

Chronic Absenteeism among B.Ed. Students in Haryana: Expected Causes and Measures

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INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact that “Even a diamond is a piece of coal without the person who carves it.”

The progress of a nation depends upon the quality of its teachers and for this reason teaching is the noblest among all professions. Each and every profession occupies a specific place and respect in the society. Doctors heal patients by suggesting the medicine. Engineers design and bankers handle money. But, the role of teachers is above from all. Teaching job requires great responsibility as compared to any another job. It has an impact on the growth and well-being of the nation. Teachers educate the youth of a nation.

Teachers are an extremely important facet of any society for a number of reasons and their role in society is both significant and valuable. Teachers play an extraordinary part in the lives of children for the formative years of their development and the importance of teachers is something that cannot be understated. They involve themselves in moulding their students into responsible citizens of their country. Every child, no matter where he comes from, deserves great teachers. Passionate, motivating, effective teachers are the foundation of a quality education; and a quality education opens the doors to a lifetime of opportunity. Teachers are needed because they provide guidance, knowledge and right direction to the student career. The teacher is the person who inspires and encourages the student to strive for greatness, give shape to future and nurtures their talent and potential.

A good teacher, in fact, becomes a role model for students. Students tend to follow their teacher in almost every way. The teacher's caring attitude will have a major influence on the students.

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Student's self-esteem could be uplifted by a good teacher. Teacher gives wings to the ambitions and aim in the mind of the student for future academic success. So, the teacher should have the professional competence as well as a good nature in order to impart good values to students. A person with proper vision, experience, and one with the passion of teaching can enter the teaching profession. Teacher education in India has seen a gradual growth trajectory. With the creation of an independent nation in 1947, Prime Minister Nehru's vision about temples of modern India included good educational institutions as well. This resulted in setting up of a range of educational institutions including schools and teacher training institutions. As per NCTE (NRC) current database on teacher education institutions, there are 1613 teacher training institutions in Haryana which imparts all kinds of teacher education programmes like D.El.Ed., B.Ed., B.A. B.Ed. / B.Sc. B.Ed., M.Ed., B.Ed., M.Ed.(Integrated) and D.P.Ed. etc.

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course is meant for preparing teachers for secondary/senior secondary schools and aims at providing the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching at school level. The duration of this programme is of two academic years. B.Ed. course can be completed in a maximum of three years from the date of admission in this course. 80% attendance of student-teachers for all course work and practicum and 90% for school internship is mandatory to complete the course. Thus, the nature of this Teacher Education Programme (B.Ed.) is highly participatory. Regular attendance in all classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, practicum, field experiences, school internship etc.) and the timely completion of assignments are essential to success in the B.Ed. Programme.

Today, we are facing with the evil of nonattendance of students in the B. Ed. Colleges especially in SFS B.Ed. colleges. Moreover, the student teachers get admission without being present before the admission committee. Sometimes it happens that the student teachers do not know about the curriculum, teachers' name, even name of the institution even after completion the course. They do not go for any field work or school internship. Even then, they complete the course. Absenteeism is a truant behavior that negatively affects the performance among students. Absenteeism among student teachers may be caused by many factors related to student teacher, family, college or institution and some financial issues etc.

CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AMONG STUDENT TEACHERS

Family Pressure

In some cases it has been observed that the student teacher admitted in B.Ed. take admission in the B.Ed. course as their parents want him /her to study B.Ed. They think that it would be easy for their children to get job after completion the B.Ed. course. Moreover, the parents think it would be easy for them to find a suitable partner for their children once they completed their B.Ed. degree. Thus the admission under family pressure results in absenteeism among student teachers.

Involvement in Domestic Tasks

In case of student teachers belonging to rural areas and farmer families, it has been observed that the students most of the times remain involved in domestic and farming activities rather than attending their classes regularly. Thus, much involvement in various domestic works leads to the student teacher towards absenteeism.

Lack of Interest

Student teachers could be lacking interest in doing B.Ed., as they think that B.Ed. curriculum is not useful for them. The curriculum does not fulfill their academic needs and there is no surety of placement after completion the course. That is why, they do not take interest in the course and bunk the classes.

Financial Problem

The fee for the B.Ed. 2year programme is near about Rs. 44000/- per year in self financing institutions. But the family's financial resources of many students are limited and they have problem with their fee and other dues. As a result, the family's financial concerns require or force the student-teacher to do some job for earning. That is why a large number of students are engaged in some private work/job side by side. All these contribute to absenteeism among B.Ed. students.

Faulty Curriculum

The present era is of great competition. Students have to face competition to succeed at every step. And the present curriculum prescribed for B.Ed (2 year Programme) or classroom teaching does not prepare the students to fight the competition in this age of competition. That is why the

private coaching could drive a number of students away from the conventional classroom teaching of B.Ed.

Institutions Infrastructural Facilities

It has been observed that a number of B.Ed. Colleges do not adhere to mandatory disclosures by NCTE or affiliated university regarding infrastructural facilities. Such institutions do not have facility of libraries, laboratories, language lab, psychology lab, sports facilities etc. Lack of infrastructural facilities is a hindrance to attendance among student- teachers.

Lack of Qualified and Skilled Teachers

Dirth of trained and qualified teachers is one of the major causes of absenteeism among student-teachers. Less qualified or experienced teachers fail to satisfy the queries of B.Ed. students. That's why the students think it only wastage of time to attendant the classes regularly. Moreover, the institutions having inadequate infrastructural facilities and human resources encourage absenteeism among the students directly or indirectly.

No Strict Action against the Absentees

The teacher training institutions take no strict action against the students who remain absent from the classes throughout the year. The heads of the institutions issue admit cards to the absentees and allow them to appear in the final examinations easily or happily. All such type of freedom/ flexibility leads the students to absenteeism.

University Inspection

The affiliating universities are not taking the nonattendance of B.Ed. students seriously. Universities are not conducting regular inspections in the teacher training institutions. Thus flexibility in university policies is also responsible for absenteeism among B.Ed. students.

Faulty Examination System

Faulty examination system also is a major factor of absenteeism among B.Ed. students. The students can pass the university examinations easily without attending the classes. He / She cram only 15-20 questions and pass the examinations easily. Moreover, no due emphasis is given to the practical examinations. A student who has some approach to the examiners or managing committee of the institution gets more marks than a brilliant student or a student who has

attended all the practical works/ sessional works. That is why, the students think it a wastage of time to attend the class regularly.

Conclusion

Education has been considered as a powerful tool for development of a nation. The idea of developing a nation without good education is surrealism. Thus education in every sense is at the heart of all type of development. Qualitative education of any nation depends on its teachers. Teachers are the core of education at every level- from school education to university education. In our nation from the day of independence, the teacher training institutions aim at providing good teachers to the society. Teaching is a profession and involves a prolonged training and a formal qualification. It is a very challenging job to do well, especially without understanding the science of learning. It is the shame of our educational system that most of the students who are enrolled in various teacher training courses/ programmes i.e. B.Ed., D.El.Ed. etc. are taking their degrees without attending even a single theory or practical class.

Today, absenteeism is the most burning issue of the teacher education programme in Haryana state. Absenteeism can lead to depression and also result in poor quality of education as a result of time lost while being away from the college. It could also lead to moral degradation that leads to drug abuse and unruly behavior etc. Absenteeism can be remedied by providing adequate co-curricular activities to students. It could be curbed by creating of clubs and societies to keep students busy when they are out of class. TEI's should strive to have up-to-date learning facilities like libraries as well as sporting facilities. To avoid and curtail the absenteeism a more reliable and secure attendance system like Biometric Attendance System should be introduced in teacher education institutions across the state. Strict action should be taken by the authorities against absentees.

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