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Exploring the effectiveness of school internship in virtual environment from the perspectives of B.Ed. pupil teachers

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Abstract---Education is a prerequisite for the development, prosperity of an individual, society, and nation at large. Education is an important means to enhance knowledge, character building and behavior modification. It accelerates the process of social change, adaptation, and accommodation with the environment. It helps to develop creative and critical minds and enables them to think, analyze and reflect from varied perspectives. It enables learners to reconstruct the experiences and draw meaningful conclusions to understand their immediate surroundings in a better way. Thus, to realize the goals of education, we must address the quality concern of education. As mentioned in the sustainable development goals that recognize the role of good quality education in developing countries. (SDGs- 4) “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

Keywords---COVID-19, online platform, school internship, teacher education.

Introduction

Quality education provides ample opportunities to reach the maximum level of potentialities of an individual. It helps to develop a sustainable outlook with desirable attitude, values and skills. Quality education may determine by the three important components i.e., quality teachers, quality learning material, tools and quality learning environment. Here, recognizing the need for quality teachers by Education Commission (1964-66) mentioned "the Destiny of India is being shaped in its classroom". Methews (1999), “No system of education, no syllabus, no methodology, no textbook can rise above the level of its teachers. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers”. National Policy

on Education, 1986 stated that “the status of teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”.

Aforesaid statements reflect that the teachers are a sole component of the education system and play a significant role in realizing the ultimate goals of education. An enthusiastic, emancipated, empowered, enlightened, committed and trained teacher may lead an individual, society and community towards a progressive and successful life. Teacher education is regarded as a requisite conception for teachers at all levels of education. The teacher training program is essential to develop teaching skills, aptitude, attitude and competencies to cater stage-specific needs and requirements of the child. “The most important fact in contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualification, his professional training and the place that occupies in the school as well as in the community” (Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53). The concern expressed by the (University Education Commission, 1948-49) “People in this country have been slow to recognize that education is a profession for which intensive preparation is necessary as it is in any other profession”.

Historical Development of Teacher Education

After Independence Kothari Commission (1964-66) placed a significant contribution to bring teacher education into the mainstream and reequip teacher education as an independent self-inclusive and self-directed discipline. Resolution on National Policy on Education (1968) laid stress on the reconstruction of the contemporary education system and highlighted the role of education for national development and good citizenship. National Educational Commission (1985) recommended a five-year integrated training program for secondary school teachers. National Policy on Education, (1986) emphasize on setting up of new structure ASCs, NCTE DIETs and advancement of SIEs into SCERT, etc. to rationalize teacher education. NPE, 1986 modified in 1988 addressed the need for CSS (centrally sponsored schemes) to provide additional support for quality improvement of teacher education institutions. The scheme was launched in 1987-88. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), set up by an act of parliament (1993) as a regulatory authority to ensure the planned and strategic development of teacher education in India. Justice Verma Commission (2012) proposed a number of reforms in teacher education to be carried out by NCTE to maintain regulations, norms and procedures. NCTE Review Committee (2015) contributes to improve the efficacy and effectiveness of NCTE by suggesting additional measures of improvement. The curriculum of teacher education is broadly dealt with three significant curricular areas i.e., the foundation of education, curriculum and pedagogy and school internship.

Teacher Education Curriculum: A Framework, (1978) suggested that “the curriculum for teacher education must satisfy the socio-personal needs of school children followed by an interdisciplinary and integrated approach along with practice teaching/internship”. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (1988) proposed a plan of action, curriculum design and methodology of curriculum transaction for varied programs of teacher education. The

framework design comprised foundation course 20%, stage of specialization 30%, additional specialization 10% and internship/ fieldwork 40%. Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (1995) highlight the need for value inculcation and proposed the course design is comprised of objectives, theory course, practicum and practice teaching for all level of teacher education program. National Curriculum for Teacher Education, 2009 addresses the issues of education at all stages of schooling and suggests a new approach to varied curricular areas of teacher education. A framework has offered considerable focus on in-service and pre-service programs to supplement the professional development of teacher educators.

Teacher Education and School Internship

School internship is a mandatory component of a teacher training program to prepare competent and efficient teachers. Good teaching practice results in the attainment of desired learning outcomes in terms of learning, pedagogical practices and curricular content. Here, the pupil teachers can receive first-hand experiences of prevailing practices in the school and classrooms. It provides opportunities for self-exploration and to identify and address their weaknesses and strength. It helps to acquire essential knowledge, skills and competencies to realize their moral responsibility and accountability as a teacher. NCFTE (2009) mentioned “At the outset, it can be seen that any attempt towards reform of current practices and design of innovative approaches in practice teaching should begin with an understanding of the place of teaching practice in the overall scheme of things. The first thing to be noted is that the practice of teaching constitutes the hub of the multiple and varied activities comprising the total programme of teacher education”.

The emergence of Covid-19 and prolong lockdown create unrest all over the world and brought substantial disruption at all levels of education. It resulted in the integration of technology at a wider space into the teaching-learning process. Training programs are not an exemption conventional modes of teaching shifted to transformational digital modes of learning. School internship is a pivotal component of the curriculum in teacher training programs to obtain desired field experiences. It was also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and prolonged lockdown that create a deterrent to develop essential skills and competencies of pupil teachers. The training institutions opted for virtual internships and promote a techno-pedagogical approach to teaching. The efforts of prospective teachers were significant enough for the successful completion of important components of school internship in virtual modes.

Teacher Education Program

The Plan for School Internship has been suggested by the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009 as under:

Internship in school for a continuous period of 4 days a week and a minimum duration of 6-10 weeks for a two year program & 15-20 weeks for a four year program. including an initial phase of one week for observing a regular classroom with regular teacher

Visit to Inovative Centre of Pedagogy and Learning

Classroom Based Reasearch Project

Developing Unit Plan and Maintaining Reflective Journal

Creating and Maintaining Resources for Teaching-Learning

Source: National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009

Review of the Related Literature

The following studies have been reviewed by the investigators in order to fulfill the objectives of the study.

- ❖ Kiran Lata (2021) expressed the need of an internship during a teacher training program. It includes a wide variety of activities under the supervision of the supervisor. It enables pupil teachers to acquire desired personality traits of teachers and bring desirable changes in the behavior of pupil teachers. Further, she has mentioned some advantages and drawbacks of an internship at a virtual platform. As she mentioned that at the virtual platform it is quite feasible in terms of time and space. She also stated a few drawbacks like an internship at a virtual platform not being able to provide real experiences of teaching in a real classroom situation and it also requires good communication and technical skills.
- ❖ Mohanty (2021) stated that the quality and quantity of school education depend on the quantity and quality of human and material resources. Variations in resources lead to variations in the quality of education. He also suggested strategies to improve the quality of education i.e., an in-service training program for school teachers, break down the isolation from school and pointed out the need for spiritual development in teacher training curricula. He added such kind of extension is needed to bring improvements to the school and training program itself.
- ❖ Shweta. S. (2021) reflected in her study the impact of Covid-19 on the internship program of B.Ed. Students. The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study and the study was conducted on 100 B.Ed. trainee teachers. The findings of the study revealed that their internship programs

are badly affected during the pandemic period and they are not able to acquire essential teaching skills.

- ❖ Singh, L.C (2017) discussed the quality of teacher education. He mentioned that the quality of education is determined by the quality of teachers and teacher education. Further, he expressed his concern about the continuous decline in the quality of teacher education due to commercialization and privatization of teacher education. The quality concern expressed by him is that non-attending culture in teacher education.
- ❖ Geneviene (2017) stated that the central goal of a student teaching program is to provide challenging, rewarding and relevant field experiences to aspiring teachers to inculcate essential teaching skills and professional growth. Teaching practice provides an opportunity to enable aspiring teachers to understand the school community its administration, students, and classrooms.
- ❖ Ashok. K (2016) conducted a study to find out the significant difference of gender, stream, and academic qualification in the attitude of pupil teachers towards internship programs. It was found a significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards internship. It was also revealed there were significant interactional differences between gender, stream, and qualification.
- ❖ Azeem (2011) study was conducted to identify the problems faced by the pupil teachers during teaching practice. The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed they prepared lesson plans daily that were checked and supervised by the allotted supervisors but sometimes schools were not offered the classes of their choice. He also mentioned that pupil teachers were not informed about existing facilities in the schools thus it was recommended that pupil teachers must be aware of facilities available and continuous supervision will enhance quality outcomes.

Rationale of the Study

School internship includes many activities like preparation of lesson plan, observation and report writing, reflective journals, textbook analysis, and organization of co-curricular activities, etc. that facilitate pupil-teacher to analyze their role as good and effective teacher. Virtual modes of teaching during the lockdown provide an opportunity to acquire and impart essential knowledge but that may create a substantial obstruction to acquiring real-life experiences of school. Thus, it is quite significant to study the attitude and level of satisfaction of prospective teachers towards virtual modes of an internship. It is very much significant to study the constraints of internship at a virtual platform of teaching and learning. It may be beneficial for the stakeholders, policymakers, school administration, and teacher training institutions to cope with the challenges for successful implementation of internship programs in virtual modes.

Title of the Study

The study has been titled "Exploring the Effectiveness of School Internship in Virtual Environment from the Perspectives of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers."

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been conducted to fulfill the following objectives.

- ❖ To study the most common virtual platforms being used for virtual internship by teacher education institutions.
- ❖ To study the level of satisfaction towards a virtual internship in relation to certain background variables of the pupil teachers i.e. their Subject of training, Gender, Year of training, Medium, and Type of Institutions.
- ❖ To study the problems being faced by pupil teachers during a virtual internship as perceived by them.
- ❖ To study the factors affecting the level of satisfaction of pupil teachers towards virtual internship.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses have been formulated and tested through suitable statistical techniques.

- ❖ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship w.r.t. their subject of teaching.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship w.r.t. their gender.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship w.r.t. their year of training.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship w.r.t. their medium of training.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship w.r.t. their type of institutions.

Methodology

The present study has been conducted by adopting the descriptive survey method of educational research. The population for the present study comprised of all the pupil teachers studying in teacher education institutions situated in Delhi only. The study has been conducted on a sample of 200 pupil teachers receiving their training from these teacher education institutions, selected using multistage random sampling technique during the session (2019-21). The data for the present study has been collected using a questionnaire cum rating scale. The tool has been prepared by the investigators themselves and the content validity of the tool was ascertained through expert opinions. The final tool contained thirty-five (35) items covering various dimensions i.e. Perception about virtual platforms, satisfaction about the virtual internship, factors related to the level of satisfaction, and problems being faced by pupil teachers.

Analysis of Data

The data has been analyzed using basic descriptive techniques like Mean, Standard Deviation, Range, Percentage, and t-test, etc.

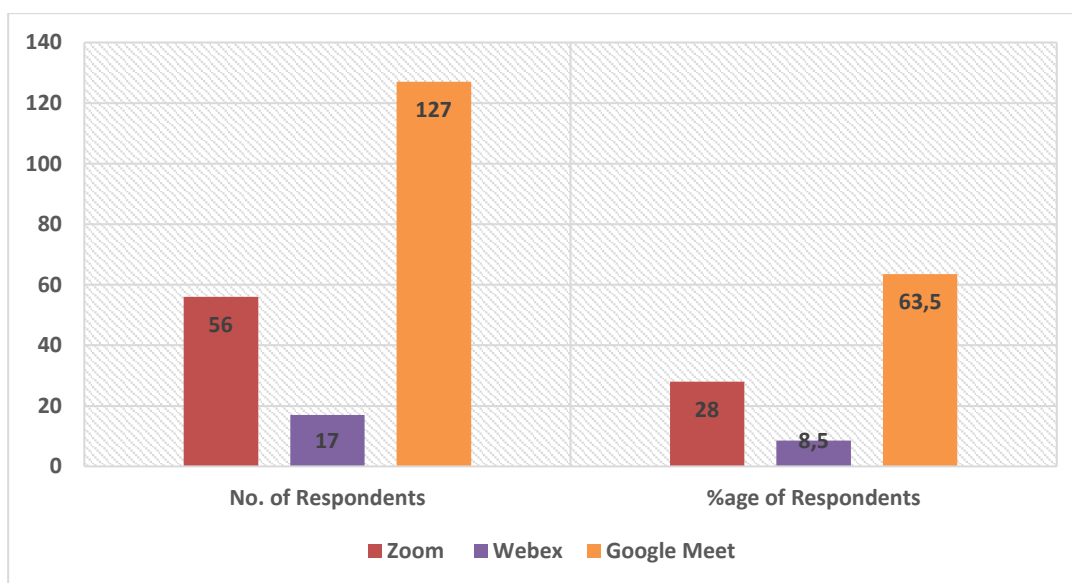
Findings from the Study

After a careful analysis of data the following findings may be reported as under:

Table A: Description of the Virtual Platforms being used for Virtual Internship

S. No.	Virtual Platforms	No. of Respondents	%age of Respondents
1.	Zoom	56	28%
2.	Webex	17	8.5%
3.	Google Meet	127	63.5%
Total		200	100%

Chart 1: Showing the Virtual Platforms being used for Virtual Internship

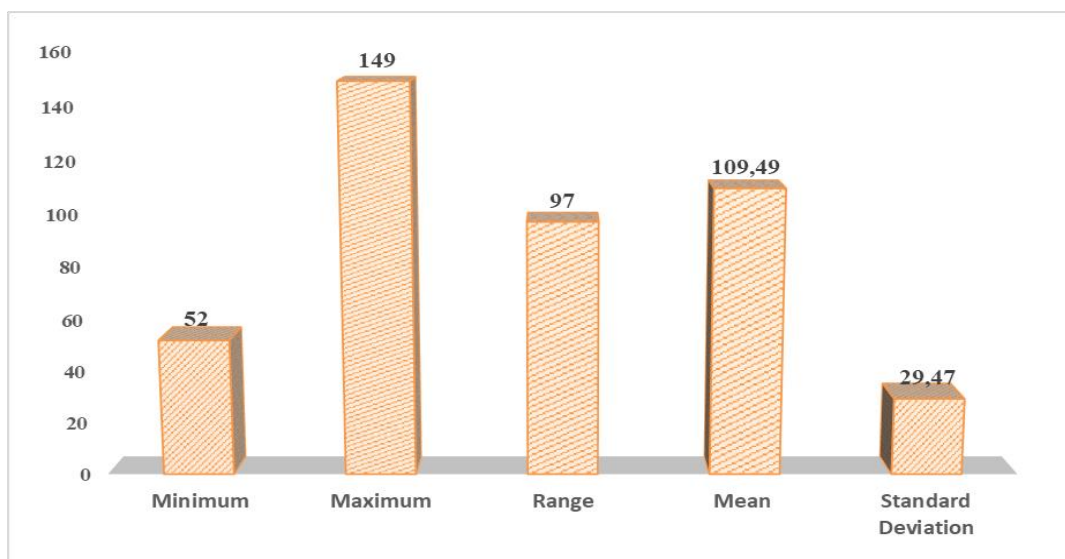


It is evident from the table A and its associated chart 1 that out of 200 pupil teachers approximately 56 pupil teachers i.e. 28% were of the opinion that they are using Zoom for the virtual internship, 17 out of 200 were found using Webex platform. But most of the participants i.e. 127 out of 200 i.e. app. 63.5% opined that they were using Google Meet Platform for virtual internship.

Table B: Describing the Overall Perception of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers regarding the Effectiveness of Virtual Internship

Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
52	149	97	109.49	29.47

Chart 2: Showing the Overall Perception Level of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers regarding the Effectiveness of Virtual Internship

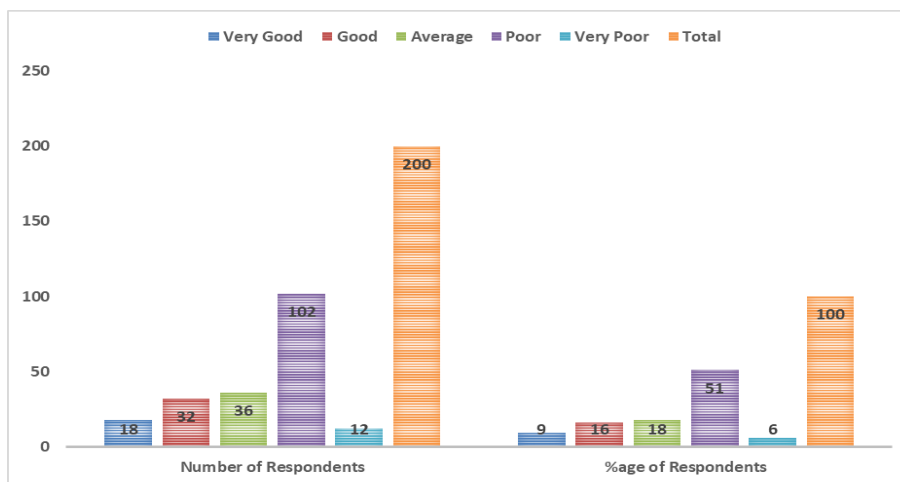


The table B and its associated chart 2 clearly demonstrate that the minimum and maximum value of students' satisfaction level of B.Ed. pupil teachers towards virtual internship are 52 and 149 respectively having a range of 97. Whereas the Mean Satisfaction level is 109.49 with a standard deviation of 29.47.

Table C: Describing the Perception Levels of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers regarding the Effectiveness of Virtual Internship

Level of Effectiveness	Number of Respondents	%age of Respondents
Very Good	18	9%
Good	32	16%
Average	36	18%
Poor	102	51%
Very Poor	12	6%
Total	200	100%

Chart 3: Showing the Perception of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers regarding the Effectiveness of Virtual Internship



The Table C and its associated Chart 3 describes the levels of satisfaction among B.Ed. pupil teachers which clearly indicates that out of 200 pupil teachers only 50 pupil teachers i.e. 25% of the total respondents assume virtual internship good to very good. Whereas only 36 out of 200 i.e. 18% of teachers assume the virtual mode of Internship to be moderately effective. But most of the pupil teachers i.e. 114 out of 200 i.e. approximately 57% were found of the opinion that in terms of effectiveness virtual mode of internship is poor to very poor.

Table D: Differential Analysis of Perception of B.Ed. Pupil Teachers towards Effectiveness of Virtual Internship w.r.t. their Background Variables

S. No.	Option (s)	Mean	N	S.D.	SE _D	df	t-value	Sig.
1.	Boys	123.20	80	23.68	3.94	198	5.79	0.00**
	Girls	100.34	120	29.48				
2.	First Year	125.78	100	22.11	3.48	198	9.37	0.00**
	Second Year	931.19	100	26.84				
3.	Science	109.97	65	30.81	4.46	198	1.61	0.87 ^{NS}
	Non-Science	109.25	135	28.91				
4.	Pvt.	113.92	100	28.32	4.13	198	2.14	0.03*
	Govt.	105.05	100	30.06				
5.	English	127.46	123	20.57	2.72	198	17.15	0.00**
	Non-English	80.77	77	15.35				

*Significant at 0.05 Level; **Significant at 0.01 Level; NS: Not Significant at any Level

Further, the effectiveness of Virtual Internship was explored from the perspectives of B.Ed. pupil teachers in terms of their gender, year of study, stream of training, types of institution, and their medium of internship. As it is evident from the Table D that there were significant differences found among B.Ed. pupil teachers regarding the effectiveness of Virtual Internship in terms of their gender, year of study, types of institution, and their medium of internship. But no such differences were found in terms of their stream of teaching.

Table E: Description of Problematic Areas in the Organization of Virtual Internship as Perceived by Pupil Teachers

S. No.	Problematic Areas in Virtual Internship	No. of Students (Out of 200)	%age of Students
1.	Problems in Planning for Internship	112	66%
2.	Execution of Planning	186	93%
3.	Problems in Classroom Interaction	156	78%
4.	Assessment/Feedback	118	59%
5.	Lack of Coordination	146	73%
6.	Minimum Scope for Application of Teaching Methods	174	87%
7.	Scope for the Organization of other Activities	131	65.5%

The Table E clearly describes the problematic areas in the organization of virtual internship that are usually countered by the teacher educators and B.Ed. Pupil teachers. As per the responses received from the respondents the most common problem areas are: Execution of Planning, Minimum Scope for Application of Teaching Methods, Problems in Classroom Interaction, and Lack of Coordination. While other problems include Problems in Planning for Internship, lack of proper feedback. As per the discussions held with the pupil teachers it was revealed that these are practical problems that come into existence while being practiced by the various stakeholders working in the field of teacher education with respect to the organization of virtual internship program.

Table F: Other Factors affecting the Successful Organization of Virtual Internship

S. No.	Perceived Factors	No. of Respondents	%age of Respondents
1.	Lack of Resources	129	64.5%
2.	Medium of Teaching	113	56.5%
3.	Digital Literacy	147	73.5%

4.	Lack of Interaction	134	67%
5.	Poor Network Quality	186	93%

Further, the above table F describes other practical problems usually being faced by the pupil teachers related to them sometimes individually and sometimes collectively. These problems include Lack of Resources, Medium of Teaching, Digital Literacy, Lack of Interaction, and poor network connection.

Conclusion

Virtual Internship is a very significant tool that has facilitated thousands of pupil teachers in this time of the Covid-19 era. But it is not the most effective solution for the organization of internship in teacher education programs. However, it has been revealed from the study that most of the pupil teachers opined that the effectiveness of virtual internship ranges from average to very poor. Only a few of them considered it effective at all in comparison to the conventional mode of internship, that may be credited to the problems related to perform various steps of internship in virtual mode and some other significant problems related to the individual pupil teachers. But despite all the above-mentioned problems, it is one of the best available solutions if utilized impressively by planning and removing the problems carefully by the authorities.

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