

Duration of B.Ed. Programs in India: An Issue

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Abstract:

In this era of rapid explosion of knowledge and advancements in the field of technology, quality education is a great concern for all of us today. Of all the factors that influence the quality of education, the quality of teachers is undoubtedly the most significant. In fact no innovation or change in education is going to bring a change in the quality of product unless the teachers are of quality. Nothing is more important than securing a sufficient supply of high quality candidates to the teaching profession and providing them with the best possible professional preparation. "Quality of teachers mainly refers to the teachers' competency in the subject that he/she deals with, expertise to use methods and techniques of teaching, ability to understand learners' problems and the teachers attitudinal makeup." (Pradhan, 2001) The ability and attitude of teachers depend on the teacher education programme that is in operation. In this context pre-service teacher education, which is a major part of Teacher Education, assumes great significance. In pre-service teacher education if we talk of B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) programmes, its duration is a controversial issue, because its duration is varied from 1,2 or 4 years (4years for integrated B.Ed.) all over India. There is a difference in opinion; with some arguing that course duration of B.Ed. should be of 1 year and others arguing that its duration should be more than 1year. These arguments are mainly based on Cost vs

Quality. So, here main questions that arise are:

- Does the duration of the B.Ed. course affect the quality of teachers ? and if it does then,
- Is there any solution for it?

In this paper an effort is being made to focus on arguments in favour and against one year B.Ed. programmes with respect to the NCTE (National Council of Teacher Education) framework of 1998 and also various alternative ways have been suggested to increase its duration.

Introduction:

The ability and attitude of teachers depend on the teacher education programme that is in operation. In this context pre-service teacher education, which is a major part of Teacher Education, assumes great significance. In pre-service teacher education if we talk of B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) programmes, its duration is a controversial issue, because its duration is varied from 1,2 or 4 years (4years for integrated B.Ed.) all over India.

NCTE has suggested the following specific objectives and curriculum framework for teacher education at secondary level in its document on 'Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education' in 1998.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To enable the prospective teachers to understand the nature, purpose and philosophy of secondary education.
- To develop among teachers an understanding of the psychology of their pupils.
- To enable them to understand the process of socialisation.
- To equip them acquire competencies relevant to pedagogy, curriculum development, its transaction and evaluation.
- To enable them to make pedagogical analysis of the subjects they are to teach at the secondary stage.
- To develop skills for guidance and counselling.
- To acquaint them with factors and forces affecting educational system and class room situation.
- To acquaint them with educational needs of special groups of pupils.
- To enable them to utilise community resources as educational inputs.
- To develop communication skills and use the modern information technology.
- To develop aesthetic sensibilities.
- To acquaint them with research in education including action research

Curriculum Framework-

(a) Theory

Emerging Indian Society; Secondary Education in India – status, problems and issues; Psychology of Teaching and Learning; Guidance and Counselling; Assessment, Evaluation and Remediation ; Curriculum Design and Development ; School Management; Comparative Education; Action Research.

(b) Practice Teaching

1. Pedagogical analysis of two school teaching subjects

2. Practice teaching in schools

3. Observation of Model Lessons

(c) Practical Work

Internship and School Experiences; Field Work with community based programmes; Creativity and Personality Development Programmes; Work Education; Sessional/practical work; Physical Education Activities, games and sports and other school activities; Aesthetic Development Programmes and Activities; Action Research studies.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ONE-YEAR B.Ed. PROGRAMME

Students get the admission in B.Ed. after completion of Bachelors or Masters degree in their discipline. If we increase the duration of B.Ed. programme from 1 year to 2 years the total duration of education, will increase from (10+2+3+1) 16 years/ (10+2+3+2+1) 18 years, to (10+2+3+2) 17 years/(10+2+3+2+2) 19 years. In general it increases another one educational year if we implement 2 year B.Ed. programmes. Due to this a student who passes out of this programme gets a job late by one year.

“Generally good and bright students show interest towards the professional courses that can be completed in less time and can provide good job opportunities. Increasing the duration of B.Ed. programme

may attract less number of bright students.” (Biswal, 1999)

Students who are doing B.Ed. will have studied their respective subjects for 3 years in Bachelor degree and 5 years in Master degree. So it seems that there is no need to teach them content of the subjects which they are supposed to teach in the school. In B.Ed. by only taking one more year we just have to mould them to become effective teachers. Only giving education about different methods and approaches of teaching is enough. Other things they learn by practice.

If we increase the duration of any course then it also increases the cost involved in it. As it becomes costly some students of low and average SES (Socio-Economic Status), though they are bright in studies, might show less interest towards the course. It also increases the cost on part of the university and the central government.

If any university takes an innovative step by increasing the duration of B.Ed. programme, it does not give any special benefit for the students who passed out through that programme. They are also treated in the same way as the students who have completed B.Ed in one year. They are not getting any benefit in any term except professional proficiency so, it seems to be no need to increase the duration of B.Ed. programme.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST ONE-YEAR B.Ed. PROGRAMME

The arguments against one-year B.Ed. programmes are in realms of:

1. Specific objectives

The specific objectives given by NCTE in 1998 are very broad. And these should be achieved within the limited duration of one year. Looking at these

objectives it seems that it is very difficult to achieve these completely in a short duration of one year.

2 THEORY

‘The Emerging Indian Society’ included in the theory part, mainly deals with factors and forces operating in Indian society. It includes Special Education, Value Education, Vocational Education, Population Education, Environment Education etc. It should not only be taught but also dealt in detail to broaden the vision of the prospective teachers. All other things in the curriculum like- Psychology of Teaching and Learning, Guidance and Counseling etc., include many things that are important for the prospective teacher. And in one year B.Ed. programmes all these things of curriculum cannot be dealt with in detail, though they are necessary for the teachers.

In this age of technology, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) has become an important part of Education, therefore ICT has been introduced as a compulsory course in some universities in B.Ed. curriculum. In the ICT main stress is given on Computer Education, Internet and multi-media. But only giving information is not sufficient. Prospective teachers should be taught how to integrate all these things in the teaching-learning process and for this, enough time should be given to prospective teachers to practise it. Finding of a study also states, the comprehensive B.Ed. curriculum was not effectively taught due To time shortage. (Hemambujam,1983)

3 CONTENT MASTERY

The competency of a teacher in the content that the teacher is assigned to teach, plays a very significant role in determining the teacher’s success in teaching. The teachers can put the pedagogical skills in

effective use, only when he/she has got subject matter competency. With the enrichment of the school curriculum in every year the subject matter competency has become all the more necessary. In one-year B.Ed. programmes, content of the subject is omitted from the curriculum on the argument that the university degree equips the graduates or post-graduates with the requisite knowledge of their respective subjects. But it is felt that it is necessary to teach and learn the subjects from the point of view of prospective teacher. By taking help of some experts of the education field, complex content, should be identified which could be taught from the point of view of the prospective teachers. When content is taught in an integrated manner it becomes very helpful to develop teaching competency.

4 METHODS OF TEACHING

There are certain assumed competencies that are required of all teachers, many of these competencies are related to the development of attitude, personal traits and skills. It is therefore, not enough to teach theory subjects in the traditional fashion and prepare the prospective teacher for external examination. As B.Ed. is a professional degree, teacher educators have used some innovative techniques for teaching. And it also requires thorough preparation on the part of teacher educator, for this they should have enough time.

5 PRACTICAL WORK

“The teaching profession expects a variety of work experiences from teachers. Adequate scope should be there in B.Ed. programme, for preparation of learning material, question bank preparation, construction of tests, and preparation of different type of assignments.” (Goel, 1999)

6 PRACTICE TEACHING

Due focus should be given on microteaching and practice teaching because the crucial test of a teacher’s competency is his/her performance in school.

In micro teaching the prospective teacher should be given enough time to practice each skill adequately, because this is first time where he/she is exposed to teaching skills. After each lesson it should be discussed with the teacher educators.

“Practice teaching is now not merely confined to the teaching of certain subjects. Pedagogical analysis of the subjects offered for practice teaching has been made compulsory.” (NCTE, 1998)

In the practice teaching phase, the prospective teacher’s lessons should be arranged in such a way that teacher educator is able to observe (evaluate) at least half of a lesson (if possible full). By this the teacher educator can give enough feedback to prospective teachers to improve their performance. Its gain would be acquisition of higher level of teaching competency. Thus practice teaching requires thorough preparation, detailed supervision and adequate time.

7 INTERNSHIP

Internship is a very important component of B.Ed. programme but due to lack of time, enough stress is not given on it as much as it should be given. In many institutions internship is generally omitted due to time constraints. But research recommends that, Internship in teaching should be for a period of 3 months. (Kakkad, 1983). All the theory that a trainee learns in educational psychology, school organization, and techniques of teaching should be applied in the school organization. The opportunity for this application can be given to the prospective teacher in the programme of internship in teaching where the student teacher is working full time in a

school, as an apprentice for 8-12 weeks. By this the prospective teachers would observe and learn different kind of activities of the school other than teaching.

“Internship in teaching provides each student teacher with a broad and comprehensive experience in the development of teaching competency far beyond the usual practice teaching. The prospective teacher works in the cooperating school full time and participates in all the activities of the school. This close relationship between the college and cooperating school is bound to result in many benefits to both institutions and also to trainee.” (Mukerji, 1968)

To get such benefits the basic condition is to have internship in B.Ed. programme and it should be for 2-3 months. In one-year B.Ed. programmes, approximately 9 months are available as a working period, and from 9 months one cannot afford to have an internship of 2-3 months.

8. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (CCA)

It is a very important feature of B.Ed. programme. It leads to the overall development in personality. It includes morning assembly, cultural programmes, educational tour etc. In school, the teacher is not only a part of it but he also has to organize such activities, for that they should participate in such activities in B.Ed. But in B.Ed., students are not participating in such activities because of exams or practical work. By increasing the duration of B.Ed. programme we can provide sufficient time gap between CCA activity and curricular activity. Finding of a study also states “The whole programme is so over crowded that they (student) do not get time for participation in other activities.” (Sultana, 1976)

9 RELATION WITH PARENTS

A teacher’s work is not only limited to the school. For the overall development of the child, teachers have to meet the parents from time to time. For that the teacher should know: What to talk with parents; how to talk with parents; and how to give important suggestions for the development of the child

The prospective teacher should be prepared for this and proper training should also be given to them. It could be put in an effective way by including it in theory as well as in practical work.

Thus increasing the duration of B.Ed. programmes will provide ample time for achieving all the points mentioned above.

“Increase in duration of B.Ed. programme will provide a strong base for pursuing M.Ed. programme.” (NCTE, 1998)

Some studies also revealed that (i) It should be preferable to have the duration of the course for two years. (Sharada, 1964)

(ii) Most of the teachers felt that duration of training course was not sufficient. (Gunju, 1973)

RECOMMENDATIONS BY DIFFERENT COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS.

All the above arguments are supported by the recommendation given by different committees and commissions in education to increase the duration of B.Ed. programmes. Some of the important recommendations by different bodies are

1. Even before independence, Report of the Committees appointed by CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) in 1938-43 states that “in the case of teachers..... the committee feels that the actual training of teacher might be

completed in one year, although a minimum courses of 18 months is to be preferred”

2. Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53 also states that “Graduates-training is restricted to one year, and although we have recommended as a long-term programme the desirability of increasing this period to two academic years....”

3. Committee on Emotional Integration in 1961 states that “The duration of teacher training courses should not be less than two years at any level.”

4. Recommendation of NCTE Seventh General Body meeting held on 31st December 1983 state that “The B.Ed. programme be increased to two years duration.”

5. Recommendation of the National Commission on Teachers-I in 1985 states that “The existing one year B.Ed. course must be made effective both by lengthening the time available and by revamping the current courses and curricula. Today most colleges of education are, in effect, reported to be working for not more than 170-180 days in the year. We are of the view that the two-summer months may be added to the academic year ensuring a working year of at least 220 days. An increase in the working hours per day may also be considered. We are aware that in some places this will entail the appointment of additional staff and a restructuring of the programme of studies allowing sufficient time for practical work in the school and community. But the urgency is such that the extra costs and other implications of the reform have got to be accepted.”

6. Recommendation by NCTE in the document on ‘Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education’ in 1998.

The last recommendation in 1998 for two years duration of B.Ed. programme was formulated on the basis of countrywide

‘discussion document’ by NCTE. The tryout of the programme has also been started in institutions like, the RIEs (Regional Institute of Education) at Bhopal, Ajmer, Bhubaneswar and Mysore. Also in Gujarat in Gujarat Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad, it has been started on trial basis from 1999-2000.

From the above arguments and recommendation it seems that there is a need to increase the duration of B.Ed. programme. But how i.e. in which mode it should be increased is also a debatable issue. Such suggested and probable models and its related problems are discussed below.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS TO INCREASE DURATION

FOR ALL UNIVERSITIES OF INDIA

Biswal in 1999 suggests the following models.

(a) Making B.Ed. programme of two year

In this case the strength of the students at a time will be doubled in the institutions, which needs double infrastructure, double manpower and even we need more number of schools for practice teaching. In this case the cost of teacher training will be nearly doubled for that the institution will require a large amount of money directly or indirectly from the central government.

(b) Admitting once in two years

In this mode, the B.Ed. training institutions would take students in the alternate years. Here, it may not create any problem for teacher training institutes in terms of manpower and infrastructure facilities. But it also creates some of the problems like.

1. Reduction of trained manpower.

2. Loss of one year for the students aspiring for B.Ed.

MODES REGARDING ‘THE MAHARAJA Sayajirao University of

Baroda' and universities of a similar kind.

(a) Admitting half the strength yearly

In this mode, B.Ed. training institutions would admit half of the total intake strength of the students every year. We have two sections (A & B) in function due to the high number of inputs i.e. 180. In this case, when the input will be reduced to half i.e. input could be reduced to 90. Then the college will be able to function with first year and second year like section A & B. But related problem is that the number of completers will be reduced to half.

(b) Making B.Ed. programme of one year and three months

As in The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, application forms of B.Ed. are to be filled in Jan./Feb. the students who are appearing in the final exam of graduation or post-graduation are not able to apply and thereby fail to get admission. As a result they have to wait for 1 year to get admission. Another hypothetical mode of implementation may work out. That is if we would start distribution of forms in Sept./Oct. We could start the new academic year in January. In the month of May, teachers have vacation and in the month of June and December, the students have to appear for the final exam of 1st and 2nd semester respectively. In the next year in the month of January to April students would be going for internship and come to college only on Saturday to meet their respective teachers. (New batch of students would be going for observation of school activities on Saturday in February and March.) Result would be declared in May.

Still increasing the duration will not serve the purpose. Before starting the new system of increased duration of B.Ed. programme, we should be prepared for the maintenance of the new system, as most of

the new untested systems are prone to errors and problems.

Will the schools be open for internship?

If admissions are given in every two years or if intake is cut down by half will the education system be in a position to stand social pressure?

Will the Government of India make some policy to attract bright students toward B.Ed. programme after increasing its duration?

Though these questions are at present unanswered we have to find more alternative solutions to different problems. We should not be discouraged looking only to a few alternatives. We have to find more and more logistic and foolproof solutions to make our B.Ed. programme more realistic and quality oriented. We have to work hard to make the entire spectrum of B.Ed. forward looking. We have to maximize our strengths and minimize our weaknesses. We have to cross thousands of hurdles in the journey to make our education, life oriented and better than the best.

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