

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY CURRICULUM

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The curriculum is the foundation and pillar of education. To bring quality development and progress in our education, we need the assistance of curriculum that has specific aims and objectives. By developing adequate and appropriate curriculum, education becomes meaningful and functional. The curriculum is a purposeful process where the curriculum framers and constructors' plans and develops the curriculum keeping in mind the present and future necessities of the learners. It is not a haphazard process: it requires a lot of research and planning before implementing it in education and should be organized and systematic. It should possess explicit aims and objectives, as it facilitates the teachers to educate students' keeping in mind the goals of the curriculum. By reviewing the past and present globalized curriculum; there is a tremendous change in terms of – aims, objectives, methods of teaching, strategies, experiences, etc. There is no doubt that all these reforms are made to meet the present and future needs and demands of learners of our nation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Formal Education System, Research and Planning, Utilitarian and Informative*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this era of globalization, the curriculum has evolved a lot and becoming more dynamic in nature. As it is evident that nothing in this world is fixed and rigid, as every entity is subject to change, so the curriculum is no exception. It has changed radically, and in this paper, I have specifically made an effort to enlighten the dynamics of the conventional and contemporary curriculum. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the major changes and development of curriculum from traditional to modern era education. It will give stress on the main aims and objectives, a method of teaching, skills, teaching techniques, teaching aids, discipline, instructional objectives, etc. which will facilitate the prospective teachers to teach the students efficiently and provide quality education irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, etc.

### **Meaning of Curriculum**

Education becomes directionless without an appropriate and utilitarian curriculum. A curriculum is a pivotal element of any formal education system that aims to provide quality education to learners. Since education is the concrete and practical instrument to bring development and change in the learners and society at large, the curriculum should be designed as such to meet the expectations and needs of the latter.

Etymologically, the term curriculum has its roots in the Latin word 'current', meaning a race- course or a run-way which one runs to reach a goal. It is the fundamental role of the curriculum to provide the total experiences and activities.

The curriculum sometimes is misunderstood as syllabus, textbooks, and contents but it is much more than that. The Curriculum is an inclusive and comprehensive term. It is a recognized, simplified and purposely selected portion of information and experience. In other words, the curriculum can be defined as the facilitator of complete school environment involving all the courses, experiences.

The aims and objectives of education cannot remain static; it is always dynamic in nature and keeps on changing the requirements and needs of the society and learners. So, the curriculum also keeps on changing to fulfill the needs and demands of the learners and society as a whole. The curriculum should be utilitarian and informative, which will make the learners to face any challenges and obstacles.

### **Definition of Curriculum**

Various interpretations and definitions of curriculum given by different psychologists and educationists:-

**Alberty A. and Alberty E. (1959)** define Curriculum “as the sum total of student activities which the school sponsors for the purpose of achieving its objectives.”

**According to Cunningham**, “Curriculum is a tool in the hands of the artist (the teacher) to mould his material (pupil) in accordance with his ideal in his studio (the school).”

**According to Payne**, “Curriculum consists of all the situations that the school may select and consciously organize for the purpose of developing the personality of its pupils and making behavior changes in them.”

**R. Doll** in his book, ‘Curriculum Improvement: Decision Making’ (1982), has stated; “Curriculum embodies all the experiences which are offered to learner under the auspices or direction of the school.”

**T. Raymont**, “the curriculum includes all that would help our pupils to become interested spectators of, or possibly co-operators in the great achievements of mankind- scientific, aesthetic and practical.”

**According to the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)**, “It includes the totality of experiences that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that go in the school.”

**Derek Rowan tree in ‘A Dictionary of Education (1981)**, defined curriculum in these words, “Curriculum can refer to the total structure of ideas and activities, developed by an educational institution to meet the needs of students and to achieve desired educational aims.”

### **Backdrop**

The concept of curriculum is as dynamic as the changes that occur in society. In its narrow sense, the curriculum is viewed merely as a listing of subjects to be taught in school. In a broader sense, it refers to the total learning experiences of individuals not only in schools but in society as well.

Traditional education system consisted usually of one- way communication system by the gurus to the students, where education was imparted to the students without the application of sophisticated technology. Here, students were required to attend the classes in person within the institution. Here, the curriculum was designed in such a manner which inhibited original thinking and critical reasoning. The students took to learning having blind faith upon the teacher as whatever the teacher taught was considered correct. There was no scope forcreativity as all the children had to learn the

same ideas and facts. The concept of individual difference was ignored as interest, potentialities, aptitudes, and habits were not taken into account in the educational process. Thereby, making the traditional curriculum teacher-centric and not life-centric. The curriculum did not prepare the child for facing various life-related challenges and deprived them for becoming sociable.

With the passage of time and refinement of mind the traditional concept of the curriculum (which was limited in scope) was replaced by a dynamic and modern concept. Hence, it is now considered to be a broad cumulative and comprehensive term including all the curricular and co-curricular activities. It is the totality of all the learning activities to which we are exposed during the study, i.e. classroom experiences, laboratory, library, playgrounds, school building, study tours, associations with parents and community. Now, it is more than the textbooks and more than the subject matter selected for a particular class.

## **IMPORTANCE OF CURRICULUM TO TEACHING**

An effective curriculum provides teachers, students, administrators and community stakeholders with a measurable plan and structure for delivering a quality education. The curriculum identifies the learning outcomes, standards and core competencies that students must demonstrate before advancing to the next level. Teachers play a key role in developing, implementing, assessing and modifying the curriculum. An evidenced-based curriculum acts as a road-map for teachers and students to follow on the path to academic success.

### **Impact on Administrators**

Administrators follow a detailed curriculum to help students achieve state and national standards of academic performance. Schools can lose public funding if students fall substantially behind peers at higher performing schools. The curriculum ensures that each school is teaching students relevant material and monitoring the progress of students from all types of backgrounds.

### **Impact on Teachers**

A school's curriculum informs teachers what skills must be taught at each grade level to ultimately prepare students for post-secondary education or a job. Understanding the big picture helps teachers align the learning objectives of their own curriculum with the school's curriculum. In the absence of a curriculum, teachers wouldn't know whether students are building a solid foundation to support learning at the next level.

### **Impact on Students**

A curriculum outlines for students a sequence of courses and tasks that must be successfully completed to master a subject and earn a diploma or degree. Students may be more motivated to study if they understand why certain subjects are taught in the curriculum. A curriculum reassures students that they're on the right track to reaching their goals and honing desired skills.

### **Other Considerations**

In addition to teaching students academic skills, the curriculum is also intended to teach students the importance of responsibility, hard work, and responsible citizenship. Teachers in partnership with parents and community members collaborate on the development of a curriculum that will instill character in students and reinforce positive behavior.

In short, the curriculum is a series of potential experiences, set up in educational institutions for the reason of disciplining the learners in desirable ways of thinking of the concerned society. It is a path by following which we can reach a specified destination. Furthermore, it is considered to be a series of learning opportunities which are planned and carried out by a teacher and pupils working together.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

### Traditional Concept of Curriculum

In the past, the second name of the curriculum was "course of studies". This term was considered to be a program related to various subjects only. However, the terms "Curriculum" and "courses of studies" were, sometimes interchangeable but used in a very limited sense. As a matter of fact, this viewpoint was a static-view which emphasized only the text-book knowledge or factual information. In those days it was correct because the main objective of education was to help the learner to memorize the contents. Furthermore, the curriculum was a body of preserved factual knowledge to be transmitted from the teacher to the pupils and mastered by them through memorization, recitation, and drill; and to be reproduced on the demand of the teacher.

### Criticism of Traditional Classroom Curriculum

- **Lacks Student Focused Learning:** A drawback of traditional training is that it inherently places the most value on standards, curriculum and passing tests as opposed to student-focused learning. Student-focused learning places value on the student and builds the curriculum around the questions young people need answering in order to understand the material. Constructivist learning builds on the knowledge students already have to allow them to form concrete associations to new information, which improves retention. Traditional learning is based on repetition and memorization of facts that students care less about and retain at lower rates after testing.
- **Less Emphasis on Critical Thinking:** Traditional classroom training doesn't encourage critical thinking skills, the ability to actively apply information gained through experience and reasoning. Instead, traditional training emphasizes the role of teachers as knowledge dispensers and students as repositories. This style of learning doesn't allow students deeper levels of understanding required for complex concepts and lifelong learning.
- **Lacks Process Oriented Learning:** Traditional training emphasizes passing tests, whether or not students understand the testing material. The learning process is thus devalued, and students are not encouraged to understand the methods, techniques, and skills required to find answers. Constructivist learning holds the process as important as the results because it stimulates skills important long after schooling.
- **Lacks Emphasis on Larger Concepts or Structures:** Rather than focusing on larger concepts and considering student context in the learning as constructivist training does, traditional training focuses on basic skills and gradually builds to a whole. While this simplifies learning, it provides the little context, which can disconnect learners.
- **Lacks Interactivity:** Traditional training emphasizes individual student work and projects and is poor preparation for a student's future endeavors, which are likely to include working in teams and collaborating with colleagues. Under this training model, students receive few opportunities to practice group dynamics and teamwork.

## MODERN CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

With the passage of time and refinement of mind the traditional concept of the curriculum (which was limited in scope) was replaced by a dynamic and modern concept. Hence, it is now considered to be a broad cumulative and comprehensive term including all the curricular and co-curricular activities. It is the totality of all the learning activities to which we are exposed during the study, i.e. classroom experiences, laboratory, library, playgrounds, school building, study tours, associations with parents, and community. Now, it is more than the textbooks and more than the subject matter selected for a particular class.

In short, the curriculum is a series of potential experiences, set up in educational institutions with a rationale of disciplining the learners in ways which would eventually make them better citizens. It is a path, following which we can reach a specified destination. Furthermore, it is considered to be a series of learning opportunities which are planned and carried out by teachers and pupils working concurrently.

### Advantages of Contemporary Curriculum

- **Learner--Centric:** The modern curriculum being pragmatic in approach attaches importance to the learner. Hence, it not only focuses on the subject or content, but also it gives priority to the students. The child is at the center of all the activity.
- **Focuses on Producing Human Resources:** One of the major objectives of the modern curriculum is to produce good, skilled human resources. The curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping the knowledge and skills of students regarding vocations from schools.
- **Aims to Make Students Self- Reliant and Self-Dependent:** The modern curriculum is developed in such a way that it provides maximum opportunity, so that the learners are no more restricted to the confines of traditional method of learning; It gives emphasis to co-curricular activities, where the students can develop their skills. The modern curriculum aims to make students active being rather than passive individual. Hence, modern curriculum is constructed in such a way that it facilitates the students to become a sociable and self- reliant person.
- **Harmonious Development:** Harmonious development is very essential for the learners. Every aspects of development is equally important, for instance- physical, mental, moral, aesthetic, spiritual and social. Therefore, modern education aims at harmonious development of learners.
- **Provides Opportunity for Creativity:** Learning is a process and modern curriculum emphasizes in providing the conducive learning environment for learners. The modern curriculum is designed in such a way that it gives opportunity to the learners to develop their creativity in their specific interest areas. The potentialities of students are nourished and nurtured by the teachers. The students gets platform to showcase their talents in classroom and beyond.
- **It is Based on Psychology of Individual Differences:** One of the most important and positive features of modern curriculum is that it is based on psychology of Individual Differences. The curriculum framers while designing the curriculum keeps in mind the psychology of individual differences. It gives importance to all types of learners and focuses to fulfil the needs and requirements of every learners.

- **Life – Centered Curriculum:** The modern curriculum apart from subject or content- knowledge gives importance to provide practical experiences and knowledge to learners. The modern curriculum believes that education should be in accordance with the life-pattern of the child. It not only aims at individual welfare but also social welfare.

## CONCLUSIONS

The advancement in technology has affected all walks of life. In this regard, the field of education has also been affected largely in a positive mode. Contemporary education is no longer confined simply within the realm of books and classroom work. It now takes into account the technological and research inputs, thus making education a more comprehensive, interesting, competitive and effort based entity. The curriculum takes into consideration the development of all basic domains, namely Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor.

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