



Challenges for the Discipline of Education Post-NCTE Regulations, 2014

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Abstract:

Given the tremendous importance of the education system in general (and teacher-education in particular) in the growth and development of a nation, the professional quality of teacher-educators surely determines the quality of teacher-education, which, in turn, determines the quality of school-education. In order to be able to impart quality teacher-education, teacher-educators have to be fully familiar with the school's realities, the social environment and the community's expectations so as to realistically perform the challenging tasks before them. On the professional side, teacher-educators need to be actively associated with policy formulations, implementation-strategies and monitoring of programmes. In this backdrop, the present Paper attempts to (a) study the status of B.Ed. and M. Ed. programmes in terms of the time-period mandated for each course, the working days, the Intake, Eligibility, Admission Procedure, components of Theory, Practicum and Internship, (b) discuss the challenges faced by the Discipline of Education due to a change in the duration of these courses, (c) suggest the direction for improvement in the B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes based on the findings of the Study with a view to producing quality teacher-educators and overcoming the challenges that Teacher Education as a discipline is facing.

Keywords: *Challenges for the Discipline of Education, NCTE Regulations 2014*

1. Introduction

India is one of the very few nations currently enjoying a demographic dividend, which means arise in the working-age population that is usually considered to be between 15 to 59 years, and a consequent drop in the number of people dependent on working people. However, this may translate into a boon only if our system of education is able to properly channelize this dividend and induce productivity into this section of people.

Quite obviously, there is tremendous pressure on our education system in terms of both quantity and quality. There is no doubt that for the quality of education to be improved greatly, there have to be efficient teachers prepared through well-planned and well-executed Teacher-Education Programmes (TEPs). This might be one of the rationales for the introduction of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Regulations, 2014 which increased the duration of B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses from one academic year to two, along with the introduction of some other important changes. This overhauling of TEPs may also have been felt to be necessary because of the various problems prevalent in teacher-education institutions— issues such as absenteeism and lack of time to develop the desirable qualities and essential skills for quality teaching, to name just a few.

Given the tremendous importance of the education system in general (and teacher-education in particular) in the growth and development of a nation, such issues cannot be ignored as the professional quality of teacher-educators will determine the quality of teacher-education, which would, in turn, determine the quality of school education. In order to be able to impart quality teacher-education, teacher-educators have to be fully familiar with the school's realities, the social environment and the community's expectations so as to realistically perform the challenging tasks before them. On the professional side, teacher-educators need to be actively associated with policy formulations, implementation strategies and monitoring of programmes. In this backdrop, the changes in the framework of TEPs introduced by the NCTE Regulations, 2014 are well-taken. But there is a felt need for conducting an analysis of its impact on the discipline of Education. Therefore, a Study was conducted with the following objectives:

2. Objectives

1. Study the status of B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes in terms of the time-period mandated for each course, the working days, the Intake, Eligibility and Admission Procedure, components of Theory, Practicum and Internship.
2. Discuss the challenges faced by the discipline of Education due to a change in the duration of these courses.
3. Suggest the direction for improvement in the B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes based on the findings of the Study with a view to producing quality teacher-educators.
4. In order to achieve these objectives, there is a need to have a look at some of the important clauses of the NCTE Regulations, 2014 document.

3. Some Important Clauses from NCTE Regulations (2014) regarding B.Ed. and M.Ed. Programme

3.1 Duration

As per Clause (b) of Regulation 2 of the NCTE Regulations 2014, the duration of the B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes shall be of two academic years each, which can be completed in a maximum of three years from the date of admission to the programme.

3.2 Working Days

- (a) There shall be at least two hundred working days each year exclusive of the period of examination and admission.
- (b) The institution shall work for a minimum of thirty-six hours in a week (five or six days), during which physical presence in the institution of all the teachers and student- teachers is necessary to ensure their availability for advice, guidance, dialogue and consultation as and when needed.
- (c) The minimum attendance of student-teachers shall have to be 80% for all Course-work and Practicum, and in the B.Ed. course, in addition to this, 90% for school-internship is also required.

4. Intake, Eligibility and Admission Procedure

4.1 Intake

There shall be a basic unit of 50 students, with a maximum of two units. There shall not be more than twenty-five students per teacher for a school-subject for methods, courses and other practical activities of the programme to facilitate participatory teaching and learning.

4.2 Eligibility

- (a) Candidates with at least fifty percent marks either in the Bachelor's Degree and/or in the Master's Degree in Sciences/Social Sciences/Humanities, Bachelor's in Engineering or Technology with specialization in Science and Mathematics with 55% marks or any other qualification equivalent thereto, are eligible for admission to the programme. For M.Ed., a student can enrol himself or herself after completing B.Ed. with 55% marks.

- (b) The reservation and relaxation for SC/ST/OBC/PWD and other categories shall be as per the rules of the Central Government/State Government, whichever is applicable.

4.3 Admission Procedure

Admission shall be made on merit on the basis of marks obtained in the qualifying examination and/or in the entrance examination or any other selection process as per the policy of the State Government/U.T. Administration and the University (NCTE Regulations, 2014).

5. A Critical Analysis of the Regulations and the challenges faced by Teacher Education as a discipline

- A change in the duration from one academic year to two academic years may drastically reduce the number of students opting for the B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes. Teacher Education Institutions may have to take proactive measures to attract the students towards these courses. Teacher Education as a course is different from other professional courses as much as teaching is different from other professions as it involves nation-building. Therefore, this change may be very much desirable, but it will take some time and efforts to make a smooth transition to it.
- Another challenge is that of the constructive utilisation of the extended time-period and to involve students in more updated teaching strategies like constructivist teaching and learning. The period of Internship should become a period of intense learning in terms of not only the pedagogy but also for understanding the school's realities and the social contexts. This can be actualised only if teacher-educators take it seriously and employ time and energy for it.
- Admissions based on marks of the previous class have a pitfall of ignoring the teaching-aptitude of the students to be enrolled in the TEP. There should have been a comprehensive test that could assess the teaching-aptitude along with the knowledge of the relevant teaching-subject.
- As far as Intake of the students, working days etc. are concerned, these provisions are good as long as they are implemented in a proper manner. But the shortage of faculty due to vacancies may defeat the purpose.

6. Some Suggestions

- There should be a comprehensive entrance test followed by an interview in order to assess the teaching-aptitude, attitude, knowledge and skills of the students aspiring to be enrolled in TEPs. This is required to ensure that only sincere candidates opt for these courses so that teacher-education doesn't become a profession which is chosen by those who are not able to succeed anywhere else.
- Orientation programmes should be organised with quality resource-persons for teacher-educators in order to develop insights about how best they can use the additional time to develop their teaching skills, mould their attitude and broaden the horizon of knowledge of pupil-teachers.
- A Teacher-educator needs to adopt different roles, departing from being a "preacher" of knowledge to a "facilitator" of synthesis of knowledge to be affected by the student himself. He should shift from being a Controller (who used to take full charge of the activities going on in the class), to a Prompter who encourages students to participate and gives suggestions about how they may proceed in an activity. And he should not play the role of a tutor who spoon-feeds the content to the students. In the market economy, he should become a brand-ambassador for his institution by contributing to make it into a hub of quality-teaching, adopting innovative strategies and developing 21st century skills in the students, thereby making the institution the favourite destination-place for them, even as these attributes make them feel confident of being able to secure a place for themselves in the world-market once they pass out from the institution. Teacher education can thus flourish as a discipline, in spite of the changes like increase in the duration of courses and fee-hike not being taken in the right spirit.
- The focus of a teacher-educator should be to make the students experience the environment and challenges they will face when they enter the global world market as workers, and make them

capable for facing those challenges constructively and effectively. If teacher-education is to be popularised in spite of its being more time-consuming than earlier, employability as an important outcome of TEPs should not be forgotten. The role of NCTE and NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) too is equally important in strengthening Teacher Education as a discipline. They should ensure that the norms and standards set by them are not by-passed by the institutions, and especially the self-financed institutions which are in the line of fire these days for by-passing the norms, promoting absenteeism and compromising with the quality of teaching-learning and assessment. These institutions, that have been given the responsibility of ensuring that quality-benchmarks in teacher-education be met, should make sure that strict action is taken against erring institutions and their recognition be cancelled.

- Another practice as a result of which the quality of teacher- education has deteriorated is the practice of hiring guest-faculty, some of whom do not even fulfil the criteria for eligibility. This practice should be curtailed and strict instructions be given for regular faculty to be brought into place. This will have a two-way benefit, first in terms of improving the quality of teachers in Teacher Education Institutions and second, in terms of providing better avenues for regular employment after the completion of TEPs.
- Another suggestion may be that of the inclusion of “Education” as an optional subject at the Graduation-level so that students coming to the B.Ed. or M.Ed. Programmes possess the basic knowledge of Education as a subject as also its importance. This provision will also improve the opportunities for employment and will attract students in TEPs in spite of the increased duration. Teachers will also have a proactive role to play in preparing employable students, so that they can compete in the market economy.

References

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