



Perception of cooperating school teachers about internship: A Case Study

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Abstract

The uniqueness of two-Year B.Ed. programme of Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar, Odisha (RIE) which is a constituent body of NCERT, New Delhi is that, it gives importance to field experience and practical exposures for trainees in the form of multicultural placement, internship in teaching and field work with community. The present study is an attempt to study the Perception of Cooperating School Teachers about Internship in RIE. The present study adopted ethnographic case study design. The site for the present study was three Government schools of Bhubaneswar. The data collection instrument was Interview schedule for cooperating school teachers. During interview, it is found that organizing pre-conference before actual internship is quite beneficial. During Internship, cooperating schools face many problems such as, delay in completion of syllabus; many doubts are not clarified by student-teachers; student-teachers do not check students' homework copies; do not use TLMs regularly; and neglect exercises given in the textbooks cooperating teachers do not evaluate the performance of student-teachers properly. Except in few exceptional cases, student-teachers hardly use any innovative approaches of teaching. At last, the investigators discussed about the results.

Keywords: Student teachers, during-internship phase, cooperating schools, cooperating school teachers

Introduction

The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of citizens depends upon the quality of their education. The quality of education rests upon the quality of teachers and the quality of teachers depends upon the quality of teacher education among many other factors. The learning society offers many and varied opportunities for learning at school and in economic, social and cultural life. The teachers are now required to update their knowledge every day. The Education Commission (1964-66, p.67) ^[1] observed; "A sound programme of professional Education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education". Investment in teacher Education can yield very rich dividends because the financial resources required are small when measured against the resulting improvement in the education of millions.

Teacher education programmes operate at two levels: Pre-service and In-service. Pre-service teacher education programme is of different types on the basis of level of school education like, elementary teacher education and secondary teacher education programmes. In India, Secondary teacher education programmes are designed to prepare pupil teachers for secondary and higher secondary schools. Programmes are two year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), 3-year Integrated B.Ed. M.Ed. and 4-year Integrated B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed. Degree.

Internship is an integral part of any pre-service teacher education programme for professional preparation of pupil teachers in a school environment, planned and co-ordinated by the teacher education institution in co-operation with one or more school systems. Intern is a prospective teacher under the guidance of a teacher educator involved in all the activities of the school simultaneously with his/her teaching duties. According to NCTE (2014, p.116) ^[2], school

internship would be a part of the broad curricular area of engagement with the field and shall be designed to lead to development of a broad repertoire of perspective, professional capacities, teacher sensibilities and skills. The curriculum of B.Ed. shall provide for sustained engagement with learners and the school (including engaging in continuous and comprehensive assessment for learning), thereby creating a synergy with schools in neighbourhood throughout the year. Student-teachers shall be equipped to cater to diverse needs of learners in schools. These activities shall be organised for 4 weeks in the first year of the course. Students are to be actively engaged in teaching for 16 weeks in the final year of the course. They shall be engaged at two levels, namely, upper primary (class VI-VIII) and secondary (class XI-X), or senior secondary with at least 16 weeks in secondary/ senior secondary classes. They should be provided opportunities to teach in schools with systematic supervisory support and feedback from faculty. Internship in schools will be for a minimum duration of 20 weeks for two year programme (4 weeks in the first year and 16 weeks in the second year). This should also include, besides practice teaching, an initial phase of one week for observing a regular classroom with a regular teacher and would also include peer observations, teacher observations and faculty observations of practice lessons.

NCERT is an apex resource organization to bring qualitative improvement in school education. It undertakes various activities like conducting research, developing curriculum, preparing textbooks and other teaching materials, providing training to the teachers and teacher educators. NCERT through its five Regional Institutes of Education, provides pre-service teacher education programme. Development of innovative programme of pre-service teacher education is one of the major concerns of the Regional Institutes of Education. The Regional Institute of Education,

Bhubaneswar (RIE) is a constituent body of NCERT. Its 2 Year B.Ed. Programme is a model pre-service teacher education programme throughout the eastern region. The uniqueness of this programme is that, it gives importance to field experience and practical exposures for trainees in the form of multicultural placement, internship in teaching and field work with community. The internship in teaching is the core of the 2 year B.Ed. programme. Its internship programme is very systematic and rigorous. Internship consists of 3 phases such as pre-internship, during and post-internship phase.

The investigators are interested to study about the perception of cooperating school teachers about internship.

Methodology

The present study adopted ethnographic case study design. The case for the present study is Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar, India which is a constituent body of NCERT, New Delhi. Only Two-year B.Ed. programme is selected for the present study. Purposive sampling method has been adopted in selecting the sample. Eighteen cooperating school teachers were interviewed for the present study.

The investigator developed an Interview schedule for Cooperating School Teachers to study their Perception about Internship. It includes components like, benefits of Pre-Conference, benefits of Cooperating school by Internship programme, benefits of students by the Internship programme, benefits for teachers, difficulties faced by schools during Internship, learning from student teachers, evaluation of student-teachers, feedbacks for students-teachers, feedback to Institute supervisor, involvement with student-teachers, involvement of student-teachers, innovative approaches used by student teacher, differences in teaching of school teachers & student teachers, acceptance of student-teachers in school and discussion with supervisors etc.

The study was carried over during the month of July-August, 2014. The collected data were analysed by using content analysis techniques.

Result

Benefits of Pre-Conference

Before sending students to different cooperating schools, a pre-conference is held at RIE with student teachers, cooperating school teachers and teacher educators. When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether they are benefitted by the pre-conference and able to mentor the student-teachers during Internship programme, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- Pre-Conference is quite beneficial. Guidelines are given by the teacher educators of RIE about how to guide the student-teachers throughout the programme. They explained the aims and objectives of this programme like, how to guide student-teachers, how to make student teachers to conduct different activities, etc.
- Pre-Conference helped us in understanding how to assess student teachers during internship.
- Pre-Conference helped us to learn how student teachers will develop and deliver lesson plans in a systematic way, how to put questions, how to cite examples, etc.
- Pre-conference helped us conducting evaluation in a new and innovative way.
- It helps us in organizing school activities in a better

way.

- It helps us how we should encourage below and average students for learning by going beyond traditional method of teaching.
- Pre-conference motivates them a lot. They need more such training.
- Pre-conference helps them to understand the children in a better way. They also came to know modern methods and approaches of teaching.

Benefits of Cooperating school by Internship programme

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether their school gets benefits by Internship programme, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- a) By Internship Programme, our school is benefitted. We got a good number of student-teachers for two months, who are young, energetic and enthusiastic and having interest in teaching as they are learners and cooperative too. As they are also students, they are preparing themselves well and are doing well.
- b) Our students get opportunity to learn from student teachers who are using new innovative teaching methods. Our students also see new faces in classes as their new teacher. Some student-teachers use teaching aids and this significantly helps students to learn better.
- c) Our students are enjoying the method of teaching of student teachers. Sometimes, regular teachers become casual in teaching due to their personal work or official work but student-teachers are very sincere to their teaching. They are very active, smart & punctual too. They present the things in a new way. They are using TLMs and their interaction with the students is very effective.
- d) Due to Internship, We cannot fully understand the state of mind of students because of a generation gap. But there is no generation gap between student-teachers and our students. So they can better understand the students. Our students are enjoying a lot with the company of student teachers.
- e) Our students get opportunity to get more content knowledge. They follow proper steps and methods of teaching. Hence, our students' level of achievement has increased.
- f) Student-teachers also do all the activities in the school and seek our help whenever necessary. They are very punctual too in their work.

Benefits of students by the Internship programme

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether their students are benefitted by the Internship programme, the respondents replied in the following ways

- a) Our students are benefitted by this programme. Students' performance in the class is improved. They are feeling comfortable and start participates in the discussion. Students treat student-teachers as their guide, elder brothers and sisters. Students also learn very useful virtues from them like, discipline, punctuality, sincerity, etc. They get friendly atmosphere, new teachings learning materials, got opportunity to experiments particularly, in science classes.
- b) They get a playful & fear free environment to learn.

- They openly discuss their problems with student teachers. They develop interest in learning.
- c) Student-teachers always assess students after completion of lessons, conduct achievement test. They test students' previous knowledge, ask thought provoking questions before introducing the topic to the class. They also use advanced and appropriate teaching aids, innovative teaching methods. So, by this our students are getting benefitted.
 - d) The most significant benefit is achievement test. By this all students are involved at a time. They are able to know their actual position in the classroom. These tests are made according to their level of understanding. It helps them to improve their standard.
 - e) Whenever the students-teachers did some experiments and demonstration, our children were happy with that and interested to learn.
 - f) Student-teachers organize subject related quiz competitions where, our students benefitted a lot.
 - g) They also get benefits from class tests. They read properly and come to the class regularly. They try to achieve more marks because the students-teachers give different prizes to motivate them.

Benefits for teachers

When I asked cooperating school teachers whether school teachers are benefitted by the Internship programme, the respondents replied in the following ways

- a) Teachers are also benefitted by this programme. Their knowledge is refreshed. They learn new methods of teaching by observing their classes.
- b) Their burden is reduced. They get leisure time when student-teachers take their classes.

Difficulties faced by schools during Internship

When I asked the cooperating school teachers about the difficulties and problems schools face during Internship programme, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- a) During Internship programme, our school faces many problems. As the student-teachers are not experienced, they cannot complete the course timely as a result, we could not complete the course in prescribed time.
- b) Due to our casual approach, we cannot observe student-teachers' classes regularly. Due to this, at times, student-teachers become casual and do not use TLMs and also do not take classes seriously.
- c) During Internship Programme, student-teachers only give importance upon completion of their lesson plans. They neglect exercises given in the textbooks as well as the evaluation part. They do not pay any attention to question answer section of the textbooks.
- d) Student-teachers are new to this system. So, they are not able to prepare exam-oriented questions.
- e) Most of the respondents said that it does not affect our regular teaching. It is refreshing our teachers. Something new is interesting. Old teachers are stereotyped now. But due to this programme, students learn from new faces, they show interest in study and progress according to the syllabus. Regular teaching remains unaffected as the student-teachers continue the syllabus. Student-teachers have requisite qualification and education background. They teach students very well & nicely. we hope that our students will perform better in examination this time.

- f) Few of the respondents said that it affects our regular teaching. We have to teach again because many doubts are not clarified by student-teachers. We have to check students' homework copies again. Student-teachers do not complete the course in time. As they are not experienced, they are unable to handle the students & making them disciplined. They are also not following proper methods and skills in classroom.

Learning from student teachers

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether they have learned anything from student-teachers during Internship programme, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- a) During Internship, we learn many things from student teachers such as, how to use ICT, use of available resources, their questioning skills, citing example skills.
- b) Student teachers have better content knowledge than us. They follow reference books, browse internet and other sources too. They are very well in their expression and way of teaching through various teaching methods.
- c) We learn from them the passion with which deal with the students cheerfully. We also learnt modern methods of teaching. We learnt how to make classroom interactive and friendly.

Evaluation of student-teachers

When I asked cooperating school teachers whether they have any role in evaluation of student-teachers during Internship, the respondents replied in the following ways

- a) Head teachers said that the RIE has given them an evaluation format to do assess overall performance of student-teachers. They also give them feedback orally by observing their lesson delivered.
- b) The co-operating teachers evaluate student teachers by observing their classes and also rate them in the rating scale sheet provided by RIE on classroom management, student participation in teaching learning process, questioning skill, home assignments that they give to the students at the end of the class, their writing style in lesson plan, etc. Sometimes teachers also give feedback both orally and written to the student-teachers while observing their lessons.
- c) We feel that we don't evaluate the performance of student-teachers in proper way. It is not possible to observe all the classes of student-teachers from beginning to end as we have many academic activities too.

Feedbacks for students-teachers

When I asked the cooperating school teachers about the feedback that they give to student-teachers for their improvement in teaching, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- a) We give feedback to student-teachers that they need more effort to be more resourceful & to learn more about the topic before coming to the class and teach the students thoroughly, prepare lesson plan, prepare themselves how to present the lesson systematically, create appropriate learning environment, control the students, etc. We advise them to use maps, pointer and others teaching aids which could make the classes more interesting and lively.
- b) We give feedback on proper way of preparing TLMs

and their use; how to prepare different types of questions; how to choose and cite examples suitable to the topic; etc.

- c) We give feedback both in written and oral form about the problems in lesson plan, in teaching, and what extra activity they must do in the class, etc. In the beginning we observe their classes.
- d) We give feedback about proper use of blackboard, classroom management, preparing difficult questions, how to engage students in classrooms, how to organize different activities in the classroom, etc.
- e) Most often, student-teachers cannot complete the lesson as per lesson plan in one period. We suggest about appropriate quantity of content matter for one period.
- f) Teachers always give some feedback through observation and student-teachers incorporate those suggestions in next class.
- g) We advise student-teachers to give teaching notes to students.
- h) We also give feedback how to manage the class, pay individual attention, how to make eye-to-eye contact, reinforce students, use of appropriate TLMs, cite examples from day-to-day life, attract students towards topic, go beyond the text book, etc.

Feedback to Institute supervisor

When I asked cooperating school teachers about the feedback that they give to the Institute supervisors regarding the performance of student-teachers during Internship, the respondents said that teachers do not give any feedback to the Institute supervisor about the performance of student-teachers. During conversation with the supervisors, they only discuss about the activities done by the student-teachers, their classroom performances, and their behaviour with the students, problems and their progress.

Involvement with student-teachers

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether they were involved in the activities conducted by student-teachers during Internship, the responses of teachers are presented below.

- a) We are involved with the student-teachers in many activities they conducted such as, observation of co-curricular activities like, games & sports, conducting achievement test, various competitions, celebration of Independence Day, Ganesh Puja, Science exhibition, assembly, maintaining discipline, etc. They organized a rally against antisocial activities for which we helped them to make posters, writing slogans, etc. They prepared projects with our help for our students on science subjects which were exhibited in science exhibition.
- b) We also remain present in the classroom to observe their teaching. After the class we suggest them about proper ways to teach. Sometimes, student-teachers could not able to use TLMs in proper way. We help them how to effectively use TLMs.
- c) Students-teachers hardly conduct any co-curricular activities. But we always help them whenever they need. When they were organizing some co-curricular activities we helped them. We help them in preparation of teaching aids and also provide them TLMs from school. We clarify doubts of student-teachers.
- d) The students-teachers are hardly involved in organizing

co-curricular activities like, morning Assembly, competitions etc. We help them whenever they need. During delivery of lesson plan, initially they rectify their lesson plan by showing to teachers. But as the time passes, they do not rectify their lesson plans. When they ask any doubt we help them. When we feel that they try their best to deliver a lesson, we help them how to give examples and how to teach the students so that, our students can understand properly. Whenever we realize their problem, we guide them after completion of lesson delivery.

- e) During two months of internship programme, student-teachers participate in different activities. We guide student-teachers in many ways like, teaching, classroom management, maintaining discipline in class, conducting experiment in class, drawing attention of students to the topic, writing properly on black board, clarifying doubts, etc.

Involvement of student- teachers

When I asked the cooperating school teachers about the involvement of student-teachers in school activities, the respondents replied in the following ways:-

- a) Some student-teachers come in time but not all the student-teachers. They take class on regular basis & very sincerely. All the student-teachers attend school assembly regularly. They never follow CCE. They conduct only one achievement test during the programme. They conduct various activities in school such as, celebration of Independence Day, organize plantation, Annual sports function, and different competitions and co-operate in school management. Many of them do not give home work to the students. They only attend the prayer class but they are not involved themselves in any activity. They also never help in maintaining discipline in prayer class.
- b) Student-teachers are serious in attending morning assembly, conducting action research and delivery of lessons. They perform very well, in teaching activity. Most of them participate in conducting achievement test and organizing co-curricular activities.

Innovative approaches used by student teacher

When I asked the cooperating school teachers about their views on innovative approaches used by student-teachers during Internship, the respondents replied in the following ways.

- a) Most of the teachers said that they have not noticed any innovative approach of teaching used by student-teachers in teaching during Internship. They follow traditional teaching methods like us.
- b) Few teachers said that student teachers are very innovative. They give very nice examples during the transaction of lessons and introductory part was also very innovative which is better than regular teachers. Students understand easily because the examples are given from day-to-day life.

Differences in teaching of school teachers & student teachers

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether they find any differences in teaching of school teachers & student teachers, the respondents replied in the following ways.

- a) There are many differences in teaching. Student

teachers lack confidence compared to our regular teachers. They also can't able to handle the classroom like us as they are very new to this profession. They also do not have sufficient experience in teaching. So, it will be better if their supervisor observe each and every class of student-teachers regularly which will polish their performance.

- b) There are differences in teaching style of our regular teachers and the student- teachers. We all are experienced and resourceful about our topic and the student- teachers are very new to this profession and still now they needs to gain more knowledge on content matters, content based TLMs, and classroom management etc. We face new challenges and problems daily. We have the skill to solve these problems. But student-teachers can't find the solution instantly. Student-teachers are unable to discuss question answers after the completion of chapter, which is exam oriented. But we always discuss question answer after the completion of lesson and that was exam oriented by which our students get benefitted.

Acceptance of student- teachers in school

When I asked the cooperating school teachers how they accept student- teachers in their school the respondents replied in the following ways.

- a) We accept them very gladly to our school. If we don't train the new teachers then there will be shortage of ideal teachers in the society. The flow of creating new teachers should continue with time. Practice must be needed for quality teaching & quality teaching creates quality teacher in the society.
- b) We accept student-teachers in our school because we and our students get benefit by this Internship programme. There are very less number of regular teachers in our school and they are not sufficient to carry out all academic activities along with teaching. When student-teachers join our school, there is no problem in taking regular classes. This programme creates a better environment for teaching and learning.
- c) We accept them because we also passed through the same stages while doing B.Ed. degree. They come to school for practicing their skills. So we help them for their teaching profession and they acquire practical experience.

Discussion with supervisors

When I asked the cooperating school teachers whether they discuss different issues with the supervisors, the respondents said that supervisors hardly visit school. They visit two times during Internship. There is no time for discussion about the different issues. We only discuss about teaching and performance of student-teachers and their problem areas.

Suggestions to improve Internship programme

- a) The Institute supervisors should visit the school regularly and give suggestions & feedback properly.
- b) We expect more involvement of student teachers with the students, organize co-curricular activities and use new approaches of teaching.
- c) Student-teachers should focus on completion of question answers. After the completion of course, they should discuss thoroughly for better learning. Notebook

checking should be done sincerely and should give proper feedback.

- d) They need to do activities in more systematic way. They should take the classes very sincerely. They must involve students during teaching-learning process. It will be better if they interact with other cooperating teachers of the school. They should conduct different activities in classroom transactions and participate in school activities.
- e) Student-teachers need more practice and preparation for improvement in communication skill. TLMs which are prepared by the student-teacher should be relevant. It should be of different varieties not limited to charts only. TLM needs to be used regularly.

Discussion

- According to cooperating school teachers, pre-conference is quite beneficial. Guidelines are given by teacher educators of RIE about how to guide the student-teachers throughout the programme. It helps them how to guide student- teachers, how to make student teachers to conduct different activities, how to assess student teachers, how student teachers will develop and deliver lesson plans in a systematic way, how to put questions, how to cite examples, how to organize school activities in a better way, how to encourage below and average students for learning. However, most of the teacher education institutions do not organize pre-conference. They should also organize it following RIE model to make internship more effective.
- During Internship, cooperating schools face many problems. As the student-teachers are not experienced, they cannot complete the course timely. Sometimes, teachers have to teach again because many doubts are not clarified by student-teachers. They have to check students' homework copies again. It is an obligation on the part of teachers to complete the syllabus. Hence, the supervisors should interact with the cooperating teachers frequently to listen to their problems and sort out with a mutual consensus.
- Due to casual approach, cooperating school teachers do not observe student-teachers' classes regularly. At times, student-teachers also become casual and do not use TLMs and take classes seriously. They only give importance upon completion of their lesson plans. They neglect exercises given in the textbooks as well as the evaluation part. They do not pay any attention to question answer section of the textbooks. Student-teachers are new to this system. So, they are not able to prepare exam-oriented questions. It is to be noted that teachers are hard pressed from higher authorities for better result in the exam. Hence, higher authorities need to understand that understanding concepts is more important than getting good marks in the examination by rote memorization of selective questions.
- Teachers don't evaluate the performance of student-teachers properly. It is not possible to observe all the classes of student-teachers from beginning to end as they have many other academic activities too. Each student teacher must be attached with a mentor so that they can give proper attention.
- Most often, student-teachers cannot complete the lesson as per lesson plan in one period. It is suggested that

appropriate quantity of content matter need to be presented for one period.

- Most of the teachers said that except in few exceptional cases, they have not noticed any innovative approach of teaching used by student-teachers in teaching during Internship. They follow traditional teaching methods like regular teachers. This problem could be overcome if Institute's supervisors should visit the school regularly and give suggestions & feedback properly. It is better if the supervisor observe each and every class of student-teachers regularly which will polish their performance.
- Student-teachers need more practice and preparation for improvement in communication skill. TLMs which are prepared by the student-teacher should be relevant. It should be of different varieties not limited to charts only. TLMs need to be used regularly.

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