

Reflections of Student-teachers on School Internship of 2-year B.Ed. Programme

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Absract

Preparing a competent teacher who possesses desired theoretical knowledge, pedagogical skill, and classroom managerial skill is the responsibility of any teacher education programme. Due to several constraints like ineffective curriculum, rigidness in its execution, lack of proper orientation to the prospective teachers, and insufficient duration of practice teaching programme made most of the teacher education institution to fail developing competent teacher. There was a general criticism that, the secondary teacher education curriculum of one year programme was not enough in terms of time to provide any scope for the student teacher to fledge with experiential learning in the school curriculum. Thus, NCTE Regulations 2014 recommended the enhancement of the duration to two year to the existing one year programme. It also highlighted that; the duration of School Internship Programme should be of minimum 20 weeks duration. Most of the Universities and Teacher Education Institutions started its implementation from 2015 onwards. It is in this context that this study has been conducted, which aims to investigate the challenges and concerns, if any, faced by prospective teachers during their extended school internship programme. The data has been collected from 300 prospective teachers from different teacher education institutions from Kozhikode and Mallapuram districts under Calicut University, Kerala. The result of the study reveals that there are many challenges and issues such as lack of time in organisation of curricular and co-curricular activities, writing of reflective journals, etc. as reflected by the student teachers. Majority of prospective teachers. (79%) agree that they

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face inconvenience due to long duration of internship. Study highlights that, mere increasing the duration of internship alone will not bring quality. More concentrated and systematic efforts are required in the organisation and implementation of school internship.

INTRODUCTION

India has made considerable progress in school education since independence, with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure, universal access and enrolment in schools. Centrally sponsored schemes such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Samagra Shiksha have been initiated at School Education level to attain these goals. Enhancing the quality of education has been another important goal of these centrally sponsored programmes. Despite of all these initiatives by central government and state governments, we are still struggling to improve the quality of our school education. Without improving the quality of our teacher preparation programmes, we may not be in a position to improve the quality of school education.

Teachers have to play a crucial role in enhancing quality of education. It is in this context, National Policy on Education (1986) has mentioned that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. This, in other way can be interpreted that if teacher preparation system fails, that will result in deteriorating the quality of education system also.

The concern for improving quality of teacher education has been a major topic of discussion in most of the reports of the commissions, committees, plans and policies on education. The Justice Verma Commission Report, 2012 (JVC, 2012) set up by the Supreme Court to study the state of teacher education and the functioning of the NCTE have identified vast gaps in current perspectives and aspirations for education and the situation of teacher education institutions.

One of the most frequently and significantly discussed challenges in teacher education programme is organisation of school experience activities. The crux of any professional development programme is the practical and hands on real experiences provided to the candidates. In the case of pre-service teacher preparation programme, this particular component is generally known as practice teaching. The other terminologies like school experience, school internship, etc also being used interchangeably.

Even though its objective is to give the prospective teachers enough firsthand experience in school functioning and teaching related activities, due to lack of organisational vision many of our teacher education institutions are

organising it in a mechanical way. The student teachers are not getting enough opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge during the school experience programme. NCFTE, 2009 tries to address this criticism of theory practical mismatch in teacher education programmes by incorporating the socio-cultural contexts of education, giving more emphasis on the field experience of student teachers in all courses through practicum, visits to innovative centers of pedagogy and learning, classroom based research, and longer duration of internship.

It is in this context, that, Justice Verma Commission, 2012, recommended enhancement of the duration of different teacher preparation programmes. As per the recommendations of JVC, 2012, National Council of Teacher Education has come up with its regulation, 2014.

THE CONTEXT

The NCTE Regulations, 2014 made an attempt to broaden the scope of practice teaching by emphasising the importance of providing the experience of all activities and programmes of the school to the student teachers. regulations suggested the enhancement of the duration of school internship to 20 weeks for all the pre-service teacher education programmes. In the case of 2 Year B.Ed programme, regulation suggested that school internship should be the part of a broader activity called 'Field Engagement' of 20 weeks has been

further split into two parts consisting of 4 weeks and 16 weeks to be organised in the first and second year. University of Calicut has modified the curriculum and syllabus of two year B.Ed as per the NCTE 2014, regulations and started implementing it also. The enhancement of the duration of school internship alone will not be sufficient to ensure improvement in the quality. The effective implementation of school internship programme by utilising the time appropriately also is very significant. It is in this context, the investigator thought of conducting an investigation about the reflection of student-teachers about the school internship component of 2 year B.Ed programme.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the reflections of student teachers about school internship they have undertaken as a part of 2 Year B.Ed programme.
2. To compare the reflections of student teachers from aided and unaided institutions about school internship they have undertaken.
3. To compare the reflections of student teachers from science and humanities specialisation about school internship they have undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

Since the present study aims to analyse the reflections of student – teachers about the school internship programmes they have undertaken

during the 2 Year B.Ed programme, investigator used survey technique to collect relevant data.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of the present study constitutes the entire student teachers studying in the 2nd year of 2 year B.Ed programme during 2018–19 organised by Teacher Education Institutions under Calicut University, Kerala.

Sample for the present study has been selected using multistage sampling technique. During the first stage two districts under Calicut University Jurisdiction have been selected purposively. The Districts selected were Kozhikode and Malappuram. During the second Stage Teacher Education Institutions were selected using strata sampling. One government, one aided and three unaided institutions were selected during this stage. 300 student teachers from these institutions comprise the final sample for the present Study. 166 student teachers were from unaided, 134 from aided and government institutions. For the study the student teachers from aided and government institutions were considered under aided management. Based on the subject of specialisation, 167 were with science and 133 were with humanities specialisation.

Tool

A questionnaire has been developed by the investigator to study the reflection of student teachers about

the various components of school internship programme. The purpose was to measure the benefits and difficulties they faced during various activities as a part of the school internship programme. The areas covered in the questionnaire are teaching, Evaluation, administration, teacher competency, class management, student interaction, teacher behaviour, student discipline, school climate, and student achievements, etc. The final tool consists of 28 items with two alternative responses agree and disagree.

Statistical Techniques

Percentile analysis and t-value for proportion were used for analysis of data.

Analysis and Discussion

The data collected using questionnaire was tabulated and percentage of responses under agree and disagree were calculated. The proportion of agree to disagree was used further for analysing the reflection of students based on type of management and subject specialisation.

REFLECTION OF STUDENT-TEACHERS ABOUT THE SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Table 1 below provides the number and percentage of the reflection of student teachers about various issues, problems and challenges they faced during the school internship.

Table 1
Response of Student-teachers about the Issues, Problems and Challenges they faced during the School Internship

S1 No	Statements	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	Faces inconvenience due to the long duration of internship	238(79.3)	62(20.7)
2.	It is very difficult to prepare for both curricular and extra-curricular activities at a time	171(57)	129(43)
3.	Getting involved in school related activities along with teaching badly affects other things	116(38.7)	184(61.3)
4.	Hurdles in teaching affect other things prescribed in the course	103(34.3)	197(65.7)
5.	Faces inconvenience from senior teachers who should themselves be mentors	92(30.7)	208(69.3)
6.	Burdened with heavy workload	115(38.3)	185(61.7)
7.	Had to face problems from students in the class while teaching	172(57.3)	128(42.7)
8.	Teachers working in the institutions show no care in preparing new methodology	104(34.7)	196(65.3)
9.	Teachers are generally lazy in duly analysing the lesson plan	72(24)	228(76)
10.	Frequent changes in learning media become problematic	121(40.3)	179(59.7)
11.	There is no enough time allotted for class room activities	129(43)	171(57)
12.	Getting various responsibilities related to school becomes intolerable	78(26)	222(74)
13.	Lacking basic necessities in school affects day to day affairs	112(37.3)	188(62.7)
14.	Teachers scold even for silly things	65(21.7)	235(88.3)
15.	Cannot manage teaching responsibly since there are so many other duties assigned as part of working in the school	57(19)	243(81)
16.	Do not get enough time for yoga and journal works	179(59.7)	121(40.3)
17.	Do not even get basic facilities like restroom, dining area, toilet, etc	93(31)	207(69)
18.	Teachers become egotistical at even simple things	98(32.7)	202(67.3)
19.	Teachers scold in front of other students	22(7.3)	278(92.7)

20.	Give no directions to improve the ways of teaching	32(10.7)	268(89.3)
21.	Give less motivation, encouragement or appreciation	34(11.3)	266(88.7)
22.	Acts as if we are a burden to them	54(18)	246(82)
23.	Attempts to make fun of in the presence of all the students if there is a problem concerning the entire class	20(6.7)	280(93.3)
24.	Questioning from the staffrooms is common and is continuing	38(12.7)	262(87.3)
25.	Allocate portions which are unmanageable in number	88(29.3)	212(70.7)
26.	Allocate portions without considering the time limit	98(32.7)	202(67.3)
27.	Generally feel mental stress, laziness and grief	128(42.7)	172(57.3)
28.	Often feels that teaching practice should somehow end very soon	128(42.7)	172(57.3)

From the Table 1, it can be observed that around 79 per cent student teachers opined that, they have faced inconvenience due to longer duration of school internship. But, for the subsequent reflective question, they were given mixed responses. In the case of preparing activities related with curricular and co-curricular activities at the same time, 57 per cent of them expressed their difficulty. Around equal number of student teachers agreed that, they have faced problems in managing students effectively. In the case of planning and conducting yoga activities and writing of reflective journals around 60 per cent of the participants expressed the lack of time. 43 per cent of the respondents reflected that, the time allotted was not enough for organising classroom activities and 40 per cent of them opined that switching in to leaching

learning medium often creates problems. Mental stress, laziness and grief due to longer duration have been reflected by 42.3 per cent of student-teachers and similar number wished to see the end of school internship quickly. Regarding the support from mentor teachers most of the student teachers only 11 per cent said that, they were not given any direction, support or motivation for their improvement. 18 per cent reflected that, the mentor teachers were thinking that, student teachers are a burden to them. With regard to teaching activities, around 30 per cent opined that, sometimes they feel, the activities given to them were unmanageable and 32 per cent said that the activities were assigned to them without considering time. 37 per cent of the respondents reflected that lack of basic amenities

provided to them in the school hinder their activities and performance.

REFLECTION OF STUDENT-TEACHERS ABOUT SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WITH RESPECT TO THE TYPE OF MANAGEMENT

To compare the reflection of student teachers from government and unaided institutions about the school internship programmes, they have undergone, investigator

first calculated the percentages of agreement and disagreement responses given by the government and unaided student teachers for each statement. To find the significance difference between their reflections based on type of management, t value of proportions were calculated separately. The analysis of the data based on type of management is presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2
Response of Student-teachers about the issues, Problems and Challenges they faced during the School Internship based on type of Management

S. No.	Statement	Aided (N=134)		Unaided (N=166)		t-value
		Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	
1.	Faces inconvenience due to the long duration of internship	85.8	14.2	74.1	25.9	2.48**
2.	It is very difficult to prepare for both curricular and extra-curricular activities at a time	59.7	40.3	54.8	45.2	0.85
3.	Getting involved in school related activities along with teaching badly affects other things	41.0	59.0	36.7	63.3	0.76
4.	Hurdles in teaching affect other things prescribed in the course	44.0	56.0	26.5	73.5	3.17*
5.	Faces inconvenience from senior teachers who should themselves be mentors	50.0	50.0	15.1	84.9	6.51*

6.	Burdened with heavy workload at times	49.3	50.7	29.5	70.5	3.50*
7.	Had to face problems from students in the class while teaching	56.7	43.3	57.8	42.2	0.19
8.	Teachers working in the institutions show no care in preparing new methodology	31.3	68.7	37.3	62.7	1.08
9.	Teachers are generally lazy in duly analysing the lesson plan	29.1	70.9	19.9	80.1	1.85
10.	Frequent changes in learning media become problematic	45.5	54.5	36.1	63.9	1.65
11.	There is no enough time allotted for class room activities	56.7	43.3	31.9	68.1	4.31*
12.	Getting various responsibilities related to school becomes intolerable	38.1	61.9	16.3	83.7	4.27*
13.	Lacking basic necessities in school affects day to day affairs	47.0	53.0	29.5	70.5	3.11*
14.	Teachers scold even for silly things	29.9	70.1	15.1	84.9	3.09*
15.	Cannot manage teaching responsibly since there are so many other duties assigned as part of working in the school	32.8	67.2	7.8	92.2	5.49*
16.	Do not get enough time for yoga and journal works	57.5	42.5	61.4	38.6	0.68
17.	Do not even get basic facilities like restroom, dining area, toilet, etc.	38.8	61.2	24.7	75.3	2.62*
18.	Teachers become egotistical at even simple things	56.7	43.3	13.3	86.7	7.96*

19.	Teachers scold in front of other students	11.9	88.1	3.6	96.4	2.74*
20.	Give no directions to improve the ways of teaching	14.2	85.8	7.8	92.2	1.78
21.	Give less motivation, encouragement or appreciation	14.2	85.8	9.0	91.0	1.41
22.	Acts as if we are a burden to them	28.4	71.6	9.6	90.4	4.21*
23.	Attempts to make fun of in the presence of all the students if there is a problem concerning the entire class	11.9	88.1	2.4	97.6	3.28*
24.	Questioning from the staffrooms is common and is continuing	17.2	82.8	9.0	91.0	2.12**
25.	Allocate portions which are unmanageable in number	28.4	71.6	30.1	69.9	0.321
26.	Allocate portions without considering the time limit	31.3	68.7	33.7	66.3	0.44
27.	Generally feel mental stress, laziness and grief	40.3	59.7	44.6	55.4	0.74
28.	Often feels that teaching practice should somehow end very soon	53.0	47.0	34.3	65.7	3.25*

* significant at 0.01 level** significant at 0.05 level

From Table 1, it is clear that there exist a significant difference in percentage of agreement of aided and unaided student teacher for following situations, faces inconvenience due to the long duration of study activities ($t=2.48$), hurdles in teaching affect other things prescribed in the course ($t=3.17$), faces inconvenience from senior teachers who should

themselves be mentors ($t=6.51$), burdened with heavy workload at times ($t=3.50$), there is no enough time allotted for class room activities ($t=4.31$), getting various responsibilities related to school becomes intolerable ($t=4.21$), lacking basic necessities in school affects day to day affairs ($t=3.11$), teachers scold even for silly things ($t=3.09$),

Cannot manage teaching responsibly since there are so many other duties assigned as part of working in the school ($t=5.49$), do not even get basic facilities like restroom, dining area, toilet, etc., ($t=2.62$), teachers become egotistical at even simple things ($t=7.96$), teachers scold in front of other students ($t=2.74$), Acts as, we are a burden to them ($t=4.21$), attempts to make fun of in the presence of all the students if there is a problem concerning the entire class ($t=3.28$), questioning from the staffrooms is common and is continuing ($t=2.12$), and often feels that teaching practice should somehow end very soon ($t=3.25$).

Interestingly in all these statements, the reflection of student teachers from aided institutions are seems to be more in the scale of agreement. This shows that, the difficulties, challenges and issues faced by student teachers from

aided institutions are significantly higher than that from unaided institutions.

REFLECTION OF STUDENT-TEACHERS ABOUT SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME WITH RESPECT TO SUBJECT OF SPECIALISATION

To compare the reflection of student teachers about the school internship programmes, they have undergone, investigator first calculated the percentages of agreement and disagreement responses given by the student teachers with science and humanities specialisation for each statement. To find the significance difference between their reflections based on subject specialisation, t value of proportions were calculated separately. The analysis of the data based on subject specialisation is presented in the Table 3 below.

Table 3
Response of Student-teachers about the Issues, Problems and Challenges they faced during the School Internship based on Subject Specialisation

S. No.	Statement	Science (N=167)		Humanities (N=133)		t-value
		Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	
1.	Faces inconvenience due to the long duration of internship	80.8	19.2	77.4	22.6	0.72
2.	It is very difficult to prepare for both curricular and extra-curricular activities at a time	61.7	38.3	51.1	48.9	1.84
3.	Getting involved in school related activities along with teaching badly affects other things	31.7	68.3	47.4	52.6	2.77*

4.	Hurdles in teaching affect other things prescribed in the course	26.3	73.7	44.4	55.6	3.28*
5.	Faces inconvenience from senior teachers who should themselves be mentors	26.3	73.7	36.1	63.9	1.82
6.	Burdened with heavy workload at times	38.9	61.1	37.6	62.4	0.23
7.	Had to face problems from students in the class while teaching	55.1	44.9	60.2	39.8	0.88
8.	Teachers working in the institutions show no care in preparing new methodology	26.9	73.1	44.4	55.6	3.16*
9.	Teachers are generally lazy in duly analysing the lesson plan	22.2	77.8	26.3	73.7	0.82
10.	Frequent changes in learning media become problematic	32.3	67.7	50.4	49.6	3.17*
11.	There is no enough time allotted for class room activities	46.1	53.9	39.1	60.9	1.21
12.	Getting various responsibilities related to school becomes intolerable	24.0	76.0	28.6	71.4	0.90
13.	Lacking basic necessities in school affects day to day affairs	35.9	64.1	39.1	60.9	0.56
14.	Teachers scold even for silly things	24.6	75.4	18.0	82.0	1.37
15.	Cannot manage teaching responsibly since there are so many other duties assigned as part of working in the school	10.8	89.2	29.3	70.7	4.05*
16.	Do not get enough time for yoga and journal works	64.7	35.3	53.4	46.6	1.98**
17.	Do not even get basic facilities like restroom, dining area, toilet, etc	22.2	77.8	42.1	57.9	3.70*

18.	Teachers become egotistical at even simple things	26.3	73.7	40.6	59.4	2.62*
19.	Teachers scold in front of other students	6.6	93.4	8.3	91.7	0.56
20.	Give no directions to improve the ways of teaching	15.0	85.0	5.3	94.7	2.70*
21.	Give less motivation, encouragement or appreciation	13.8	86.2	8.3	91.7	1.49
22.	Acts as if we are a burden to them	16.2	83.8	20.3	79.7	0.91
23.	Attempts to make fun of in the presence of all the students if there is a problem concerning the entire class	2.4	97.6	12.0	88.0	3.31*
24.	Questioning from the staffrooms is common and is continuing	16.2	83.8	8.3	91.7	2.04**
25.	Allocate portions which are unmanageable in number	27.5	72.5	31.6	68.4	0.77
26.	Allocate portions without considering the time limit	35.3	64.7	29.3	70.7	1.10
27.	Generally feel mental stress, laziness and grief	44.3	55.7	40.6	59.4	0.64
28.	Often feels that teaching practice should somehow end very soon	35.9	64.1	51.1	48.9	2.64*

* significant at 0.01 level** significant at 0.05 level

Science and humanities student teacher shows a significant difference in percentage of agreement or disagreement for following statements—getting involved in school related activities along with teaching badly affects other things ($t=2.77$), hurdles in teaching affect other things prescribed in the course ($t=3.28$), frequent changes in learning media become problematic ($t=3.17$),

cannot manage teaching responsibly since there are so many other duties assigned as part of working in the school ($t=4.05$), do not get enough time for yoga and journal works ($t=1.98$), do not even get basic facilities like restroom, dining area, toilet, etc., ($t=3.70$), teachers become egotistical at even simple things ($t=2.62$), give no directions to improve the ways of teaching ($t=2.70$), attempts to

make fun of in the presence of all the students if there is a problem concerning the entire class ($t=3.31$), questioning from the staffrooms is common and is continuing ($t=2.04$), and often feels that teaching practice should somehow end very soon ($t=2.64$).

From the table it can also be seen that, the maximum agreement towards the statements were shown by student teachers with humanities specialisation except for few statements. In the case of lack of support from mentor teachers, the difference is significant in favour of student teachers from science specialisation. Similar is the case with reflection towards the statements lack of time in yoga and journal writing and questioning from the staffroom. The result of this comparison shows that, student teachers with humanities specialisation have faced minimal problems during school internship.

FINDINGS

The major findings of the present study are summarised below—

- Around 57 per cent of student teachers expressed their difficulty at preparing curricular and co-curricular activities together.
- In the case of managing students during classroom activities, more than 57 per cent agreed that, they faced lots of difficulty.
- Lack of time was an obstacle in organising yoga activities and preparing journals for around 60 per cent participants.
- Only less than 20 per cent opined that, the experienced teachers (mentor teachers) from the school were not helpful in motivating and supporting them.
- More than 30 per cent felt that the some of the activities given to them were unmanageable due to time constraints.
- 37 per cent pointed out that lack of basic amenities provided to them in the school hinder their activities and performance.
- More than three quarters (79%) of the student teachers agree that longer duration of the school internship programme created inconvenience to them.
- Study found significant difference in the reflection of student teachers based on type of management. Towards all those items which show significant difference the agreement towards issues, challenges and problems during school internship of student teachers from aided institutions are significantly higher than those from unaided Institutions.
- Study found significant difference in the reflection of student teachers based on subject of specialisation. In most of the cases, the agreement towards issues, challenges and problems during school internship of student teachers with humanities specialisation are significantly higher than those with science specialisation.

DISCUSSION

Providing ample opportunities to the student teachers to practice and gain exposure of various kinds from a real school situation can be considered as a crucial phase of any pre-service teacher preparation programme. By recommending a longer duration teacher preparation programme with increased internship, Justice Verma Commission (2012), has send a message to the education community the need of providing a real hands on field on experience to the prospective teachers. The result emerged from the present study needs to be discussed in this perspective. It has been seen that lack of time as a constrain in organisation of many activities both curricular and co curricular as reflected by some students. Whether this happens due to lack of time or due to absence of planning? Student teachers are placed in the school for almost 4 months. That means, it may not be the issue of lack of time instead it of course will be the issue of judicial use of time. The other major issues reflected by majority of the students are related with planning of curricular and co-curricular activities together, managing students during classroom teaching, amenities provided in the school are not sufficient, etc. These issues were there earlier during the shorter version of school internship also. This indicates that, the basic issue is not of duration but it is something else. Here, comes the role of proper planning and organisation of school internship programme. As

mentioned earlier, what is required is a systematic planning and judicial use of the time. The findings also reveal that almost 80 per cent of the respondents opined that the longer duration of school internship has been an inconvenience for them. This opinion may be the result of improper planning and organisation of school internship programme. The study also reveals that the reflections of student's teachers from aided institutions were against the duration of school internship and their issues and problems were significantly higher than those from unaided institutions. This is an indication that, the unaided institutions shows more interest in planning and organising school internship activities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study reflects that, merely increasing the duration of school internship has no use unless it is organised in a systematic way. It is not the matter of sending student teacher to a particular school for four months. What's more important is the kind of experience they acquire during that period. Teachers being the one of the important resources responsible for quality education, the preparation of teachers also require utmost care and importance. It is in this context, the Universities and teacher education institutions needs to prepare effective and feasible guidelines for the organisation of the school internship programmes. The guidelines could

include the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, different activities to be organised at institution level and school level, orientation to the stakeholders, assessment of student teachers, etc.

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