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Distant Education And B. Ed. Course

—Principal M.N. Karim

B.Ed degree course through distance education has earned a popular demand in Bangladesh, just in consonance with the distance education system prevalent in other development and developed countries of the world. The existing ten Teachers' Training Colleges of Bangladesh can only offer training facilities to about three thousand teachers annually, out of a total of about eighty thousand in-service untrained teachers.

The establishment of more such colleges at a cost of crores of Taka is not possible at all for the Government in view of financial constraint. Hence, to meet the demand of B.Ed course of study and training for the huge number of untrained teachers, a course of distance education at a minimum cost was contemplated early in 1985. A National Institute of Distance Education was set up by merging the two media institutions, the Audio-Visual Education Centre and the School Broadcasting Centre. B.Ed degree programme was subsequently introduced in July, 1985, through distance teaching, using printed correspondence materials supplied by Audio-Broadcast, Cassetted Programme, Tutorial Services, Summer Schools etc. The execution of the Programme was entrusted to this Institute of Distance Education within the academic programme of the Rajshahi University. The BIDE had thus set the ball rolling and with the coopera-

tion of the T.T. Colleges and the NIEAR in their tutorial and summer and winter courses the programme is being run with a hope to meet the demand of society in the field of teacher training.

In 1985, a total of 3211 teachers were enrolled for this course of study and at the end of two years, through 4 semester terms as many as 2193 are found eligible for B.Ed degree. The remaining 1018 mostly happen to be irregular taking advantage of the passing time limit of seven years granted to them. Meanwhile, the July admission session of 1988 is temporarily kept in abeyance with a view to evaluating the performance of the past distance education trainees with an idea to integrate a few more effective steps in the programme in the light of past experience of experts connected with this course.

This temporary pause in the dynamic process of the BIDE has caused frustration in the minds of the aspiring candidates and their well-wisher educationists. But since the programme of distance education has been taken up after due consideration by government and with the enthusiastic support of the Rajshahi University, it is in the logic of things that it is destined to continue. The temporary pause, therefore, need not be construed as something negative.

I had been connected with this course of distance education in connection with some editing works of

some of its text-book materials and with practical and viva voce test of the candidates of the course. I have also a few years experience in conducting the B.Ed course of study and training in T.T. Colleges as Vice-Principal and Principal and as such I venture to make my humble remarks in connection with the improvement of the distant education course. In course of my examination of the distance education candidates (both viva and practical) it was revealed to me that most of the candidates did not care to master the useful written materials of the course of study so carefully prepared by the Institute with the aid of scholars. For example, they mostly failed to answer simple questions on history of education and on educational psychology such as on 'wood despatch', psychological needs of adolescents motivation etc.

Of course there were a few exceptions who could answer questions on some such important and familiar subjects as class management, Dr. Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission Report etc. The primary cause of this flaw in their study seemed to me to be their lack of seriousness due to perhaps the long lease of seven years' time limit granted to them for their B.Ed degree and also because of the chance they expect to take in passing easily by taking recourse to the objective type of questions set up for them for their B.Ed degree course. Hence if the time-limit to pass is reduced to at

least 4 years and about two-thirds of the questions for B.Ed degree be of essay type then they may be found more active and vigilant and may show better performance.

Needs cause energy to overflow. If a candidate knows that he will have to read and pass within a specified period and will get the benefit of increased salary at his success in the course of his study he will naturally be up and doing, because where there is will there is way to pass.

The B.Ed candidates of the T.T. Colleges, on the other hand, are found to be more responsive because of their intensive study to pass within the scheduled time of virtually nine-month course. They are found to be fully conversant with the text-book materials of the BIDE which they are utilising in their answer-scripts to their great advantage.

In practical examination I could find the Distance Education candidates more care-free and confident than the average B.Ed candidates of T.T. Colleges. Even some of them were found to be born teachers and exceptionally good. This is because of their long standing teaching experience in schools, varying from 3-4 years to 26-27 years as it was manifest from records. The outlook of these teachers on life and of life little differs from that of the B.Ed trainees of the T.T Colleges.