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**EDITORIAL
INNOVATIONS IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION AND
TRAINING OF SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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INTRODUCTION

Innovations bring life into school education system. Innovation Unit (2015) listed following ten ideas for 21st century education: 1. Open up lessons; 2. Think outside the classroom box; 3. Get personal; 4. Tap into students' digital expertise; 5. Get real with projects; 6. Expect (and help) students to be teachers; 7. Help (and expect) teachers to be students; 8. Measure what matters; 9. Work with families, not just children; and 10. Power to the student. There have been efforts to measure innovations. OECD (2014, p. 16) reported that "There have been large increases in innovative pedagogic practices across all countries covered in areas such as relating lessons to real life, higher order skills, data and text interpretation and personalisation of teaching." This study covered innovations in respect of following areas: 1. Teaching styles; 2. Instructional practices; 3. Class organization; 4. Methods of assessment used in classrooms; 5. Use of textbooks in the classroom; 6. Availability of computers and the internet in the classroom; 7. 11. Use of computers in the classroom; 8. Provision of special education in schools; 9. Extent of teacher collaboration in schools; 10. Feedback mechanisms in schools; and 11. Evaluation and hiring in schools.

Edge and Mann (2013), in their edited volume for British Council related to an international scenario of innovations in pre-service education and training for English language teachers, covered innovations such as 1. Providing ‘the spark’ for reflection from a digital platform; 2 Formative assessment for a pedagogy of success; 3 IMMERSE: an institutional approach to pre - and early-service teacher development; 4. Borrowing the use of ethnographic notes from the social sciences for classroom observation in central Mexico; 5. Fostering collaborative conversations between pre-service trainees and serving teachers through supervisory role plays; 6. Cultivating expertise in materials design in pre-service English teacher education; 7. Communication skills: a blended learning approach for pre-service teachers; 8. Top Tips: a model for participant-led, shared learning; 9. A course on continuing professional development; 10. A shadowing experience for TEFL student teachers; 11. iCorpus: making corpora meaningful for pre-service teacher education; 12. Using the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) to scaffold reflective teacher learning in English language teacher education; 13. Beyond theory and practice: introducing praxis in pre-service language teacher education; and 14. ‘Being there?’: comparing synchronous and recorded online instruction for language teachers.

INNOVATIONS IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN INDIA

Nations provide initial teacher training programmes at pre-service stage, to make trainees acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills, and if possible, develop suitable attitudes and values. Since more than a decade, Governments of United Kingdom and United States have permitted suitable schools and school systems to select and train their own teachers,

in spite of opposition from university experts. As no study has reported that school based training is inferior than university based training, there has been no compelling reason for withdrawing this provision.

In India, there are many innovative schools and innovative school systems such as Saraswati Sishu Mandirs, etc. which have the ability to train teachers. There are residential Public Schools, which are private and their teachers play many roles, which are not taken care of by the available teacher training programmes. There may be a necessity for MHRD officials to make a study of school based teacher training system, introduced by their counterparts in UK and US as an alternative to university based teacher training system, and explore possibility of having such a system in India so as to make university teacher training system have a befitting challenge to improve. In fact, certain heads of schools are Ph. D. (Education) and may be more competent than heads of conventional teacher training institutions. Recently, such a head of an English medium school conducted efficiently a national level conference on ECCE. Why then not to allow competent schools and school groups systems to have their own teacher training programme and if required rules be modified to allow teachers trained in such manner to appear at teacher eligibility tests?

Five main aspects of quality of an initial teacher training programme are: quality of teacher trainers; quality of teacher trainees; quality of teacher training curricula; quality and quantity of material resources for imparting training; and quality of involvement of the school system.

QUALITY OF TEACHER TRAINERS

States differed in deciding minimum qualification of a Lecturer in Education. Today, there are Professors of Education with following basic qualifications : (a) B. A. / B. Sc. and M. Ed. and Ph.D. (Education); (b) M. A. (Education) and Ph. D. (Education); (c) M.A. / M. Sc. and Ph. D.

in a subject other than Education and without M.Ed./ M.A. (Education); and (d) M. A. / M. Sc. and M. Ed. and Ph. D. (Education). Today, majority of professors of Education belong to 'd' category and are two years junior in service than professors belonging to other categories in Education subject as well as their counter parts in other subjects. During academic deliberations, no difference is found among these four categories of professors of Education. Why then to insist on M.Ed. degree? During MHRD directed NCTE team visit, it was found that Himachal Pradesh's Govt. College of Teacher Education at Dharamashala, supported by the Central Government as a CTE was recognised by NCTE, although majority of its faculty including the principal did not have a B.Ed. Degree. The principal told the visiting team (editor was a member of the team) that lack of B.Ed. degree for majority of faculty or of principal did not affect the performance of students at B. Ed. Exam. The visiting team also found that certain CTEs and IASEs in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab States were supported by MHRD and recognised by NCTE, although their principals did not have even a B.Ed. Degree. If NCTE could recognise such colleges for running B.Ed. programmes, why then to have B. Ed. / M. Ed. Degree essential for a faculty of a teacher training programme? Lifelong learning skill is essential for a teacher trainer. This year, in a seminar organised by one university college of education, participants were asked to mention the text mentioned under article 45 of Directive Principles of the Constitution of India on a piece of paper. All participants failed to mention ECCE, unaware of 86th Amendment. This result was also found in case of a paper writing workshop in a teacher training college. A few years ago, during a paper writing workshop conducted in a central university no participant with M. Ed. or M. A. (Education) could correctly state the said article, whereas a participant from a non-Education subject could state it correctly. Can such teacher trainers, who are not aware of such developments in school system, instil lifelong learning skills in teacher trainees? If the current policy of two-year B.Ed. and two-year M.Ed. started this year continues, after four years, an individual eligible to work as a lecturer to teach science method in a B. Ed. class must have spent SIX years after graduation (2 years M.Sc.+ 2 years B.Ed. +2 years M. Ed), whereas his/her more talented peers at degree stage, who did not opt for B.Ed., could become eligible to teach that science subject to graduates after two years, after completing their B.Sc. Hence, now less talented will opt for becoming a Lecturer in

Education to teach methodology of a subject. Conventional teacher training institutions have been trying out certain innovations. Innovations in respect of school experience to faculty include (a) Heads and faculty taking a few classes in schools, (b) Observing classes of school teachers and giving them feedback; (c) Making faculty observe classroom teaching skills of peers; and (d) Survey of school situation by faculty members of teacher training institutions.

QUALITY OF TEACHER TRAINEES

An individual with two-year B.Ed. Degree, takes at least FIVE years after his/her passing Higher Secondary(+2) examination. An individual with Four Year Integrated B.A. / B.Sc. & B.Ed. degree, takes at least FOUR years after Higher Secondary (+2) examination. As trained graduate teachers having passed Four Year Integrated B.A. / B.Sc. & B.Ed. degree or Two-year B.Ed. Degree get same scale of pay, a more talented will opt for Four Year integrated course and in due course two year B.Ed. Courses will continue with the process of having reduced intake and also low quality intake than found in case of integrated courses. Last year, in a meeting of teachers of a school 'international' included in its name, when teachers were asked to divide 403 by 4, no one could have 100.75 as the result. Similar results were also found in case of a group of primary school inspectors of a state B and teachers of States C and D.

Content knowledge plays a crucial role in determining level of quality of a teacher trainee. Conventional degree in a subject may not be adequate to teach a subject at school stage. For instance, a Graduate with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics have to teach topics related to Biology, Earth science, Astronomy, etc. as part of General Science curriculum at school stage. Hence, certain teacher training institutions have introduced innovations such as content knowledge test and imparting appropriate subject knowledge to candidates found deficient. They also test the relevant content knowledge before the students are sent to schools for internship.

QUALITY OF TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULA

In case of initial teacher training for primary school teaching, there are two types of programmes- Two year Diploma course and B. El. Ed. course, which admit students having passed at least higher secondary. For secondary school teaching, two programmes are Four year integrated courses and two year B. Ed. courses. Minimum qualification for admission for four year integrated courses is a pass in a higher secondary examination (18 years old), whereas, minimum qualification for admission in a B.Ed. course is a degree (21 years old). Moulding of value pattern or attitude towards teaching profession may be better in case of adolescents in integrated courses than it is possible in case of adults in B.Ed. courses. However, in most of the B.Ed. courses, there is provision for morning assemblies and a number of co-curricular activities, which may not be there in case of four year integrated courses. Innovations are essential for improving quality of teacher training curricula. A few areas in which innovations may be thought of are listed here. Individual differences among teacher trainees necessitate to have flexibility in teacher training curricula to suit to needs of individual teacher trainees, depending on their past teaching experiences, expertise in using specific teaching aids, etc.. Constitution of India lists certain groups as SC or ST and directs the government to make special provision for education of children from such communities. Identified rural talented children at the age of 11, join special residential schools known as *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas*. Innovations are necessary to suggest effective strategies for teaching gifted students and also students admitted under quota system, who are not academically as capable as their peers, who have been selected on merit. Students from rich families, studying in high fee charging schools have more facilities for self-learning, because of home environment enriched by Internet and other self-learning resources. Researches are necessary to develop skills in teacher trainees to handle learning skills of such students. Students coming from poor families may be deprived of adequate home feedback or may be frequent

absentees in schools, due to their family obligations. Training programmes need to make trainees adopt appropriate strategies including teaching skills for supervised study in school hours. Year-round schools are found in certain developed countries to facilitate better learning in students. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Puducherry provides year-round schooling for physical education. Training programmes may need to introduce innovations to make teacher trainees develop appropriate skills to effectively work in schools that provide year-round training in physical education and recently introduced yoga education and also year-round support to under achievers and as well as to gifted students. Certain attributes such as personal autonomy, morality, teaching aptitude, attitude towards teaching profession, love for students, creativity, resourcefulness, flexibility, etc. are essential for effective functioning of a teacher. Teacher training institutions vary in providing innovations to develop social and emotional and communication skills of their teacher trainees some of these are: (a) Having morning assemblies at the starting of the day's work - all human resources joining; (b) Singing prayers from various religions in morning assemblies; and (c) School heads and school supervisors giving talks on their work. Innovations related to training of teacher trainees in delivery of lessons include (a) Prior distribution of copies of demonstration lesson plans and getting written feedback, (b) Delivering a number of demonstration lessons in each subject so as to cover all methods of teaching a subject; (c) Covering method theory before student teachers are sent to schools, (d) Delivery of demonstration lesson in the school classroom; (e) Method of Teaching wise weekly discussion on school experience; and (f) Teachers distributing copies of lesson notes giving list of references including page numbers. Innovations related to developing skills in teacher trainees include (a) Teacher trainees observing classroom teaching of regular school teachers and discussing observations; (b) Teacher trainees observing classroom teaching of their peers; (c) Training in preparing maps

using epidiascope by projecting maps / pictures in books on the chart on the wall; (d) Non-writing of application questions on black board cloth; (e) Training in individual skills of teaching; (f) Full time presence of the student teacher at the school during block practice teaching; and (g) Delivering practice teaching lessons as per school scheme of work.

QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MATERIAL RESOURCES FOR IMPARTING TRAINING

Innovations in respect of quality and quantity of material resources for imparting training include: (a) Providing playground and other physical education facilities, available at a distance, on payment, accessed by institution arranged transport; (b) Providing Internet facilities and a computer lab; (c) Digitalisation of library catalogue; (d) Keeping library open one hour before the regular class starts; (e) Having open access system in library; (f) Having facilities of reading room; (g) Having a special room for teaching aids preparation; (g) Making faculty preparing topic wise index of publications in the library; and (h) Procuring teaching aids including films, film strips, charts, photographs, posters etc. from government departments, NCERT, RIEs and also from embassies and consulates.

QUALITY OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Innovations relate to quality of involvement of the school system include (a) Making school teachers observe lessons of teacher trainees and giving feedback on a form supplied by the teacher training institution; (b) Following school scheme of work and involving school teachers in student teaching; (c) Having pre and post internship discussion in the presence of school heads and school teachers; (d) Utilising teacher trainees to handle school classes in the sudden absence of a school teacher; (e) Supporting schools with teaching aids and publications; (f) Faculty members

of teacher training institutions teaching school students; (g) School heads and school teachers teaching certain topics to teacher trainees; and (h) School teachers (ex-trainees of the institution) narrating their experiences during their training to new teacher trainees;

CONCLUSION

Although Initial teacher training curricula of examining bodies do not provide scope for innovation as a curricular initiative, institutions and their faculty, if interested in experiencing JOY in their work have to be innovative, within the limitations of the prescribed curricula.

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