SWOT Analysis of Teacher Education Programme: A Students Perspective

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Abstract: **A programme development process can have encouraging results when it begins with "early assessment" that addresses different dimensions related with it. This paper presents a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for Teacher Education Programme in Tezpur University with respect to various dimensions. A SWOT analysis is used to initiate meaningful change in a programme of study and to use the data for programme improvement. Descriptive method was adopted for the present study in which survey is the technique used. Considering the nature of the study, which is both qualitative and quantitative in its approach, purposive sampling technique was employed. The sample includes 100 teacher trainees. the tool used for the study is a self-developed questionnaire for student teachers to measure their perceptions regarding various dimensions of the programme. The collected data were subjected to analysis employing descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean and standard deviation. On the basis of analysis of data, the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the teacher education programme were identified.**

Keywords: **Teacher Education Programme, SWOT analysis**

1. Introduction

Education is the most powerful instrument to combat most of the social evils that exists around the world. Education is a process of shaping the minds of the people towards socially acceptable goals that would also enrich the individual's life. The policy planners develop various plans and put forward various recommendations which sought to usher betterment in the society through the learners at all levels of education viz. primary, secondary and higher education. However, the vision and the mission of such highly placed educational plans and policies lay greatly, if not solely, in the gracious hands of the teachers as it is only the teachers that come in direct contact with the students in the classrooms. Also, the traditional role of a teacher which basically was 'imparter of knowledge' has been taken over by the contemporary role of a 21st century teacher which is 'interpreter of knowledge'. Here comes the necessity of a sound teacher education programme.

Teacher educators, and national policies that provide a configuration to the teaching profession, are both very much critical for the provision of a good quality education, as teachers of the present era are taken as the pivotal facilitators of learning. Teachers are the largest professional group engaged in human development activities. Notwithstanding, it is a challenge for education systems to pay adequate attention to factors affecting teacher effectiveness, such as policies on training, recruitment, deployment, management, assessment and professional development. Teachers often suffer from poor professional status, wages and work conditions. Moreover, an acute shortage of qualified teachers is also seen as an existing problem.

2. Concept of SWOT analysis & teacher education Programme

A. SWOT Analysis

It is a tool largely used in management and administration to find out the strengths and weaknesses as well as to estimate the probable opportunities and threats of any particular institute or programme or any business plan. Many people wrongly assume a SWOT analysis is only relevant for businesses, but it can be invaluable for individuals, organizations and even for team building. It is a strategic planning tool that thoroughly examines the internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats.

B. Teacher Education Programme

It refers to the complete set of policies and activities needed to be acquired by a prospective teacher in order to attain proficiency and competency in the field of teaching. Such programmes need some entry qualification and on the completion of it, the candidature gains eligibility to be in the teaching profession.

Teacher education as a programme of study comprises of the policies, procedures, and provision designed to furnish student teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills which they require in order to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. The professionals who are engaged in this activity are called teacher educators. Traditionally, teacher education was called as teacher training, however it has been renamed rightly because training is provided for routine and mechanized tasks and teaching can in no way be a mechanized activity because here, a teacher constantly deals with various types of learning environments with students having individual differences with respect to their intellectual abilities, interests, aptitude, etc. therefore, the teacher education programme is more relatable with the preparation of staff for the role of a reflective practitioner.

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3. Review of related literature

Gutierrez, Liso & Chico (2016) conducted a study which shows the use of SWOT to analyze students' perceptions of an environmental education joint master's programme in order to determine if it runs as originally planned. The open answers given by students highlight the inter-university nature of the master's programme, the technological innovation used as major points, and the weaknesses in the management coordination or the duplicate contents as minor points. The external analysis is closely linked with the students' future jobs, their labor opportunities available to them after graduation.

Bell & Rochford (2016) attempted to rediscover the integrative nature of SWOT which highlighted the points like reductionism and poor text coverage undermines SWOT's integrative nature, incorrect temporal sequencing of concepts contributes to misuse of SWOT, 37% of surveyed faculty do not teach SWOT at all, etc.

Sethi (2014) conducted a SWOT analysis of self-financing /private educational institutions and government/aided institutions in Meerut District of U.P. where it could be visualized that there is a lot of discrepancy in the survival of these institutes and the institutes face many challenges on a regular basis.

Dyson (2012) studied on strategic development and SWOT analysis at the University of Warwick and arrived at a rich array of findings. The strengths could be enumerated as Income generating capacity, Warwick brand itself, Research, Land, Student quality, Rapid decision making, Location, Pragmatic decision making, etc. The weaknesses were No endowments, Complacency, Strains of expansion, Communications, Lack of interdisciplinary research, Adverse to partnerships, Imbalanced funding, etc. The opportunities were Entrepreneurial political climate, Technological development, Brand status, Local Research Institute, Fundraising prospectus, etc. The threats were found as Collapse of pay bargaining system, Subject decline, Land use legislation, etc.

Cunha, et.al., (2005) used SWOT analysis to study the web based learning and teaching for higher education where they found that together with the traditional classroom model a truly multimedia-enabled interactive technology platform for an effective and efficient learning experience, allowing a self-paced mode of learning, complemented by web-based guidance from teachers can answer to the students' requirements of the present and of the future.

4. Objectives of the study

The specific objectives are to study the Teacher Education Programme's (B.Ed. & Integrated B.A B.Ed, B.Sc B.Ed):

- curriculum design
- instructional strategy
- evaluation procedure
- aspects of school internship & practice teaching
- student welfare facilities
- post qualification teacher growth and development

5. Hypothesis

- The student teachers possess positive perception towards the curriculum design.
- The student teachers possess positive perception about the instructional strategy.
- The evaluation procedure used is not satisfactory.
- The student teachers possess positive perception on school internship and practice teaching.
- The student welfare facilities available for the student teachers are not satisfactory.
- The post qualification teacher growth and development facilities available for the student teachers are not satisfactory.

6. Methodology

Method: In this study the researcher has adopted descriptive survey research design.

Sample: A sample of 100 pre-service teachers has been selected for the venture by the technique of purposive sampling. Among the 100 sample selected, 39 belonged to B.Ed. 4th semester, 39 belonged to B.Ed. 2nd semester and 22 belonged to integrated B.Ed. 6th semester.

Tool used: A Self Developed Questionnaire for student teachers, namely- *Questionnaire for "SWOT Analysis of Teacher Education Programme: A Students Perspective"* has been used chiefly for gathering the data relevant for study. It was standardized by establishing content validity as well as reliability using test-retest method.

Procedure: Analysis of the present study was conducted by the use of descriptive statistics as it helps to describe and understand the features of a specific data set, by giving short summaries about the sample and measures of the data. The data were descriptively analyzed by computing the count, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

7. Analysis of data and discussion

Hypothesis no. 1: The student teachers possess positive perception towards the curriculum design.

Table 1
Student Teachers responses regarding Curriculum Design

S. No.	Item topic	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Curriculum up-to-date	88	12
2	Appropriate & flexible	82	18
3	Balanced curriculum	93	7
4	Supports gender based needs	71	29
5	Coherence in pedagogical & model practice	86	14

Interpretation: The above table indicates that out of total respondents, majority said that the curriculum has been designed properly i.e., the curriculum is up-to-date, flexible, balanced, supportive w.r.t. gender based needs & provides coherence in pedagogical & model practice. Therefore, the hypothesis that the student teachers possess positive perception towards the curriculum design is retained.

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Hypothesis no. 2: The student teachers possess positive perception about the instructional strategy.

Table 2
Usage of instructional methods adopted by teachers in classroom

S. No.	Focus Area	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Teacher centric	2	98
2	Learner centric	48	52
3	Content Focused	24	76
4	Participatory	26	74

Interpretation: From table no. 2, it can be inferred that the most widely used instructional methods by the teachers was learner centric, followed by participatory method, content focused and lastly, teacher centric with just 2% of responds. Therefore, the hypothesis has been retained.

Hypothesis no. 3: The evaluation procedure is not satisfactory.

Table 3
Various evaluative procedures used

S. No.	Item topic	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Continuous and comprehensive evaluation	95	5
2	Provision for orientation of the programme	91	9
3	Satisfied by the evaluation procedure	86	14
4	Fear about the evaluation process	14	86
5	Grade appealing option	84	16

Interpretation: From the above table, it can be analyzed that the institution provided continuous and comprehensive evaluation where the students have the opportunity to raise the issue for grade appealing if they face any discrepancies and only a few respondents had fear about the ongoing evaluation practices. Overall, the process was found to be satisfactory and thus, the hypothesis has been rejected.

Hypothesis no. 4: The student teachers possess positive perception on school internship and practice teaching.

Table 4
Provisions available for school internship

S. No.	Item topic	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Pre-practice teaching opportunity with practicum	79	21
2	Supervision	87	13

Interpretation: For the practice teaching and school Internship, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Government Schools are available where most of the respondents said that the program provided pre practice teaching opportunity with practicum and supervised field experience. Hence, the hypothesis can be retained.

Hypothesis no. 5: The student welfare facilities available for the student teachers are not satisfactory.

Interpretation: The student welfare facilities available for the student teachers showed mixed level of satisfaction. The accessibility to the administration, safety and protection and mentoring opportunity are found to be of considerable level of satisfaction. However, the student teachers told that they are not much satisfied with the scholarship available, career guidance

opportunities and medical assistance provided to them. Hence the hypothesis can be retained.

Table 5
Welfare facilities available for the student teachers

S. No.	Item topic	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Scholarship	59	41
2	Medical assistance	60	40
3	Career guidance	48	52
4	Mentorship	88	12
5	CCTV surveillance	91	9
6	Accessibility to the administration	80	20

Hypothesis no. 6: The post qualification teacher growth and development facilities available for the student teachers are not satisfactory.

Table 6
Opportunities for post-qualification teacher growth and development

S. No.	Item topic	Percentage of responses	
		Yes	No
1	Opportunities for post qualification teacher growth	83	17
2	Professional connections with job market	40	60
3	Higher educational opportunities	53	47
4	Encouragement for development	93	7
5	Research opportunities	63	37

Interpretation: Even though encouragement provided for development were quite high as well as the opportunities for post qualification teacher growth was also considerable, yet higher educational & research opportunities were not sufficient. Moreover, the data shows poor professional connections with job markets and placement services. Therefore, the hypothesis can be retained.

8. Conclusion

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
1. Up-to-date, flexible & relevant curriculum design to meet latest trends	1. Lecture & assignment method usually dominate the methods of teaching learning
2. Strong guidance during school internship	2. No sufficient material available in learning resouce centre
3. Satisfactory system of evaluation (CCE)	3. No sound career guidance provided
4. Sholarship available for reserved quota	4. No online courses available
5. variety of instructional strategy adopted by faculties	
6. Encouragement of professional development	

SWOT

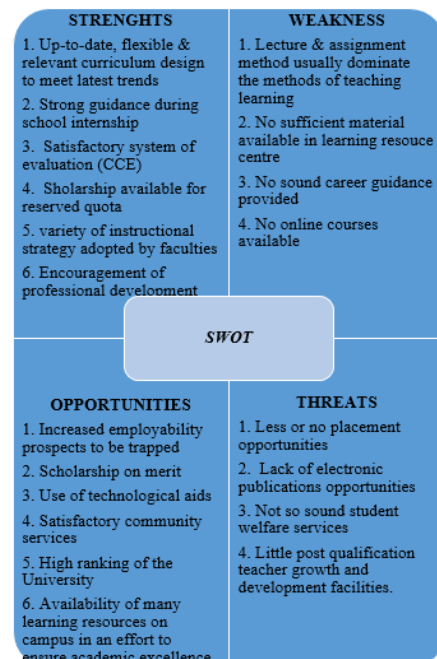| OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Increased employability prospects to be trapped	1. Less or no placement opportunities
2. Scholarship on merit	2. Lack of electronic publications opportunities
3. Use of technological aids	3. Not so sound student welfare services
4. Satisfactory community services	4. Little post qualification teacher growth and development facilities.
5. High ranking of the University	
6. Availability of many learning resources on campus in an effort to ensure academic excellence.	

Fig. 1. SWOT matrix

After a thorough review of all the major findings of the Programme of Teacher Education provided by the Department of Education, Tezpur University, following results has been obtained which is presented in figure 1: SWOT matrix.

SWOT analysis of a Teacher Education Programme or any programme can thus be viewed as a driving force for implementing need based change. Even though SWOT analysis has an old fashioned feel about it, however it has stood the test of time and can readily incorporate ideas from newer approaches such as resource development and competency based planning. It is one tool to use in a strategic planning process.

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