Abstract

The current study focuses on evaluating the English curriculum of the primary teacher training programme in Kerala, which is awarded Diploma in Education (D.Ed). The course was formerly known as Teacher Training Certificate Course (TTC). The curriculum of TTC was previously revised in 2005. The impact study (2009) conducted by the Regional Institute of English, Bangalore, pointed out the problems of primary English teachers and hinted indirectly at the shortcomings of the primary teacher training curriculum. In 2013, the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Kerala, modified the TTC course and revised its curriculum on the basis of the recommendations from the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF) 2007 and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009. The course was renamed as Diploma in Education (D.Ed) and it was converted into semester system.

The present study analyses and critiques the D.Ed English curriculum from various angles and identifies the gaps between the curriculum objectives and its implementation at the various Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs). The suggestions and recommendations given in KCF 2007 and NCFTE 2009 are kept as points of reference throughout the evaluation. The study also compares the D.Ed English curriculum with the previous TTC English curriculum to analyse the changes that were made. The study concludes by offering suggestions to further improve the D.Ed curriculum and its implementation.

The research has tried to explore the answers to the following questions:

1. How far does the D.Ed curriculum meet the needs of the primary teacher trainees?
2. What are the problems faced by the primary teacher trainees during classroom interaction?

3. To what extent does the D.Ed curriculum incorporate the suggestions given in NCFTE 2009?

4. What are the various problems arising during the implementation of the D.Ed curriculum in various teacher training institutions?

5. What are the major differences between the old TTC English curriculum and the new D.ED English curriculum?

6. What aspects of the D.Ed English curriculum need to be restructured?

The sample for the study comprised of 225 D.Ed trainees and 12 teacher educators from 12 TTIs spread across three educational districts (Kottayam, Pala and Mavelikkara) of Kerala. The sample was chosen mainly through convenient sampling. The study has mainly adopted a qualitative framework and the data were collected through four research tools: questionnaires (for teacher educators and trainees), semi-structured interviews (for teacher educators and trainees), classroom observation and checklist for analyzing the teacher educators’ handbook. The research tools focused upon the aspects like the D.Ed curriculum and its implementation in the training classroom, materials and methods used in the classroom, approaches and techniques followed by the teacher educators, the language needs of the D.Ed trainees, problems faced by the trainees during classroom interaction, problems faced by the trainees while transacting the primary school English curriculum, the importance given to LSRW skills in the D.Ed English curriculum, comparison between the D.Ed curriculum and the TTC curriculum, and suggestions to improve the D.Ed curriculum.
For the purpose of data analysis, the study adopted a mixed method framework where both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The data collected through the questionnaires were subjected to content analysis and percentages, frequencies and values were calculated. The open ended questions in the questionnaires were subjected to thematic analysis. Similarly, the responses collected through the interviews were transcribed and subjected to colour coding and categories and dominant themes and sub-themes were identified for the purpose of analysis. The classroom observation reports were also subjected to thematic analysis based on the themes evolved from questionnaires and interviews. Each items in the checklist [which is an adapted version of Cunningsworth’s (1995) checklist for evaluation and selection of coursebook] is described in detail after analyzing the teacher educators’ handbook. The data collected by the four tools were triangulated to ascertain its validity.

The findings of the study revealed that even though the new curriculum is better than the previous TTC curriculum, there are gaps between the curriculum objectives and its implementation. The new curriculum needs improvement and refinement in many areas like materials, allotment of content, allocation of time, teaching practice etc. Apart from this, problems were also identified in other areas like the availability of proper infrastructure, availability of specialized English teacher educators, absence of proper training for teacher educators etc. The study has given suggestions and recommendations to address the above mentioned problems identified in the course of research so that the D.Ed English curriculum and its transaction can be improved.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one gives an introduction to the study. The background to the study, research problem, assumptions, objectives, research
questions and significance of the study are discussed in this chapter. It also carries a brief
description of the methodology adopted for the research.

Chapter two reviews the related literature associated with the main concepts dealt
in the study like teacher education, curriculum, curriculum evaluation and renewal,
teacher education curriculum etc. The same chapter towards the end reviews similar
studies that happened internationally, nationally and locally (in the context of Kerala).

Chapter three establishes the theoretical framework for the study and examines
the theories related to L2 learning, teacher education, Andragogy and curriculum
evaluation. The chapter also reviews three prominent models of curriculum evaluation
namely Stufflebeam’s Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) Model, Kirkpatrick’s four
levels of evaluation and Peacock’s Model which gave insights to the researcher to
develop his model of curriculum evaluation.

Chapter four describes the research design and discusses the selection of sample,
design and administration of tools and procedures adopted for data collection.

Chapter five presents the analysis and description of data using quantitative and
qualitative methods.

Chapter six, which is the last chapter, presents the finding of the study. The
suggestions to improve the D.Ed curriculum and its transaction have been presented in
the same chapter. It also carries the recommendations for further research.