



Hindrances and Issues Faced by the Elementary Teacher Education Institutions (DIETs and TEIs) in Academic Areas

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the hindrances and issues faced by the DIETs and TEIs of Kerala in academic areas in improving the quality of elementary teacher education. The descriptive study collected data from a stratified random sample of Educational Experts, the Heads of TEIs, Heads of the PSTE faculty in DIETs, Teacher Trainees of TEIs and DIETs, and Teacher Educators working in TEIs and DIETs with the help of questionnaires and further by holding interview. The experts opined that the admission to D.El.Ed. course should be made on the basis of a teaching aptitude test, giving equal weightage to the performance of 10th and 12th grades. Increasing the course duration to 3 years, setting Postgraduation and M.Ed. as minimum qualification for teacher educators are among the suggestions. Lack of teaching aptitude, poor understanding of content, lack of experience of the teacher educators, lack of Lab school facilities, insufficiency of proper infrastructure etc. were pointed out to be major impediments and issues in the academic area.

Keywords: District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs), D.El.Ed. course, Pre-service elementary school teacher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Universal elementary education is one of the most important catalysts for social and economic progress of a country. The development of a child into a responsible and empowered citizen is dependent on elementary education he or she receives. The quality of education primarily depends on the quality of the teachers, which in turn is a function of the quality of the professional preparation of teachers (Parmar & Tripathi, 2021). The elementary teacher education in Kerala is facing a lot of quality concerns during the past two decades. Though the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) made so many suggestions for quality improvement of elementary teacher education, the reformation ended with revision of curriculum, renaming of the diploma programme, resetting of entry qualification, slight alterations in evaluation and the like (Leema, & Saleem, 2017). One of the most neglected facets of elementary teacher education in the state is the role of the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in improving the quality of pre-service teacher education. In India the DIETs were established as part of NPE 1986. The DIETs started with a view to improve the quality of elementary education and to monitor the pre-service teacher education in each district. In the guideline of MHRD it is said that one of the faculties in the DIET, the PSTE (Pre-service Teacher Education) should render resource support to elementary level teacher education in the district (MHRD, 1989). The DIETs under the leadership of the said faculty conducts two-year D.El.Ed. (Diploma in Elementary Education) course with a view to prepare competent teachers capable of transacting the elementary school curriculum. Moreover, it is the duty of DIETs to empower the TEIs (Teacher Education Institutions) with respect to the national and international standard and the changes occurred in the field of elementary education in Kerala (SCERT, 2005). Though the DIETs are responsible for ensuring the quality of elementary teacher education by extending timely academic and resource support to TEIs, the recent changes in the D.El.Ed. curriculum in the state have brought about many academic as well as administrative impediments and issues in the sector (NCERT, 2017; Longchar & Manehrii, 2019). In this context, this study is a modest attempt to identify the major impediments and issues faced by DIETs and TEIs in academic areas,

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to identify the hindrances and issues faced by the teacher training institutes (DIETs and TEIs) in the academic area.

3. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis formulated for the study is stated as follows: "There are many hindrances and issues that are being faced by the Teacher Education Institutes (DIETs and TEIs) in the academic area".

4. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research design by employing normative survey method was used for the study. Data were collected from a stratified random sample which consisted of: (a) Heads of TEIs (N = 46) and Heads of the PSTE faculty in DIETs (N = 7), (b) Teacher Trainees of TEIs (N = 624) and DIETs (N = 240), (c) Teacher Educators of TEIs (N = 266) and DIETs (N = 46), and (d) 10 Educational Experts. The necessary information were procured from the sample with the help of three different measuring instruments viz., (a) Questionnaire for Teacher Trainees of TEIs and DIETs, (b) Questionnaire for Teacher Educators of TEIs, (c) Questionnaire for Faculty members of DIETs, and (d) Interview schedule for Educational Experts. The tools were administered on the sample under standardized conditions and the data thus collected were treated statistically using simple percentage of the responses of each category and significance in difference between the percentages of responses.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Enhancement of the quality of elementary school teacher education in our state necessitates, as a first step, identification of major impediments and issues in the field of teacher education and training. Shortcomings in the current practices, recommendations for solving problems, suggestions for betterment, etc. are sought out from a panel of experts in the field of teacher education. The analysis done based on the observations made by the experts are discussed under appropriate titles below.

5.1. Criteria of Admission to D.El.Ed. Course

Opinions and suggestions regarding the minimum educational qualification for admission to D.El.Ed. course were collected from the educational experts. The responses thus collected were analyzed to draw inferences regarding the recommendations of the experts, which is shown in Figure 1.

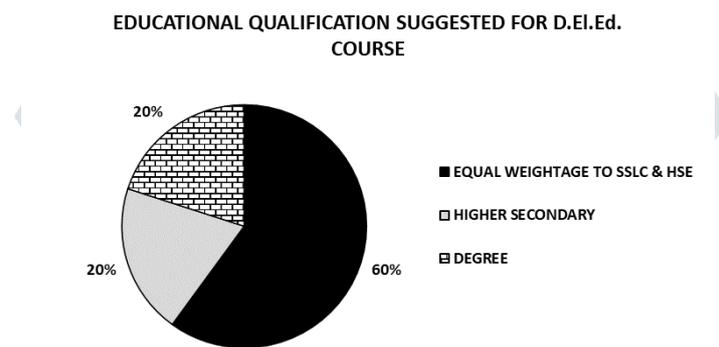


Figure 1: The educational qualifications suggested by academic experts for the admission to D.El.Ed. course.

As depicted in Figure 1, majority of the Educational Experts recommended equal weightage to SSLC and Higher Secondary Examination as the basic criterion for admission to D.El.Ed. course. 20% of them found no reason to bring a change in the existing criterion of Higher Secondary Education as minimum qualification for the admission to D.El.Ed. course. Only 20% of them demanded a rise in the existing basic qualification to degree in school subjects. Opinion was collected from the Educational Experts regarding the nature of selection test to be conducted for D.El.Ed. admission. The result of the analysis obtained in this regard is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Educational Experts who have opined that the performance in Aptitude Test should be considered for the admission to D.El.Ed. course

Sample Size	Recommendation for Aptitude Test	
	No.	%
10	10	100

The result presented in Table 1 indicates that all the Educational Experts (100%) opined that the performance of the candidates on a Teaching Aptitude Test should also be considered for the admission to D.El.Ed. course. This has been insisted in the D.El.Ed. curriculum also. But it is seen that the admission to D.El.Ed. course in Kerala at present is not based on an aptitude test.

5.2. Duration of D.El.Ed. Course

Opinion of the Educational Experts regarding the duration of D.El.Ed. course was collected to see what they consider to be the ideal duration required for attaining the proficiency needed to be a teacher in elementary schools. The data and result of the analysis are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Duration of D.El.Ed. course suggested by educational experts

Sl. No.	Duration of D.El.Ed. Course	Educational Experts (N = 10)	
		No.	%
1	3 years	10	100
2	4 years	0	0
3	5 years	0	0
Total		10	100

As evident from the responses of the educational experts, given in Table 2, all of them insisted a change in the duration of the D.El.Ed. course and suggested that the duration of the course should be extended to three years. It is to be emphasized that extending duration beyond three years has not been recommended by any of the experts. It is already found that the performance of the teacher trainees is very poor in handling the classes. Because of the overburden of the D.El.Ed. curriculum, the teacher educators pointed out that the trainees failed to acquire all the experiences needed to become a successful teacher. When we look in to the above said reasons seriously, it seems imperative to extend the duration of the D.El.Ed. course to three years.

5.3. Qualifications of Teacher Educators

Suggestions of the Educational Experts were collected regarding the minimum qualification to be set for teacher educators of teacher education institutes. The recommendation they made is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Qualifications suggested by the educational experts for the teacher educators of teacher education institutes

Sl. No.	Suggested Qualification	TEIs		DIETs	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Degree + B.Ed	0	0	0	0
2	Degree + M.Ed	0	0	0	0
3	Post Graduation+ B.Ed	2	20	0	0
4	Post Graduation+ M.Ed	8	80	8	80
5	Post Graduation+ Ph.D in Education	0	0	2	20
Total		10	100	10	100

As evident from Table 3, majority of the Educational Experts (80%) recommended Post Graduation and Post Graduate Degree in Education (M.Ed.) to become a teacher educator in both the TEIs and the DIETs. While 20% of them favour Post Graduation and Graduation in Education (B.Ed.) for entering into the profession of a teacher educator in the TEIs, an equal proportion of the experts suggested Ph.D in Education, in addition to Post Graduation, to become a teacher educator in DIETs.

The study was further extended to investigate the current status of the educational qualifications of teacher educators in our teacher education institutes. The information collected and the estimates made based on that are given in Table 4.

Table 4: The present status of educational qualifications of teacher educators in teacher education institutes

Sl. No.	Educational Qualification	TEIs (N = 248)		DIETs (N = 35)	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Degree+ B.Ed	37	15	0	0
2	Post Graduation+ B.Ed	33	13	0	0
3	Post Graduation+ M.Ed	94	38	23	66
4	Post Graduation+ Ph.D in Education	0	0	2	6
5	Others	84	34	10	28
Total		248	100	35	100

The results of the analysis given in Table 4 indicate that 15% of the teacher educators working in TEIs do not possess the minimum academic qualification recommended by the educational experts. While 80% of the Educational Experts suggest Post Graduation and M.Ed. for the teacher educators in TEIs and DIETs (vide Table 4.89), only 38% teacher educators in TEIs and 66% of faculty members in DIETs have possessed these qualifications. The condition of DIETs is more satisfactory than that of TEIs in this regard. Though 20% of the Educational Experts recommend Post Graduation and Ph.D in Education for DIET faculty members, currently only 6% of them have this qualification.

Opinion of the Educational Experts were collected regarding the minimum teaching experience in elementary schools that the teacher educators must possess before entering into the profession. The responses collected and the estimate made up on that are given in Table 5.

Table 5: The educational experts who pointed out the need of teaching experience in elementary school for teacher educators

Sample Size	Recommendations Received	
	No.	%
10	9	90

The result of the analysis given in Table 5 shows that majority of educational experts (90%) are supportive of teaching experience in elementary school for working as teacher educators in teacher education institutes. Only 10% of them hold the view that elementary school teaching experience is not necessary.

Opinions were further sought out from the Educational Experts regarding the length of teaching experience they recommend for the teacher educators of teacher education institutes. The suggestions they made are shown in Figure 2.

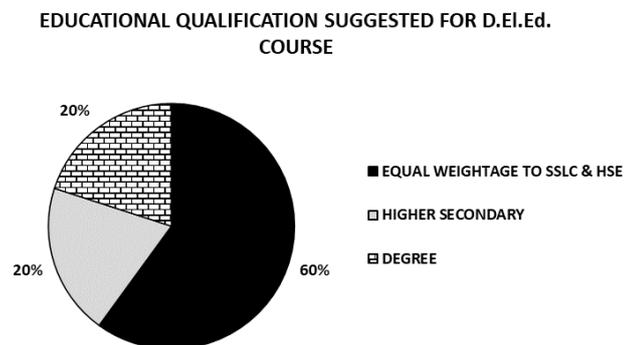


Figure 2: Suggestions of educational experts on the length of teaching experience in elementary school for teacher educators.

The Figure 2 shows that the majority of educational experts (56%) suggested 3 years of elementary school teaching experience for teacher educators. While 11% recommended a minimum experience of 4 years, 33% suggested 5 years of minimum teaching experience in elementary schools for becoming teacher educators in teacher education institutes. Details were collected from the teacher educators of TEIs and faculty members of the DIETs to study the present status about the length of teaching experience in elementary schools they possess. The result of the analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.

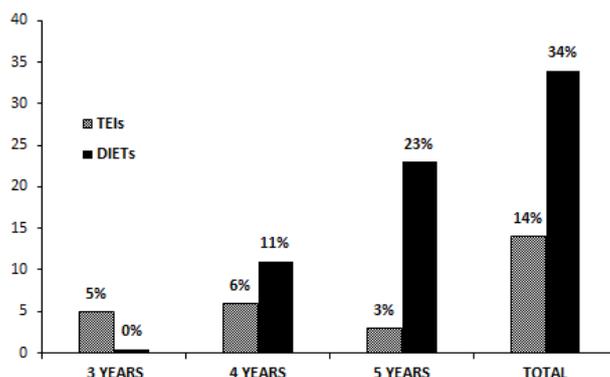


Figure 3: The present status of length of teaching experience in elementary schools for teacher educators (Response of the teacher educators of teacher education institutes and the DIET faculty members).

As clear from the Figure 4.3, only a minority of teacher educators in TEIs (14%) and DIETs (34%) have got teaching experience in elementary schools. Whereas 5% of the teacher educators in TEIs have 3 years of elementary school experience, only 3% of them have got 5 years of experience. While 23% of the teacher educators in DIETs have got 5 years experience in elementary schools, the proportion of teacher educators who have got 5 years elementary school experience is just 3% in TEIs. Their proportion is in the order of 11% and 6% when we consider the teacher educators who have got the elementary school experience of 4 years. It is evident from the graph that the percentage of DIET faculty members who have got the teaching experience in elementary schools is much higher than that of TEIs.

5.4. Teaching Posts in Teacher Education Institutes

Suggestions were collected from the Educational Experts regarding the need of common structure and number in the post of teacher educators in teacher education institutes. The proportion of experts who recommended for the common structure is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Educational experts who suggest the need of common structure and number in the post of teacher educators in teacher education institutes

Sample Size	Response	
	No.	%
10	10	100

As given in Table 6, all the educational experts (100%) suggested for the need of a common structure and number of posts of teacher educators in teacher education institutes. Specific recommendations regarding the structure and number of posts of teacher educators in teacher education institutes were solicited from the Educational Experts, and the suggestions they made in this regard are given below in Table 7.

Table 7: Suggestions of educational experts on the structure and number of posts for teacher educators in teacher education institutes

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Response (N=10)	
		No.	%
1	The number of teacher post in all the institutions should be equal to that of the subjects specified in the D.El.Ed. curriculum	7	70
2	One teacher post for the General papers and one for other each subject	3	30
Total		10	100

As given in Table 4.93, the Educational Experts made two suggestions for solving the problem of insufficient number of teaching post in teacher education institutes especially in TEIs. Majority of educational experts (70%) suggest that the number of teacher post in the institute should be equal to that of the subjects specified in the D.El.Ed. curriculum. The remaining 30% of the experts insisted that there should be one teacher post for the general papers and one each for other subjects.

5.5. Issues to be solved for Improving the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education

Improving the quality of teacher education in our state requires urgent intervention from the authorities to solve the problems prevailing in the primary teacher education sector. As an effort to identify and locate the issues in the field of pre-service teacher education, reactions were collected from the Heads of TEIs and PSTE Faculty in DIETs which are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Issues to be solved for the improvement of the quality of pre-service teacher education (Responses of Heads of TEIs and PSTE faculty in DIETs)

Sl. No.	Issues	Responses					
		TEIs (N = 41)		DIETs (N = 5)		Total (N = 46)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Late admission to the D.El.Ed. course	41	100	5	100	46	100
2	Lack of aptitude in teaching; and poor understanding of the teacher trainees in the content of school subjects	36	87.80	4	80.00	40	86.96
3	Impracticability to transact the curriculum in the stipulated time due to curriculum load	39	95.12	4	80.00	43	93.48
4	Lack of teaching experience of the teacher educators at primary level	24	58.54	2	40.00	26	56.52
5	Indifference of the teacher educators to take up and carry out responsibilities and duties	13	31.71	1	20.00	14	30.43
6	Lack of lab school facilities	28	68.29	0	0.00	28	60.87
7	Lack of teacher post in many subjects	41	100	5	100	46	100
8	Lack of proper monitoring and guidance	24	58.54	3	60.00	27	58.70
9	Lack of proper training to teacher educators	5	12.20	2	40.00	7	15.22

Sl. No.	Issues	Responses					
		TEIs (N = 41)		DIETs (N = 5)		Total (N = 46)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
10	Lack of co-operation and interest of the neighbouring schools to provide school experiences to the teacher trainees	32	78.05	1	20.00	33	71.74
11	Insufficiency of proper infrastructure	22	53.66	2	40.00	24	52.17
12	Teacher educators are not able to concentrate on their work due to other responsibilities and duties in the institution	21	51.22	5	100.0	26	56.52
13	No issues to be solved for the effective conduct of D.El.Ed. course in the institution	0	0	0	0	0	0

The major hurdles that the teacher education institutes in our state have to overcome on their way to excellence are given in Table 8. All the identified problems exist both in TEIs and DIETs except the lack of lab schools which is an issue solely of TEIs. Late admission to D.El.Ed. course and lack of teaching post in many subjects are problems that existing in all the institutions, both TEIs and DIETs studied. Poor knowledge of the teacher trainees on the content in school subjects and lack of aptitude in teaching are among the major other problems point out by most of the Heads of TEIs and PSTE Faculty in DIETs. Lack of proper monitoring and guidance, lack of proper training and other duties and responsibilities of faculty members which hinder them to concentrate their own work in the institutes are more serious issues in DIETs than in TEIs. None of the institutions under study is devoid of problems on its way to excellence.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Majority of educational experts suggested that equal weightage should be given to scores/grades of both 10th and 12th grade for D.El.Ed. admission. All the experts recommended 3 years of duration for the D.El.Ed. course, and that the admission should be on the basis of candidate's performance in a Teaching Aptitude Test. Majority of educational experts suggested PG + M.Ed. as the basic qualifications necessary for the post Teacher Educator in TEIs and an additional Ph.D in Education for the faculties of DIETs. The majority of Educational Experts point out the need of teaching experience in elementary schools for teacher educators in teacher education institutions. All educational experts point out the need for a common structure and number of the post of teacher educators in teacher education institutions. All the Heads of TEIs and DIETs point out that late admission to the D.El.Ed. course and lack of teacher post in many subjects are the major issues to be solved. Other issues to be solved, as pointed out by the Heads of Teacher Training Institutes, for improving the quality of pre-service teacher education are: (a) Lack of teaching aptitude and poor understanding of the content of the school subjects on the part of teacher trainees, (b) Impracticability to transact the D.El.Ed. curriculum in the stipulated time due to curriculum load, (c) Lack of teaching experience of the teacher educators at elementary level, (d) Indifference of the teacher educators to carry out responsibilities and duties, (e) Lack of Lab school facilities, (f) Lack of proper monitoring and guidance to institutes, (f) Lack of proper training to teacher educators, (g) Lack of co-operation and interest of the neighbouring schools to provide school experience to the teacher trainees (h) Insufficiency of proper infrastructure and, (i) Extra duties and responsibilities of teacher educators.

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