

ATTITUDE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHER EDUCATORS TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Debapriya Ghosh *

Dr. Abhijit Guha **

Abstract

Education is the driving force that builds a resourceful society, thus improving the strength of a developing nation. Since quality is the key defining element of 21st century which is brought about by multiplication of suitable skills and knowledge, producing excellence in research in related areas can enhance quality of educational system. Teacher education is an interdisciplinary field and has assumed paramount importance. Quality in teacher education can soar the heights of excellence only if the prospective teacher educators show a favourable attitude towards Educational Research. Attitude towards Educational Research may be considered as the pivot for improving quality of a particular course, especially in the Indian educational scenario which can facilitate both academic and national development. The present study seeks to find out the Attitude towards Educational Research of prospective teacher educators pursuing 2-Year Master of Education (M.Ed.) curriculum in West Bengal. A sample of 240 prospective teacher educators were randomly selected from two universities conducting regular 2-Year M.Ed. course under Semester system. They were administered a scale called 'Attitude Scale towards Research (ASTR-

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* Assistant professor, Minakhan Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Education

** Associate Professor, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math

SVSY)' (Sood and Sharma ,2012). Data collected was analysed using SPSS 22.0 to find out the level of attitude of the sample and also whether any significant difference exists in Attitude towards Educational Research with respect to University, Gender, Semester and Basic Educational Stream. It was found that there was no significant difference in attitude towards Educational Research with respect to University and Gender while notable significant difference was observed among prospective teacher educators belonging to different Semesters and Basic educational streams.

1. Introduction

Quality has become the defining element in 21st century in the context of fast changing world scenario and emergence of new social realities. Quality of learners depends on quality of teachers who constitute the backbone of the education system. Teacher development is possible only if there is a significant programme for developing teacher educators. Teacher educators are actors behind the screen of quality education. Teacher educators are people “who provide instruction or who give guidance and support to student teachers, and who thus render a substantial contribution to the development of students into competent teachers” (Koster et. al., 2005). They are, thus, rightly regarded as prospective teacher educators. They are prepared through Master Degree of Education (M.Ed.) programme of teacher education. The M.Ed. students of today are the builders of future teachers of the country.

Multiplication of knowledge and practical skills through excellent education can be contributed to three aspects- Research, Teaching and Application. Out of the three aspects, Research is of utmost significance. The term ‘Research’ comprises of two words, namely, ‘re’ and ‘search’. Generally, ‘re’ means ‘again’ and ‘search’ means ‘to find out’. Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell,2002). The effectiveness of any study programme can be evaluated only by conducting researches in the field. Researches pave the way to the improvement of any course and teacher education, being a new and developing area, needs to be much focussed on. **Attitude towards**

research can be defined as tendency of individual that is expressed by degree of favour or disfavour towards research. In the present study, Attitude towards research means how an individual mentally approaches all the work related to research.

Evaluating student's attitude towards doing research is indeed necessary to reveal their interest, their awareness about research, and their attitudes about it. Recently Justice Verma Commission (2012) recommended that M.Ed. programme should become a two-year programme and there has been a significant change in the research theoretical papers as well as the organization of dissertation programme. Students of M.Ed. are likely to become prospective teacher educators who also should be prone to be indulged in educational research work besides developing teaching skills. Attitudes towards educational research would determine if Teacher Education be directed to a prospective future. Whether the existing two-year curriculum is significant in revamping teacher education sector in our country can be understood only by finding the attitudinal inclination of the prospective teacher educators towards educational research.

Sridevi (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of M.Ed. students towards research and concluded that all students had a favourable attitude towards research irrespective of gender, marital status, and educational stream (Arts/Science) while a closer look of **Butt and Shams (2013)** in two public universities of Pakistan revealed a negative attitude towards research. **Shah and Purani (2014)** explored the research attitudes of M.Ed.-M.Phil. students in P.G. Educational Gujarati medium colleges in Ahmedabad City in context of four variables, namely, college type, gender, educational stream and educational qualification. They found that there was no significant difference of attitude towards research between M.Ed. and M.Phil. students with respect to their gender and educational qualification. But the study showed that females have a more positive attitude than males towards educational research and also, Science/Commerce stream students have a more positive attitude than Arts stream students towards research. **Singh and Kaur (2015)** conducted a research on M.Ed. students from Colleges of Education from Ludhiana district and found that attitude towards research of M.Ed. students from Government-aided colleges is significantly more as compared to M.Ed. students from Private colleges. Though a few scholars have tried to find out the attitude of M.Ed. students towards research in Ahmedabad and Ludhiana and also in Pakistan, it has yielded results when the M.Ed. curriculum

was of 1 year duration. While searching the literatures for reviews, it became evident that studies in this area is relatively scanty and this prompted the investigators for conducting the present study.

Objectives of the Study :

The study was planned, designed and conducted to achieve the following objectives:

O₁ To study the level of the attitude towards educational research of the prospective teacher educators.

O₂ To study and compare the attitudes towards educational research of the prospective teacher educators of different Universities.

O₃ To study and compare the attitude towards educational research of the prospective teacher educators in context of their gender (Male/Female)

O₄ To study and compare the attitude towards educational research of the prospective teacher educators in context of the semester they belong to (2nd/4th Semester)

O₅ To study and compare the attitude towards educational research of the prospective teacher educators in context of their basic educational stream (Science /Social Science / Language)

Hypotheses of the Study

For O₁, the research question was :

What is the level of attitude of prospective teacher educators towards educational research?

To achieve O₂, following null hypotheses were formulated :

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the attitude towards educational research of prospective teacher educators with respect to the University.

For O₃, O₄ and O₅, the null hypotheses were as follows :

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the attitude towards educational research of prospective teacher educators with respect to gender (Male/Female).

H₀₃ There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the attitude towards educational research of prospective teacher educators with respect to the semester they belong to (2nd/4th Semester).

H₀4 There is no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards educational research among the groups of prospective teacher educators belonging to their basic educational stream (Science /Social Science /Language).

2. Research Method

2.1 Method and Sampling Technique

The design of the study was Descriptive Survey. The population of the present study consists of all students currently pursuing 2-Year Master of Education (M.Ed.) course conducted in different universities of West Bengal. Random Selection Sampling technique was adopted.

	West Bengal University of Teachers' Training, Education Planning and Administration	University of Calcutta
Semester 2	51	56
Semester 4	66	67

2.2 Variables

Major :

Attitude towards Educational Research

Categorical :

- University
- Gender
- Basic Educational Stream
- Semester

2.3 Tool

The tool which was used for carrying out this dissertation work was Attitude Scale Towards Research devised by Sood and Sharma (2012). It is a self-administering and self-reporting five-point scale. Items of the scale are in statement form requiring information for each item on either of the five options on a continuum as follows : Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The scale consists of 42 items divided into four dimensions. Out of the 42

items in the scale, there are 26 favourable (positive) items and 16 unfavourable (negative) items. The items are scored in a manner such that Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree are given scores of 5,4,3,2, and 1 respectively. The scores are just the reverse in case of negative items. The sum of scores on all statements of the scale is considered as respondent's total attitude score.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Data Tabulation and Analysis

The responses of the sample were tabulated in Excel Worksheet. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0) was used to run descriptive analyses. Tables were used to summarize data. Descriptive Statistics such as Mean, Standard Deviation and Inferential Statistics such as t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the data for testing the hypotheses. **Table 2 : Attitude towards Educational Research of prospective teacher educators**

<i>S.no.</i>	<i>Range of raw scores</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Level of attitude Towards research</i>
1	>=192	7	2.9167	Extremely favourable
2	184-195	12	5.00	Highly favourable
3	172-183	23	9.583	Above average favourable
4	156-171	93	38.75	Moderately favourable
5	144-155	62	25.83	Unfavourable
6	132-143	36	15.00	Highly unfavourable
7	<=131	7	2.9167	Extremely unfavourable

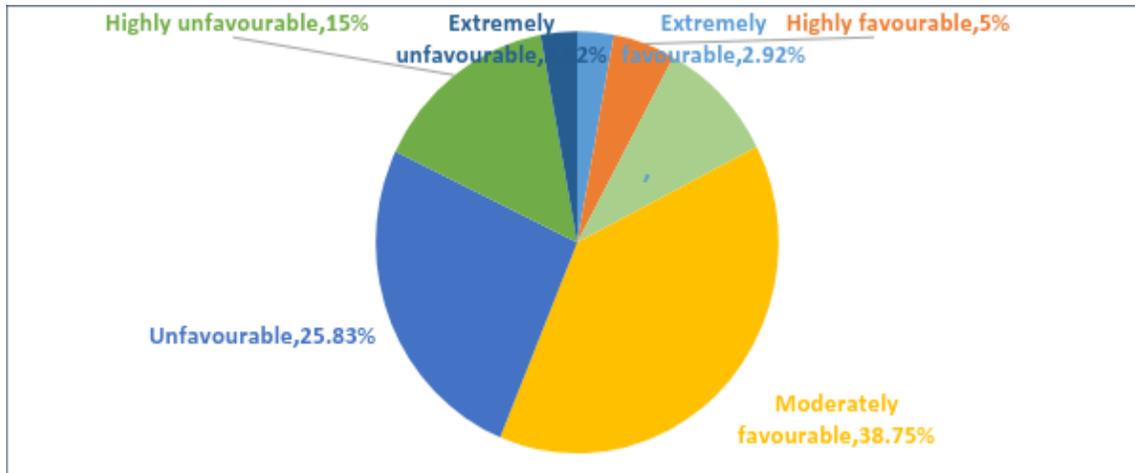


Figure 1 : Attitude towards Educational Research of the sample of prospective teacher educators

University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test for equality of means			
University of Calcutta	123	156.16	16.127	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
WBUTTEPA	117	159.63	15.170				
Attitude towards educational research				-1.715 [#]	238	.088	-3.470

#not significant at 0.05 level

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test for equality of means			
Male	114	157.61	17.510	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Female	126	158.07	13.997				
Attitude towards educational research				-.224 [#]	238	.823	-.457

#not significant at 0.05 level

Semester	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test for equality of means			
				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Second semester	107	153.43	12.589				
Fourth semester	133	161.41	17.094				
Attitude towards educational research				-4.031*	238	.000	-7.984

*significant at 0.05 level

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Language	75	157.48	16.702	1.929
Social science	92	153.53	13.297	1.386
Science	73	163.68	15.901	1.861
Total	240	157.85	15.732	1.015

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	4210.520	2	2105.260	9.082*	.000
Within groups	54937.376	237	231.803		
Total	59147.896	239			

*significant at 0.05 level

3.2 Major Findings and Interpretation

In the light of the objectives, after completion of data analysis and immediate interpretation, several points were viewed and the major findings and finding-based interpretation were as follows :

1. In response to Research Question- What is the level of attitude of prospective teacher educators towards educational research- it was found that about 56.25% of respondents approach towards a favourable attitude while 43.75% turn away from research (Table 2).

Majority of the respondents show an inclination towards research, it can be said that prospective teacher educators following 2-Year M.Ed. curriculum definitely have a goal of taking up research as a career in the long run. This assures that not only is the currently framed curriculum effectively organized into appropriate theoretical and practical implementation papers of research but it ensures upliftment of career of prospective teacher educators towards excellence by incorporation of research work thus, facilitating Teacher Education to grow up as one of the leading sectors of education in our country.

2. For H_{01} , the results of the t-test depicted in Table 3 show that the mean and SD of Calcutta University are 156.16 and 16.127 respectively while the mean and SD of WBUTTEPA are 159.63 and 15.170 respectively. The calculated t-value is $t_{(238)} = 1.715$ and p-value is 0.088 ($p > 0.05$). Hence, t is not significant, therefore, H_{01} is not rejected. So, it can be said that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the attitude towards educational research of prospective teacher educators with respect to University.

The purpose of conducting this study was to find out the level of attitude of prospective teacher educators towards educational research. The first hypothesis was fixed to determine this attitudinal level with respect to the university in which they are pursuing this 2-Year Master of Education (M.Ed.). The results of the independent t-test (Table 3) show no significant difference exists between prospective teacher educators of the two universities with regard to their attitude towards educational research. This means that the curriculum of Educational Research followed in both universities is the same and the prospective teacher educators follow the same kind of content and take up similar practicum which is why they developed the same kind of attitude regarding their approach towards educational research. Thus, the null hypothesis framed is accepted.

3. For H_02 , the results of the t-test (Table 4) show that calculated t-value is $t_{(238)} = 0.224$ and p-value is 0.823 ($p > 0.05$). Hence, t is not significant, therefore, H_03 is not rejected. It concluded that there is no significant difference in the levels of attitude towards educational research between males and females.

Though the universities reveal the same kind of attitude towards educational research on the part of the prospective teacher educators, it was of immense interest for the researchers to find out if any difference exists among the males and females. It was observed that there exists no discrimination in the merit of male and female prospective teacher educators and their approach towards educational research is almost similar.

4. For H_03 , the results of the t-test as in Table 5 show that calculated t-value is $t_{(238)} = 4.031$ and p-value is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Hence, t is significant, therefore, H_04 is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the levels of attitude towards educational research of 4th semester compared to 2nd semester.

The study was conducted to reveal the effectiveness and limitation of the newly introduced 2 Year Master of Education (M.Ed.) as announced by NCTE through determination of attitudes of the students on doing research. The presence of the paper Academic Writing in Semester 1, Introduction to Research Methodology in Semester 2 offers students the knowledge about standard referencing styles, concept and necessary steps about conducting a research in general. On the other hand, Advanced Research Methodology (including Statistical Techniques) in Semester 3 and the involvement of students in Dissertation Work from Semester 3 onwards continuing to Semester 4 gives exposure to students and provides them opportunity of what they need to apply in research practice comes from the content of the course besides getting assistance of their supervisor and other sources of academic materials. Students of 2nd semester become accustomed to APA format and also the steps of an Educational Research -how to find a topic but what to cover and where to search for is still not understood by them. Although the course-book provides a clear view on types of methods students can apply, the procedure of research in practice and their own experience answer the question of suitable research instruments. In this study, positive attitude towards doing research is dominantly shown by M.Ed. students of 4th Semester. Through the paper Introduction to Research Methodology, students of 2nd Semester can acquire the concept of research, what to research and steps to conduct a research. However, this paper only can meet a small demand on background knowledge, while the skills and

techniques to carry out a research comes from the practice when students learn from the research procedure and their supervisor while dealing with their dissertation-related work. They identify the problem for research, generate research questions, find out materials for literature review, and analyze the data collected by making use of the knowledge gained through Advanced Research Methodology (including Statistical Techniques) in Semester 3. Thus, the Hypothesis framed with respect to Semester is rejected.

5. For H_04 , the results of the one-way ANOVA (Table 7) show that calculated F-value is $F=9.082$ at $df=2, 237$ and p-value is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Hence, F-value is significant, therefore H_05 is rejected. So, it can be said that there is significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards educational research among the groups of prospective teacher educators belonging to their basic educational stream (Science /Social Science /Language).The results of the one-way ANOVA (Table 7) show an overall significant difference between the three educational streams with regard to their attitude towards educational research.

The results also strongly report that the Science Stream students are very much inquisitive and curious and the sense of searching for new knowledge and developing a strong outlook for the depth of any subject is their immediate objective. Hence, they tend to have a much more favourable attitude towards educational research compared to the other two streams namely, Social Science and Language. This has led to rejection of the hypothesis.

Reviews of related studies showed attitude towards educational research was found to be neutral irrespective of gender (Sridevi ,2008) in M.Ed. students of University of Mysore. Positive attitude towards educational research in females than males has been observed by Shah and Purani (2014) in colleges of Gujarat. A significant difference have been found between students of Science and Humanities Stream by Shah and Purani (2014) in colleges of Gujarat whereas, a non-significant difference is observed in study by Sridevi (2008). A marked controversy in results is also visualized with respect to type of institution. A better attitude towards research is seen in Government institutions of Ludhiana districts of Punjab by Singh and Kaur (2015) while Private institutions depict negative research attitude by Butt and Shams (2013) in two public universities of Pakistan. However, all these studies have been conducted when teacher education

courses were of 1-year duration taking into consideration different variables. It is seen that diversified results have been obtained- both negative and positive. Recently Justice Verma Commission (2012) recommended that M.Ed. programme should become a two year programme. It is prime time to investigate whether the newly reconstructed curriculum suitably caters the lacunae of the 1-year curriculum or whether it is successful enough to induce a strong attitude towards educational research among prospective teacher educators.

In this study, most of the participants have positive response towards further research as they have received previous academic training in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and higher education like master degree in their respective mother subjects. They feel more confident about their research skill. This paper concludes that the students' attitude towards educational research is commonly positive as they confirm their future involvement in doing research through their responses. They recognize the importance of doing to their study and future career and the studies they have done benefit them theoretically and practically.

The two year M.Ed. curriculum thus reveals that it is designed to provide opportunities for prospective teacher educators to extend as well as deepen their knowledge and understanding of areas of education and also develop research capacities in them. The revised curriculum emphasizes field based experiences to the prospective teacher educators through long-term dissertation work. A significant step in the revised curriculum are studying of two theoretical research papers of introductory and advanced level. The course is designed in such a way as to equip student teachers with hands on experience in their field of specialization. It is expected that this will prove helpful to the prospective teachers in integrating theory and practice. Extensive effort has been taken in preparing the curriculum. Attitude of M.Ed. students or prospective teacher educators towards educational research will play role of pivotal importance in the promotion of research in teacher education.

4. Conclusion

Lecturers perceive that the students' attitude to research in turn influences their ability to identify, comprehend and apply knowledge of the fundamental concepts in the execution of research in dissertation. An understanding of these attitudes is necessary to help curriculum

framers and policy makers to evaluate the effectiveness of 2-Year M.Ed. curriculum. Teachers can make a valuable contribution in developing a friendly relationship with their students, in order to develop a positive attitude towards learning concepts of research by adoption of different instructional techniques. Positive and supportive classroom atmosphere is needed for learning research, and the errors can come to the forefront only when they are exposed to practice of research work through dissertation under supervision of experts. Consequently, students can encounter major obstacles while studying in research methods classes and applying learned knowledge. Teachers should motivate the students to develop the concepts of research for getting employment in future.

Educators should always encourage learners to read published articles and theses and implement the methodologies in their dissertation work. This would help them to develop confidence and they will be competent subsequently. This research is significant because along with similar studies, it can possibly be used by authorities of different educational institutions to improve and construct educational environments that are more conducive to learning and promote academic success for prospective teacher educators. When institution personnel have specific data and information about students' preferences, they will be able to make decisions based on prospective teacher educators' perceptions and attitudes that will hopefully create an environment that is more conducive to conduction of dissertation in which everyone will positively benefit.

It is necessary to have more frequent research practice for students to empower their ability and their interest. In addition, the role of supervisors and teacher trainers must have adequate knowledge, useful techniques and pedagogies for encouraging students' positive attitude toward research. With the result of this study, teacher educators are expected to emphasize the importance of research among their students and to assist the learning of research.

All the teacher education programmes must emphasize to develop a research outlook among the teacher trainees and prospective teacher educators irrespective of the level of the programmes. It may be in the form of action research in B.Ed. or a Dissertation in Master in Education programme. In future it would help them in solving their classroom related problems in specific

and in serving the society uniformly in general. One of the main objectives of these programmes must be to develop a favourable attitude towards research among them, so that they can reach the heights of ultimate success in their future.

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