



## 1. Introduction

The quality of teacher education is a determining criterion for assessing the strength of a country's school system. In India, the National Education Policy 2020 has given a revolutionary framework for transforming the process of teacher preparation by reforms that focus on integrated, multidisciplinary, and research-based learning cultures (Ministry of Education, 2020). The M.Ed. program takes centre place in this structure, as it is the higher level of the professional development of teacher educators, policy researchers, and academic leaders. While teacher education at the undergraduate level targets class pedagogy and basic skills, M.Ed. degree is supposed to develop in-depth mastery of educational theory, research methods, leadership, and policy analysis, hence linking teacher education with national development objectives. Karnataka offers a fertile ground to study teacher education reforms because of the coexistence of central and state university systems, each of which is operated by differing academic rules and funds. The Central University of Karnataka (CUK) is a centrally regulated model with modern curriculum changes in tune with NEP priorities. Gulbarga University (GU), being a state university, is more conventional in its approach with curriculum frameworks that were formulated in general before the launch of NEP 2020. A critical comparative analysis of the M.Ed. curriculum of these two universities can provide significant information on how policy change is understood and implemented differently in central and state settings.

This article intends to examine the curricula of CUK and GU to evaluate their coherence with NEP 2020's vision for teacher education. The curriculum evaluation considers six thematic areas: structure of curriculum and multidisciplinary integration, pedagogical approach, integration of technology, equitability and inclusivity, reforms in assessment, and research focus. Through the identification of strengths, gaps, and areas for potential improvement, the research intends to contribute to the discourse on aligning postgraduate teacher education with national educational priorities.

## 2. Literature Review

Indian teacher education reforms have been shaped by both domestic policy processes and global pedagogical currents. At the national level, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009, which was developed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), has stressed reflective practice, research, and inclusive pedagogy. The NEP 2020 maintains the foundational principles but gives increased stress on multidisciplinary learning, competency-based education, and the adoption of digital technologies. It suggests that all teacher education programs, such as M.Ed., be positioned in multidisciplinary institutions and be geared towards the all-around development of teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Around the world, nations such as Finland, Singapore, and Canada have shown the payoff from research-focused teacher education programs that draw on theory, practicum, and innovation (OECD, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Finland's system, for instance, blends in-depth coursework in educational psychology, curriculum, and assessment with

school-based research that lasts for several years, graduating teachers as both practitioners and scholar. Singapore's National Institute of Education also follows a comparable strategy, highlighting the integration of ICT and inquiry learning in teacher education. M.Ed. programmes in Canada provide electives that cut across disciplines, challenging candidates to acquire specialist expertise in education leadership, special education, and indigenous education.

A number of Indian studies have looked at how far teacher training curricula involve solutions to challenges of diversity, technology uptake, and outcome-based education (Singh & Sharma, 2021; Buch, 2011). All these studies identify the necessity for flexible, contextually applicable, and futuristic-capable curricula that are capable of equipping teachers to face changing classroom realities. Comparative studies of curriculum, though relatively uncommon, have not been undertaken so far, and there is a conspicuous lack of literature analyzing the differences between central and state universities in adopting NEP-conformant reforms at the M.Ed. level. This research fills that gap through a systematic comparison of two typical institutions in Karnataka.

### 3. Research Questions

- (i) How are the M.Ed. curricula of CUK and GU positioned in accordance with the six dimensions of NEP 2020:
  - curricular structure & multidisciplinary integration,
  - pedagogy
  - ICT integration
  - inclusion & equity
  - assessment systems
  - research orientation
- (ii) In what extent do the curricular structures of CUK and GU vary with respect to electives, interdisciplinary courses, and practicum components?
- (iii) How do pedagogical strategies at both universities strike a balance between theory and practice, and in what measure do they facilitate competency-based learning?
- (iv) What are the differences in the use of ICT in CUK and GU's M.Ed. programs?
- (v) In how far do the curricula of both universities address inclusion and equity, and to what extent do they respond to NEP 2020's priorities?
- (vi) What kind of assessment systems are followed at CUK and GU, and how do these are differ from competency-based assessment?
- (vii) How do both curricula support research orientation, such as methodology training, dissertation work, and prospects for dissemination?
- (viii) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and possible reforms that can be seen in CUK and GU curricula for better alignment with NEP 2020?

### 3a. Research Objectives

- (i) To assess and compare the conformity of the M.Ed. curricula of the Central University of Karnataka (CUK) and Gulbarga University (GU) to the NEP 2020 mandates.
- (ii) To contrast the curricular organization and multidisciplinary integration in CUK's and GU's M.Ed. programs.
- (iii) To compare the pedagogical strategies followed in both universities in terms of theory, practicum, and competency-based learning.
- (iv) To analyze the level of ICT integration in the M.Ed. curricula of GU and CUK.
- (v) To evaluate the extent to which inclusion and equity are being addressed in the two curricula.
- (vi) To contrast the assessment practices of GU and CUK with the vision of competency-based assessment articulated by NEP 2020.
- (vii) To look into the research orientation of both the curricula in terms of research methodology, dissertation, and dissemination.
- (viii) To determine the strengths, gaps, and best practices across the two programs and propose reforms for improving NEP 2020 alignment.

### 4. Methodology

The research employs a qualitative comparative evaluation of curriculum with document analysis as the main methodology. Official M.Ed. syllabi of CUK and GU were the main data sources. The CUK syllabus is the latest curriculum, updated with NEP 2020 guidelines in consideration, whereas the GU syllabus is a pre-NEP structure still running in most state universities. A framework for analysis was constructed in light of NEP 2020 priorities in teacher education. Six thematic categories were selected for coding and contrast:

- (1) Structure of curriculum and multidisciplinary integration
- (2) Pedagogical approach
- (3) Integration of technology
- (4) Equitability and inclusivity
- (5) Reforms in assessment
- (6) Research focus.

The analysis involved three phases. Initially, each course in both syllabi was mapped onto one or more NEP themes. Next, a semester-wise comparison was made to pick up structural differences. Third, thematic patterns were compared to establish relative strengths and weaknesses within each program. Validity was maintained by repeated coding and cross-validation, and findings were triangulated by direct reference back to the NEP 2020 text. Although the analysis gives a full picture of the written curricula, it does not measure implementation or student outcomes, which are areas left for future research.



<b>Assessment Systems</b>	Combination of portfolios, seminar presentations, and fieldwork reports	Primarily written exams and viva voce	CUK adopts competency-based assessment.
<b>Research Orientation</b>	Dissertation, research seminars, advanced statistics	Dissertation and methodology papers	Both strong, but CUK includes research dissemination

### 5.b. Strengths and Gaps Across the M.Ed. Curricula Between CUK And GU

#### CUK's Strengths:

- (i) Clear NEP Integration: Has specific courses in major NEP topics such as Inclusive Education and ICT in Education.
- (ii) Multidisciplinary Pedagogy: Provides a good range of electives (Policy, Leadership, Administration) encouraging interdisciplinary learning.
- (iii) Pedagogy Focused on Competency: Applies varied assessment techniques such as portfolios, seminars, and fieldwork reports, beyond mere learning by rote.
- (iv) Research Publishing: Has a formal seminar presentation, encouraging scholarly communication skills as imagined by NEP.

#### GU's Strengths:

- (i) Theoretical Foundation: Offers a solid, rigorous foundation in fundamental theoretical subjects such as Philosophy and Sociology.
- (ii) Assessment Literacy: Provides specialized and advanced programs in Measurement & Evaluation and Programme Evaluation, an important tool for teachers.

#### CUK's Gaps:

- (i) May be able to enhance its curriculum with the inclusion of GU's proficiency in sophisticated assessment and program evaluation methods.

#### GU's Critical Gaps

- (i) Implicit Inclusion: Does not have a specific, practicum-based course on Inclusive Education, a key pillar of NEP.
- (ii) Outdated ICT View: Covers ICT under the broad "Educational Technology" umbrella without a pedagogical, hands-on emphasis on digital tools and LMS.
- (iii) Traditional Pedagogy & Assessment: Overemphasizes theoretical lectures and written exams and does not incorporate the competency-based, practical approach espoused by NEP.
- (iv) Limited Electives: Provides a more conventional array of specializations, without the multidisciplinary width found at CUK.



## 7. Findings

The evaluative study of the M.Ed. curriculum of the Central University of Karnataka (CUK) and Gulbarga University (GU) brings to light both similarities based on the larger scheme of Indian teacher education and glaring dissimilarities in the manner each of them has reframed, or hasn't reframed, itself in terms of NEP 2020 guidance. Both the programs span two years, with four semesters each, and are composed of a mix of core theory papers, research work, and practicum learning. CUK's curriculum, however, demonstrates more intentionality in embedding NEP priorities, while GU's structure is still very conventional and representative of previous policy environments. Both universities start off in the first semester with core papers on educational psychology, philosophy, and research methodology. At CUK, Advanced Educational Psychology and Philosophical Foundations of Education are combined with Research Methodology–I and a specific course on Inclusive Education. This final element is in clear contrast with GU's Semester I, which touches upon inclusivity more obliquely through sociology of Education instead of as a specific subject. NEP 2020 stresses the necessity of explicit and ongoing focus upon inclusion, and it is possible to argue that CUK's method more overtly addresses this necessity.

The second semester also illustrates differences in thematic congruence. CUK provides Sociological Foundations of Education, Curriculum Studies, and a specific ICT in Education course in addition to Research Methodology–II. This ICT course exceeds usual educational technology units by adding hands-on practice with learning management systems (LMS) as well as digital pedagogy to their offerings, echoing NEP's emphasis on equipping educators to work in technology-rich environments. GU's second semester, although it covers educational technology, addresses ICT more as an ancillary ability rather than as a core pedagogical tool, with scant overt preparation in digital sites or pedagogy online.

CUK's third semester permits extensive specialization through electives like Policy and Leadership in Education, Guidance and Counselling, and Educational Administration. These are buttressed by an Advanced Statistics in Education course and the first part of a two-part dissertation. GU's third semester also features specializations, including Leadership in Education and Guidance and Counselling, as well as Program Evaluation. Although both programmes invite specialization, CUK's curriculum is more diverse and interdisciplinary, more reflecting NEP's appeal for multidisciplinary streams.

The fourth semester of both the institutions is dedicated to the completion of research and professional preparation. CUK's formal seminar presentation as part of the dissertation process aligns with NEP's focus on scholarly communication and dissemination of research. GU ends with a dissertation and viva voce but lacks a formal platform for presenting results to a scholarly audience other than for the purposes of examinations. This drawback lessens students' chances to participate in peer critique and academic discussion.

When the curricula are mapped onto the six thematic NEP 2020 dimensions of curricular structure, pedagogy, technology integration, inclusivity, assessment systems, and research

orientation, it is clear that CUK shows greater alignment in four out of these six dimensions. The two institutions are as robust in research orientation, providing scholarly research methodology training and complete dissertation requirements. CUK has the edge of using competency-based evaluations, including reflective journals, fieldwork portfolios, and seminar presentations, while GU places greater emphasis on conventional written exams.

## **8. Discussion**

The evidence here is that CUK's M.Ed. curriculum is more responsive to NEP 2020, specifically in its adoption of technology integration, clear emphasis on inclusion, and diversification of electives. This is in line with the more general observation that central universities, with more autonomy and fiscal resources, tend to revise and renew curricula more quickly in reaction to national policy changes. Through the integration of ICT as a key competency and the provision of interdisciplinary electives, CUK equips its graduates to fulfil the envisioned multifaceted roles of NEP, such as teacher educators, policy analysts, and educational leaders, that can function both in physical and virtual learning environments.

GU curriculum, although thorough in theoretical study, indicates a weaker response to the NEP structure. The tacit treatment of inclusivity, the absence of a specific ICT pedagogy module, and the dependence on conventional assessment structures point to a curriculum still rooted in pre-NEP assumptions about postgraduate teacher education. Although GU graduates will be well-equipped with educational theory and research methodology, they might not be adequately equipped to enact the policy mandates for technology-facilitated, inclusive, and competency-based learning spaces.

The thematic comparison also identifies areas of learning between the two institutions. For instance, GU's emphasis on Measurement and Evaluation and Program Evaluation provides richness in assessment literacy that might be complemented by CUK's more practice-based approaches. In turn, GU might learn from CUK's clear modules on inclusion and digital pedagogy, as well as its wider selection of electives. The fusion of these components might guarantee both programs an outcome of theoretically grounded, technology-literate, and inclusivity-focused graduates. The broader significance is that aligning M.Ed. curricula with NEP 2020 is not a question of merely introducing new courses or changing titles. It calls for a reframing of pedagogical design, integration of practicums, and evaluation tools. Especially in view of NEP's vision towards adopting a four-year integrated B.Ed.–M.Ed. pathway, which will require even greater progress and consistency in curriculum planning. Universities will have to develop M.Ed. frameworks that are flexible enough to cater to students' various interests and stringent enough to satisfy professional requirements for teaching training.

## **9. Conclusion**

This evaluation of M.Ed. curricula of CUK and GU illustrates that although both Gulbarga University and Central University of Karnataka provide strong M.Ed. programs grounded in educational research and theory, their levels of alignment with NEP 2020 are

quite different. CUK has made tangible efforts to incorporate NEP priorities through specific ICT training, stand-alone inclusion modules, interdisciplinary electives, and competency-based evaluation. GU, though strong on foundation and evaluative theory, is behind in incorporating these newer aspects.

The suggestions from this research are two-fold. Firstly, GU should think about reforming its curriculum by incorporating specific courses on inclusive education and the pedagogy of digital media, broadening electives, and using more diversified assessment tools. Secondly, CUK might enhance its theory subjects in measurement and program evaluation by borrowing ideas from the expertise at GU. Both the institutions need to make efforts to integrate global thinking, sustainability education, and cutting-edge interdisciplinary research projects into their curricula. Finally, the effectiveness of NEP 2020's reforms for teacher education will be contingent on the ability of universities to craft responsive policy-oriented curricula within academic rigour. Comparative studies like this one paint the map towards spotting strengths, filling gaps, and inching toward a common vision of teacher education that competes at both national and international levels.

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