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Educating the educators through distance mode: Chhattisgarh experience

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Abstract

Distance-Education Programme (DEP) is a major intervention started by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, on 1st July 2003 to train teachers of the country under SSA programme and the course is popularly known as Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed). This is intended to upgrade the professional competencies of working teachers in the elementary schools who have entered in the profession without formal training. This paper deals with the training of elementary teachers through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode in Chhattisgarh started under the supervision of SCERT from 07.05.2012 with the permission of NCTE. The main objective of this study was to find out the perception of the elementary teachers enrolled in the D.El.Ed. (ODL) programme regarding relevancy and applicability of this programme, academic support they get and impact of programme on untrained teachers. The researcher was used survey method under descriptive research for this study. The sample consists of 300 untrained elementary school teachers pursuing Diploma in Elementary Education through ODL mode as participants from the different study centres of the Chhattisgarh were selected for the study. The data in the study have been gathered through the questionnaire in which the open ended questions take part. Students were asked to give their feedback on areas associated with the relevancy and applicability of this programme, academic support and impact of the programme. To study the perceptions as perceived by the trainees, content analysis was incorporated. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed with the percentage technique. Analysis of data indicates that programme is relevant and applicable for the teacher trainees as they imbibe skills to transfer their implicit knowledge into practical knowledge but still there is a need to improve the programme to cater the expectations of trainees and society at a large. The areas that emerged to be a matter of concern in the present study are outdated course designing, absence of co-curricular activities, inadequate and less experienced resource persons, insufficient academic support.

Keywords: Distance education, In-Service Elementary teacher education, Diploma in Elementary Education (ODL) programme, Learners opinion

1. Introduction

Teacher is the most prominent component in the process of making education more effective and accessible to children, as teacher is the heart of the school and they are the main pillars of the society (Duggal, 2005) [14]. Therefore, to benefit the teachers in their role a sound professional training is indispensable. Teacher education in India has a strong historical prospective. As a different outside interference, it starts moulding from the ancient education system and till the present system of education taking shape according to the global and local needs of Indian society (Balwaria and Gupta, 2014) [4]. In this connection a paradigm shift was take place in 20th century namely "education for elites to education for masses" (Joshi, 2005) [18] and to deal with this expansion a national programme has been launched which is commonly known as 'Education for All' (EFA). This swing formed gigantic challenges to education in general and to teacher education in particular. In order to fulfilment of this objective many national level programmes such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) are implemented at the national level. The National curriculum framework on school education-2005 (NCFSE, 2005) [23] also highlighted the urgent need for quality education in schools and need to make the classroom environment welcoming for students from diverse cultural background. In keeping the spirit of NCF-2005 the National

curriculum Framework on Teacher Education-2009 (NCFTE, 2009) acknowledged teacher education as a key factor for quality improvement in schools. With the enactment of Right to Education Act-2009 [29], responsibility to train all untrained teachers through a course approved by the National Council Teacher Education by 31st March 2015 was given to both the central and the state governments.

To meet such problems Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode was chosen as an alternative for teacher training, because it has capacity to: 1) to reach a large number of students, including remote areas, 2) the tutors and trainees don't need to be replaced while they learn, as they continue to work 3) once the system has been established and learning materials developed, the cost of enrolling extra students is relatively low (Carr, Fung and Chann, 2006) [6]. The NCF (2005) and NCFTE (2009) also emphasizes the need of distance mode for in-service training because it has the capability to reach to the teachers 'on the job' without interrupting the classroom teaching. Distance-Education Programme (DEP) is a major intervention started by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, on 1st July 2003 to train teachers of the country under SSA programme and the course started to train elementary teachers was known as Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed). The Elementary Teacher Education programme through Open and Distance Learning system is