



**Training of Teachers through Distance Mode – The Experiences and Challenges
of Training Urdu Medium Teachers**

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Abstract

Teacher training is an important professional programme. The Urdu medium teachers training is required to be highlighted in present scenario. The role of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) in training teachers through pre-service and in-service programmes is praise worthy. The distance mode programme of MANUU is found very successful. In this article the authors looks into important components of B.Ed. Distance Mode programme, its functioning and challenges of teacher training in distance mode programmes in Urdu. Despite of all challenges it is found that the teacher education programme becomes largely successful in Urdu Medium.

Key Words: Teacher Education, Distance Mode

Introduction

Teachers play a pivotal role in functioning of school and shaping of student community who are the part of the larger society. The role of teacher in formal education is crucial as they are regarded as disseminators of knowledge, channels of communication of content as well as national ideology and producer of quality products in the form of learned students. Hence, training of these facilitators of schools is more important for the nation. This training not only involves orientation of the philosophical, psychological, sociological methodological, aspects of education, but also the content enrichment is given, which is to be taught to the school students. The in-service teachers are aware of these aspects of education but, it is important to note here that their experiences and ideas are correlated vis-à-vis contemporary requirements of teachers. The NCTE has geared up with fresh guidelines through new regulation 2009 which throw light on various modes of teacher education including distance mode teacher education. There are very few Urdu medium teacher education

programmes at secondary schools i.e. graduation and post graduation level training of teachers. These programmes are to be put in line with national curriculum framework of teacher education, so as to facilitate the academic achievements Urdu medium schools and Urdu teacher. Before knowing the teacher education programmes in Urdu medium, it is worth while to know about Urdu medium schools and teachers teaching in these schools.

Different states have taken various strategies with regard to the promotion of respective minority languages in their states like Urdu. Some of the states like Uttar Pradesh, have recruited Urdu teacher in all the schools. These teacher are meant for teaching Urdu language at primary and secondary schools and help for implementation of three, language formula. Some of Hindi-belt states teach only two languages i.e., Hindi and Sanskrit/ Urdu in the schools. The other category of states is one which have Urdu medium schools from 1st to 10th standard. All subjects in these schools are being taught in Urdu medium. Hence, the subjects like Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences etc are available in mother tongue till the completion of secondary stage. This is why Urdu medium teachers are required for teaching all the levels and all these subjects.

Role of MANUU in Training Urdu Teachers

The Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) was established by an act of Parliament in 1998. The main objectives include promotion and development of Urdu language. In this connection the University offers various programmes in Urdu medium from certificate to Ph.D level through on-campus and distance mode. The discipline where programmes are on offer are as varied as management, science, computer science, education and linguistic and indology programmes etc.

The MANUU offers training for teachers in pre-service and in-service formats. As part of training of pre-service teachers the students are given training through D.Ed., B.Ed., and M.Ed., programme at various centres like Hyderabad, Darbhanga, Bhopal and Srinagar. The in-service and untrained teachers are given training through its B.Ed. programme in centres located at Bangalore, Darbhanga, Hyderabad, Pune, Secunderabad, Jammu and Srinagar. The teachers are trained in content-cum-methodology and general education aspects as per NCTE regulations. In addition to this the centre for promotion and development of Urdu medium teachers offers short term in-service training programmes for the in-service teachers. These programmes are intended to cover contemporary issues in school education and requirements of teachers. The centre trains teachers from states like Gujarath, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. The efforts are also made to train Madarasa teachers. The other two centres of such nature are located at AMU, Aligarh and JMI, New Delhi which cater to the other geographical locations of India.

Thus, all attempts are being made by MANUU to fulfil its mandate as it is evident that the better trained teachers can shape the society and protect the language and culture.

B.Ed. (DM) programme implementation

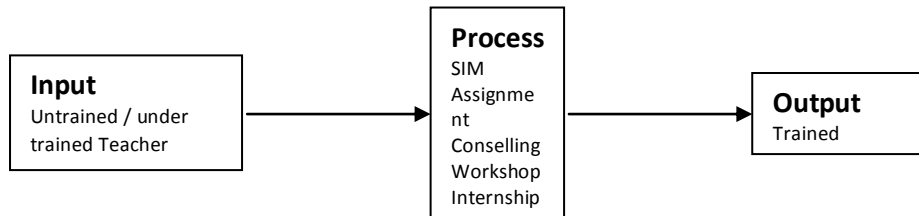


Figure showing input-output model of training in-service teachers through distance mode

The B.Ed. (DM) programme is a professional programme where untrained or undertrained teachers are trained to become a graduate or post graduate teachers to be eligible for teaching at secondary or senior secondary level. The teachers who are working in Government Private institute with full time teaching experience of two years are admitted through an entrance test after due verification of documents. The entrance test is conducted for assessing teaching aptitude of ‘would-be-teachers’ or aspirants of B.Ed. programme and this also tests content knowledge in their respective subjects. The test also helps in screening the candidates. The candidates are thus selected based on their merit and admitted at various programme centres.

The actual training starts with the induction programme of students. The students are supplied self learning material in Urdu. The assignments are prepared in such a way that the learner gets aware of the entire contents. The student is asked to do both theoretical and practical assignments. The counselling sessions are held as per the convenience of the student teacher either during the weekends or in long vacation of student teacher. During the counselling both academic, administrative problems of students are dealt. The programme centre is the places where all these programme related activities are held. The workshop is also held during long vacation at programme centre. Unlike counselling, attendance is compulsory in the workshop and the centres perform all the practical activities, which are necessary for this professional programme. The secondary schools are identified for carrying out practice teaching. The student teachers are called upon to complete practice teaching and this is done in the format of internship. The students are to undergo term end examination to complete the programme.

The performance of teacher-trainees are pooled from theoretical and practical performances and the results are declared. It is ensured that over all performance of student teacher should not be less than 50% for passing.

Components of B.Ed. programme

The B.Ed. (DM) for Urdu teacher is a professional programme and all the profession related activities are to be performed for completion of the programme. These includes.

1. Academic counselling
2. Assignment – Theoretical and practical
3. School based activities
4. Workshop based activities
5. Teaching Practice

Academic Counselling

The academic counselling involves counselling of the problems of student teachers related to the academic aspects. The academic counselling covers various theory courses including the core-courses, content-based-methodology courses and special courses.

Assignments – theoretical and practical

The assignment facilitates the learner to go through the content and respond his understanding with his ideas. This gives the student teacher a provision to record his comprehension of content, so that proper feedback is given. The assignments are given to clear theoretical concepts as well as solution of this the gives practical aspects of the content learnt. The assignment increases interactivity, which is lacking in distance education.

School – Based practical work

School is the laboratory for a teacher scientist and so also for the student teacher. This is why they should learn to plan, organise and conduct practical activities systematically, professionally and scientifically. These activities include maintenance of registers and records, addressing the school assembly, conducting sociometric test etc., This component gives a practical idea regarding the school organisation.

Workshop Based activities

This is also a compulsory component of the B.Ed. programme and held in a span of 12 days each for both the year. This gives exposure to all practical requirements for teacher trainees such as unit plan, lesson plan, micro teaching, use of

psychological tests etc., Conduction of these activities helps the teacher in planning his lesson, microteaching, preparation of achievement of tests etc.

Teaching practice

This is an important aspect of the programme and divided into two phases i.e., practice of teaching under the supervision of mentor and practice of teaching in the internship programme. The latter is observed and evaluated by teacher educators of programme centres, while the former is monitored by senior teacher at teacher trainee's place of work.

Challenges of teacher training in Urdu medium

The teacher training programme in distance mode is a new concept and involves challenges. These challenges are of two types. The general challenges are related to mode of teacher education itself and the specific problem is related to Urdu language itself. This was a novel experiment of training Urdu medium teachers in distance mode by the University (MANUU).

Preparation of Self Learning Material (SLM)

The preparation of Self Learning Material (SLM) is an important aspect. It is easy to find experts for writing about education subject or on various aspects of education as required by distance mode programmes in English as compared to Urdu. It is also a common observation that there are many Urdu writers available but they are not necessarily from education background. Hence, preparation of SLM a challenging task.

Terminology

The terminology or glossary used for preparation of books on education is not uniform. This has been written by various authors from their perspectives. Hence, it is a common observation that terms like teaching is written as 'tardrees', 'iktesaab' or any other such related. Having a common terminology for acceptance of all academicians or educators is a challenge.

Translation

The translation requires a good deals of work and this has to be done by a person who is expert of both the content and language. But, finding such experts for translation of any related literature available in teacher education is difficult. Most often, it is a common observation that the translators either do justice to content and / or sometimes intent of the matter. Thereby, proper justice is not done to the material.

Use of ICT

Availability and accessibility of ICT tools for distance learners in Urdu medium is a major concern. The radio, television internet teleconferencing facility is quite rarely available for teacher training in Urdu medium. This may be due to lack of expertise in the language or lack of media support for the language. The Urdu teachers make use of only the existing programmes in English or any other locally available language. However, MANUU has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Doordarshan and telecast its programmes on DD Urdu. Efforts are also being made to set up teleconferencing facility. Text based messages in mobile is used either in English, Hindi or any other local language for communication of academic matters. Use of Urdu in ICT is a challenging task.

Student Support Network

The MANUU follows 3- tier system. Apart from its head quarters DDE located at Hyderabad, it tries to reach the stakeholders through Regional and Programme Centres. The programme centres are basic units where the programmes are carried out. All the B.Ed. students are attached to seven programme centres only i.e., irrespective of their geographic location. They need to attend for their activities at these centres only. This is also a matter of concern as the distance between the teacher and taught cannot be reduced beyond certain geographical limitation. The number of programme centres cannot be extended beyond 5 (with intake of 100 each) due to certain technical limitations. Hence, student support network must adopt ICT to meet this challenge.

Practicing schools and text books

The student teachers are required to take up their practice teaching in respective places. It is observed that most of the schools in vicinity of student-teachers of MANUU do not have Urdu medium school. Bhopal is one such place where Urdu high schools are not available for practicing teaching. Hence, they are forced to practice in non-Urdu medium schools. Moreover all the states do not publish all subject text books in Urdu at a time. Hence, the teacher trainees find difficulty in preparation of the lesson plans, tests etc.,

Lack of Research

There is an urgent need to do research in teacher training programmes in Urdu. The research is required in planning, organisation, conduct of the programme. The student teachers, their background, teacher educators their background, programme centres its infrastructure, academic inputs like self learning material, counselling, workshop, assignment, teaching practice etc., have to be evaluated. There is also a need

to have a comparison among various teacher training programme available. This type of research helps in listing out micro-level issues so that the teacher education in Urdu can be enhanced.

Modern day challenges of teacher education programmes

The teacher education programmes of modern day have to meet the demands of globalisation and meet the requirement of scientific society. Online education, e-learning, online transfer of money, online examination are influencing the educational system and hence, distance education systems have to geared up to face this situation.

Conclusion

The linguistic minority teacher training institutes like Urdu face various problems in present era. There is a great need to cope up with the demands of the society and changing educational scenario. The investigators may take up macro and micro level research for upliftment of education in Urdu. It is expected the government and private organisations will work for the teacher training programmes in distance mode.

