CHAPTER III

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF A GROUP OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

The quality of education at any stage ultimately depends upon the quality of teachers. The role of the teacher at the secondary level has a special importance because in the long run, it is the quality of secondary education which determines the quality of primary and higher education since all teachers for the primary schools and all students for the higher institutions are drawn from the secondary schools. The quality of teacher education at the secondary level, therefore, plays a very significant role in the whole process of education.

It is, therefore, essential to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of a teacher-training programme for teachers of secondary schools. With this purpose in view, a scheme for a follow-up study of trained teachers was submitted from the department of Education and B.T. of the Gauhati University to the Ministry of Education of the Government of India. The Ministry of Education, realising the importance of the project, immediately accepted the scheme and agreed to bear the entire expenses of the scheme. The present writer was appointed as one of the Research Fellows under Professor B. C. Kar, Professor and Head of the Department of Education and B.T. of the
Gauhati University. The writer had the privilege of working in the scheme for the first two years and the major portion of the entire scheme was completed by him.*

This association has created in him a great interest in the field of teacher education at the secondary level, which took him to the Institute of Education of the University of London for a year where he selected 'A Comparative Study of Teacher Training in the United Kingdom and India' as his subject for advanced studies leading to the Associateship of the University of London.

The present study is the result of the writer's observation of 150 secondary school teachers of Assam selected at the initial stage of the implementation of the follow-up scheme. The purpose of the study was to find out whether or not the trained teachers follow the teaching methods in their schools after their returning from training and to find out the causes which were responsible for the impracticability of the training college methods and techniques being applied to actual classroom practice if the teachers did not follow these methods.

Altogether 150 teachers serving in the secondary schools of Assam were selected for the study at the initial

stage. Of these, 100 were trained graduates and 50 were untrained teachers selected at random. The schools from which these teachers were selected scattered over the whole State which included private, aided and government schools. The trained teachers studied Principles of Education, Educational Psychology, School Organisation and School Hygiene, History of Education, Educational Essays, Lives and works of some great educators and methods of teaching two or three school subjects. They were also required to teach 30 lessons in the local schools under supervision of the training college staff as a part of their practical training. They prepared their lesson plans daily and got them approved before teaching each lesson and they passed an examination also in Practical teaching assessed by one or two internal and one external examiners. They prepared some simple aids themselves during their training relevant to the subjects taught. Most of the trained teachers were deputed by the Government of Assam from the aided and the government schools.

The trained teachers were observed from the beginning in their theoretical and practical classes when they joined the teachers’ training department of the Gauhati University. At the time of teaching practice in the local schools and also at the time of their final Practical Teaching examination, they were thoroughly observed and a general record of their teaching performance was kept without going into the details. Their address and other relevant information were collected.
After the completion of their training, they were followed up in the schools from which they were deputed for training. They were observed in the class-room while they were teaching. Although information about the writer's visit was intimated to the schools through the office of the Inspector of Schools concerned who arranged these visits, the exact date or dates of the visit were not communicated to the schools. This was intentionally done to observe the teachers under normal circumstances without giving an opportunity to the teachers to make special preparations for the occasion. Records of their teaching performance were kept in a printed form individually which is reproduced below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Note:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mastery of the Subject matter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence and Correctness:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questions and treatment of answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Board writing, sketches and summary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Progress of the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Class

Response and activity.

Discipline in the Class.

Teacher

Manners and attitudes.

Voice.

Resourcefulness and alertness.

Class management and individual attention.

Total Effect

Remarks

Signature of the Supervisor.

Along with the first group of trained teachers who were followed up, teaching methods of another fifty untrained teachers were also observed during the writer's visit to the schools to make a comparative study of the methods of teaching of the trained and untrained teachers. The educational qualifications of the teachers were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trained Group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A., B.T.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Sc., B.T.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attempts were made to make the teachers feel at home when their teaching was observed to make them free in their work. After the observation, all teachers were interviewed and the interview was made as informal as possible. The trained teachers were asked about the difficulties in applying their newly acquired professional knowledge and skill in their actual classroom work. They were also asked about the usefulness or otherwise of the professional training as a whole and of the different subjects they studied and also about the changes they felt necessary in the teacher training programme in the light of their experience. The questions were of the following type:

A. What experience in the training college has proved to be specially helpful to you in your job as a teacher of a secondary school?
B. What modifications in the training course would you suggest in the light of your experience?

C. What factors are standing in the way of your applying the methods and plans with which you were acquainted during the course of your training?

D. What do you consider to be the most important thing that would go to make the training more effective?

A printed questionnaire* dealing with the personal data, social life, economic conditions, academic qualifications, professional knowledge, teaching methods, teaching experience, discipline in schools, participation in extra-curricular activities etc. was given to the teachers interviewed with an assurance that the answers to the questions would be treated very very confidentially.

The teachers interviewed belonged to both the sexes and their economic and social background, experience and qualifications were so different that they actually represented the secondary school teachers of Assam. At the time of taking the study there were 6156 secondary school teachers in Assam, the number of trained teachers being 1162 only (men 977 and

* Copy of the Questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix I of this thesis.
women 185).* The number of teachers taken for this study, therefore, was adequate from the point of statistical sampling.

The age range was from 22 to 48 years, the average being 31 years for the trained group and 27 years for the untrained group. Most of the teachers were enthusiastic about the study although many of them were skeptical about the value of such studies. The Headmasters and the Headmistresses, who were also interviewed, were all helpful and cooperative and they expressed great enthusiasm in the study. Certain information relevant to the study were also collected from the Heads of the Institutions. The proforma used for the collection of these data is given in Appendix 2. An attitude test was also given to all teachers interviewed to determine the attitude of these teachers towards the teaching profession. Copy of the attitude test is given in Appendix 3.

An analysis of the data collected based on the verbal and written responses collected through the questionnaire and interview and observation of teaching performance shows the following.

None of the trained teachers prepared a lesson note or notes or any short plan of their work which they invariably

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did during their teaching practice and in the final examination in teaching. On being asked as to why they did not prepare a lesson plan, they replied that it was not possible for them to do so as they were required to teach six or seven class teaching periods a day and that too on a variety of subjects. Although in the daily time-table of the school, a teacher has one or two vacant periods, they never enjoy these as they are required to serve as substitutes for the absent teachers. Many teachers are also required to do a lot of administrative and clerical work during their leisure time. Some of the teachers are in charge of the school library and other social activities of the school. In the newly started schools and in the small schools, the non-teaching burden on the teachers is quite heavy but they do not get any relief from their teaching load because of their association with these activities.

The mastery of the subject matter was also not up to the mark. Of the one hundred trained graduates, eighty were Arts Graduates, fourteen Science Graduates and the rest with Master's degrees in different subjects. The subjects they taught in the school were in many cases different from what they studied in their college or what they selected as method subjects in the training colleges. Many teachers were found to teach those subjects in which their knowledge was only upto the Matriculation (now School leaving certificate) standard.
Although the trained teachers as a group were found to be somewhat methodical in their teaching and followed the correct sequences in general, their teaching was different from what they did during their practice teaching. Most of the teachers were found to have returned to their own traditional stereotyped methods of teaching. During their training they were acquainted with the new methods of teaching, such as the Dalton Plan, Project Method, Heuristic Method, Herbartian Steps, Correlation Method etc. They also studied the lives and works of the great educators like John Dewey, Froebel, Montessori, Gandhi and others. They studied about the new type of examination, techniques of questioning, class management and discipline in their training college. During our observation we have found that they forgot about all these methods of teaching and we were led to believe that the study of the lives and works of the great educators and the study of the new and dynamic methods of teaching did not inspire these trained teachers. Although they followed the Herbartian method of teaching during the teaching practice in the training college, more or less under compulsion as the training college staff insisted on these methods, they returned to their own methods of teaching after a few days of their rejoining the school.

It is, however, interesting to compare the teaching methods of the trained and the untrained teachers. Of the
fifty untrained teachers who were observed, fortyone teachers simply said what the text-books contained. Nine teachers did not use any text-book and said something more than what the text-books contained. Majority of the teachers in the untrained group read the text-book, explained few sentences and asked the students to read. Even in subjects like Geography and Science, some teachers merely read the lesson from the text-book. Only seven of these teachers used the black board. Few of them put questions also. The usual method of putting questions to the students was to assign a question to the first boy in the first bench and to the next boy by his side and to continue the process till time permitted. Students were not asked to answer the questions in their own language or in a voice so that the whole class could listen. Students were not encouraged to put questions on points not clear to them. Neither proper credit was given to the deserving pupils. The treatment of answers by the teachers on the whole was defective.

Except some Geography teachers none of the teachers used any teaching aids although some aids could have been easily made available by the teachers. All secondary schools in Assam, except some private Christian Missionary schools, were very poor in this respect and that was a plea advanced by many teachers for not using any aid. On being asked as to
why they did not prepare some simple aids such as charts, models etc., their reply was that, that was not possible under the circumstances in which they had to work. All the untrained teachers started the day’s lesson without giving any introduction or without testing previous knowledge of the students. No one of them encouraged the pupils to be actively involved in the teaching-learning situation. Many teachers were found shouting at the top of their voice and they used the same tone of voice throughout the whole class period. The voice of some of the teachers, specially of some women teachers, was very low. No one was found to have used the variation in the tone of voice as one of the effective techniques of class-room teaching. There were only seven women teachers in the group of untrained teachers and as such although it is difficult to draw any sex difference in the teaching performance, it appears to the writer that women are more suitable for the lower classes.

As compared to the untrained group of teachers, the trained group as a whole followed some methods of teaching in the sense that at least they put questions to the students, used the black board occasionally, introduced the lesson with an introduction or by asking some relevant questions to the pupils, followed the sequence to some extent and tried to get the students involved in the situation. The trained teachers also hardly used any aid except a map or a globe by the
geography teachers. They pointed out that the schools had no resources to have these aid.

Although the trained group of teachers put questions to the students, they did not put it properly and questions were not pre-prepared. Neither they treated the pupil responses in the way they should have done it as trained teachers. The work on the black board was not satisfactory. Sketches and summaries were hardly written on the black board and students were hardly asked to write on the black board. Except in some private schools, the black board was invariably small and glossy and was placed sometimes at a place not seen by all the pupils. Not a single teacher was found using a coloured chalk. Some of the schools were without dusters. The writer did not observe any disciplinary problems in the class rooms and on the whole the teachers' ability to maintain discipline in the class was found satisfactory. This might be due to the presence of some outsiders in the class-room. In the girls' schools, discipline was more satisfactory.

Although the group of trained teachers as a whole tried to give individual attention to the students, there was a tendency on their part to neglect the back benchers and to give more attention to the first few benches. Because of the use of long desks inside the class room, written work was not properly examined. Not a single teacher was found to have
examined whether the students used the pen properly, whether the reading materials were placed at correct distance or whether the black board was seen by all.

In response to the question whether they prepared their lessons daily, many replied in the negative. Although few of them said that they prepared the lessons very well, their teaching performance did not justify what they said. The typical answer was that there was no need of any preparation as they were teaching the subject for a long time.

Only a few teachers were found cheerful and enthusiastic about their work. As revealed by the questionnaire, most of the teachers had several dependents, the average being five and they had to supplement their income by doing private tuition. It was observed that the conditions under which the teachers had to work were deplorable. The writer did not find a single school where the teachers could sit comfortably during their leisure time. Although there is a tiffin break in the time-table in each school, tiffin is neither available to the students nor to the teachers. In some of the schools, teachers make their own arrangements for their tiffin, but these are exceptions.

The school buildings in general were not conducive to work. In most cases, the building roof is of corrugated iron sheets and in the absence of a ceiling, the class-room is not the proper place to teach and learn. All these factors contributed
largely to the frustration, unhappiness and pessimistic outlook of the teachers directly and indirectly.

The attitude of the teachers towards the teaching profession was also not encouraging. In response to a statement 'I am a teacher only because I am compelled to do so', about half of the teachers of the trained group wrote 'Yes' against the statement and 88 per cent of the teachers of the untrained group wrote 'Yes' against the same statement. An analysis of the attitude test given to 150 teachers showed that majority of the teachers did not have a positive attitude towards teaching.

An experimental study of the teachers' choice of profession undertaken by the present writer reveals that out of 50 trained graduates only 32 per cent gave first preference to teaching. Although they have crossed the age for any government service, 50 per cent preferred to be in civil service. The least preferred job was clerical, the percentage of teachers giving first preference to clerical job being only 4.®

It is interesting to compare the results of similar studies undertaken in other countries of the world. Even in

the United States of America, where the position of the teachers is decidedly better than his counterpart in India, teaching as a profession does not attract many people. "A group of women aged 20 to 30 was asked 'If you had your choice, what kind of work would you like to do?' The highest choice was for office or clerical work, 25.0 per cent. Factory, nursing, civil service, professional or executive, and arts (theatre, music etc) all outranked teaching in the order given of the entire sample, 6.8 per cent preferred teaching. This is almost exactly the proportion (6.9 per cent) of teachers among the gainfully occupied women, according to the United States Census. That teachers enjoy their work, and in higher proportion than is typical of workers in general, is suggested by a comparison of figures collected by the National Education Association (24) and by a Fortune Poll (28-Spring, 1947) of employed men. Only 1 per cent of the men teachers said 'I seldom enjoy teaching' as compared to 7.2 per cent of men in general who said that their work was dull and boring."

All trained teachers whose teaching was observed were asked to give their opinion about the training they received and also to suggest changes in the training programme. The opinion of the teachers about training may be indicated in the following statements.

& Mourse, W.S., Encyclopaedia of Educational Research, p.1420 Macmillon
1. The training course is more theoretical than practical and in some cases has no relevance to the problems of the school. More emphasis should be given to the practical aspect of teaching.

2. Some of the subjects like History of Education are absolutely unnecessary for the teachers in their day-to-day work and these should be discarded.

3. The course is too heavy to complete in one academic year which consists of only a few months. Either the duration of the course should be for two years or the syllabus should be made lighter.

4. A knowledge of Educational Psychology and Principles of Education is definitely useful for a teacher in dealing with the adolescent pupils and to understand the process of education. So also, a knowledge of School Organization and Hygiene is also required for the management of the school. Methods of teaching should be restricted to two subjects only and these should be full papers instead of half papers. If content of the subject is taught, it should be compulsory for all method subjects.

5. Some amenities by way of a common room should be made available to the teachers.
6. However excellent a training programme might be, it will never be effective if the teaching load of the trained teachers is not reduced and conditions of work are not improved.

According to the trained teachers themselves, the following factors are responsible for the ineffectiveness of the training programme.

1. Heavy teaching load.
2. Absence of teaching aids in the schools.
3. Unmanageable size of the class.
4. Shortage of staff, books, furniture etc.
5. Unsatisfactory pay scales of the teachers.
6. Absence of recreational facilities.
7. Indifferent social status of the teachers.
8. Theoretical nature of the training.

From the above, it is clear that the present system of teacher training is only partially effective in as much as the trained teachers do not or cannot make full use of their professional knowledge. It is a fact that every teacher has his or her own method of teaching and as such one should not insist on a particular standardised method or methods. What is required, is a dynamic and experimental approach to the whole
problem of teaching.

It appears, two factors are mainly responsible for the impracticability of the training college methods and techniques being applied to actual class-room practice. One is the training course itself and the other is the conditions under which a trained teacher has to work in a school.

Since the time of making this follow-up study of the trained teachers, many changes have taken place in the field of secondary education in its duration, structure, aims and objectives, organization and administration, curriculum, system of evaluation and practically in all aspects of secondary education. Development of teacher education, however, had not matched either in quality or in quantity this growth and diversity in the field of secondary education. The writer's experience as an organiser and supervisor of teaching practice of about 200 M.A. in Education and B.T. students of the University Classes, Gauhati University and also as an internal and external examiner of Practical teaching in the different parts of the State for about fifteen years shows that even now the trained teachers cannot or do not teach in the schools as they are taught to do so. The conditions of work in the schools have not improved in general and in some cases, due to economic reasons these have deteriorated to some extent. The writer had to visit about 20 schools in and
around Gauhati each year and another 20 schools or so outside Gauhati in connexion with the B.T. Practical Examination and he took every opportunity of seeing the schools in details and the teaching performance of the trained teachers most of whom were his pupils in the University. This study along with the writer's observation of trained teachers and the schools, makes him believe that there is an urgent need of reorganising teacher education at the secondary level. An attempt will be made in the next few chapters to suggest these changes.