

A Paradigm Shift into the Primary Teacher Education Program in Bangladesh

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Abstract : This paper portrays an assumed change in the primary teacher education program in Bangladesh. An initiative has been taken with a vision to ensure an integrated approach to developing trainee teachers' knowledge and understanding about learning at a deeper level, and with that aim, the Diploma in Primary Education (DPED) program replaces the Certificate-in-Education (C-in-Ed) program in Bangladeshi context for primary teachers. The stated professional values of the existing program such as 'learner-centered', 'reflective' approach to pedagogy tend to contradict the practice exemplified through the delivery mechanism. To address the challenges, through the main two components (i) Training Institute-based learning and (ii) School-based learning, the new program tends to cover knowledge and value that underpin the actual practice of teaching. These two components are given approximately equal weighting within the program in terms of both time, content and assessment as the integration seeks to combine theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge and vice versa. The curriculum emphasizes a balance between the taught modules and the components of the practicum. For example, the theories of formative and summative assessment techniques are elaborated through focused reflection on case studies as well as observation and teaching practice in the classroom. The key ideology that is reflected through this newly developed program is teacher's belief in 'holistic education' that can lead to creating opportunities for skills development in all three (Cognitive, Social and Affective) domains simultaneously. The proposed teacher education program aims to address these areas of generic skill development alongside subject-specific learning outcomes. An exploratory study has been designed in this regard where 7 Primary Teachers' Training Institutes (PTIs) in 7 divisions of Bangladesh was used for experimenting DPED program. The analysis was done based on document analysis, periodical monitoring report and empirical data gathered from the experimental PTIs. The findings of the study revealed that the intervention brought positive change in teachers' professional beliefs, attitude and skills along with improvement of school environment. Teachers in training schools work together for collective professional development where they support each other through lesson study, action research, reflective journals, group sharing and so on. Although the DPED program addresses the above mentioned factors, one of the challenges of the proposed program is the issue of existing capacity and capabilities of the PTIs towards its effective implementation.

Keywords : Bangladesh, effective implementation, primary teacher education, reflective approach

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