

Internship Programme in B.Ed.: A Descriptive Study of Student–Teachers’ Experiences in Aizawl

Laldinsangi Renthlei¹, K. Lalnunsiami²

^{1,2}Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University

Abstract

In order to produce effective and efficient teacher internship programmes in teacher training institutions are needed since it equips the student-teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. The draft National Education Policy 2019 has also recommended for integration of the B.Ed. programme in order to enrich the overall programme by teaching content and pedagogy together. Currently, the internship programme consists of one semester which is divided into three phases. The present study is conducted in order to find out the benefits of internship programmes, the challenges faced by the student-teachers and the issues related to the internship programme. The qualitative descriptive research method is adopted for the study. The sample involves a total of 30 randomly selected student-teachers which includes 10 each (5- arts; 5 science) from MZU, IASE and DIET, Aizawl. The interview method is used for the collection of data and it is analysed through an interpretive approach. It is found that the majority of the student-teachers have benefitted greatly through the internship programme and many reported that their parent institutions lack proper management. Suggestions for the improvement of the internship programme are also taken from the samples and also it is discussed in light of the draft national education policy 2019.

Keywords: Challenges, Internship, Pedagogy, Student-Teachers.

Introduction

Teachers are the builders of the future leaders of a country. Their personality, intelligence, achievement and teachings greatly influence the students to a great extent. And teaching as a profession is a very complex process where in order to become an effective teacher, flexibility and adaptability are needed. Since teachers are expected to continually develop and upgrade their knowledge and teaching skills, teacher training institutions like Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), have been set up by the Government of India following the recommendations of various committees and policies to equip the teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for the development of a country.

In each teacher training institution, internship programmes are needed for producing eligible and efficient teachers who will be well-equipped with all the elements to deal with the complexities of every teaching process. Further, since teaching requires the application of theoretical knowledge, internship programmes are greatly needed for teacher education programmes.

Knowing this, Mizoram University, Tanhril have developed an internship program for the student-teachers of the 3rd Semester, Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and it comprises 16 weeks of internship-related activities which were divided into three mandatory phases i.e. Pre-Internship, School-Internship-and Post-Internship. In each phase, the student-teachers used various teaching skills under the guidance of

invigilators and external evaluators to enhance their overall teaching competencies. The main activities under the three phases of the internship are described under the following heads. They are as follows: -

1. Phase-I: Pre-Internship:

During this phase, all the activities were conducted in the institution and it includes the following activities as Model/Demonstration Lesson, Micro-Teaching, Simulated Teaching, Teaching Learning Material and Teaching in an Actual Classroom Setting.

2. Phase II: School Internship:

Here, the student-teachers were attached to a particular school for around 12 weeks for teaching practice. In this phase, the student-teachers were expected to participate in all the curricular and co-curricular activities of the practicing school.

3. Phase III: Post Internship:

In the last phase, the student-teachers were expected to write a comprehensive report of their school internship which will be signed by the in-charge teacher-educators. Final practice teaching as well as viva voce was held.

Draft National Education Policy (NEP), 2019

The draft NEP 2019 aim for the reformation of the entire education programme in India, from Primary to Higher Education; including Teacher Education Programmes. In order to improve the teacher training programmes, it suggested for 4-year integration of the B.Ed. programmes which will enable the student-teachers to acquire desirable knowledge and skills as it will include high-quality content pedagogy and practical training.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken in order to find out the conditions of the one-semester internship programme in the teacher training institutions of Aizawl through the experiences of the student-teachers.

Methodology of the Study

A descriptive research method was adopted for the present study. The samples consisted of 10 Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students-teachers each (5 Arts and 5 Science) from the Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE), Mizoram University (MZU) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Aizawl, Mizoram. Data was collected from the samples through the interview method. An interpretive approach was used for analysing the data.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the present study have been given separately under two heads namely Benefits and Challenges/ problems. They are as follows:

A. Benefits:

It introduces the student-teacher to the world of work, enhances their creativity, increases self-confidence and overall improves their skills needed for teaching-learning like communicating skills,

classroom management, problem-solving ability etc. It also enables the student-teachers to have a deeper understanding of the role of a teacher.

Challenges/problems

The challenges/problems faced by the student-teachers from the three major institutions have been given separately with regard to their institutions:

A. IASE

The findings from this institution are as follows:

a) **Timely Information:**

The student-teachers have had many problems in adjusting and adapting last-minute information's had to change their lesson plans and teaching aids all over again which is uneconomical with regard to time and money. Giving clear and timely information to its student-teachers is still a major challenge for IASE.

b) **Adequate teacher-educators:**

Many student-teachers have also reported that they were unsatisfied with their micro and macro teaching because they were not supervised by the concerned teacher-educator who was in charge of their specific pedagogy but instead they were supervised by other unfamiliar educators. This problem may be caused by a lack of an adequate number of teacher-educators in the institution and many other factors. So, increasing the number of faculty/teacher educators is still a major challenge for IASE.

In addition to the above points, some of the major problems faced by the student-teachers in their internship schools are mentioned below:

- Some practice teaching schools do not have a proper timetable for the student-teachers. Mathematics and science teachers in the internship schools do not allow the student-teachers to take their period and instead will make them take English, Mizo and social science subjects. So, this hinders the progress and development of science pedagogy student-teachers.

B. MZU

The findings from this institution are as follows:

a. **Fixed routine:**

Many student-teachers have reported that they have faced many problems due to a lack of clear-cut information like planning lessons beforehand because their lesson plan book was distributed to them at the very last hour and the duration of time allotted to them during their final practice teaching was also uneven.

b. **Mizo pedagogy teacher-educator:**

Due to the lack of a Mizo pedagogy teacher-educator, the student-teachers faced many problems in preparing their Mizo lesson plan.

C. DIET

The findings from this institution are as follows:

a) **Timely Information:**

- Last-minute information from the parent institution creates stress and confusion. Lack of clear and proper information about the required number of lesson plans creates stress among the student-teachers.

- Emergency calls from the parent institution often create a burden to the student-teachers since they have to always ask for permission from their internship schools.

b) Supervise visit:

Many student-teachers have reported mistreatment by their internship schools due to a lack of supervising visits by the parent institution.

c) Low-cost Teaching Aids:

Many student-teachers have reported that they faced many financial problems while preparing their teaching aids.

In addition to the above points, some of the major problems faced by the science pedagogy student-teachers in their internship schools are mentioned below:

- Many schools do not have science laboratories.
- Even schools that have laboratories do not always allow the student-teachers to use them.
- Number of classes for the science student-teacher was limited so the students have difficulty in learning and understanding the topic.

Suggestions

The suggestions collected from the samples are as follows:-

1. Supervise by pedagogy teacher-educators during micro and macro:

For the betterment of the overall internship programme supervision of student-teachers delivering their lessons for each pedagogy during the micro and macro session if possible should be done by the concerned pedagogy teacher-educator who has an in-depth knowledge of that specific pedagogy. This will benefit the student-teachers to a great extent with regard to feedback about certain skills on how to teach a specific lesson and on the overall execution of the lesson plan.

2. Better management for the entire internship programme: -

- Time allotted for final practice teaching should be uniform for all the student-teachers.
- There should be uniformity among the authorities in IASE, DIET and MZU regarding the number of lessons to be planned.
- The practice teaching schools and the parent institutions should have an agreement regarding the number of periods that are to be given to each individual student-teacher.
- MZU, IASE and DIET should give clear information and guidelines to the student-teachers before the internship period. They should fix their schedule and not give last-minute information. This will prevent stress and confusion among the student-teachers.
- There should be a unified lesson plan format for all the teacher training institutions.

3. Teaching learning material:

Student-teachers have different family backgrounds so adequate resources for the Teaching learning material should be provided by the parent institutions during the internship period.

4. Others:

- Frequent supervise visits should be made by each parent institution.
- Internship period should be considered a teaching experience, this will greatly motivate the student-teachers.
- Duration of the internship programme should be extended covering the 3rd and 4th semesters as it is a time-consuming activity. If not, it should be placed in the last semester.

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Authors' Biography

Laldinsangi Renthlei	Doctoral Research Scholar from Education Department at Mizoram University, Tanhril, Aizawl, Mizoram
K. Lalnunsiami	Doctoral Research Scholar from Education Department at Mizoram University, Tanhril, Aizawl, Mizoram

Conclusion

Though there are still many challenges that need to be overcome by teacher training institutions and as human beings we must always strive for development and improvement. However, it is a fact that the internship programme has indeed provided student-teachers with a platform which enables them to develop a better insight into their pedagogies, broaden their concept of education and teaching, improve their communication skills and overall have equipped them with the necessary skills needed for their academic and professional growth.

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