



Cover Page



AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEIVED CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT TEACHERS IN INTERNSHIP DURING COVID PANDEMIC

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Abstract

In this paper, the purpose of the internship program and the problems faced by the students have been discussed in detail at present. According to the National Council for Teacher Education Regulations 2014 passed by the National Council for Teacher Education, B.Ed. School-based program has been made an essential part of the curriculum. The school-based training program has been prescribed for 20 weeks. The school-based training program is divided into two parts. B.Ed. School-based training has been prescribed for 4 weeks in the first year of the course and 16 weeks in the second year. Its main objective is to prepare an effective teacher by keeping the students engaged in school activities. School-based training provides an opportunity for the students to fulfil the responsibilities of a full-time teacher in the school. In the present time of the Covid pandemic student teachers are facing many problems in the internship. Necessary steps must be taken to solve concerning problems related to the internship programme. Relevant strategies must be prepared and student teachers must be educated to cope up with these problems.

Keywords: Internship, Student-Teacher, Teacher Education, Covid Pandemic.

Introduction

In the education system, the responsibility of a teacher is not limited to teaching in the classroom, but also to inculcate the inherent powers in the young students as well as to discharge the important responsibility of imbuing them with their capacity. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has acknowledged the challenges of the role of teachers and confirmed this in the above statement. Dr. Kalam himself, being recourse to the role of a teacher, has deeply imbibed the role of a teacher and expressed the view that the best mind in the country can be found on the last benches of the classroom. Therefore, the teacher should be given equal importance to every student in the study. Referring to the students, Dr. Kalam said that the student should have the curiosity to ask questions himself, he should have the courage to think differently, follow new paths, and research and invent. They should fight and win over problems and challenges. He believed that all students should be treated equally without discrimination of any caste, religion, creed, etc., and they believed that a teacher should not be fully a partner in national development. There should always be an effort to inculcate great thoughts in the mind and to feel proud of the success of your student is the hallmark of the best teacher. Dr. Kalam's views on the education system of India, along with teachers and students, are helpful in giving direction to India's education system.

For the educational development and quality education of the nation, it is very important for the teachers there to be qualified and trained. The more qualified and trained teachers there are, the more educationally the nation will develop. The progress of the society depends on its worthy citizens and the qualifications of the citizens are more or less based on their education. The objective of teacher education is not only to develop the definite skills and qualifications inherent in the teacher but also to generate interest in teaching because if a teacher is interested in teaching, he also creates new knowledge and strives for effective teaching while moving forward. Teacher education covers all the theoretical aspects of education by which knowledge is imparted in the context of specific subjects and to students and teachers. Teacher education consists of all the activities, activities, and events by which future teachers are made aware. Teaching is great and sacred work. It is very important to have a skilled and effective teacher for good teaching. A school-bound training program is an important component of teacher education. Which is essential to become an influential teacher. To create a teacher who can play an important role in the development of the nation. School-bound training not only provides training to students but also an opportunity to complete all the work done by a regular teacher. The National Policy on Education was emphasized in 1986 on the adoption of the internship model. Students in school internationals need to do a variety of activities. Students have to be involved in classroom teaching, class management, school observation work, and community-based activities, community service campaigns, observation of various school scenarios, etc.

Internship

The Internship suffix was first used in the field of medical education. In medical education, this term means medical experience, where a new doctor has to acquire practical knowledge for a specified period under the direction of a skilled scholar and distinguished doctor. Only then can he act as an independent doctor or pursue further education. Thus, it is clear that 'Internship' was first introduced as a compulsory and intuition component in medical-vocational education. Subsequently, it was included in other



Cover Page



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vocational education programs respectively. At present, the context of the adoption of Internship as an essential component can be understood by forming the meaning, definition, objective, characteristics of the Internship Program, and the positive effects of the program.

Internship means acquiring practical knowledge and experience under the guidance of a capable supervisor. In which the student examines his theoretical knowledge which he has learned in classes. Here Internship includes all the important experiences that are obtained by the student in the actual field of work. The program develops meaningful skills as well as sensitivity and specific attitudes towards the respective occupations among the students. An attempt has been made by scholars and experts to make Internships more clearly through different definitions.

McMahon, U.&Queen, U. (1995) - has said that "Internship programs are inspectable work experience, in which the student leaves his institute and gets busy with work-based programs and during that time period they are closely monitored by the shelter present in that profession."

According to Wisch (1988) "internship is defined as using and trying for academic information in real life. In other words, it is an experience of converting the accumulated knowledge into behavior by doing and living it".

According to Potton & Dail (1988) – "Internship is defined as a form of on-the-job training in which people gain supervised experiences and practical knowledge that is relevant to a specific field." According to Collway Beckstead (1995) "The internship experiences expose students to practical skills, improve their social relationships, motivate future learning and enhance their social personality".

Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus - "a period of time during which someone works for a company or organization in order to get the experience of a particular type of work."

According to Furco (1996) - "Internship is defined as a program to keep students busy or engaged in service activities. The main objective of the program is to provide them with work-based experience and enhance their understanding or knowledge of relevant issues relating to a particular field. "

According to Chakravarty Parijat (2016) - "Internship is action-based learning that gives students and teachers a real experience of choosing their future field. It also helps them develop a sense of commitment, accountability, efficiency, and duty."

Based on the above definitions, it can be said that an internship program in any vocational education is a useful and beneficial component for students. The student is in a learning state and he goes to the workplace and implements the same knowledge he is learning. An internship program is a form of experiential learning that incorporates the use and development of knowledge and skills practiced by the study in the real professional field. It also introduces trainees to the actual experience of professional work areas, understanding of procedures, and complexity of components. This helps in developing efficiency, adjustment capacity, thinking, and decision-making ability in trainees at an excellent level. At the same time, many self-qualities such as initiative tendencies, Risk-taking, confidence, and self-esteem also increase. The concept of the internship is not only related to trainees but is a concerted effort of professional institutions, associate establishments, employers, teachers, associate supervisors, and vocational education institutions. The objective of which is to fully benefit the students, employers, institutions, and society. The internship program develops a specific type of interaction and interrelationship between the student, the institution, and the employer. Some of the features of the internship program can be identified as such.

Internship in teacher education

'Internship' has been incorporated under the Teacher Education Programme. Through which efforts have been made to provide real work experience to students and teachers as well as to integrate the theoretical and experimental aspects. The objective of this internship program is to develop professional skills and teacher tendencies among students and teachers, to create sensitivity to school conditions, and to make them endowed with teaching skills. The use of internship suffixes in the teacher education program is not a new phenomenon in the global context as in other countries this component has already been incorporated and conducted in the teacher education program and a number of researches were also conducted such as Fisher (1993) studied the impact of long-term internships on the attitude and teaching behavior of former in-service teachers. Rohods, Weber, and Redhu (2011) studied the internship experience of future secondary mathematics teachers. Similarly, Parveen, Saleha (2012) studied the challenges faced during the internship at Sindh University and the experience of future teachers. Alfred, Otara (2014) studied the experience and perception of



Cover Page



trainees towards the internship program at the University of Ravanda. Alice, Mirab Kagedo and John, Santogo (2015) studied the behavior of university trainees of Uganda during school practice, relationship with associate teachers, participation in school activities, and dress code.

The internship was already implemented in the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme by RIEs in India. The two-year B.Ed. of Teacher Education scheduled since 2015. The internship was also included as an integral component in the course. The internship program was placed in the two-year course for a certain period of time. NCTE again as per the draft submitted by the Government in January 2016, the duration of the internship program has been kept at 2 weeks in the second session of the first year and 18 weeks in the third session of the second year. Thus, a total time of 20 weeks has been fixed for the internship. Students are scheduled to be sent to schools of different nature for internships, which will be up to the primary or upper primary level. But it is worth noting that the NCTE in the January 2016 directive on the internship program has made it clear that trainees have to do 80% of the internship practice in Government schools and the remaining 20% in private schools. Then the question arises as to how the trainees will be able to acquire innovative and quality real work knowledge where there is a shortage of educational facilities in Government schools. At the same time, the question arises as to how trainees in the country of diverse schools will get the experience of schools of different nature. A visual objective of this distribution of internship program is also to improve the quality of teaching of Government schools in India. During the internship exercise, the trainees will show their full involvement in all the activities in the school such as community-based experience, observation of school conditions, hairstyle study on innovative activities in the school, question paper making, making evaluation equipment, and teaching, etc. All these activities will be conducted by the students and teachers under the guidance of school mentor teachers and mentor teachers.

Objectives of School Internship

- Understanding the school environment.
- To develop teaching-learning resources.
- Preparation of unit plan.
- Creating a daily lesson plan.
- Developing and managing assessment tools.
- Organizing teacher-parent meetings.
- Organizing co-curricular activities.
- Organizing community service campaigns.
- Observing different school scenarios.
- To observe the classroom.
- Addressing the school prayer meeting.
- Making a reflective diary.
- Analyzing school curriculum and textbooks.
- Doing a case study.
- Conducting diagnostic tests and remedial teaching.

Challenges Faced by Student-Teachers in Internship during COVID-19

At present, in this period of Corona global pandemic, all educational institutions are closed for almost a year. Efforts are being made by all the institutions and the government to keep the education of the students smooth through online classes. But due to the closure of the schools, the internship of BEd students is not being completed. The main objective of the school internship is to make the students aware of the school environment and to produce such teachers who can become partners in the development of society and the country. But in the present internship students are facing many difficulties.

The objective of internship is to enable teachers to familiarize themselves with their current and upcoming assignments. Internship is actually equivalent to the laboratory experience for the student teacher, in which the teacher-teacher, the headmaster of the school, the teacher and the student teacher himself have a significant contribution in planning, conducting and evaluation. Under this, all curricular and extra-curricular activities have been included, whose practice helps in becoming a successful teacher. But due to the Corona pandemic, the student teachers are not able to get the real experience of classroom teaching. They are getting knowledge of only theoretical subjects. Last year (2020), all the students were promoted by the government without internship and this year (2021) also the student teachers have not got internship experience which is making the teaching training weak. Due to the closure of the school, the student teachers are not getting opportunities to understand the various activities of the school and their implementation. The student teachers are not able to complete the various tasks to be done during the internship. The internship is very important for



Cover Page



teacher training, in the absence of which the personal qualities of the trainees such as self-confidence, creativity, leadership, etc. could not be developed. The gap between theoretical and practical knowledge has increased among the trainees. Trainees are feeling stressed due to the non-completion of the internship. Effective teaching skills, communication style and teaching skills have not been well developed in them. Therefore, it can be said that the present form of internship is the real form, is being completely disregarded.

Suggestions

Internship is the most important part of any teacher education program. It gives student teachers hands-on experience to get acquainted with total school practice including teaching, assessment, administration, clerical tasks, community involvement, handling student issues, student support services and the like. In the present situation it is completely impossible to organize school internship in real form. According to experts, theory can be taught by the student himself, but practical knowledge is very important for future teachers.

Teaching-learning exercise is virtually going on in various schools during COVID-19 even though schools are closed. If teaching-learning is possible in alternative form] then why not school internship.

For this it is necessary that along with developing techno-pedagogical skills among student-teachers, virtual internship should be kept in mind for them. As per the current trend student-teachers should have techno-pedagogical expertise to impart education in technology-based environment like online learning.

These changes can be made in School Internship

- Teacher education institutions can tie up with any school to encourage this type of innovative teaching-learning encounter. Like during the period of covid-19, virtual internship can also be planned during the time of emergency. Parental support is another important factor in scheduling it for their children. Participants can also be taken globally where online teaching-learning culture is very popular.
- It can be practiced for few days during the long school holiday to inculcate techno-pedagogical skills among the student-teachers.
- Preparation of learning design is an important tool of trainee teachers in the pre-teaching stage. Virtual internship calls for techno-pedagogy based learning design where due importance is given to TPK (i.e., technical knowledge, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge) on which the learning design for teaching is to be built.
- There are various apps and web-based platforms like Zoom Cloud Meetings, Google Hangouts, Web-x Meet, Skype Meetings etc. on which a virtual classroom can be created for imparting education.
- Providing lessons through T-L-M's use of teaching-learning materials is an essential part of teaching. Here the trainee-teacher can switch on the share screen option to display power point, video, photograph, diagram, diagram, sketch etc. to the students regarding the given topic.
- Online test can be planned with regard to checking the learning outcome of the students. Learning tasks can be assigned to them and evaluation can be done virtually. Students can also express their learning outcomes in creativity-based productive forms such as painting, collage making, singing, text, video production and the like.
- The classroom teaching given by the trainee-teachers should be supervised by the teacher-teachers. Here, any teacher-teacher can enter the class through the web link which has to be notified to him/her first. Similarly, the head teacher or subject teacher of the schools can join the classroom to supervise their teaching practice.
- Action Research is a tool for the practitioner to develop the professional competence of the intern. Trainee teachers as apprentices can also practice this virtually. For example, the education and schooling of a child with mild visual impairment may be examined virtually. Student-teachers can meet the child, discuss with him, observe his behavior, and interview his parents and teachers on the online platform. In this way case study-based action research can be prepared.
- Student-teachers can arrange a parent-teachers meeting. When they need to attend a meeting with the head teacher and other teachers, it can be easily determined here. Video conferencing can be used to share the knowledge of senior and experienced teachers with regard to creating more effective classroom teaching. Web pages of various schools can be searched to gather more knowledge on the daily practice of the school.

Provisions Made by Rajasthan Government for School Internship

In Rajasthan, internship of B.Ed. students was not being done due to Corona period. Therefore, it was decided by the government that the students of B.Ed. would be sent to the field along with the teachers by connecting them with government schools. Along with teachers for internship, B.Ed. students will also help teachers in online study from door to door. Under ISMAIL-3,



Cover Page



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students from class 1 to class VIII will do the work of putting homework, checking homework, filling work book, evaluating work book and preparing performance sheet of every student. In this way, B.Ed. students will be able to get practical knowledge along with the study of theory.

B.Ed. students will go door-to-door with the teachers to test the intelligence of the students by going door-to-door with the teachers, class education speech, education philosophy, HawaMahal, Ismail 3, filling the book, giving homework, checking homework, reviewing weak children. Along with this, they maintain register, maintain library, make TC, make mark sheet, teach through smart classroom, work in coordination with school management and staff and get information about the momentary activities going on in the school, etc. You will be able to get practical knowledge.

Conclusion

According to the National Council for Teacher Education (Regulation, Norms and Procedure) Regulations 2014 passed by the National Council for Teacher Education, B.Ed. School-based program was made mandatory in the curriculum, the main objective of which is to create an effective teacher of such teacher who can work as a regular teacher by living in the school environment. But at present, the internship being done by the students is just a food supply. The original purpose of the internship has been forgotten. The biggest reason for this is that the internship is being neglected due to Corona. Practical knowledge is very important for teaching. Perfection will not come in student teachers without an internship. Good teachers will be available only when they get the right training. Therefore, there is a need for teacher training institutions and the government to make special provisions in this regard.

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