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Higher Secondary Teachers' Training

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TEACHING is a knowledge and skill-oriented job. Professional course on teacher training strengthens the knowledge base; provides teaching skills to teach curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular subjects and furthermore shapes a teaching mind in the person. Training of teachers is essential for school education but in Bangladesh teachers at the higher secondary level do not seem to require training in teaching. Teaching needs are manifold and teachers need to be trained accordingly. Four Higher Secondary Teachers' Training Institutes (HSTTI) were established in Bangladesh in 1994. These went into operation in 1995.

Higher Secondary Education is a part of secondary education. Historically, in Bangladesh, it is an appendage to the higher education system. Teachers are very much inclined to use lecture, seminar and discussion style of methods suitable for tertiary level of education. It leaves scope to use projects, assignments, demonstration, laboratory methods of teaching and instructional technology to unfold the manifold potentialities of the late adolescents. In higher educational institutions there are no exciting co-curricular activities tied to the curriculum for all-round development and for associating the curricular learning. The present traditional curriculum is only academic and does not cater to their 3-fold needs—(i) Development needs (ii) Vocational needs and (iii) Knowledge need for its active use. The present higher secondary teachers have their own belief system about teaching. It has been observed that most of our teachers at the higher secondary level share a belief in teaching through "filling of empty vessels" system.

Their method of teaching is a theoretical illustration of subject-matter without caring for real attention and participation in lessons by the late adolescent children. Against this backdrop, the establishment of HSTTI in Bangladesh is a right step to enhance teaching-learning at HSC level. However, both the Khuda Commission and Mofiz Commission recommended professional training for higher secondary teachers. As a product of the Higher Secondary Education Project (HSEP) 1992-1997, 4 HSTTI came into existence in July 1994.

The HSEP has the very lofty goal to restructure the school system in its programme. This is to develop a school system with classes from 9 to 12 as secondary level to be housed in one campus and in a unit level of continuum. From the developmental perspective of the children, this is very sensible and in full accord with the previous commission's reports. The HSTTI programme must view this structural dimension of school system and design training activities. But for the present, an in-service training course of 3 months' duration has been devised. It contains 30.0% pedagogy and 70.0% subject based teaching contents. In addition, the

course includes co-curricular activities comprising games/sports, cultural activities, debate/speech and educational trips. The 4 HSTTI's launched their first course in their hired buildings between 22.10.95 and 19.01.96. With this, the first phase of establishment of HSTTI's at Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Comilla and Khulna has ended. Real establishment of HSTTI's will be completed when it will be housed in its own campus. HSTTI, a sub-project of HSEP, is the joint venture of the government of Bangladesh, ADB and UNDP. It is to be completed by June 1998, which includes the time for spill over.

At present the HSTTI's are in the project stage and going through many uncertainties. All the HSTTI's are housed in rented houses with non-academic structures and environment. All are lacking in physical facilities and teaching aids. There are even problems with the trainers. The major problems of the HSTTI's are enumerated below for analysis and solution—

1. Duration of the course is inadequate for developing appropriate teaching qualities in the trainees.

The course is In-Service and of 3 months duration (which will perhaps be shortened to 6 weeks). The trainee teachers do not have pre-service exposure and join training programme with rigid teaching beliefs earned through years of traditional practices. These higher secondary teacher trainees also teach at the tertiary level of education where an academic type of lecture is in vogue as the method of teaching. They regard lecture as scholarly and explanatory for all the students including late adolescent children. They do not recognise passivity of the students in lecture method of teaching. But for higher secondary children the teacher needs to use a variety of methods depending on the subject, topic, class size and learners' ability. The trainees within the time ration of subject teaching do not get ample scope to master and practise various effective methods for teaching the subject. With inadequate exposure to pedagogy and teaching methodologies they fail to develop appropriate teaching behaviour and competence in them.

The trainers of the HSTTI's including the directors do not need to have any pre-service training or any long training on pedagogy and educational research. 90.0% of the HSTTI trainers have been picked up from government college teachers teaching at the tertiary and higher level of education and 10.0% have been recruited from among the qualified out of job subject experts. At present only 15.0% of the trainers have some pre-service training on teaching. In this background, after joining the HSTTI the trainers are being given a 3 months' training on pedagogy and subject teaching. The training on teaching the subjects is done through simulation and practi-

cally the exercise is dull because of the complacency of the master trainers (mostly university teachers) and trainers in the superiority of the scholarly way of traditional or dogmatic teaching methods. Thus inadequate training of the trainers fails to develop the needed professional competence, outlook and behaviour. It rather fortifies their old teaching beliefs with new reasoning. It leaves them in need of more training. In fact, trainers are very much in need of full time pre-service training first, then in-service training and no piece-meal training of the present sort.

For supporting constant need of teaching aids teachers' training institutes of this kind require to have resource centres. But at present no HSTTI in Bangladesh has any resource centre to meet these needs and to everybody's surprise, no HSTTI has any Overhead Projector (OHP), TV, VCR, Video-Camera and other common A-V aids.

Evaluation of the performance and achievements of the trainees differ from one HSTTI to another. Types of tests/batteries to be used for evaluation are not defined. It depends on the inclination of the module or subject in-charge in the HSTTI. Save HSTTI, Rajshahi, no other HSTTI conducts and evaluates activities like P.T., games and cultural events which are compulsory for the pro-

gramme. Thus the HSTTI's evaluation programme lacks oneness, which needs to be remedied.

Each HSTTI is allowed to hire buildings with space of about 10,000 square feet at the maximum. This space is not adequate even for office accommodation and classroom. HSTTI's are not allowed to hire buildings for a dormitory. They even do not have dormitory and classroom furniture. Trainees are to find their own accommodation within the city/township. Since the training is full-time and the trainees do not reside within the vicinity of the training venue, it causes great inconvenience to them. Co-curricular activities, which are compulsory for training, are either being ignored or implemented with less emphasis. Since they are not accommodated, the trainees make little investment in activities.

All the HSTTI's have completed one course each and the second course is in progress. According to the project pro forma there is provision for Professional Development and Course Planning Programme (PDCPP) for and by the staff. But no HSTTI has undertaken the exercise. In this regard there are two obstacles.

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