CHAPTER VII

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE TEACHING PROGRAMMES.

A study of the records pertaining to practice teaching in the departments of Education and training colleges leads to an inference that all is not well with the programmes of practice teaching. This is also supported by the responses to the questionnaires and the schedule given in the previous chapters. This sad state of affairs is not confined to India alone. What is true about teacher-education in India is in a large measure true about teacher-education in America also. In India several education commissions have studied the problem of teacher-education from time to time and have made valuable suggestions for its improvement.

The B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee also took a commendable step in this direction in 1955. A Study Group set up by the Ministry of Education, Government of India had revised the programme of practice teaching in 1964. One of the Task Forces of the Education Commission 1964-66 had also produced a revised programme. But in spite of all this there is no marked improvement in the structural organisation and working of the programmes. Piece-meal changes in practice teaching have been effected again and again but their impact has been
nullified by rapidly changing conditions of society. Educational thought and philosophy have been developed in every sector of education but there is no equally rapid and corresponding adaptability in training colleges in the matter of technique. Forward-looking attitude which is so necessary for professional education is sadly lacking in the education of teachers. What is, therefore, required is a radical change in the whole structural organisation and working of practice teaching keeping the future in view.

By now the very conception of teaching has changed. The emphasis is now on helping the learner learn by himself. Likewise teacher training has changed to teacher-education. It is in the light of these new conceptions that we have to adapt our teacher-education programmes. Then, newly emerging aims of education demand a new type of teacher to realise them. Within a short period of 9 months we have to transform raw graduates with poor academic background and often lacking all sense of vocation, into craftsmen qualified to practice the most delicate and difficult human craft. We have to keep all these points in mind while trying to re-orientate the education of teachers. An attempt has been made in the following pages to offer a few suggestions for raising the tone of teacher-education.

I - Objectives of practice teaching:

(1) Practice teaching should bring about personal and professional development of the teachers-in-training.
(2) It should create and develop in them a sense of dedication to the profession of teaching.

(3) It should provide them, from first-hand experience, a knowledge about the school and its children and about the society from which they come.

(4) It should give them knowledge, and skill in the use, of different methods and techniques of teaching.

(5) It should give them training in performing different extra-teaching duties.

(6) It should create and develop in them a spirit of experimentation and a habit of self-criticism.

(7) It should enable them to discover the interests and capacities of individual children and to provide for their needs.

(8) It should create and develop in them the capacity to motivate pupils.

II - Selection of Candidates:

To realise the above objectives it is necessary that selection of right kind of candidates should be made after very careful scrutiny and tests. They should possess the following qualifications:

(1) They should be physically, mentally, morally, emotionally and socially fit.

(2) They should be 2nd class graduates with at least two school subjects and should possess a fairly good general
knowledge.

(3) They should give proof of clear thinking and clear speech and their aptitude for teaching at the time of interview.

(4) Those with teaching experience should be preferred but weightage for more than 5 years' teaching experience should not be given.

III - Re-orientation of Teachers-in-Training:

(1) Practice teaching should create in them a realisation of the nobility of teaching profession.

(2) It should create in them a wholesome attitude towards life.

(3) It should provide them content-courses and a wide general knowledge, as stressed by Dr. K.L. Shrimati in his inaugural address to the VI Conference of All India Association of Teachers' Colleges.

1. This year the Agra University has laid down some guiding principles for selection. Only graduates with two school subjects are eligible for admission. Five marks will be given for each 1st division, 3 marks for each II division, and 1 mark for each IIIrd division in high school, inter and degree and post-graduate examinations. One mark will be given to old students of the University and 1, for old students of the college. One mark will be given for one year of teaching experience subject to a maximum of 4 marks. Two marks will be given for members of the college first eleven and prize-winners of sports. Marks earned by each candidate will be added and a merit list will be prepared on the basis of the total marks. Leaving 10% seats as reservation for the Principal, 150 candidates for the remaining 75 seats will be called for interview. Selection will be made by a Board consisting of the Principal, the Head of the Department and three senior-most members of the staff of the department. We can hope that better stuff will be admitted as a result of selection in this way.
IV - Induction to Practice Teaching:

(1) Practice teaching should begin after a period of about one month of preparation.

(2) Before starting practice teaching they should get thorough knowledge of different methods and techniques of teaching and receive training in necessary items of practical work.

(3) They should be given a knowledge of the technique of lesson-planning and should be given ample practice in drawing up lesson-plans with the help of those drawn up by staff and previous years' student-teachers.

(4) A good number of demonstration lessons of different types should be given by college staff and practising school-teachers under normal school candidates in different subjects and discussed. They should not be isolated lessons specially selected for this purpose.

(5) They should get an opportunity to observe different types of lessons given by experienced school teachers and to study one or more children of the practising school. This will give them some idea of the problems they may have to face during period of actual class-teaching.

V - Organisation of practice teaching:

(1) 40 to 50 lessons should be delivered in two spells, the latter being of the block type wherein student-teachers should share all the duties of regular teachers. This is being practised in A.G. Teachers' College, Ahmedabad, University College of Education, Dharwar, St. Ann's Training College,
(2) Students should be allowed to teach only the subjects offered by them for their degree examination.

(3) Practice teaching should be arranged in different schools and provide experience of teaching in different classes. Lessons should be fairly distributed over different branches of the subject.

VI - Planning of Lessons:

(1) Background in the contents of courses should be prepared before planning of lessons begins, as is being done in University College of Education, Dharwar and St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Bombay.

(2) Planning on Herbartian steps should be encouraged in the beginning but later on student-teachers should be left free to try objective based planning and unit planning, and to plan on evaluation approach as is being tried in A.C. Teachers' College, Ahmedabad. Any attempt at rigidity stifles creativity of the student teachers.

(3) Plans should be detailed in the beginning but less detailed later on, only referring to aims, methods, apparatus, aids, etc. More freedom of approach should be given by and by. Deviation from the plan to meet unexpected class-room situations should not be condemned.

(4) One or two plans in every branch of a subject and

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1. N.C.E.R.T., 'Innovated Practice in Teacher Education in India at Secondary Level' V-1, New Delhi, 1970, pp.1-5.
on different approaches should be thoroughly discussed. Others may be gone through in a summary fashion with regard to approaches, aids, apparatus etc., used therein.

(5) Planning for extra-curricular activities also should be practised.

(6) Theory classes should be suspended during the period of practice teaching except for those topics that bear on practice teaching.

VII - Supervision of Practice Teaching:

(1) All the supervisors should arrive at a common line of approach in a conference to avoid conflict of views and confusion to the teacher-in-training. Supervision of practice teaching should be guidance-oriented, and supervision of criticism lessons should aim at evaluation.

(2) Objectives of supervision should be made clear to the student-teachers before practice teaching begins.

(3) In the beginning visits should be few and friendly. The number of remarks should be small and touch only the fundamentals and the essentials, leading by and by to greater details.

(4) Remarks by supervisors should be frank but sympathetic. They should be stimulating and democratic, should include both appreciative and critical ones, and should suggest remedial measures. Flexibility of approach by student teachers should be welcomed.
(5) Student-teachers should implement the suggestions after thoroughly discussing them in a supervisor-student conference.

(6) On-the-spot demonstration should be given by supervisors when the student-teacher is in difficulty, or in cases where a student continuously adopts unscientific approach.

(7) In order to cope with the heavy supervision work, strength of qualified and trained supervisors should be proportionately raised. Experience of teaching in a school must be one of the qualifications of the supervisors.

VIII - Practising Schools:

(1) There must be an experimental/demonstration school attached to the college to demonstrate the use of different methods and to carry on experiments.

(2) A good number of other schools also should be provided for practice teaching, suited to the needs of the student-teachers with regard to their subjects.

(3) Co-operation of practising schools should be sought by giving financial help to the school for apparatus, library etc., and some facilities to their teachers. The Heads of the practising schools should have a say in final assessment of student-teachers. Occasional "get-togethers" should also be arranged by the Department. Student-teachers should also come to the help of these schools in the event of casual shortage of teachers.
(4) Services of the Heads of practising schools and some good experienced teachers should be availed of for supervision on suitable remuneration. They should be oriented in the work of supervision. Good co-operating teachers should be given preference in appointment as college supervisors, if they hold high qualifications.

IX - Practical Work:

(1) Training in extra-teaching work, e.g., black-board writing, sketching, register work etc., should be provided to student-teachers under expert guidance.

(2) Training in preparation, use and mending of simple teaching aids, in preparation and administration of tests should also be given to teachers-in-training.

(3) A whole-time Art and Crafts teacher should be appointed if there is no member on the staff qualified for this work.

(4) Student-teachers should be required to make a study of the school-plant, of some children and of the community background.

(5) Arrangement for participation by student-teachers in different co-curricular activities should also be made in the college, and they should be given training in organising and conducting them.

(6) All these activities should be assessed as part of sessional work.

X - Observation Lessons:

Students should be required to observe, according to a plan, about 20 good lessons in each subject delivered by fellow
students. They should be properly guided in their work and their observation remarks should be discussed in a conference of supervisors and the student-teachers.

XI - Criticism Lessons:

One criticism lesson in each of the subjects of teaching should be given by student-teachers and their performance in these lessons should be assessed as part of sessional work. Such lessons should be arranged during the period of practice teaching and not at its end and should be in continuity. In this way there will be room for further guidance of the student-teachers.

XII - Assessment of Practice:

1. Regular plan for training in various components of practice teaching programmes should be drawn up and separate marks should be earmarked for them.

2. A record of the performance of student-teachers in different items should be kept. They should be assessed by supervisors and supervising teachers and average thereof should be taken.

3. This assessment should count towards final assessment.

XIII - Final Examination:

1. External examination should continue and board of examiners should evaluate two lessons of each student. Not more than four lessons should be assessed in one period.

2. Internal assessment should count towards final
assessment but the assessment by examiners should not be influenced by it.

(3) Oral examination should also form part of the final examination.

XIV - Follow-up of the Training College Methodology:

(1) Opinion of the members of the staff should be taken into consideration for purposes of confirmation of teachers at the end of their period of probation. This will check development of negative and non-professional attitude in teachers in service.

(2) During this period there should be provision for regular inspection and guidance of the teachers by college staff. Their opinion should be based on how far the teacher has put into practice what he learnt in training college.

(3) Steps should be taken to keep the trained teachers in schools in touch with the latest developments in educational practice through Extension Services Department and refresher courses.

XV - Miscellaneous:

(1) In order to provide for all the programmes theory courses should be cut down to the minimum and number of working days in the session should be suitably increased.

(2) Lecture work should be curtailed and more emphasis should be laid on self-study, tutorials, seminars etc.

(3) Residential facilities should be provided for students to enable them to participate in corporate activities
of the college.

(4) Higher scales of salary to teachers and liberal financial help to teachers-in-training and prospective teachers should be given to attract better persons to the teaching profession.

**How to Implement the Above Suggestions:**

(1) Implementation of the above suggestions does not mean much financial implication. The U.P. Government has already introduced revised grades for teachers in all grades of educational institutions. This has brought some relief for them.

(2) The departments of teacher-education have recently been borne on the grant-in-aid list. This has improved the financial position of institutions to a considerable extent.

(3) This will also, in turn, mean some financial relief to teachers-in-training by way of freeship and half freeships which had been denied to them prior to the extension of the grant-in-aid scheme to departments of Education. But free education in these departments should be the ultimate aim, as recommended by the Study Group.

(4) Stipends, say of Rs. 20/- per month, to 25% of student-teachers should also be instituted as is done in Government Training Colleges. This will mean an annual expenditure of about Rs. 2,00,000/- only, and better candidates will be available for admission to the departments of education.

(5) The Universities should rigidly enforce the condition of affiliation regarding the provision of residential
facilities in all teacher-education institutions.

(6) The departments of Education must make it binding on all the student-teachers that they must live in hostels. This will provide time for self-study, and different corporate activities necessary for proper education of teachers.

(7) Extension services department should be opened in all teacher-education institutions. For this more foreign aid should be sought.

(8) Co-operation of practising schools should be sought in the joint responsibility of teacher-education. But besides these steps some reorganisation of practice programmes in the light of the above suggestions will be necessary for all the universities. All India Association of Training Colleges or the National Council of Educational Research and Training can take a lead in this direction.

(9) The staff-student ratio should come down from 1:12 to 1:10. This will mean an annual increase of about Rs.4,00,000/- in expenditure.

(10) Past experience has shown that members of the staff, particularly heads of the department show luke-warm interest in the implementation of steps recommended for improvement of the programmes. It is here that all schemes have come to naught. Hence the staff of this department should itself come forward with a sense of dedication to the holy cause of education.
In the words of Dr. Koerner, 'when it is entirely clear that nothing less than our national security and well being depend upon the quality of teaching in our schools, we should wish that no task that our society now faces deserves more serious and competent attention than that of securing the best education for the prospective teacher that our resources can provide'. Hence our national Government should help of a few lacs for this noble cause. It is a joint enterprise in which all should co-operate. The investigator hopes this co-operation will be coming forth and teacher education institutions will produce teachers properly qualified to shoulder the responsibility our democracy has placed upon them.