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Trends of Research in the field of Curriculum Studies – India and Abroad (2000 to 2018)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to determine trends of research in the field of curriculum studies at secondary level between 2000 to 2018 in India and Abroad and to examine these studies in terms of frequently used subject matter, frequently used research method, frequently used sample, trends in data collection tools and trends in data analysis methods. The objective is entirely based on literature review. Therefore, the various forms of published and unpublished documents related to curriculum at secondary level such as journals, articles, reports, projects, books, book chapters and thesis were collected. The publications were collected from the internet using the web platform Google Scholar. Content analysis took place in the content of the studies. It has been found that majority of studies were done on general curriculum, followed by subject curriculum & majority of studies used qualitative research method followed by quantitative and mixed method of research design & majority of the studies have chosen documents as a sample followed by stakeholders and combination of stakeholders and documents & most of the studies have used more than one self constructed tools in combination like questionnaire and interview, interview and observation, checklist and interview, interview, questionnaire and observation followed by studies that have used only one data collection tool & majority of studies have used qualitative analysis method including content analysis and descriptive analysis followed by quantitative data analysis method including percentage, standard deviation, graphic illustrations, correlation, t-test, ANOVA, structural Equivalency model and both qualitative and quantitative.

1. Introduction

As the Indian Education Commission of 1964-66, also known as the Kothari Commission had stated that the destiny of our country is being shaped in our classrooms. That this shaping to a great extent depends upon the kind of curriculum that a nation constructs and, thereafter, on the steps it takes for its proper implementation at all stages of education, is hardly debatable. Thus national issues are invariably linked with both the system of education and curriculum. It is no exaggeration to say that the curriculum of a country not only reflects its genius but also its ethos, philosophy, cultural heritage, as well as its concern for national development, particularly development of its most precious resource, namely, the human resource. In view of this, one may assert that policy statements on education are, by and large, statements of curriculum reform. Analysis of trend and evaluation of research in an area cannot be undertaken in isolation from fundamental theoretical consideration and what, under the name of curriculum, is prescribed for and transacted in the system of education. This precisely was the reason for dwelling upon some cultural imperatives and historical aspects of curriculum development in the country. It is therefore, necessary to create a reference/criterion-base against which analysis and evaluation of the appropriateness, adequacy and quality of the research work carried out in this area until now, can be done. The concept of curriculum generally comprises four major components, namely, objectives defined in terms of expected learning outcome, content, learning experiences i.e., teaching and learning strategies and tools and techniques of evaluation. It is only for convenience that the concept has been defined as four separate components and it needs to be emphasized that curriculum must be conceived as a totality or sum total of experiences provided for the optimum growth and development of the potential endowed to an individual. Curriculum development has been conceived as a dynamic and continuous process, and so is the research in the area, it has been decided to discern the trends of research in the field of curriculum studies. The purpose of this objective was to determine the subjects, types and methods of studies, sample involved, tools used and data analysis technique used in the studies carried out especially on educational curriculum and instruction at secondary level in India and abroad between 2000 to 2018.

2. The aim of the research

The aim of this study is to discern the trends of research in the field of curriculum studies in India and abroad between 2000 to 2018.

3. Method

Document examination which has been one of the qualitative research methods has been used in this research. While compiling the baseline information for the trends in curriculum studies, various forms of published and unpublished documents (related to curriculum at secondary level) such as journals articles, books, book chapters, reports, projects, and

theses were collected. The publications were collected from the internet using the web platform Google Scholar. Key words such as curriculum, secondary education, NCF-2005, stakeholders were used to search for related articles online. Of all the collected publications I accept that this is not the complete list of works from the curriculum research between the years 2000 to 2018, but submit that this list provides a basis on which to examine the research gaps and identify future priorities. Total 70 studies which have been written in the field of curriculum at secondary level have been examined in the frame of the research. Content analysis took place in the content of the studies. The present investigator firstly develops categories in context of the objective. The various categories developed were i) subject ii) research method/design iii) sample iv) data collection tool and v) data analysis techniques and then make analysis.

4. Major Findings

Table 1.1: Showing trends in frequently used subject in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and Abroad

S. No	Subject of the studies	No. of studies	%age
1.	General curriculum at secondary level	32	45.71
2.	Subject curriculum at secondary level	20	28.57
3.	Secondary education	8	11.43
4.	Secondary school program	5	7.14
5.	Quality education at secondary level	5	7.14

As it can seen in table , it is observed that when the curriculum related studies at secondary level were examined according to their subject, it has been found that most frequently investigated research topics were on general curriculum(45.71%), followed by subject curriculum(28.57%). Moreover, a significant percentage of studies were published in other topics such as secondary education (11.43%), secondary school program (7.14%) and quality education at secondary level (7.14%).

Although majority of studies were done on general curriculum, the studies were on curriculum development, competence based curriculum, curriculum improvement, curriculum reform, curriculum innovation and only one study was done on curriculum including three dimensions content, teaching pedagogy and learners' assessment **(Gang Nam Tran2015).**

Table 1.2: Showing trends in frequently used research method/deign in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and Abroad

S. No	Research method/design	No. of studies	%age
1.	Qualitative	56	80
2.	Quantitative	12	17.14
3.	Mixed	2	2.86

The above table shows trends in frequently used research method/design in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and abroad. The perusal of the table depicts that out of 70 studies analyzed so far ,most of the curriculum studies employed qualitative method (80%), (17.6%) employed quantitative method and only a small amount of curriculum studies 2(2.86%) employed mixed research designs as a research approach.

When research studies connected with the qualitative research designs were investigated in detail, it was found that both interactive and non interactive qualitative research designs were employed. Out of the interactive qualitative research design, the most employed method was descriptive followed by case study and among non-interactive research designs, the most employed method was review followed by content analysis. Similarly when research studies connected with the quantitative research designs were investigated in detail, it was found that non-experimental research designs have been preferred than experimental research designs. With respect to non-experimental research designs, it was found that simple descriptive, survey and comparative research methods were the most preferred methods.

Table 1.3: Showing trends in frequently used sample in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and Abroad

S. No	Sample	No. of studies	%age
1.	Documents	24	34.28
2.	More than one stakeholder	19	27.14
3.	Teachers	16	22.85
4.	Students	6	8.57
5.	Parents	1	1.43
6.	Documents and stakeholders	4	5.71

The above table shows the sample group of the analyzed studies, it has been determined that out of 70 studies, 24(34.28%) studies have chosen documents as sample, 19(27.14%) studies have chosen more than one stakeholder as a sample group, 16(22.85%)studies have chosen teachers as a sample group, 6(8.57%) have chosen students as a sample group, only 1(1.43%) have chosen parents as a sample group and 4(5.71%) have chosen both documents and stakeholders as a sample. When research studies connected with the sample group of more than one stakeholders were investigated in detail, it was found that most of the studies use combination of only two stakeholders either student and teacher or student and parent or teacher and administrators or parents and headmasters or teacher and parents and few studies use combination of more than two stakeholders.

Trends in Data collection tools

While analyzing curriculum research studies of secondary level with respect to data collection tools used, it has been found that most of the studies have used self constructed tools and only 2 or 3 studies have used standardized inventories constructed by others. Out of the self constructed tools, the most widely used was questionnaire followed by interview, observation schedule and checklist. It was also determined that most of the studies have used more than one self constructed tools in combination like questionnaire and interview, interview and observation, checklist and interview, interview, questionnaire and observation followed by studies that have used only one data collection tool. In addition to that focus group discussions were used in most of the studies along with observation, interview and questionnaire. It has

also founded that some studies have used document analyses method of gathering the data and some studies use document analysis along with other self constructed tools.

Trends in data analysis methods

Table 1.4: Showing trends in frequently used data analysis methods in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and Abroad

S. No	Data Analysis Method	Frequency	%age
1.	Qualitative (content analysis, descriptive analysis)	39	55.71
2.	Quantitative (percentage, standard deviation, graphic illustrations, correlation, t-test, ANOVA, structural Equivalency model)	28	40
3.	Both qualitative and quantitative	3	4.29

The above table shows trends in frequently used data analysis methods in curriculum studies between 2000 to 2018 in India and abroad. The perusal of the table depicts that out of 70 studies analyzed so far, qualitative data analysis method were used in 39(55.71%) studies, quantitative data analysis method were used in 28(40%) studies, and both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods in combination were used in 3(4.29%) studies.

When research studies connected with the qualitative data analysis methods, were investigated in detail, it has been found that in most of the studies thematic analysis were used followed by content analysis. Similarly when research studies connected with the quantitative data analysis methods, were investigated in detail, it has been found that in most of the studies percentage were used followed by combination of percentage, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA and t-test.

Therefore, the quick look of the table reveals that majority of the studies have used qualitative data analysis method.

5. Discussion

From the analysis of trends of research, the investigator found that most of the studies were done on general curriculum followed by subject curriculum at secondary level, the topics of general curriculum studied were on, curriculum development, competence based curriculum, curriculum improvement curriculum reform, curriculum innovation and only one study was done on curriculum including three dimensions i.e., content, teaching pedagogy and learners assessment. In this sense, it may be recommended that this research subject should be given more importance. Most of the curriculum studies employed qualitative method than quantitative method and only a small amount of curriculum studies employed mixed research designs as a research method. Because of the fact that qualitative researches are generally used to discover themes and relationships at the case level, and play a discovery role, qualitative research may present more fundamental ideas about contemporary issues, and is better recognized by others in related fields (Lee et al., 2009). Due to these advantages, it can be said that the qualitative research designs have an important fact in the field of curriculum studies. However, a good qualitative study isn't easy to produce because, unlike quantitative studies, with its established steps to follow, the unique situations of qualitative studies require judgment decisions that inexperienced researchers may not be able to make properly (Herry, Sturges, & Klinger, 2005). Moreover, interpretations of qualitative results is especially challenging to new researchers (Sozbilir et al., 2012). Therefore, this finding is a satisfactory situation in terms of this research. The results are in line with the study conducted by **Syeda Gul and Mustafa Sozbilar(2015)** in which he found that majority of studies employed qualitative and most of the remaining studies were quantitative research tradition and papers employed mixed method as a research approach were very limited. The results are also in contradictory with the findings **of Mecit Aslan and Mustafa Saglam (2017)** which revealed mostly quantitative research methods and descriptive model were used in 306 postgraduate theses on curriculum evaluation. Most of the studies have chosen documents as a sample followed by stakeholders and very few studies have chosen both documents and stakeholders as a sample. The results are in contradictory with the study conducted by **Mecit Aslan and Mustafa Saglam (2017)** which revealed that data was collected from teachers and students in majority of studies. Most of the studies have used self constructed tools and only 2 or 3 studies have used standardized inventories constructed by others, some studies have used document analyses method of gathering the data and some studies use document analysis along with other self constructed tools. . The results are in contradictory with the results of the study conducted by **Subhan et al., (2014)** in which he found that the documents have been the most data collection instruments in the essay. Most widely used self constructed tool was questionnaire followed by interview, observation schedule and checklist which is in line with the finding of **Subhan et al.,** (**2014)** which revealed that the most used data collection instrument after the documents has been determined as questionnaire followed by interview and observation. In most of the studies, qualitative data analysis methods were used than quantitative data analysis methods and in very few studies both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods in combination were used. The reason for this is that researchers prefer qualitative research designs/methods. But it is also note worthy that in general, frequency of qualitative data analysis is decreasing while descriptive and inferential analysis has been increasing in overall research studies. The results are partially in line with the study conducted by **Syeda Gul and Mustafa Sozbilir (2015)** which revealed that qualitative data analysis methods were used commonly followed by quantitative methods.

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