

**A STUDY ON THE PRE-SERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHER TRAINING  
PROGRAMME (TTC) IN KERALA- 2010  
SCERT, KERALA  
(DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION)**

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**LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE STUDY**

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**4.1 The feasibility of the existing curriculum**

“The curriculum objectives are very prescriptive in relation to process, outcome does not specify properly”. This observation is correct.

So many tasks in terms of seminars, debates, referencing, comparison of sophisticated materials such as curriculum of other countries in relation to process are prescribed in the TTC curriculum. There has not been carried out any study pertaining to the transactability of these prescriptions of curriculum before introducing it. Besides, repetition of so many things in different subjects etc., culminates to curriculum load. Unnecessary emphasis of writing tasks and their products demand very much time. Little precaution has been taken to provide training to teacher educators, making materials available to students and teachers etc., in order to ensure the transaction possible. So the student teachers are confronted with extreme frustration owing to the tyranny of processes and their product. The present curriculum is very heavy which cannot be transacted during two years' time. So many topics that are not expected to be taught in a certificate programme of this duration are included. So many unwanted theory topics are included. The same topics are repeated in different papers. The treatment of the papers are not conducive for blending theory and practice. Further the curriculum is not revised on the basis of KCF 2007. Constructivist paradigm, issue based approach and critical pedagogy which form the foundations of the present elementary school curriculum and textbooks. The TTC curriculum does not match with it. Therefore the existing curriculum is not feasible to be continued.

**4.2 Curriculum load**

Curriculum cannot be transacted in the stipulated time. Lack of materials and teacher educators' support cumulatively affect as heavy load to the students.

### **4.3 Tyranny of process and writing burden**

All the process strategies end up with written product. Teacher educators give writing tasks without much planning. Without considering how much time one task requires, some times many tasks are given simultaneously by different teacher educators. Student teachers are compelled to write so many pages together which are humanly impossible. So they resort to copying without knowing what they do? All these consume the time of student teachers. TTC has become the synonym of writing. Student teachers were of the same opinion that they are fed up with excess writing. It can be seen that student teachers lose much of their time unnecessarily writing various assignments and records. So they do not get time to read and study. This is a very serious impediment in the TTC programme.

### **4.4 Textbook and support materials**

There are not textbooks for TTC course. There is no support materials for teacher educators too. Both students and teacher educators are groping in the darkness in search of materials. Teacher educators rarely bother to make needed materials available to the students. This has also contributed to the increase of curriculum load. Eventually, institutions have become the market place of unauthorised 'guide books'. Student teachers believe that those guide books are the real textbooks

### **4.5 Classroom process**

The classroom process in TTIs has changed to a small extent from the conventional mode as the student teachers often involve in seminars, discussion, debate etc. But these so called process strategies are insufficient to develop the concepts associated with various subjects because of the lack of adequate support and interventions from the part of the teacher educators. Eventually, the process strategies glide over to writing tasks which do not yield the construction of knowledge.

Only less than 40% of the instructional hours are utilised in presence of teacher educators in the TTC classrooms. During this period also worthy teacher-pupil interaction is much less. The quality of teacher-pupil interaction is poor owing to lack of planning and preparation, lack of providing materials and

the consequent complacency on the part of teacher educators. This situation in the classroom leads towards poverty of input to student teachers.

Though a lot of process strategies are prescribed in the curriculum, most of the teacher educators resort to 'lecture method'. Transmission mode is prevalent in TTC classroom. Class room remains more or less as conventional. Little change is visible in the classroom process in tune with process-based approach envisaged in the curriculum. This let slip opportunities to experience process based transactions which otherwise would have been worth to follow by the student teachers.

The teacher educators whose classes were observed are not in the habit of maintaining their training manual regularly. Teacher educators do not plan well before taking classes. Hence, needed materials, aids and other appliances are not being made use of in the class. In short, lack of professionalism on the part of teacher educators while dealing with pre-service classes is visible. Hence teaching quality remains poor, which adversely affect the development of student teachers.

The teacher educator- student teacher interaction is less than forty percent of the total time. The rest of time is spent by students themselves without adequate support or even presence of the teacher educators.

Pre-service teacher training process necessarily be the blending of theory and practice. Then only the students teachers will be able to assimilate the concepts in all the areas in tune with their classroom implications. But blending of theory and practice happens minimally, particularly in foundation papers.

TTC programme has assumed overemphasis on subject teaching rather than developing the student teachers to teach elementary children from classes I to VI.

The courses (papers) and their content are not prepared based on this perspective.

Instead of a professional programme with ample scope for closely watching and providing equitable support for every student teacher in order to develop self-learning capacity, mere course completion is taking place. The structure

of the course is largely oriented towards the theoretical foundations related to pedagogy which have got limited scope to enable the student teachers to identify their role in school. This impedes the professional growth of student teachers.

#### **4.6 Teaching Skills**

Basic skills that a teacher should acquire such as questioning, analysis of content, use of blackboard, activity based teaching, students' assessment, teaching in multilevel situation etc., are not adequately developed in the student teachers. When the TTC programme is confined to theory and pedagogy, minimal attention is paid for developing teaching skills. Therefore most of the students are far behind in their teaching skills.

#### **4.7 Co-curricular activities**

Co-curricular activities such as morning assembly, parliamentary activities, sports, games day celebrations, study tour, community work etc., are essential experiences which pave the way for the development of a beginner teacher. But the institutions and teacher educators fail to develop a favourable attitude among the student teachers, towards such activities. Unaided institution is far behind in this regard where many students keep negative attitude towards many of the co-curricular activities. Training fails to inculcate the right spirit among students. On the contrary, all the student teachers with negligible exception accept fifteen days' community living camp whole-heartedly. Curriculum gives less weightage to working with community.

#### **4.8 Teaching practice**

Preparatory activities such as analytical classes, demonstration classes, criticism classes etc. are carried out based on the stipulations in the curriculum. Majority of the student teachers like teaching practice. However many of them are not confident in communication, class management etc.

Institutional variation is visible in the teaching practice. DIET takes care of the teaching practice as an institutional priority. So faculty members often visit the schools and support them. In the aided TTI too teacher educators provide support by visiting the schools frequently. But in unaided TTI the students are not welcome in the school. Teacher educators are not particular

to provide support to the students. So they are far behind in their confidence to teach during teaching practice.

The quality of the lesson plans, pedagogic analysis report etc. reveal that there is a quality erosion in equipping the students teachers in the TTIs. Very stereo typed format is followed for developing lessons with less pedagogic clarity. The response column of teaching manual remains empty. This shows that student teachers lack the concept of assessment and feed back. It is understood that teacher educators do not take it or any other pedagogic issue in a research-based manner. There is no scope for creativity and diversity in the making of teaching manual. It is considered as an inevitable evil by the students.

Students teachers seem striving hard to finish the required number of lessons rather than developing professional abilities from the school experiences.

In the second year TTC, student teachers get very less theory classes. Theory and its practical implication do not be treated hand in hand. Teaching practice is in second year only. This is the right time to reconcile theory and practice, so that student teachers get a lot of opportunities to try out various concepts across different subjects. It is a reality that most of the topics particularly general paper which are essential during teaching practice are taught after teaching practice.

Student teachers are not attached to regular teachers. Teacher educators' convenience rather than student teachers' developmental needs governs the selection of schools for teaching practice. So they do not get support from regular teachers. Except DIET other TTIs do not maintain communication between teacher educators and regular teachers for facilitating the school experience programme fruitful to the student teachers.

#### **4.9 The duration of TTC course**

The duration of the course is insufficient to develop a beginner elementary teacher particularly in the changed context. The two year programme is inadequate in equipping a higher secondary passout to handle children from class I to VII that too for teaching five subjects. Since the students upward mobility is blocked due to this certificate programme prospective students

do not join the course.

#### **4.10 NCTE norms and teacher educators**

There are three types of staff patterns in government aided TTIs, unaided TTIs and DIETs. Aided TTIs and govt TTIs have only four teacher educators. Their qualification is BSc. BEd or BA BEd which is as good as high school teachers'. But in unaided TTIs there are 7 teacher educators with postgraduation and BEd as qualification. DIET faculty of pre-service teacher education unit possess qualification like MA/MSc with MEd and at least 5 years' experience in departmental school. NCTE norms of staff pattern have not been implemented in government and aided TTIs. This has created an imbalance in the treatment of institutions in terms of academic personnel thereby affecting the quality of pre-service teacher training. Though NCTE maintains norms for giving recognition to institutions, there is no surety that the mandatory facilities are available there in unaided TTIs. SCERT approves the appointment of teacher educators, in unaided TTIs but there is no mechanism to see that those qualified teacher educators continue to teach there in the institute or someone else teaches in place of the approved teacher educator holding the latter's certificates.

Most of the students who joins TTC are from poor economic background. Almost half of the students join because of their parents' compulsion without considering their consent. 66% of the students of second year TTC in the sample belong to families with income less than 24000/- per annum. Passing of the TTC will make them employable, the parents still believe. But the present TTC programme does not appear capable of developing them to compete in the job market.

The students who join TTC are relatively poor in their academic performance particularly in english. There is no mechanism to provide equitable support to students to better their subject knowledge.

TTC programme should be viewed upon in a different perspective. Students hail from poor economic background who are not in a position to afford other professional courses only join this course. It would be difficult to carve out a prospective teaching group for future unless pre-service programmes is made attractive and challenging.

#### **4.11 Teacher educators' empowerment**

Lack of professional approach is a crucial problem in pre-service teacher training. The search of the causes may reach to the teacher educators' qualifications and their quantity. However there is no regular teacher empowerment programme in the state apart from the isolated training programme being organised by DIETs and orientation programmes organised by SCERT which is imparted through DIETs. Frequent changes of teacher educators in unaided TTIs and transfer of teacher educators in aided TTIs impede their continuous empowerment. Training needs are always different. No mechanism to constantly assess the training needs of the teacher educators. Hence it is likely that this also contributes to the deterioration of professionalism in the pre-service teacher training programme.

#### **4.12 Monitoring**

There is chronic negligence on the part of the concerned in monitoring the activities of TTIs. This has seriously affected the functioning of elementary pre-service institutions. DIETs have not undertaken the responsibility of academic monitoring in the district. The absence of monitoring mechanism in the functioning DIET affects its quality and performance.

#### **4.13 Gender imbalance**

More than 90% students are women. Men do not join this course. This gender imbalance in the future teacher population is not healthy.

#### **4.14 Infrastructure**

Infrastructural facilities are not sufficient according to the NCTE norms. No labs such as social science lab, psychology lab, science lab etc., are functional in any of the institutions except DIET where computer lab and science lab are physically available. Only name boards of labs are placed on top of lifeless rooms. Though NCTE norms are considered for giving recognition to institutes there appears little mechanism to see that such facilities are available in the TTIs and DIETs. The demand of facilities are not coming up owing to the poor quality of teacher training process in TTIs.