



## Teacher Education through Open and Distant Learning Mode at Secondary Stage

**Dr. Shyamasree Sur<sup>1</sup>**

Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Education,  
Siddhinath Mahavidyalaya, S.S.Patna, Purba Medinipur,  
West Bengal, India.

Email: [shyamasreesur2020@gmail.com](mailto:shyamasreesur2020@gmail.com)

### Introduction:-

Since the teacher plays a pivotal role in the entire education process, Teacher Education (T.E.) is very crucial to the improvement of both quantity and quality of education. Especially at the secondary stage, teacher education has assumed special significance in between elementary education on the one hand and higher / university education on the other. The B.Ed degree is the most sought after qualifications at the secondary stage is the most sought after qualifications at these secondary stage. It has been traditionally transacted as one-year course and the first-degree level qualification in teacher education. Subsequently, B.Ed course were provided in many colleges and universities through correspondence of Distance Education mode of two-year duration. Certain other variations in the form of vacation or part-time course were also available prior to NCTE came into existence. Besides, there were four-year integrated courses in different Regional Colleges of Education. Teacher Education programmes at secondary stage generally include theory, practice teaching in schools and various kinds of practical activities in the light of context, concerns, profile and general as well as specific objectives. In this paper, we are more concerned with modes of curricular transaction than curricular provisions as the quality of the cake is more appreciated in cooking and eating than in its rich ingredients, attractive contours and colours.

### Modes of Curricular Transaction

As discussed above, the crux of the teacher education programme is the manner in which the curriculum is transacted. Modes of curricular transaction are related to the channels adopted for providing learning experiences to the student teachers. These act not merely as links between objectives and trainees, but also as determinants of effectiveness of the TE programme. In fine, such modes represent operationalization as well as actualization of the different instructional goals and components of TE programmes. The mode of curricular transaction is determined on the basis of certain such as aims and objectives, nature and characteristics of trainees, types and topics to be taught, nature of activities to be organized, the resources and facilities required and infrastructure support available. Besides, modes involve administrative and supervisory input, community and other groups involved and interested, professional ethics and compulsions, market forces like supply and demand. The mode adopted acts as a medium or channel of instruction and organization of the programme in all its aspects and dimensions.



Generally, there are two modes or types of transaction namely the face-to-face mode, which has been traditional and the order is the Distance Mode, which is mostly modern and innovative. The former is mostly personal, interactive and discursive, transacted as well as supplemented with lectures, seminars, demonstrations and discussions. In the Distance Mode (DM) on the other hand a distance is maintained at least physically between the teachers and the taught i.e. there are no direct contacts between them. Therefore, a third channel or medium is felt essential which includes print, audio, video and other audiovisual aids. These are often used in combination in order to be more interactive and effective. In order to do away with or minimize the disadvantages of impersonal or indirect contacts, ultra-modern methods and techniques like interactive video/satellite TV, and teleconferencing are introduced or provided occasionally or conveniently, which make the programme more realistic and meaningful.

In the beginning, print media like textbooks, handbooks, guidebooks etc, were not available. Afterwards these teaching learning materials were developed and printed. Print media gradually assumed significance and oral communication was supported by print media. Then correspondence education, particularly TE programme became popular with the prospective teachers. Emergence of open learning systems made use of different kinds of electronic media viz, audiovisual aids and media that make the process more interactive and effective. Learning experiences and skills are imparted to pupils, who gain self-confidence along with competence. Thus "Guru Parampara" helps the teaching-learning process to grow, to continue and to sustain the civilization and culture of the country.

### **Growth of Correspondence / Distance Mode**

With a view to promoting professional competence of teachers, it was realized that both pre-service and in-service TE are essential. Since there was a huge backlog of untrained teachers among working teachers in many States and also a great demand for trained teachers for new appointments. It was felt that the traditional face-to-face mode available in various Training Colleges and Departments of Education in Universities were not adequate to meet the growing needs of pre-service training. Similarly, in order to keep teachers abreast with the latest developments in content knowledge and methodology, in-service training programmes need to be effectively and continually, organized by the universities and State Departments of Education. In view of those demands beyond all dimensions, alternative modes were thought of in our country. Success of correspondence courses in other countries and Distance Education mode in a few organizations like British Open University prompted educational planners, policy makers and politicians to try these modes in India selectively. During seventies and eighties, B.Ed courses were provided in most of the universities through their Directorates of Correspondence Education and in the Regional Colleges of Education.

Subsequently, the Correspondence Courses were renamed as Distance Education. The Correspondence/ Distance Education mode had some distinct advantages. It could cater to the needs of a large number of clientele at a time. It could provide well-structured and validated package of printed learning material. It was possible to enable learners to read and understand these materials at their own pace and time convenient to them. These materials were also



developed by experts in the programmed learning or self-study principles. These were also well-articulated, comprehensive and up-to-study materials on the part of students. In case, there are any doubts or certain points for clarification or elucidation that can be taken care of face-to-face interactions during the “contact” programmes which are occasionally organized, of course at least once a year preferable during vacations, Counselors are also available at study centers under the open university system. Students enrolled for Correspondence/Distance Education courses are found to be more self-dependent and self-motivated. All these make the learning experiences, particularly in Distance Education Programmes more rewarding meaningful meaningful and profitable.

In the year 1990, National Council of Teacher Education Committee for Teacher Education Programme through Distance Mode under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.B. Buch reported that (i) The duration of the programmes should be 24 months; (ii) professionally developed printed material be given to the student; (iii) audio and video packages to supplement the print materials; (iv) assignment be evaluated and feedback provided promptly; (v) trainees be attached to schools for 3-week internship and 12week contact programme be made compulsory. The entry qualification should be the same for both regular and Distance Education B.Ed course and for every 500 students enrolled, there must be 10 strong full-time core faculty, and 10 strong part-time faculty in addition to external course writers.

The central Advisory Board of Education Committee on Distance Education set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of G. Ram Reddy in 1992 dealt with the concept, growth objectives and status of distance education in India and inter alia emphasized the use of electronic media, use of child-centered approach, continuing evaluation and starting in-service teachers training related to the specific needs of the clientele group.

The Committee appointed by the UGC under the Chairmanship of prof. Ramlal Parikh in 1993 studied the continuance of B.Ed course through DE and suggested : (i) the universities running B.Ed correspondence course should not admit more than 250 students in a year, (ii) teachers-in-service should have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience (iii) for freshers minimum qualification of graduation with 60% marks or a Master’s degree with relaxation of 5% of marks for SC and ST students, (iv) DE should be organized in close collaboration with the Department of Education of the university and stage Colleges of Education with core staff 10 teachers with adequate academic qualification (v) high quality self-instructional packages with a minimum of two course of 30 days contact programmes and a compulsory supervised internship of 60 days should be provided for trainees.

Another Committee appointed by the UGC under Chairmanship of Prof. Kherma Lyngdoh in 1994 evaluated the B.Ed correspondence / Distance Education Programmes and inter alia, recommended : (i) the duration of the course should be of 14 months, (ii) the personal contact programme of 30 days duration should be made compulsory, (iii) at least 40 practice lessons must be organized and monitored by the principal and other staff members (iv) the UGC should have a standing committee for evaluating and monitoring the B.Ed programme.



The NCTE constituted an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of prof. R.C. Das in 1994. The Committee examined the TE programme through various modes of education and made recommendations, inter should be only through face-to-face institutional programmes of teacher education of a minimum of one academic year's duration, (ii) no further admissions should be made to courses to teacher education from 1995-96 onwards, (iii) Correspondence/Distance Education mode can be effectively used for in-service education of teachers at all levels, (iv) a teacher education programme/ institution will be considered to be indulging in commercialization if the total recurring receipts including expenses of that year in the programmes exceed by more than 10% (v) in case an institution found to be indulging in commercialization, NCTE may take strong action including withdrawing recognition.

The committee appointed under the Chairmanship of prof. R.Takwale recommended: (i) no university will admit more than 500 candidates to the B.Ed mode for secondary school teachers in an academic year. (ii) the duration of these courses would be 24 months (iii) tuition fees as paid by other B.Ed students excepting extra charge to cover the cost of supply of print material, audiovisual package, library service etc. (iv) for every 500 students there would be 10 full-time core faculty members.

### **Review of the Teacher Education through Distance Education:**

Time and again Teacher Education Programmes at the secondary School stage, have come in for criticism irrespective of the mode adopted, as the courses are found "not being very effective" in producing the teachers with adequate competence. Teacher Education through Distance Education has been perceived to be more diluted in its quality and impact. It has been aptly said (NCTE, 1998 P.83), "Skepticism about the credibility of the B.Ed programme increases as one moves away from the 'regular' programme towards correspondence courses, if the two are seen to be two ends of the continuum, with part-time courses and vacation courses in between". It also added, "for the universities, which set up separate Directorates of Correspondence courses, B.Ed programme looks like a very profitable undertaking through which substantial revenue could be generated" (Ibid P.84), B.Ed courses through Correspondence / Distance Education proved to be golden eggs which were collected by the universities by enrolling thousands and thousands of students. The Teacher Education programme was not properly transacted and standard left much to be desired.

The situation was very much worsened by the commercialization of TE through DE. B.Ed programme was criticized heavily in the media for its moneymaking racket. For example, the article "Correspondence Bazaar" B.Ed course-published in the India Today, May 31, 1997 (Singh, P.98) reported, "Many teacher training institutes across the country are admitting semi-literate students, promising to transform them into erudite teachers in couple of years. To cash in on what has become a lucrative business, a large number of them do not insist on minimum qualifications, admissions tests or even a rudimentary interview. They are not recognized by the government, are privately run and do without the most basic of facilities. Little wonder then that the products they churn out by the thousands every year are not fit to impart knowledge". S.N. Singh, a former Dean of Banaras Hindu University in a report to NCTE has also reiterated,



“These institutes produce substandard and incompetent people. To appoint them as teachers is a national risk”.

For awarding such nefarious degree these institutions charge amounts ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs.1,00,000 despite government warning. They also enrolled a staggering 3.23 lakh students in 1996-97. Even one lakh of them learned the art of teaching through correspondence courses. The NCTE Chairman, J.S. Rajput says, “It is like learning Swimming through a distance education programme”. In this context only two glaring example are given here. The M.D. University, Rohtak, an institution recognized by the government enrolled 24,000 students in 1994-95 for the B.Ed Correspondence Course. Since each students paid Rs.4000, the university gained Rs.8.4 crores. Similar, the Chennai-based Annamalai University enrooled 18,000 students the same year and collected Rs4000 per head, the net gain being Rs.7.2 crore. What a lucrative business it was;

It was lucrative mainly because the institutions did not provide even the minimum infrastructure-poor staff, lack of space, no practical teaching, no library, no labs and nothing for co-curricular activities. Mr. N.K. Singh (Ibid, P.99) says, “It is a dismal picture but high unemployment rates as well as the need for B.Ed degree to get a job as a teacher still drive thousands to such teaching shops. This, despite the fact that few of thses who get the degrees actually land good jobs. Most carry around what is actually a worthless piece of paper, hoping to get employed. Some do manage to get jobs in similar institutions, where they are paid a paltry Rs.400 a month”.

Although the NCTE was set up in 1995 to develop, regulate and maintain standards in TE system and Act gives it the necessary teeth to bite, it has practically failed to bite up to expectation. Rather many erring institutions and universities have tried to bite the NCTE. The NCTE is under pressure from many quarters. Political patronage and vote banking attitude of some unscrupulous leaders have created hurdles in the way of implementation of the NCTE Act and regulations. One example can be cited: the Rajiv Gandhi College in Bhopal that was allegedly charging Rs. 1 lakh for its course. It was managed by the Chouhan Shiksha Samiti whose Secretary Syed Sajid Ali was an ex-office bearer of the Madhya Pradesh Youth Congress and the erstwhile Higher Education Minister, Mukesh Nayak was then President of the organization.

A counterattack was reported to have been made jointly by the Vice-Chancellors of 17 universities targeted by the NCTE by asking the UGC to convene a meeting where they criticized the NCTE Rules for Distance Education. One of the esteemed Vice-Chancellors even complained that NCTE was working “against the national interest” by denying the “deprived sections of the society” the advantages of DE. On the other hand, Rajput of NCTE observes, “Unless teachers training is conducted professionally, they dream of good quality education will remain a dream”.

In order to strengthen, the hands of the NCTE a number of studies were conducted to find out the actual conditions of DE institutions relating to modality and commercialization etc. of TE programmes. The findings of these studies and the action taken by the council are



not yet known. But it is felt that the NCTE not controlling reasonably the institutions and universities, which are still engaged in continuing so called Distance Education B.Ed courses and making money feely. On the contrary, a few universities which were running TE courses through DE reasonably well have been denied the facility as they have stopped the programme at the behest of NCTE directions. Further, the regular face-to-face B.Ed courses are being managed in the old stereotyped and haphazard manner throughout the country and the NCTE has not brought about any significant changes for improving the quality of Teacher Education.

## Conclusion

Distance Education mode cannot be ignored for improving both its quality and quantity. The deficiency of Teacher Education through Distance Education is not inherent in the mode, but in management. Commercialization is another stigma that is holding back the proper utilization of the distance Mode for improving Teacher Education. The advantages of the mode might have inspired the IGNOU and prevailed upon the NCTE to the launching of B.Ed courses through Distance education. With adequate infrastructure and efficient management, Teacher Education through Distance Education can bring about wonders in Teacher Education programmes. Particularly, in-service Teacher Education programmes. At present, such programmes are being organized very haphazardly in an unplanned and unsystematic manner. Government and institutes are happy with spending the money provide for the purpose without having expected impact on teachers as well as the Teacher Education system. The methods followed are traditional and not utilizing the electronic media, which can ensure effectiveness. Hence, NCTE should formulate a series of in-service Teacher Education courses of different durations with specific objectives and through Distance Education mode, which can be implemented regularly and throughout theyear.

## References

- NCTE: Policy Perspectives in Teacher Education, New Delhi, 1998.
- NCTE: Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education, New Delhi, 1998.
- Singh, N.K.: "Correspondence Bazar" B.Ed Courses India Today Many 31, 1997.
- Mohanty, J: "Development of Distance Education" Journal of Education Planning, July, 1992, New Delhi.
- Mohanty, J: Teacher and Education in the Emerging Indian Society, Takshashila, Cuttak, 1994.