An Evaluative Study of the Organizational Culture of Elementary Teacher Education Institutions in Bihar

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Abstract: Organizational culture is a critical determinant of institutional effectiveness in educational organizations, particularly in teacher education institutions where professional values and practices are transmitted to future teachers. The present study evaluates the organizational culture of elementary teacher education institutions (TEIs) in Bihar with the objective of understanding prevailing cultural dimensions and their influence on institutional functioning and teacher preparation. A mixed-methods research design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected using an Organizational Culture Questionnaire administered to administrators, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers across selected TEIs, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. The study examined key dimensions of organizational culture including leadership and vision, collegiality and collaboration, academic orientation and innovation, decision-making and participation, professional development support, resource climate, and community partnership. Findings reveal that while most institutions demonstrate strong commitment to institutional mission and practicum partnerships with schools, challenges persist in participative governance, systematic professional development, and innovation-oriented practices. The study concludes that strengthening organizational culture through collaborative leadership and continuous professional learning is essential for improving the quality of elementary teacher education in Bihar.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Teacher education institutions, Elementary education, Institutional effectiveness, Bihar

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education institutions occupy a pivotal position in shaping the quality of school education by preparing competent, reflective, and socially responsible teachers. Beyond curriculum design, regulatory compliance, and infrastructural provisions, the internal environment of institutions—commonly conceptualized as organizational culture—plays a decisive role in influencing professional practices, leadership behaviour, and academic outcomes. Organizational culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, norms, symbols, and underlying assumptions that guide behaviour, interactions, and decision-making within an organization.

In educational institutions, organizational culture determines how teachers collaborate, how leadership is exercised, how innovation is perceived, and how institutional goals are translated into day-to-day practices. A supportive and learning-oriented culture encourages professional dialogue, reflective practice, and continuous improvement, whereas a rigid and hierarchical culture may constrain creativity and responsiveness to change. In teacher education institutions, culture is particularly significant because teacher educators model professional behaviours and pedagogical approaches that pre-service teachers are likely to internalize and reproduce in school settings.

In the context of elementary teacher education in Bihar, institutions are expected to prepare teachers capable of addressing diverse classroom realities, including multi-grade teaching, inclusion of children with special needs, socio-economic diversity, and the integration of learner-centred pedagogy. National policy documents such as the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) and the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasize reflective practice, collaboration, and continuous professional development as essential attributes of teacher education institutions. However, the realization of these policy expectations depends substantially on the organizational culture prevailing within institutions.

Bihar has witnessed a significant expansion of elementary teacher education institutions over the past decades, encompassing government-supported institutions and privately managed colleges. While regulatory mechanisms ensure minimum standards of infrastructure and curriculum, variations in institutional effectiveness suggest that deeper cultural factors influence performance and outcomes. Leadership styles, collegial relationships, availability of professional learning opportunities, and openness to innovation collectively shape the quality of teacher preparation.

Despite the growing emphasis on quality assurance in teacher education, limited empirical research has systematically examined organizational culture in elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar. Existing studies often focus on infrastructure, enrolment, or examination results, overlooking the cultural processes that underpin institutional functioning. The present study seeks to address this gap by conducting an evaluative analysis of organizational culture across selected elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar, with the aim of identifying strengths, challenges, and directions for improvement.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organizational culture has been widely studied in organizational and educational research. Schein conceptualized organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration. These assumptions operate at three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Denison emphasized cultural traits such as mission, involvement, consistency, and adaptability, linking them directly to organizational effectiveness.

In educational institutions, organizational culture has been found to influence teacher motivation, collaboration, instructional practices, and student outcomes. Studies indicate that institutions characterized by participative leadership, collegial support, and professional learning communities demonstrate higher levels of effectiveness and innovation. Conversely, rigid bureaucratic cultures often restrict teacher autonomy and responsiveness to change.

Research on teacher education institutions highlights the role of institutional culture in modelling professional behaviours for pre-service teachers. Positive cultural environments encourage reflective practice, experimentation with pedagogical strategies, and sustained engagement with professional development. Indian studies have identified challenges such as hierarchical governance structures, limited research orientation, and inadequate professional development opportunities in teacher education institutions. However, region-specific studies focusing on Bihar remain scarce, underscoring the relevance of the present investigation.

III.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To examine the prevailing organizational culture of elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar.

2. To analyze key cultural dimensions influencing institutional effectiveness.

3. To study perceptions of administrators, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers regarding organizational practices.

4. To suggest measures for strengthening organizational culture in elementary TEIs.

IV.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the dominant characteristics of organizational culture in elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar?
2. How do leadership and decision-making practices influence organizational culture?
3. What challenges affect collaboration, innovation, and professional development within TEIs?
4. What strategies can enhance organizational culture and institutional effectiveness?

V.   METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design
The study adopted a mixed-methods evaluative research design combining quantitative and qualitative

approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of organizational culture.

4.2 Population and Sample

The population comprised elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar offering pre-service teacher education programmes. A purposive sample of 25 institutions representing government and private management types and different geographical regions was selected. From each institution, administrators, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers participated, resulting in approximately 350 survey respondents and 40 interview participants.

5.3 Sampling Technique

Stratified purposive sampling was used to ensure representation of institutional types and regions. Convenience sampling was employed within institutions for participant selection.

5.4 Tools of Data Collection

Data were collected using:
An Organizational Culture Questionnaire based on established frameworks
Semi-structured interview schedules for administrators and faculty
Observation checklists focusing on institutional practices and artifacts
Document analysis of institutional records

5.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review. A pilot study confirmed acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 for major dimensions.

5.6 Procedure of Data Collection

Permissions were obtained from institutional authorities. Questionnaires were administered in person and online. Interviews and observations were conducted during institutional visits, and relevant documents were reviewed.

5.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed, and triangulation was employed to enhance credibility.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive picture of the organizational culture prevailing in elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar. Results are discussed under major cultural dimensions identified in the conceptual framework.

6.1 Leadership and Vision

Findings indicate that most institutions formally articulate their vision and mission statements, emphasizing teacher preparation, social responsibility, and compliance with regulatory norms. However, the extent to which this vision is shared and enacted varies considerably. A significant proportion of respondents perceived leadership as predominantly administrative, focusing on routine management and regulatory compliance rather than instructional leadership. Limited opportunities were reported for faculty participation in strategic planning and academic decision-making. Institutions where leaders actively engaged faculty in dialogue and goal-setting demonstrated a more positive organizational climate.

6.2 Collegiality and Collaboration

Collegial relationships among teacher educators were generally cordial, reflecting informal support and mutual respect. However, structured collaboration such as peer observation, team teaching, and joint curriculum planning was limited. Faculty members reported heavy teaching loads and administrative responsibilities as barriers to sustained collaboration. Institutions that had initiated professional learning communities or regular academic meetings exhibited higher levels of shared responsibility and professional growth.

6.3 Academic Orientation and Innovation

The academic culture of most institutions remained examination-oriented, with strong adherence to prescribed syllabi. While faculty acknowledged the importance of learner-centred pedagogy and reflective practice, opportunities for experimentation and innovation were constrained. Limited access to research resources, inadequate institutional support, and lack of incentives were identified as major challenges. A small number of institutions demonstrated encouraging practices such as action

research, use of ICT in pedagogy, and reflective journals during practicum.

6.4 Decision-making and Participation

Decision-making processes in many institutions were centralized, with limited transparency and faculty involvement. Pre-service teachers also reported minimal participation in academic or institutional matters. Institutions that practiced participative decision-making reported higher levels of trust, commitment, and job satisfaction among staff. The findings suggest that inclusive governance structures contribute positively to organizational culture.

6.5 Professional Development Support

Professional development opportunities for teacher educators were found to be irregular and largely dependent on external agencies. Systematic mentoring for newly appointed faculty was generally absent. Respondents emphasized the need for institution-based continuous professional development programmes aligned with pedagogical innovation and research engagement. Institutions that invested in faculty development exhibited more dynamic and learning-oriented cultures.

6.6 Resource Climate and Infrastructure

Significant variation was observed in the availability and utilization of physical and academic resources. While basic infrastructure was present in most institutions, access to ICT resources, libraries, and teaching-learning materials varied widely. Resource limitations directly affected the implementation of learner-centred and experiential learning approaches. Institutions with better resource management practices demonstrated more effective integration of theory and practice.

6.7 Community Partnership and Practicum Culture

A positive finding across most institutions was the presence of functional partnerships with local schools for teaching practicum. Faculty and pre-service teachers recognized practicum experiences as valuable for professional learning. However, systematic reflection and feedback mechanisms were often lacking. Strengthening school–institution partnerships through collaborative planning and evaluation could further enhance practicum quality.

Overall, the findings align with existing literature emphasizing the role of leadership, collaboration, and professional learning in shaping organizational culture. Institutions exhibiting supportive leadership and collaborative practices demonstrated more positive cultural climates and higher levels of perceived effectiveness.

VII. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The study highlights the need for leadership development programmes emphasizing participative governance and instructional leadership. Institutionalizing professional learning communities, mentoring systems, and reflective practices can strengthen organizational culture. Policymakers should integrate cultural indicators into accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to selected institutions and relied partly on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias. Time and resource constraints restricted the depth of observation in some institutions.

IX. CONCLUSION

The present evaluative study highlights the critical role of organizational culture in shaping the functioning and effectiveness of elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar. The findings demonstrate that while many institutions exhibit strong commitment to their stated mission and maintain functional partnerships with schools, significant challenges persist in the areas of participative leadership, structured collaboration, innovation support, and systematic professional development.

Organizational culture emerges as a mediating factor between policy expectations and actual institutional practices. Institutions with collaborative leadership, inclusive decision-making, and learning-oriented cultures are better positioned to prepare reflective and competent elementary teachers. Conversely, institutions characterized by hierarchical governance and limited professional learning opportunities may

struggle to adapt to contemporary pedagogical demands.

Strengthening organizational culture requires deliberate and sustained efforts at both institutional and policy levels. Leadership development programmes, institutionalization of professional learning communities, and integration of cultural indicators into quality assurance mechanisms can contribute to meaningful improvement. By addressing cultural dimensions alongside structural and curricular reforms, elementary teacher education institutions in Bihar can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to the broader goal of improving the quality of elementary education in the state.

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