Department of Educational Policy

National University of Educational Planning and Administration
New Delhi-16

Orientation Workshop on 'Qualitative Research Methods in Education'

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught

Oscar Wilde

Introduction

Qualitative Research Methods have gained enormous importance in the field of educational studies by providing an in-depth understanding of the processes giving way to inequity. Although research studies have pointed out various levels of educational inequalities; but these studies have brought into focus only the end results in the form of access, enrolment, retention and achievement etc, thereby, not providing enough understanding of the processes involved. Research studies have explored factors which contribute to educational inequities and policy makers have sought to target these, however, stark educational inequities persist. Evidence suggests the de-contextualised nature of many policy reforms has undermined their ability to challenge inequities in real-world settings. Achieving 'equity' therefore remains a major challenge within the education systems. In this vein, the value of qualitative research is paramount in providing nuanced picture of the underlying principles inhibiting educational equity across groups and communities. 'Qualitative research' studies things in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them.

The orientation workshop will draw upon the tradition of *Qualitative research methods* to equip the researcher in developing a deep insight about the equity issues in education. Its focus on understanding equity issue in education through various qualitative research methods will make the workshop distinctive. Three-week long workshop on 'Qualitative Research Methods in Education' with thematic focus on *Equity in education* will be organized by the Department of Educational Policy, NUEPA. It will orient the participants with the approach, methods and techniques of conducting qualitative research to study equity issues in education and its policy implications. The participants will be familiarized with the processes of preparing qualitative research design and its implementation in the field. This orientation workshop will introduce the participants to different qualitative methods in educational research. It seeks to involve them in an intellectual setting within which they can continuously subject ideas (their own and

others) - to critical reflection and constructive reconsideration.

Objectives of the workshop

On one hand the workshop aims at providing students with a theoretical outline of the current equity concerns for education and on the other hand it aims at providing practical tools to conduct qualitative research in the field. The workshop will provide epistemological and methodological framework of qualitative research to study equity in education. The workshop will be constituted in three parts: Epistemology-Methodological-Practical. The main objectives of the Workshop are:

- To understand the epistemological and philosophical basis of qualitative research methods.
- To provide detailed understanding of the qualitative research methods.
- To provide critical knowledge and skills of qualitative research methods for advancing equity Studies in education.

At the end of the Workshop participants will be able to

- Know the critical approach of equity as a framework in which to carry out qualitative research in education.
- Lead a field research on equity issues in education by using qualitative research methods.

Themes of the Workshop

Equity is a very illusive category and subject to many interpretations. Everyone would like to be a part of an equitable society but our principles of an equitable society may differ, so does the nature of an equitable society vis-à-vis education system. 'Equity in education' has been widely discussed by political philosophers but sociologists have mostly remained concerned about the equality in education- a very tangible and visible outcome of the principles of equity.

Principle of equal representation which we usually derive from the idea of a democratic society has been the source of our definition about equality in general and equality in education per se. One can identify number of research studies; primarily seeing equity and equality in terms of representation of groups and communities in proportion to their population. This very idea of democratic representation in terms of the number and participation has also remained the fundamental governing principle of our educational policies and research studies conducted by scholars over the period of time. On the one hand major educational policies have recommended explicit provisions for the inclusion of disadvantaged children in the school premises; and on the other hand research studies fed to the educational programmes and schemes by studying the participation level of disadvantaged communities in terms of access, enrolment and retention. There is no doubt that this has helped in increasing the participation level of children at all the levels of school education to a great extent, but the problem still persist, and the existing

principle of equity and equality deriving its rationale from the working of a democratic society is unable to provide solution to the all pervasive problem of achieving equitable education system. John Dewey has pointed out in his 'Democracy and education' that democracy is more than a form of government and representation. It needs internal mechanism to achieve order and equality, and education is one of the means to achieve this order, but it would demand much more nuanced understanding of the actual working of the education system beyond numbers and representation.

In order to carry forward this debate and understanding of equity beyond number, the proposed workshop will engage to understand the philosophical, epistemological, methodological and practical part of equity in education through qualitative research methods. The workshop will provide an opportunity to the participants to critically envisage and debate the principle of equity beyond archaic norms of number within and outside the school through the prism of qualitative research methods.

The sessions are arranged in a manner to build comprehensive understanding of equity in education starting from epistemology to methodological to practical part where participants will be given chance to put hands into practice and study equity in a field setting.

The following broad themes will form the focus of the workshop:

1. On Methodological fundamentalism in social research: Issues and Perspectives
    - Quantitative *versus/and* Qualitative Methods
    - An introduction to qualitative methodology
2. Theoretical foundations of qualitative research methods: A recapitulation
    - The main features of qualitative approach
    - The ontology and epistemology of qualitative approach
    - Hermeneutics
    - The three cycles of qualitative approach: design, ethnography, and analysis.
3. Qualitative Methods to understand equity within and outside the institution.
    - Classroom observation: *emic* and the *etic* perspectives; In-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion, Genealogy, Narratives, life history, case study (single, multiple, and comparative), Discourse, and conversation analysis.
4. Understanding Equity through research studies
5. Issues in analysis and interpretation of qualitative data
6. The quality of qualitative research
7. Ethical questions in qualitative research
8. Writing qualitative research reports

Learning from past experience

NUEPA has a long experience of organising qualitative research methodology workshop in the past. The Department of Educational Policy has been organizing the workshop each year since 2012. Since the beginning, the methodology for the transaction of this workshop has undergone changes. Although there is continuity in terms of focus on qualitative approach and methods, each workshop has been used as an occasion by the resource persons to improve and improvise the course contents to make the transaction more effective. Although there has been a constant demand for incorporating longer fieldwork experience into the programme but the nature of the workshop does not allow much scope for this because it may disturb the normal routine of the school work. Seeing all the possibilities and taking experience from the past experiences it has been realized that the present workshop should involve participants into rigorous critical exercise of reading and discussion on some of the selected studied on equitable education. Participants will also make presentation on the methodology of their ongoing research work. Besides this participants will be taken for a school visit across Delhi to see the spectrum of educational institutions. Report writing on the identified problem will form the main focus of all these engagements.

Methodology and Assessment for the Proposed Workshop

The nature of the proposed workshop will remain participative in nature. It will involve classroom lecture, group discussion, practice sessions and school visit to the selected schools and presentations by the participants. The proposed workshop will adopt the below mentioned module to develop an in-depth understanding of the equity in education through qualitative research methods.

Module 1: Enquiry into the Qualitative Research Methods

- Major issues which will be discussed here include fundamental premises of qualitative research, theoretical, methodological, epistemological and ontological concerns.

Module 2: Understanding Equity through Qualitative Research Methods

- Participants will be made aware about the concept of equity in education; underlying principles of equity in education; equity concerns inside and outside the school. While dealing with equity issues in education, the sessions will help to understand the importance of qualitative research beyond quantitative methods.

Module 3: Presentation by participants

A. On the methodology of their ongoing research work

   Participants will present their ongoing research work and its methodology. It will be a mutual learning process for all the participants as well as resource persons

B. On the qualitative research Study

The main purpose of this exercise is to get critical reflection by the participant on the qualitative methodology used by various research studies on equity in education. A set of articles in the form of a reader will be provided to the participants in advance for reading and presentation.

Module 3: Identification of the Research issue and preparation of the proposal

- From day one all the participants will be involved in identifying a research problem around equity in education. All the lecture sessions, group work and presentations by the participants will be aligned to achieve this target. This exercise will develop inquisitiveness, sensitivity and criticality towards qualitative research methods in studying equity in education. It will include: preparation of the research proposals, identification of the methods and tools in discussion with resource persons, group work on 'Identifying research issues' to be studied through qualitative research methods. Each participant has to identify research issue and prepare a research proposal/write-up on the same by using qualitative research methods.
- While identifying the research issues it will be taken into consideration that each research proposal remain the part of a broader theme of the workshop i.e. *Equity in education*. It will help us to remain focused and avoid too many themes.

Module 4: School Visit

- Fieldwork in the selected school to explore the identified problem and to get deeper insight of the spectrum of education system

Module 5: Report Writing

- Research 'report writing' by the participants. Participants will be involved in mutual learning under the supervision of resource persons.
- Presentation by each participant on the 'research report'.
- Final submission of the 'research report'.

Date and Venue of the Workshop

July 21- August 08, 2014
NUEPA, New Delhi.

Resource Persons

Resource persons for this programme shall mainly be from amongst NUEPA faculty with some experts from outside NUEPA.

Participants/Target Groups

Around 30 young faculty members and research scholars with a social science background mainly in the area of social sciences will constitute the participants. These participants will be belonging to different research Institutes and Universities, NGOs and professionals engaged in education across the country.

Management of the Workshop

The Orientation workshop will be organised by the Department of Educational Policy under the overall guidance of Prof. R Govinda, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, NUEPA. Administrative and logistical support in organising the workshop will be provided by the Training Cell of NUEPA.

Apply for Workshop: Research Scholars from social science background can apply for the orientation workshop. Preference will be given to those working in the area of equity in education. Selected outstation participants will be provided accommodation at NUEPA guest house (from July 20 to August 09) and AC 3 tier railway fare.

Last Date: Duly signed nomination form along with the write-up should reach NUEPA on or before June 30, 2014. To avoid the postal delay, participants can email the scanned copy of their nomination form and write-up to nareshkumar@nuepa.org.

Nomination Form

To be filled by the Researcher and duly signed by the nominating Authority

The following Researcher is hereby nominated to attend the Orientation Workshop on 'Qualitative Research Methods in Education' to be held at NUEPA, New Delhi from **July 21 to August 09, 2014**,

1. **Name:**…….
2. **Designation:**……
3. **Topic of Research** ……
4. **Small write up (200 words) to be written by the 'nominated person' regarding the use of 'Qualitative Research Methods' in his/her present area of research in the field of education (on a separate sheet)**.
5. **Address of the nominated person:.**……
   ……..……**Telephone**……
   Mobile……**Email**…….....

(Signature and seal of Nominating Authority)

- NUEPA shall re-imburse travel expenses as per NUEPA rules. The accommodation shall be provided at the NUEPA Hostel.
- The enclosed Nomination Form may kindly be filled up by the candidate and send to the below mentioned address at the earliest to secure participation.
- To avoid any postal delay, candidate can send the **scanned copy of the form** by email.
- Send email to nareshkumar@nuepa.org Cc aksingh90@gmail.com mentioning your areas of research and small write up stating the use of 'Qualitative Research Methods' in your research in the field of education.
- Registration will close as soon as the seats are filled. **Selected candidates will be informed by phone/email/post**.

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