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## Practicing Diploma in Primary Education at Government Primary Schools: Policy and Reality

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**Practicing Diploma in Primary Education at Government Primary Schools: Policy and Reality**Rabeya Khatun<sup>a</sup> and Muhammad Salahuddin<sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup> *Instructor, Primary Teachers' Training Institute (PTI), Mymensingh*<sup>b</sup> *Assistant Specialist, National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), Mymensingh*

The Diploma in Primary Education (DPed) is one of the significant advances of TED plan in Bangladesh. For ensuring quality primary education we need quality teachers whereas DPed helps a lot. The main objective of this study is to explore the policy and practice issues for implementing DPed at government primary schools. This study has followed qualitative research design as fundamental. Although it has been guided by empirical research method to collect and analyze the data, those data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources to meet the research questions. Using qualitative analysis method, it is found that DPed has strong policy direction while the trainee teachers are facing different obstacles like as heavy academic works, extensive non-academic work, physical/mental sickness, non-cooperation of head teachers, assistant teachers and family members, reluctance of trainees, improper instructions, insolence of officials, imbalance of time and workload. This study recommended reduction of workload at fourth term and ensuring strong collaboration with PTIs and schools, close monitoring, mentoring and supervision for trainee teachers.

**Key words:** *DPed, Teacher Education, Bangladesh*

**Introduction**

In recent era, the world moved to achieve quality education as committed to sustainable development goal. The global educational trend in the last decade was to achieve 100% enrolment rate including reducing dropout and repetition at primary level. As a part of global movement, Bangladesh showed the highest success in primary education sector to achieve millennium development goal (MDG). A compendium of the scenario was found in Bangladesh Education Statistics Report 2017. The net enrolment rate was 94.7% in 2005 while it was 97.9% in 2015. In addition, the dropout rate was also reduced dramatically from 47.2% to 20.4% from 2005 to 2015. The trend of reduction rate subsided from 10.2% to 6.2% in the previously mentioned decade (BANBEIS, 2018). The quantity-based achievement guided us to ensure quality education as we decided in SDG4.

It is arduous to ensure quality education without quality teacher. That is why the EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2013/4 "Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All" suggests that it is necessary to attract, motivate and retain the best qualified candidates in teaching, to provide good quality initial and ongoing teacher education and support (UNESCO, 2014). Similarly, the teacher education gets priority for ensuring quality education in sustainable development goal documents. The target 4.c stated that "by 2030,

substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and Small Island developing States” (UNESCO, 2018, p.40). In addition, they identified few global and thematic indicators to achieve SDG4 through implementing target 4.c.

Before signing the SDG and at the end of MDG in 2011, Bangladesh took a national plan and strategy for primary education Teacher Education and Development (TED Plan). The aim of the plan was to give an overarching framework for teacher development. In addition, this plan also aimed to improve primary education through a “holistic, life-long process of CPD” based on teacher competencies and covering initial appointment to later stages of the profession and to harmonise a considerable number of training activities for teachers (Breakell, Nishad, & Das, 2016).

The Diploma in Primary Education (DPEd) is one of the significant advances of TED plan. In 2011, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) decided to start DPEd for primary school teachers against Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed) course. MoPME instructed the National Academy for Primary (NAPE) to develop curriculum and course materials for this course which was piloted in 2012 at 7 Primary Teachers’ Training Institutes (PTI). After that in 2013, this course was introduced at 29 PTIs and in 2015 at 36 PTIs and 2019 in all 67 PTIs (Hossain, et al., 2015).

The DPEd course is six months longer than the C-in-Ed. The program is structured in a way that it actively combines student teachers’ practical experiences in school with the learning on taught courses at the Primary Training Institutes (PTIs). By promoting learner-centered teaching and learning methods the DPEd program aims to support long term change in classroom practice (Breakell, Nishad, & Das, 2016).

### **Rational and Scope**

The philosophical foundation of DPEd was developed basing on constructivism theory of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Semionovich Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (Hossain, et al., 2015). This philosophical basis has given priority both to course work (47.5 credit hours) and school level practice (48.5 credit hours) to ensure the quality of DPEd. This course has given emphasise to classroom practice along with course work which had taken place at PTIs (Hossain, et al., 2015). According to Breakell, Nishad, & Das (2016), this diploma program has introduced trainees, and teachers in the training schools, to the principles of differentiated learning. It makes the teacher accountable for the pupils’ learning. Another potential real strength of the Diploma program is the placements. Time allocation reflects the equal status of PTI-based and school-based practices.

The trainee teachers of DPEd have caught opportunity to practice at placement school during course work and own school at the end of 12 month course work. On the one hand, students work take place throughout the first year in one of the 20 training schools under regular supervision of instructors of PTIs, on the other hand, this course is designed to represent an extended opportunity for students to link their learning to the classroom. It is clearly evident that the DPEd is operating as an in-service program that the internship takes place within the teachers’ own schools. It is an opportunity for the teachers to apply their learning within a very real and immediate context, supported by skilled and experienced mentors and instructors. During this period (6 months), the Head teacher takes the responsibility for facilitating the trainee teachers and maintaining regular communication with the PTI. In this period, PTI Instructors visit trainees in the local URC periodically

where the trainees bring their portfolio along with lesson plans, school attendance book to the meetings. The instructors assess the trainees and showing possible ways to support them for being a good teacher.

One of the main objectives of this program is to ensure effective practice at school which students learnt from this course. That is why we need to know the gap between policy and practice for implementing DPED at government primary schools. This study will help the policy makers, NAPE personnel, PTI administrators and instructors to implement DPED effectively.

The main objective of this study is to explore the policies and practice issues for implementing the Diploma in Primary Education (DPED) at government primary schools in Bangladesh. The research questions of this study are:

1. What are the policy guidelines to implement DPED at government primary schools?
2. How do the trainee teachers follow the existing policies for effective practice of DPED at government primary schools?
  - a. What type of challenges are faced by the trainee teachers to practice learned knowledge of DPED at own schools?
  - b. How do the trainee teachers overcome these challenges to implement DPED effectively at government primary schools?

### **Methodology**

This study has followed qualitative research design as its principle. Although it has been guided by empirical research method to collect and analyse the data, those data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources to meet the research questions. The primary data have been collected from DPED trainee teachers and instructors of PTIs. Moreover, the secondary data have been collected from different policies including the Curriculum of DPED, Management Handbook of PTI, Assessment Guideline and students' guideline of DPED, and Training school guideline of DPED. Furthermore, different kinds of official documents, letters and office orders are also reviewed to meet the research questions.

This study has been conducted with a small number of samples due to its nature and its' findings have not been generalized for getting overall idea of effective implementation of DPED. Using purposive sampling method, the researchers have been selected PTIs, trainees and instructors from different geographic locations. Firstly, a total number of 9 trainee teachers have selected purposively from three PTIs named Mymensingh PTI, Panchagar PTI and Bhola PTI (three from each PTI). Secondly, a total number of three instructors have been selected from PTIs (one from each PTI). Thirdly, a total number of nine classrooms have been observed to know the actual practice of DPED of selected trainee teachers.

Three types of instruments have been used to collect primary data from field level. An open-ended interview schedule has been used for trainee teachers to get concrete idea about the practice of DPED at government primary schools. Another semi-structured interview schedule has been used for PTI instructors to collect information about DPED practice at schools. Furthermore, a classroom observation checklist was also used to examine the DPED learning of trainee teachers which they practiced at own school classrooms. Using qualitative analysis method, the researchers have analysed field level data thematically.

## Results

To meet the research questions, firstly we present the policy issues for implementing DPED than the practice related findings have presented in different aspects.

### Policy analysis

The different policies indicated implement action of DPED at government primary schools through trainee teachers. In the curriculum of DPED, management handbook of PTI, assessment guideline and students' guideline of DPED, and training school guideline of DPED identified different issues to implement DPED at government primary schools after one year course work at PTIs.

In different policies, it is evidently mentioned that the duration of DPED is divided into four terms in which in the first three terms (36 weeks) the trainee teachers participated in PTI actives. During the PTI period, the trainee teachers attended in teaching learning activities directly for 20 weeks and another 16 weeks they practiced at training schools to get first hand experience. After completing the first three terms, the trainee teachers were sent up for final exam at PTIs and then they would go to their own schools for final (fourth) term.

The curriculum of DPED emphasizes professional practice at training schools and own schools for 32 weeks. To ensure this practice effectively, the DPED identified the main objectives as “to develop different qualities of primary school teachers through professional knowledge and understanding, professional practice and values” (Hossain, et al., 2015; p.17). In addition, for effective professional practice another nine objectives are:

- to develop student-centered study schedules by using different methods and techniques according to the needs of all learners, demonstrating the ability to teach and manage the work.
- to express high expectations of all the children and show it at the workplace.
- to be able to communicating with all stakeholders including parents, students, and colleagues.
- to achieve the strategy of learning in a way that children can easily understand all the issues.
- to achieve the development of student learning through the classified management and work management capabilities of different types of learning.
- to encourage the students to ask question by the students and ensure proper pedagogy for asking questions.
- to display the ability for creating a safe, creative, stimulating and integrated learning environment.
- to be able to the use of information and communication technologies, including to select, create and use relevant and effective learning materials.
- to assist the trainee teachers for ensuring child-centered education and for promoting inclusive education through different effective monitoring.

There are different policy directions found in the curriculum of DPED, management handbook of PTI, assessment guideline and students' guideline of DPED, and training school guideline of DPED regarding training school practice and own school practice.

#### a. Policy Direction for Training school Practice:

During 16 weeks at training schools, the trainee teachers take regular classes under the straight supervision of instructors of PTIs. The trainee teachers had followed school routine, general schools' rules and regulation not only to take classes but also s/he to prepare lesson plan and supplement teaching materials. In addition, every trainee has to

write reflective journal and log book regarding their everyday teaching practice at trainee schools.

For developing lesson plan of different subjects, trainee teachers have followed multiple instructions from the instructors which also varied from PTI to PTI. The policies of DPED guided the teachers to develop lesson plan for every classes of regular routine. In addition, trainee teachers also are instructed to conduct class by using teaching related materials which are closely connected with their lesson. After completing all the duties at schools, the trainee teachers have to write reflective journal and logbook.

Specifically, trainee teachers have to write their opinion regarding teaching and learning process in the classroom, teaching experiences, different types of challenges and problem solving methods in the reflective journal. This reflective journal helps the trainee teachers to ensure active learning process, mapping the development of students, development of writing skills of students, opportunity of students to express their opinion and to ensure the creativity of students and self-criticism (Hossain, et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the trainee teachers prepare their everyday logbook based on the daily routine of schools and collect signature from the head teacher. After completing two/three weeks practice teaching at school, the instructors of PTIs have assess these logbook and put his/her signature (Hossain, et al., 2015). In addition, trainee teachers have to conduct action research, lesson study and case study at the trainee schools with the proper guideline of instructors.

#### **b. Policy Direction for Own school Practice:**

After completing first three terms at PTI, the trainee teachers have to go to their own schools for the next 16 weeks for practicing hands on learning. During that time, the teachers are recognized as trainee teachers and conduct classes regularly as distributed in school routine. Every day s/he has conducted four classes with proper preparation while in Thursday s/he has no classes. According to Hossain, et al., (2015), the trainee teachers have to prepare logbook by writing regular activities at schools, conduct baseline survey, prepare lesson plan based on students' learning need, conduct classes regularly (4 classes in a day and Tuesday off), write reflective journal regularly, preserve all documents in portfolio, prepare report based on regular work (one in every two months) and visit URC for meeting with the guide instructors (once in every two months).

In this period, the head teachers of government primary schools, Instructors of PTIs, Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEO), Instructors of Upazial Resource Centers (URC), Assistant Instructors of URCs, Superintendents of PTIs, District Primary Education Officers (DPEO), Divisional Directors (DD) and Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) have different roles to implement DPED at government primary schools.

Specifically, the head teachers are fully liable to oversee the trainee teachers' activities at own schools and s/he will mentor and monitor their activities. In addition, the instructors have to meet with the trainee teachers at URCs once in twice months and give feedback to achieve teacher standards of this course. Moreover, the DPE, DDs, superintendents and DPEOs are also liable to ensure effective practice of DPED through different instructions and orders. Furthermore, the head teachers have to prepare a total number of six (once a month) reports on the progress and activities of trainee teachers and s/he have to submit these reports to the superintendent of PTIs. Similarly, the instructors and AUEOs are also prepare a report on each trainee teacher when they observe their classes and meet at URCs.

**Practicing DPED at schools**

During DPED course, the trainee teachers have opportunity to practice their learning at real classroom setting in training schools and own schools. Researchers observed the own schools classroom practice of sampled trainees in the first half of 2018. It is found that all trainees in all areas had conducted lesson following lesson plan while 77.8% (7 out of 9) trainees used teaching materials to deliver their lesson. Although the researchers asked trainees to show previous lesson plan, 66.7% (6 out of 9) trainees mentioned that they did not have all lesson plans according to their class routine. In addition, 44.4% (4 out of 9) trainees had written their reflective journal and logbook regularly.

All of the trainees tried to follow lesson plan for conducting their lesson. Data shows that 66.7% (6 out of 9) trainees were starting their lesson with song and 33.3% (3 out of 9) trainees were starting with pictures while 44.4% activities were closely aligned with the topics. In addition, the presentation skill all of trainees were moderate whereas near about all 88.9% (8 out of 9) trainees used local language to deliver the lesson. All of the trainees had given pair work or group work during lesson while no one assessed the students' activities.

The trainee teachers were assessing the students during class with given emphasise on formative assessment while feedback was not popular like formative assessment. Data show that 66.7% (6 out of 9) trainees assess the students by using formative assessment tools while only 33.3% (3 out of 9) trainees were giving feedback after classroom assessment. In some cases (22.2%) teachers also gave negative feedback on the students.

The overall classroom practice was not satisfactory. Researchers inform to trainees before they went to their schools and requested them to conduct a class as per DPED philosophy. That is why it is not the real situation although it would be a good practice if trainees follow their lesson plan. After observing the class, the researchers wanted to know if the trainees "conducted classes regularly following DPED learning with lesson plan and teaching aids?" Following to this question, 66.7% (6 out of 9) trainees mentioned that it was not possible for them to conduct four or more classes as per DPED guideline. Finally, all trainees recommended ensuring effective practice of DPED through reducing the number of classes and workload at fourth term.

**Challenges of Practicing DPED**

There are different types of challenges faced by the trainee teachers in own schools at the fourth term of DPED. Mainly, trainee teachers are facing academic and administrative obstacles during this period like: huge academic and non-academic workload, physical and mental sickness, non-cooperation of head teachers and assistant teachers, family oriented work load, non-cooperation of family members, lack of proper supervision from instructors and AUEOs, lack of self-motivation and willingness to prepare guided materials including lesson plans, reflective journals, logbooks and other reports.

**a. Immense academic work**

The trainee teachers are facing difficulties due to huse academic work. Near about all of the teachers mentioned that the teacher-students ratio was more than 1:50 and schools have shortage of teachers. As per DPED policy, the trainee teachers are entitled to conduct only four lessons in a day while they took more than 6/7 lessons. In addition, the trainee teachers are not authorized to conduct lessons on Thursday while they must be present in school. But the reality is not like as policy described by a trainee teacher:

A large number of students are studying in our school while the number of teachers is insufficient. The class size is large and not manageable for a teacher to follow the DPED philosophy. Due to lack of assistant teachers, I have to conduct more than 6. Classes in a day and sometimes the number of classes increased which is not affordable by me. For that reason, I am not able to follow proper guideline of DPED and it's not possible for me to prepare lesson plan and materials for every class. Although at the end of this course we have to prepare all lesson plans as per school class routine.

The academic work not only includes taking lessons in the classes but also contains some other work like attending sub-cluster meetings, visiting students' home, conducting child survey, preparing class routine, developing annual lesson plan and work plan, mapping the catchment area, updating monitoring board, distributing books, arranging annual sports and study tour, working as admission officer and updating stipend related information. For example a trainee teacher said:

I have to attend different academic activities out of my DPED fourth term prescribed activities. I have to do child survey, class routine, annual lesson plan and work plan, catchment area mapping, annual sports and study tour, admission related work and so on. At the beginning of every academic year in January, we have to work as a team under the leadership of the head teacher. I think such kind of work hampers my regular DPED activities in the first quarter of the academic year.

During in-depth interview with the instructors of PTIs' also we got similar opinion. For example an instructor stated that:

In the fourth term of DPED, the trainee teachers have to do lots of work including his/her regular official work. I received lots of phone calls from my supervised trainees. They told me that they have to conduct more than four classes in a day with some additional classes of other teachers.

#### **b. Extensive non-academic work**

The teachers of government primary schools have to attend different types of non-academic work along with academic work like updating voter information, arranging vaccination program, participating in different rallies and social events, working as polling officer at national and local government elections, organizing different meetings with parents and local community, arranging students council, SMC and PTA elections, participating in different programs of local government at upazila headquarters and so on. When DPED trainees worked at their own school during fourth term of this course, s/he must participate in the above mentioned activities. These extensive non-academic activities obstructed trainee teachers' regular activities. For example a trainee teacher mentioned:

I have to participate in different non-academic activities during my DPED course at fourth term in my own school. Sometimes my head teacher requested me to participate in different meetings and rallies at upazila headquarters organized by the local government authority. In addition, I must be engaged in different national programs during my course. I think these events interrupt my regular DPED activities.

Not only the trainee teachers but also the Instructors of PTIs' similarly pointed out this obstruction for practicing DPED effectively at government primary schools. An instructor stated:



Trainee teachers have to engage with the non-academic work beside fourth term activity. Officially they are not entitled to do such kind of non-academic work during this period. But in most of the cases, head teachers and assistant teachers forced them to participate with the regular activities at school.

### **c. Physical/Mental sickness**

Data show that some of the trainee teachers faced different challenges due to physical/mental sickness during DPED fourth term activities. The fourth term is fixed with lots of work and activities. In this period, either a trainee teacher sickens physically or mentally or s/he will suffer a lot at the end of this course. Similarly a trainee teacher pointed out:

I have been doing a lot of work at the fourth term of DPED in own school. Starting my work in full swing at the very beginning of January, but unfortunately I can't continue due to my lack of physical fitness. The winter season has comes to Bangladesh at the end of December and continue until coming spring at the end of February. During this season, most of people especially the trainee teachers had been suffering from cold fever and seasonal sickness. I think, this sickness happened not only to me but also to my other colleague. I and my other companions had faced difficulty to fulfil the assigned workload of DPED.

During interview with the teachers, nearly all of the head teachers mentioned that trainee teachers had furlough for 6-10 days at school during the fourth term of DPED activities. They were enjoying this leave for reasons of sickness and sometimes for family program.

### **d. Non-cooperation of HT**

The DPED activities have been continuing with the support of all stakeholders of primary education including officials, instructors, head teachers, assistant teachers and trainees. For effective implementation of DPED at the fourth term, the continuing of all stakeholders has to be ensured through active or passive participation. But the reality was not like that different from what we are thinking or expecting. The head teachers are not welcoming in his of her school and not supportive or cooperative also. For example a trainee teacher illustrated her experience as follows:

It is my bad luck that I am working with a head teacher, who is not welcoming about DPED. He believes that DPED is creating extra pressure for him through 4<sup>th</sup> term attachment at my own school because he is liable to oversee all my activities. He suggested me to take six lessons in different classes and another special two classes for grade V students. I have to participate in about all activities of schools according to his order and arrogance.

Although the reverse scenario were found in some government primary schools, where the DPED trainee teachers are working. In most of the cases, trainee teachers received proper supervision and mentoring from head teachers while a good number of trainees didn't get similar support. For example a trainee teacher said:

I found my head teacher as a cooperative, supportive, who inspired me a lot to fulfill my duties of DPED. He creates a lot of working environment at our school not only for me but also for all teachers. Specifically, he oversees my all activities regularly and makes a report monthly. In addition, he not only supervise my lesson plan, classroom practice, reflective journal and logbook but also mentors me for improving learning of DPED.

**e. Non-cooperation of AT**

The trainee teachers of DPED are also facing challenges from assistant teachers through their noncooperation. In most of the cases, assistant teachers are annoying to them in classroom organization and practice as per evidence-based learning of DPED. The assistant teachers are not willing to corroborate the trainee teachers in classroom practice or management issue. Similar statement was received from a trainee teacher like as:

It is difficult for me to apply evidence based-learning of DPED at classroom without our teachers' support and cooperation. Yes, I am doing this difficult assignment in the last four months because I can't receive any support from our assistant teachers. They are not willing to talk about DPED most of them have C-in-Ed. When I wanted to know or share something about DPED, they said that they were not aware about DPED. Most of the time they told me, "Do your job as you want. Its' your matter".

**f. Non-cooperation of family**

Non-cooperation of family members is another challenge for trainee teachers to implement DPED at the fourth term in own schools. Data show that more than 75% trainees of DPED are females and mainly they are facing this challenge steadily less than male trainees. In addition, married women are the challenged trainees in DPED who are really in a disadvantageous situation at their home and schools. These trainees have to maintain families including their husbands, children, parents and so on. Analogous opinion was also found from a female trainee, as she said:

I have a family including my husband, two kids, mother-in-law, two brothers and sister-in-laws. I am doing teaching with different limitations due to non-cooperation of my family members. My kids are under six and I have to feed and take care of them regularly. My mother-in-law has been suffering various illness for the last few years. For that reason, I have not enough opportunity to take preparation for my lesson.

Another trainees say that most of the female trainees are facing challenges in their home in doing their job. They have to fulfil both responsibilities simultaneously at home and school. For example a trainee stated:

I have to meet 23 teachers standard at the end of my fourth term teaching practice at my own school. During this time I must conduct regular classes with lesson plan, reflective journal and logbook. Doing this job appropriately during DPED, I need to work at night. But unfortunately I am unable to do this due to my family members' non-cooperation. I have to work at morning and night for my family members for preparing food, washing cloth and caring for family members.

**g. Reluctance of Trainees**

During interview with trainee teachers, researchers found that some of the trainees were not serious about their course and job responsibility. They showed reluctant attitude towards preparing lesson plans and teaching materials, doing regular activities and communicating with guide instructors. Similar kind of opinion was found from trainees' interview about their careless colleagues of DPED like the following:

We are not serious about these DPED activities at the fourth term. Some of my colleagues are doing nothing during training period at their own school. They are not willing to participate on regular school activities

regardless the DPED activities. Although at the end of this term, they prepared all these documents by other persons giving them money. In addition, some of our lethargic colleagues are coping from another trainee's documents to submit their portfolio finally at PTI.

Furthermore, different opinions were found about these indolent trainees who are showing their reluctant attitude at the beginning of DPED. They mainly joined DPED for passing one and a half years without doing anything. Research found such kind personal experience when they were supervising trainee teachers during school activities either at trainee schools or own school. When researchers asked to the trainees about such kind of issues, they described it descriptively. As cited someone's statement:

We have to fulfil our responsibility at own school without proper supervision and monitoring of instructors or other officials. Some of my friends emphasize preparing papers for final viva at PTI however they are doing classes without lesson plan and teaching materials as they did before receiving this training. They mainly want a certificate from Dhaka University regardless of learning anything.

#### **h. Improper of instructions**

To ensure proper implementation of DPED, trainee teachers need proper instruction when they needed. At the first three terms at PTI, the trainees received instruction at debriefing after coming from the school. They got opportunity to share their ideas and views with the other trainees and instructors. At that time, if they faced any difficulty to practice DPED at trainee schools, they have good opportunity to get feedback. But at the own school activity, they have not such kind of opportunity to share their opinion and receive immediate feedback from experts. Similar statement came from trainee teachers' in-depth interview and a teacher said:

I have to come a long distance for communication with my guide instructor and other colleagues to share my improvement and challenges. But I think it is difficult for guide instructors to supervise or mentor me through mobile phone. Because, we are more than 35 teachers conducting fourth term activities under an instructor. If we called to the instructor regularly, s/he was not able to respond to all calls. On the other hand, Instructors came to visit us at URC once in two months for giving feedback and ensuring documents of final viva. S/he was not able to get feedback to all of us due to lack of time and number of trainees.

Conversely, the instructors of PTIs strongly disagreed with this issue and they pointed out that during one year of course work with trainee school activity, the trainee teachers received full support from them. In addition, when trainee teachers came to the own school for conducting fourth term activity, the instructors supervised and mentored them over phone regularly and once in two months at URC physically. For example, an instructor said:

We are trying to meet all difficulties of trainee teachers about practicing DPED at government primary schools during course work of PTIs in the first one year. After completing training school activity, regularly I tried to give feedback on their teaching learning activities at classroom, lesson plan and other important issues. At that time, the trainee teachers practiced 16 weeks at trainee schools received required support from both instructors and also from other trainees. On the other hand, I also

tried to communicate regularly over phone to supervise their fourth term activity and give feedback if they needed.

#### **i. Insolence of officials**

There are some other officials including AUEOs, assistant instructors and instructors of URCs are also liable to visit trainee teachers at own school during fourth term of DPED while the reality is not desirable. In most of the cases, responsible officials do not come to see the own school activity. If some officials came to visit they didn't provide feedback on teaching learning issues. Analogous opinions come from a trainee teacher:

The high officials of primary education came to visit our school in last month. When they heard from my head teacher that I was doing DPED and now practicing own school activity, they wanted to observe my class. After observing my class, they gave me some positive feedback regarding classroom management, language, environment of classroom while they didn't talk about my teaching style, questioning and teaching learning activities. Finally, they inspired me to take class by following DPED instructions.

#### **j. Imbalance of time & workload**

After one year course work of DPED, trainee teacher comes to the school to practice own school activities while lots of other work are also waiting for them. Most of the time, head teachers and assistant teachers seemed that the trainee teacher came to school for helping them but the reality was different. The trainee teachers came to practice their fourth term activity as part of DPED course. In addition, trainees have to do lots of work during this tenure as the partial fulfilment of DPED while the time is limited to do these jobs. During interview, similarly said a trainee teacher:

I have to do lots of work at fourth term as partial fulfilment of my DPED degree. I have to prepare four lessonplans, teaching materials for these classes, write reflective journal and logbook regularly. In addition, I took another two-three classes as guided by my head teacher with other regular activities. Moreover, at the beginning of the academic year in January, I must have accompanied with other assistant teachers to do student survey, prepare catchment map, arrange annual sports, distribute books and so on. I think, the work is more than allocated time at fourth term.

### **Major Findings and Discussion**

The curriculum of DPED emphasises professional practice at training schools and own schools for ensuring practice effectively. In addition, not only the curriculum but also management handbook of PTI, assessment guideline and students' guideline of DPED, and training school guideline of DPED highlight to ensure practice. The DPED was developed basing on constructivism theory whereas the neighboring country India also introduced teacher education at primary level following similar theoretical guidelines. Both countries emphasize practice at school level. For example in Bangladesh, trainees have to practice more half of the course time (48.5 credit hours out of 96 credit hours) (Hossain, et al., 2015) whereas in India, the trainees have to practice 40% of course time in addition to 20% practical work and 20% internship in teaching (in primary, upper-primary & Pre-school system) (Agrawal & Agrawal, 1994).

This study identified some challenges affecting good practice of DPED at government primary schools. These obstacles are immense academic work, extensive academic work, physical/mental sickness, non-cooperation of head teachers, assistant teachers and family members, reluctance of trainees, improper instructions, insolence of officials, imbalance of time and workload. Similar challenges were identified by a study in Turkey. This study

identified that communication by student, classroom management, passivity of trainees, irregular attendance of trainees, transportation and non-cooperation of school administration are major challenges of prospective teachers and practicing classroom teachers encountered their problems which are related with carrying out of the teaching practice (Öksüz & Çevik, 2014). Furthermore, according to Breakell, Nishad and Das (2016) identified that most obstacles of implementing DPED at government primary schools is that the trainees get little support in schools from head teachers for his lack of time.

Another study was conducted in Spain and Mexico to identify the problems faced by beginning teachers in private elementary schools. This study categorizes all these challenges in broad three areas like academic problems, organizational problems and social problems (Tijerina & Sánchez, 2006) including workload, non-cooperation of teachers, administrators, lack of facilities and so on. Moreover, heavy workload, significant stress, no guidance and support at school also were illustrated as challenges for good practice at urban primary schools (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, & Volman, 2017).

### Conclusion

Based on primary findings this study recommended effective practice of DPED at trainee schools and own schools. These suggestions will help the policy makers, administrators and practitioners for further development of DPED and its proper implementation at government primary schools. The recommendations of this study are to reduce workload of DPED trainee teachers at fourth term in their own schools, ensure strong collaboration with PTIs and government primary schools, ensure close monitoring, mentoring and supervision for trainee teachers. In addition, the policy maker can revisit the DPED policies for ensuring quality implementations at government primary schools.

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