

## **A Study on Teacher Education for Addressing Gender Equity in English Language Courses of B.Ed. and D.ELEd in Manipur**

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**Abstract**

The contents prescribed for pedagogy of English in B.Ed and D.EL. Ed courses which are compulsory for student teachers aspiring to teach English language in school are very important as these PSTE programmes are preparing teachers to cope up with any issue relating to teacher education. A lot of change has been taking place in the education system, according to which it needs to address the issues of gender discrimination arising out of culture and traditions and from different backgrounds of society. It is meant to strengthen the capacity of an education system to reach out to all learners ensuring a stable growth of the society. A developing society should ensure inclusive education irrespective of language, gender, and ethnicity/cultural and disability. With fast growing education system, it witnesses a paradigm shift from conventional methodologies to innovative pedagogy practices. Being the Lingua Franca, English is an essential part of school curriculum. Therefore, there is need to explore the preparedness of English language teachers to identify and take care of the gender equity among the children studying together in education settings. With insufficient exposure about the diverse learners, when teacher is introduced to the different learning needs in the service, they find faults with the individual learner rather than modifying his/her pedagogy practice. Majority of English Pedagogy courses of B.Ed. under Manipur University and D.El.Ed under SCERT don't adequately prepare student teachers to be sensitive towards gender equity. While there is a great need of English language taking care of gender equity in most PSTE programs, it is evident that pedagogy paper is not updated and need to be re-evaluated.

**Keywords:** NCTE-2014, Pre-Service Teacher Education (PSTE), Gender Equity, Inclusive Education, Gender Discrimination, Innovative Pedagogy

### **1. Introduction**

There is still a lot to say about different types of inequalities apparent within the classroom. Teachers engaged less frequently with female students, asking them fewer questions, while at the same time providing males with more feedback. This history of education has perpetuated its' gender inequalities as teachers, students, and people in general have been socialized to think that males are in general smarter than women, especially when

it comes to Math and Science fields of study. A well trained classroom teacher is the single most important factor in the success of inclusive education programmes (Sharma and Das, 2015). He or she should be very sensitive to the educational needs of children. Pre-Service Teacher Education (PSTE) prepares teachers for teaching in the classroom. As the name indicates it is the education of teachers before they enter the education system as teachers are entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the students. Ideally, PSTE should be an enriching experience for student teachers so that they could justify the demanding role of teaching professional.

Today, issue of gender inequality is a concern within the international community. In 1995, on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNDP has implemented substantial measures such as the gender related human development the GDI, the human development index (HDI), indicator of women's participation IPF. These indicators have led to many measures for gender inequality. Despite this, gender inequality can be observed in almost all developing countries and even in developed countries. Gender inequality in education can prevent the reduction of fertility rates, infant mortality rates and may also have negative effects on children's education and health. It can also affect economic growth through a number of channels. Undoubtedly, it is the prime responsibility of the Pre-service Teacher Education (PSTE) to prepare teachers to address the gender discrimination of students in inclusive classrooms.

Several studies had been conducted to find out the teaching/learning process of English in Manipur. Singh (2002) explored the problem, prospect and status of English in Manipur in his research "A Critical Scrutiny of the Position, Problems and Prospects of English in Manipur". Devi (2006) explored the difference between the sentence structures in English and Manipuri language in her research "Sentence structure in English and Manipuri Language", A contrastive study. Sujeta Beishamayum (2010) explored linguistic problems in learning English language in her research "Communication and linguistic problems faced by Meiteiron speakers in learning English language." However, there is no study available with regard to the study of "A Study on Teacher Education For Addressing Gender Equity in English Language Courses of B.Ed. and D.El.Ed in Manipur". In the light of the above background, we will investigate the contents prescribed for pedagogy of English in B. Ed. and D.El,T.Ed. courses and find out how the PSTEs are preparing teachers for their roles in education settings without gender discrimination.

### **The Structure of the Paper**

In section 1.1, we will discuss the methodology adopted in the study while section 1.2 discuss objectives of the research paper, 1.3 deals with questions of the research or hypothesis and 1.4 section deals with observation and in the section 1.5, we have findings and an analysis of syllabus of B.Ed. under Manipur University and D.El.Ed. under SCERT. This is followed by section 1.6, where we discuss the findings of the study conducted and conclude with some suggestions to address the gender disparity in the classroom.

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## 1.1. Methodology

The contents prescribed for pedagogy of English courses which are compulsory for student teachers aspiring to teach English language in schools were studied to find out how the PSTE is preparing teachers for this role. Pedagogy of English syllabus of PSTE programs under Manipur University and SCERT post 2014 are taken into account for this study. The year 2014 has special significance here, for this was the year when the NCTE revised the PSTE curriculum and issued directives related with for revised curriculum and duration of the PSTE to meet the need of the hour in teacher education. The core curriculum of PSTE remains same for all students aspiring to be teachers of various subjects but different subjects like English, Mathematics, EVS and other subjects have different pedagogy courses.

## 1.2. Objectives of This Research Study are to:

- Study how PSTE programs prepares English teachers for identifying gender issues and sexist languages in their education settings,
- Study how PSTE programs prepares English teachers for modifying pedagogy practices for addressing gender discrimination in inclusive education settings
- Study how PSTE programs preparing English teachers for adapting the assessment evaluation process to assess the students' achievements in inclusive education settings
- Study how PSTE programs prepares English teachers for working in collaboration with special teacher, counsellors and other allied health professionals to address this gender problem in inclusive education setting.

## 1.3. Research Questions or Hypotheses

1. Is the PSTE program preparing teachers to identify the gender issues arising out of teaching learning process, social and economic disadvantages?
2. Is the PSTE program preparing student teachers to modify the pedagogy based on gender equity?
3. Is the PSTE program preparing teachers for teaching verbal communication and writing practices without gender biased languages?
4. Is the PSTE program preparing teachers to check sexist languages and other activities causing gender discrimination?

## 1.4. Observations

Being the Lingua Franca, English is an essential part of school curriculum in India. The present paper explores the preparedness of English language teachers to identify and take care of the language learning needs of learners. The table below explains the nature and identification of different Learner's in language classrooms.

**Table-1:  
Challenges in the syllabus and language classroom:**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Nature of Challenge</b>	<b>Identifying characteristics</b>
1.	Sexist languages: (challenges associated with verbal aspect of language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of mistakes in verbal communication etc.</li> <li>• Difficulty in following verbal communication</li> <li>• Inability to frame appropriate pronouns in terms of gender biased languages.</li> </ul>
2.	Sexist languages: (challenges associated with written aspect of language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor grammar</li> <li>• Difficulty in organising and expressing their thoughts without gender biased languages in writing.</li> </ul>
3.	First Generation Learners: (difficulty may result from lack of support for learning English at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have inconsistency in academic achievement.</li> <li>• May show irregularity in completing the written work/assignments.</li> <li>• May hesitate in participating in discussions.</li> </ul>
4.	Students with English as second language: (difficulty may result from lack of support for learning English at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May hesitate in speaking in English in front of peers.</li> <li>• May have inconsistent academic performance.</li> </ul>
5.	Children with social and economic disadvantages: (difficulty may result from lack of support for learning English at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May hesitate in participating in group activities</li> <li>• May show absence of interest in peers</li> <li>• May have unstable academic result and performance.</li> </ul>
6.	Different activities catering to gender equity: (difficulties may arise due to nature and culture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May hesitate in participating in group activities</li> <li>• May show absence of interest in peers.</li> <li>• Children may also feel shy and find it difficult to mingle and initiate</li> </ul>

		conversation with other children
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### 1.5. Findings

Keeping the discussed gender issues lacking in English language courses of B.Ed. and D. El. Ed and their needs (Table-1) in mind, we enquired the pedagogy course of English and their reliability towards preparing reflective and sensitive professionals. The contents prescribed for pedagogy of English course which is compulsory for student teachers aspiring to teach English language in schools was studied to find out how the PSTE is preparing teachers for this role. The tables below give the analysis of pedagogy of English course of PSTE programmes in Manipur. The tables below also indicate whether the pedagogy of English syllabus caters to this gender equity in the context of learning English or not. Overt mention of these gender issues indicates the further possibility that the course might be preparing English teachers for teaching in education settings without gender discrimination.

**Table-2**

S.No.	Universities	Course content of Pedagogy paper of English in-lieu with inclusive setup
1.	Manipur University (B.Ed.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language across the curriculum discusses first language acquisition and second language learning, language diversity, multilingualism and basic language competencies- LSRW.</li> <li>• Objective of the pedagogy paper includes importance of English language as a second language</li> <li>• Learner’s assessment includes Remedial teaching (error analysis attitude towards errors and mistakes in second language learning).</li> <li>• Reading and reflecting on texts.</li> <li>• Sessional work includes Diagnosis of learner difficulty in speaking English and preparation of remedial exercises.</li> </ul>
2.	SCERT, Manipur (D.El.Ed.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedagogy of English: historical view of English as a second language, general principles of teaching English, behaviouristic, Structural and Eclectic Approach, Cognitive and Constructivist Approaches.</li> <li>• Different types of learners, teaching in a large classroom and Methods of teaching.</li> </ul>

		Strategies for writing and assessment.
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**Table 3**

<b>Gender equity as a Challenge</b>	<b>Whether these curriculum of B.Ed. and D.El.Ed discuss them in their Pedagogy papers of English.</b>
1.Language learning problem (sexist languages)	No
2.Other problem requiring attention of language teachers (Verbal language as well as in writings etc)	No
3.First Generation Learners	No
4.English as a second language	Yes
5.Disadvantages (Social or Economical background)	No
6.Assessment of gender biased languages.	No

### **1.6. Discussion**

The above tables are prepared after closely studying the objective, Course content, Practicum and suggested readings of Pedagogy paper of English for Manipur University and SCERT, Manipur. The tables clearly show that majority of English Pedagogy course of Manipur University and SCERT don't adequately prepare student teachers to be sensitive towards gender equity needs. With insufficient exposure about learners, when teacher is introduced to the different learning needs in the service, they find faults with the individual learner rather than modifying his/her pedagogy practice. While there is a unit on inclusive structure of gender issues in most PSTE programs, it is evident that pedagogy paper is not updated and need to be re-evaluated.

### **Conclusion**

To justify the need of gender less English classroom, teachers must be prepared in the PSTE programs. They must understand the individual differences of different learners and yet embrace them together. It is ironical that student teachers are introduced to the concept of inclusive education through an isolated paper or unit and the same is not included in all pedagogy papers. Only if student teachers are trained and empowered to enhance the learning opportunities for gender equity could they provide enriching experience to all young minds. If the teacher is well aware of the needs of these gender less class, he/she can modify his/her approach of teaching by introducing the story via discussion, verbal communication and writing practices using different techniques to make these children aware of these gender discriminatory words. These innovative approaches will not only be helpful for special needs

of children but will be engaging to the whole class. Although there is no one way or solution to be appropriately prepared to deal with inclusive and gender discrimination, PSTE is the central key to enable and enrich the student teachers to be reflective and sensitive professionals. It is the responsibility of the English language teacher to value and treat learners' needs equally and to offer equity based quality education to them. This can only be achieved if the English language teacher himself/herself is enlightened and sensitized to deal with learners without segregating them from their peers and is also ready to work in collaboration with the special education teachers. The same applies to language teachers who could be sole partners of evolution.

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