

Title of the Study : **The Teacher Education Programme in Universities**
Researcher : **Prof. Elsie Kothlawala**

Objectives / Terms of reference for the assignment

- i. Review the organizational structure of the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Departments/Units of Education, Postgraduate Institutes in other Universities presently providing teacher education.
 - ii. The capacity of the universities to meet the demand for teacher education at different levels in terms of physical facilities and human resources.
 - iii. The academic and professional qualifications of the university staff.
 - iv. The performance of the staff in
 - a. developing courses
 - b. research output
 - c. Contribution to university
 - d. contribution to the quality of the teaching profession and
 - e. contribution to the community
 - v. the quality and relevance of the courses provided - B.Ed., Post Graduate Diplomas, Higher Degrees.
 - vi. the quality and relevance of the content of the curriculum in course options.
 - vii. The use of effective teaching-learning methodologies and practical sessions.
 - viii. The use of educational technology.
 - ix. The standards of examinations and student performance.
 - x. University community linkages.
 - xi. Adequacy of support services.
2. Identify gaps in meeting the qualitative and quantitative needs of schools in teacher supply and suggest ways of bridging this gap by developing programmes in the
 3. University system.
Propose measures to improve the
 - a. Organization
 - b. Quality of human resources
 - c. Courses, curricula methodologies and examinations
 - d. Capacity to meet the needs of schools in response to education reforms and emerging external pressures.

Methodology of Study

A close examination of the Terms of Reference surfaced a number of questions which could form the basis for the development of a data collection sheet to be presented to the Faculties/Departments of Education prior to personal visits to the Universities and discussions with key personnel such as Heads of Departments and Programme/Course Co-ordinators.

A decision was taken to send the data collection sheet early to reach the Universities at least two weeks ahead of visiting the Departments on mutually arranged date/dates. The latter request was omitted from the letter sent along with the data collection sheet to the University of Jaffna. They were informed of the inability to visit Jaffna and a special request was made to provide as much documentary evidence as possible to enable an accurate evaluation.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Organizational Structure

- 1.1 Department of Education at the University of Jaffna should be brought under one Faculty.

- 1.2 Faculty of Education at OUSL should take steps to overcome difficulties arising from excessive involvement of staff in administrative functions by reviewing allocation of responsibilities. The system adopted by the Faculty of Education, Colombo of appointing an 'Academic Officer' and an 'Examinations officer' should be considered.
- 1.3 OUSL should take steps to upgrade student facilities at Regional Centers by providing more reading material specially in Sinhala; teaching learning aids in the form of audio, video cassettes; circulating information regarding these facilities at registration and by appointing a staff member to oversee programme implementation at regional centers.
- 1.4 Organizational aspects related to programme development should be systematized by
 - Setting up an inter Faculty / Departmental Curriculum Committee for Education.
 - Obtaining the services of a wider group of resource personnel
 - Conducting a needs assessment survey to assess the needs of the schools in terms of teacher supply and teacher competencies arising from new education reforms and emerging external demands.
 - Review of existing teacher training curricula by the curriculum committee so as to bring them more in line with school needs.

2 Physical Facilities

- 2.1 Improving the quality of physical facilities at the Department of Education, University of Jaffna should receive early attention.
- 2.2 The additional needs that will emerge as a result of the establishment of a Faculty of Education at OUSL for example in terms of administrative and office staff, vehicle and other equipment should be met early.
- 2.3 Each Department in the University of Colombo, Faculty of Education needs additional space.
- 2.4 Computer facilities and equipment for the use of educational technology in the teaching learning process are inadequate in all the Departments reviewed.

3 Human Resources

- 3.1 Proficiency in English should be made a compulsory requirement for granting permanent appointments to probationary staff and for promotions.
- 3.2 It is strongly recommended that a suitable system be worked out to secure foreign training at advanced centers of learning for all younger academics.
- 3.3 The teaching learning system in the Faculties / Departments should be restructured so as to require the cultivation of scholarly attitudes and the development of expertise in selected disciplines.
- 3.4 Promotional system for academic staff should give more weightage to scholastic advancements and contributions to the department.
- 3.5 Existing vacancies should be filled without delay.
- 3.6 New recruits to the staff of University Departments of Education should be guided to specialize in disciplines in which staff shortages exist.
- 3.7 Number of students admitted to higher degree programmes should be decided upon the availability of qualified staff.

4 Courses, Curricula and Methodologies

- 4.1 All teacher training curricula should be reviewed by the Inter University Education curriculum committee that should be established to

- Ascertain the relevance of the programmes offered at present in terms of the needs of the school system.
- Ascertain the quality of programmes
- Establish a uniform credit system
- Restructure programmes / curricula so as to provide for more student involvement, self-learning, skill development, diversity and flexibility.
- Require introduction of technology to the teaching learning system and
- Require the use of diverse evaluation techniques

4.2 A needs assessment survey should be conducted prior to such reviewing and restructuring.

4.3 Steps must be taken by all University Departments of Education that utilize the services of 'Master Teachers' for supervision of Teaching Practice Stage I (Colombo and Peradeniya weekend PGDE and OUSL PGDE) to provide the students adequate guidance

4.4 Offer interdisciplinary and inter faculty programmes to ensure diversity, flexibility and increase relevance.

5 Examinations

5.1 Revive the system of External Examiners

5.2 Select external examiners from sister universities and use external examiner reports to check and maintain quality of examinations and standard of student performance.

5.3 Use interdisciplinary and inter faculty programmes to provide a means of checks and balances to ensure standards.

5.4 Diversify evaluation techniques used specially in formative evaluation.

5.5 Take up with relevant authorities the plight of M.Ed. students at OUSL who find it difficult to complete the dissertation without obtaining leave for at least three months.

6 Capacity to meet the needs of the schools

6.1 Present to the Ministry of Education proposals regarding measures it could take in collaboration with the University Faculties / Departments of Education to bridge the present gap in teacher supply specially in grades 12 and 13 in both media.

6.2 Make a case for the recruitment of B.Ed. graduates in relevant disciplines to bridge the gap in teacher supply in all subjects in both media at grades 12 and 13.

6.3 The possibility of offering a B.Ed. in the Teaching of English should be considered by the Faculty of Education, Colombo.

6.4 OUSL should consider the possibility of offering the PGDE programme in the English medium to meet the demand in schools that have commenced instruction in English in Grades 12 and 13

6.5 Make the M.Ed. programmes offered by Colombo and Peradeniya which are not research degrees more relevant to the needs of the school system by offering course options on subjects taught at school level along with relevant techniques of teaching. The course options of the M.A. in Teacher Education programme offered by OUSL could be taken as an example.

6.6 Encourage research on the needs of the school system.

6.7 Require academic staff to do research pertaining to programmes / courses they offer and the teaching learning methodologies and evaluation techniques adopted.