. Thus, total 200 teachers constituted teachers sample. Besides, 20 experts were selected purposively. Thus, total 200 assistant teachers constituted teachers sample. Similarly 20 experts constitutes the sample.

6.1 SELECTION OF THE SCHOOLS:

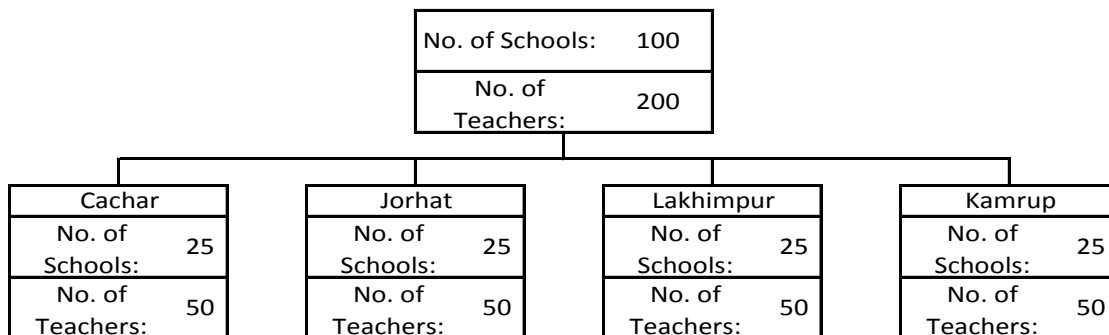
In order to collect information on Environmental Education Curriculum, Textbooks, Status of co curricular activities, Teacher training and Evaluation procedures related to environmental education followed in the schools of Assam at the Elementary level, a sample of 100 schools were selected from four districts Viz. Jorhat Lakhimpur, Kamrup and Cachar districts of Assam by using purposive sampling technique. The researcher had selected twenty five schools from each district purposively. In selection of the schools care was taken to select schools from different educational blocks of each district to make it representative, after discussion with a number of experts in the field and educational administrators.

6.2 SELECTION OF TEACHERS:

The study involves a total sample of 200 teachers of elementary level teaching Environmental Education. Teachers of class V, VI and VII were selected by purposive sampling technique in the year 2011-12. The investigator had gone to the selected schools to collect data and due permission was sought from the District Elementary Education Officer (DEEO), and Deputy Inspector of the respective districts. (DI) and Heads of the schools. Then, proper rapport was made with the teachers so that the selected teachers answer the tools without any hesitation.

In selection of the teachers, the investigator gave importance in two aspects- [i] Experience in dealing Environmental Education and [ii] Experience of training on Environmental Education.

7. TOOL USED IN THE STUDY: A structured interview consisting of 30 (Thirty) questions carefully constructed for the study.



8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: Orientation of teachers on Environmental Education is the prime need for smooth implementation of the Environmental Education Curriculum at elementary level. It is the teacher who interprets and transmits the message of Environmental Education to the students. A teacher properly equipped with necessary knowledge, skill and attitudes are the essential prerequisite for successfully introducing any programme on Environmental Education at school level. Thus, proper orientation of teachers into Environmental Education concerns is a matter of vital importance. Realizing the importance of teacher training, the researcher made an attempt to know the present status of the teacher training on environmental education in Assam. Analyses of the questionnaire on teacher training following findings were observed.

Table No.1 Status of trained and untrained teachers on Environmental Education.

Total number of teachers	200	100%
Number of trained teachers	25	12.5%
Number of untrained teachers	175	87.5%

Above table indicated that only 12.5% of the teachers were trained on Environmental Education

Table No.2 Professional qualification of teachers and their training on Environmental Education.

Professional Qualification	No. of teachers having professional training	No. of teachers trained EE	Source of training programme	Duration
CPE	42 (21%)	8 (4%)	SSA	2 days
Normal School	28 (14%)	0	–	–
Junior Basic	6 (3%)	0	–	–
DIET	33 (16.5%)	9 (4.5%)	SSA	2 days
BEd	14 (7%)	0	–	–
Nil	77 (38.5%)	8 (4%)	SSA	2 days

Above table indicated that 123 teachers were having degree and diploma in education. But, only 17 teachers were receiving training on Environmental Education organized by SSA for 2 days duration. Teachers having degree and diploma in education opined that they did not have training on Environmental Education in the training institutions while they were attending courses for degree and diploma.

1. 88% of the teachers opined that they were attending the training feeling the importance of the subject.
2. 100% of the teachers opined that only lecture method was used by the teacher trainer during training.
3. 92% of the teachers of the view that no teaching aids were used by the teacher trainer in the trainings.
4. 100% of the teachers stated that no hand book was provided to them in training programmes.
5. 72% of the teachers opined that teacher educator had just described some activities of Environmental Education.
6. 96% of the teachers felt that the training programmes were not satisfactory. They were trained only on different types of pollutions and how to keep the school environment clean.
7. Regarding drawbacks of Training program,
 - i. The 94% of the teachers commented that duration of the training program was very short. It should be 7-10 days duration.

- ii. 96% of teachers expressed their opinion as four sessions of the training programmes had been restricted only on dealing content aspects on Environmental Education.
 - iii. 96 % of teachers opined that no discussion was made on demonstration, designing and organizing the activities and co-curricular activities on Environmental Education.
 - iv. 76% of teachers opined that no discussion was held on preparation of teaching aids and using of teaching aids, while teaching environmental education in the classroom situation.
 - v. 84% of the teachers commented that evaluation aspects should be given priority at the time of designing training programme. But this aspect was completely neglected in the training program. They commented that they were unaware and not trained on scoring and grading the non-scholastic area. Teachers were not properly trained on how continuous and comprehensive evaluation was to be carried out.
 - vi. 86% of the teachers opined that during the training, no discussion was held on teaching learning strategies on environmental education.
8. Regarding impact of training of teaching, 64% of the teachers opined that there was no impact of the teacher training programme in their teaching in the classroom.
 9. Regarding fulfillment of objectives of going to the training program, 91% of the teachers opined that their expectations were not fulfilled. Resource persons were not at all cooperative. Some resource persons were not resourceful.
 10. Regarding improvement of quality of the training programme, following suggestions were given by trained teachers-
 - Careful in designing the training programme, duration of training programme should be increased.
 - Participatory approach should be adopted to make the program interesting and effective.
 - Emphasis should be given on demonstration, designing and organizing of the activities as well as co- curricular activities on Environmental Education.

- Teacher trainer, Resource persons should have resourceful background to deal the Environmental Education.
- Emphasis should be given on teaching learning strategies' in classroom situation, evaluation of non- scholastic aspect and preparation and use of teaching models and aids.

During face to face interview with the teachers on teacher training on environmental education the teachers opined the problems as follows-

- EE has not yet infused the curricula of teacher training courses. Thus teachers are not well equipped to deal with the new subject area.
- In teacher training programmes, low weightage has been given to Environmental Education than other subjects such as Educational Technology, Multimedia Education, Computer Education, etc

Teachers' suggestions were -

- considering the environmental problems and nature of the subject, Environmental Education should be given priority in teacher training programmes.
- training programmes need to be designed based on the ongoing curriculum of Environmental Education at the elementary level.
- need of the teachers should be properly assessed before the training programme on Environmental Education.
- as majority of the teachers were not trained on Environmental Education, so proper strategies need to be developed to train these teachers.
- Prior to the teacher training, teacher educators need to be trained properly to make the mission successful.

9. CONCLUSION: Most of the teachers said that training programme were not satisfactory because emphasis had been given only on content aspects ,very low emphasis had been given on teaching learning strategies, organization and conduct of co curricular activities, use and making of teaching aids and evaluation of non scholastic areas. Another important point is that very less number of teachers was getting opportunity for training in this subject. So, proper mechanism should be prepared on teacher training and implemented covering all the elementary level school

teachers who teach environmental education. No proper instruction was found how to measure learners' performance in this subject.

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