



YOGA AS A MEDIUM OF MORAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHER-TRAINEES

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Abstract

Teachers are not only the disseminator of knowledge but are the potential architect of society who provide direction to the worthy citizens therefore, in order to facilitate moral development of personality and attitudes of students for healthy and peaceful living teacher-education programmes should focus on composite development of personality of teachers who are infused with a sense of compassion, love and affection, moral integrity and righteousness, dedication, self-reliance, discipline, punctuality, dutifulness and strong character. Guideline for NCFTE document 2010, identified need for developing professional and humane qualities in student-teachers and an inherent idea of integrating Yoga education for personality development of pupil-teachers through teacher education programmes, guided policy makers in significant manner which is reflected in NCTE regulations, 2014 in form of creating new faculty position for providing Physical and Yoga education. A proper understanding of teachings and practice of Yoga will lead to the moral and character development among student-teachers. The present paper aimed to know the perceptions of prospective teachers on the need, significance and challenges of moral education in present day teacher-education programmes and implications of Yoga education for the moral development of teacher-trainees. The data were collected purposively through focus group discussion among a mixed group of fifty participants including teacher-trainees at B.Ed. level, prospective teacher educators at M.Ed. level and pre-Ph.D. scholars in education from Faculty of Education, Kumaun University, SSJ Campus, Almora. A qualitative analysis of the data revealed that Yoga education helps in integrating moral values and physical well-being besides promoting emotional stability, mental hygiene and high level of consciousness, overall personality development and academic growth among teacher-trainees. Participatory and self-learning approaches were suggested as significant practicum activities.

Keywords: Yoga education, Moral education, teacher-education programmes, teacher-trainees



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1.0 Introduction

Education plays a central role in integrated development of child's personality in different spheres of cognition, affection and connotation and help in learning techniques to adopt healthy life styles. The importance of affective and moral education is gaining momentum nowadays due to observed downfall in character and conduct of learners in modern materialistic age and therefore, education should encompass the universal moral values of honesty, fairness, respect and responsibility for the development of harmonious and cooperative human society. The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers more

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than upon any other single factor. Teachers are not only the disseminator of knowledge but are the potential architect of society who provide direction to the worthy citizens therefore, in order to facilitate moral development of personality and attitudes of students for healthy and peaceful living, teacher-education programmes should focus on composite development of personality of teachers who are infused with a sense of compassion, love and affection, moral integrity and righteousness, dedication, self-reliance, discipline, punctuality, dutifulness and strong character. Kothari Commission (1966) in its report observed that of all the factors that influence the quality of education, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly most significant. The growing concern for decline in moral consciousness, sensitivity and social responsiveness, downfall in abilities of understanding and tolerance among students led to the re-establishment of Yoga education as significant contributor in facilitation of above said qualities and as a holistic approach to health and well-being.

Recognizing the importance of 'Yoga' as a spiritual practice, UNGA in 2014 declared to celebrate June 21 every year as '**International Yoga Day**' worldwide. The status of Spiritual and Yoga education in curriculum receive a major setback during and after colonial rule in India which observed to be a common practice in ancient education curriculum. Policy developments after independence such as NPE-1986 and POA-1992 although recommended to introduce Yoga as a component to achieve integrated development of body and mind in school education and teacher-training courses but this was not implemented to a satisfactory level due to lack of strategic planning. Guideline for NCFTE document 2010, although identified need for developing professional and humane qualities in student-teachers but subsequently failed to identify inputs related to this context. An inherent idea of integrating s Yoga for personality development of pupil-teachers and through them transmission of this knowledge and understanding to the younger generations, guided policy makers in teacher-education programmes in significant manner and which is reflected in NCTE regulations, 2014 by introducing a compulsory paper/ area of study on Yoga Education for all teacher educators and student teachers nationally and develop detailed syllabus and learning modules on Yoga Education for all the 15 teacher education programmes that NCTE has recognised moreover, creating new faculty position for providing education for physical development and Yoga (Dhoundiyal and Pawar, 2015).

In this context, present paper aimed to know the perceptions of prospective teachers on the need, significance and challenges of moral education in present day teacher-education programmes and implications of Yoga education for moral development of teacher-trainees.
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2.0 Research Questions

Following research questions guided the study:

- 2.1** What is moral education?
- 2.2** What is the need and significance of moral education in teacher-education programmes?
- 2.3** What are the challenges of moral education in teacher-education programmes?
- 2.4** How teachings of yoga will promote moral education among teacher-trainees?
- 2.5** What will be the practicum of moral education through the medium of yoga?

3.0 Research Methodology

The data were collected purposively through focus group discussion among a mixed group of fifty participants including teacher-trainees at B.Ed. level, prospective teacher educators at M.Ed. level and pre-Ph.D. scholars in education from Faculty of Education, Kumaun University, SSJ Campus, Almora.

4.0 Findings

Findings revealed through qualitative analysis of views emerged in group discussion among the participants of focus groups are outlined in the following sections:

4.1 Meaning and Understanding of Moral education

The respondents of the study perceived meaning of moral education in the following ways:

- i Moral education was viewed as a dimension of educational process which is concerned with the development of attitudes, beliefs, emotions, feelings and social skills. As a component of comprehensive development it was reported to be received informally through environmental examples provided by adults at home and in society and reflected in good behaviour and virtues.
- ii Moral development was perceived by the respondents to be linked with many aspects of the individual, such as the social being and citizenship. A moral character was reported to be reflected in the virtues of truthfulness, love, peace, non-violence, right conduct, discipline, respect for others, self-less service to community, self- control, self-regulation and better interpersonal relations.
- iii Respondents of the study also reported that although moral values are important for human development, those cannot be learnt from books and cannot be theoretically assimilated or practiced and most of the times the values do their work through the hidden curriculum.

4.2 Need and Significance of Moral education in Teacher education programmes

In reference to the need and significance of Moral education, participants of the study revealed following understandings:

- i **Transfer of moral values in education:** As a teacher, one has to be a good moral example for teaching students and creating in them strong moral characters. Teachers with moral character would help students in learning about people with high morals in the national and cultural history, and play significant role in correcting anti-social and anti-moral behaviours among students by the means of suitable methods such as story-telling and role-play etc.
- ii **Flexible and reflective outlook:** Teaching is a highly professional activity which demands openness and dynamism on the part of teachers therefore, teachers should reflect on their behaviour, take responsibility for their actions, and try out new behaviour in an experimental and reflective manner to handle their methods and actions.
- iii **To develop sensitivity among teachers:** Young teachers need to develop sensitivity to see when moral values are at stake and how meaning is given to their experiences and the world around them, and how they work with the values involved. In order to incorporate this moral sensitivity among them, a practice of analyzing processes of meaning making by developing teachers in many situations and comparing different constructions for the same situation can stimulate the development of moral sensitivity in actions.
- iv **To develop communication competences and an active action-oriented participation in society:** The personal experiences of teacher-trainees and theoretical knowledge acquired through teacher-education programmes could be transformed actively by developing competence in communication and organizing action-oriented activities related to moral issues to gain practical experience.
- v **To work with community:** Social and moral engagement with the society can be provided to the grooming teachers by organizing participatory social inquiry in and outside the institution. Apart from the provision of courses in teacher education curriculum related to gender, and social perspectives of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, opportunity of working with the community would provide them scope to discuss on the matters related to morality in their internship.

- vi **Generation of self-concept:** Moral education would help student teachers in generating self concept that is organized around moral principles. It would develop humanistic and democratic attitude and provide an awareness of discipline and rules as safeguards to rights among prospective teachers. With an understanding of moral values, pupil-teachers would examine their own personal beliefs and philosophies of students, re-contextualize course methods and content knowledge, and redefine the teacher-student relationship. A realization of multiple perspectives of curriculum and a variety of instructional choices available would help student teachers to make choices of learning styles and plan activities based on the context of situations and their own moral philosophies.

4.3 Challenges of Moral education

In regard to the challenges of moral education, respondents of the study revealed the following aspects:

- i Overemphasis on knowledge aspect and acquisition of teaching skills in teacher-education curriculum.
- ii Moral values to be taught are not pre-defined. Teacher education courses present different concrete interpretations of the value and in distinct practices.
- iii The double measure used in teacher-education impose to pupil-teachers rules that ourselves, as educators, do not respect.
- iv Noxious influence of media, extensive corruption and lack of respect for teaching as profession.
- v "Resignation" of teachers and parents from their respective roles, and leaving responsibility and devalued attitudes toward school and teachers.
- vi Teacher education also experiencing serious challenges in the form of inconsistent values, insufficient training of teacher educators especially from the perspective of moral and affective education, unclear role in moral and affective education of pupil-teachers further results in lack in quality of education.
- vii Lack for coherence and consistence among teacher educators to participate in the moral and emotional education of student teachers regardless of the subject they teach.
- viii Changing of social customs of networking required constant communication with the community. Teacher education institutions in our country rarely provide appropriate space and time for the communication between developing teachers and community

to which they belong. Teachers need to be prepared to deal with new types of communication and interaction articulating what is valuable in order to reconstruct cultural practices and narratives personally.

- ix The challenge facing teachers and teacher educators is whether to allow moral formation to occur opportunistically, or whether to foster an intentional, transparent and deliberative approach that facilitate moral dimensions of teacher education.

4.4 Teachings of Yoga to promote Moral education among Teacher-trainees

Findings related to the teachings of Yoga to promote Moral education among teacher-trainees revealed following understandings:

- i The Astanga Yoga as a spiritual practice lays down physiological, ethical and psychological discipline and presents a fine fabric of psychology and ethics. According to Patanjali, 'Yama' requires the conservation of virtues of truthfulness, non-violence, celibacy, non-stealing and non-collection and these virtues embodies personal as well as social morality exhaustively. Non-violence is described in Yoga as the highest dharma of mankind and form the basis of social morality. The Niyama yoga is concerned with the personal freedom however personal 'purification' is regarded to be most essential for evolving oneself as a moral being. So a student - teacher would realize the concept of systematic procedure of Yama, Niyama and Asana etc. for the fullest realization of self through the teachings of Yoga.
- ii Yoga required a comprehensive development of human personality and also to make an individual, free from bodily, mental and supernatural miseries. This implies that education must care for the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual growth of the pupil. It aimed to promote feeling of universal brotherhood among citizens and to evolve nobility in thoughts and actions. The teacher as a facilitator of knowledge, skills and attitude can bring out the understanding of disciplining of body and mind among future generations if they themselves possess training in moral education through Yoga.
- iii The system of Yoga aims at attaining the highest evolution of human self. Yoga stress on merging the empirical self into the transcendental self or God for attaining union with God. It implies that with the well-being of human body and moral preparation on the part of man the process of self-discipline is possible. This aspect makes Yoga education a moral necessity.

- iv Teacher is not a mere transmitter of knowledge in Yoga philosophy therefore, in order to transfer moral values and generate moral sensitivity among younger generations the teacher should be well versed with the implications of Yoga. The Yoga system ascribe highest position to the teacher without whom nothing can be attained by the student, hence the place of the teacher is inevitable.

4.5 Practicum of Moral education through Yoga

Following activities were suggested by the participants for deciding about practicum of moral education through Yoga:

- i Practice of Yogic exercises;
- ii Awareness programmes ;
- iii Theme based activities such as workshops, seminars ;
- iv Personality development programmes;
- v Role play, drama and discussions;
- vi Morning assembly;
- vii Field based activities such as interaction and work with community;
- viii Celebration of International Yoga Day;
- ix Yoga Camp; and
- x Preparation of anecdotal records

5.0 Conclusions

Teaching of values is interwoven in the process of education. Teachers impart morality in classrooms through their own behaviour and conduct and implicitly through encouraging students for seeking truth, establishing classroom routines, enforcing discipline, motivating students to work in groups and encouraging excellence among them. The present paper highlighted the perceptions of prospective teachers on the need, significance and challenges of moral education in present day teacher-education programmes and suggested the implications of Yoga education in integrating moral values and physical well-being besides promoting emotional stability, mental hygiene and high level of consciousness, for the moral and overall personality development along with the academic growth of teacher-trainees.

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