Change Readiness Among the M.ed Students

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ABSTRACT   *This paper is an attempt to assess the readiness for change among the students pursuing M.Ed from Pondicherry University and its affiliated colleges. The sample size for the study is 100 comprising 50 male and 50 female students. A questionnaire with 8 questions having multiple responses was administered to gather data and was analyzed using proportion analysis. The readiness to change towards new method of teaching, changing policies, changing syllabus, assessment criteria etc are assessed*

Heraclitus puzzled over this principle two thousand years before the birth of the modern science and drew its ultimate lesson for the change. As material beings, we live in a state of flux. Change is constant and resistance is common. Things are constantly changing – things are unpredictable. People sometimes think they are ready for change if they are willing to go along with some new initiative (Wood, Stacy, Swait & Joffre, 2002). In a neoliberal world, often such initiatives emanates from organized agencies which have power and control over people. Compliance to follow such initiatives should be addressed as 'adjustments' rather than a 'state of readiness for change'. People may comply because they agree with the proposed initiative and see some value in it; they may comply because they have no power to prevent the proposed change; or they may comply because there could be negative consequences if they do not comply (Barlow, 2000). However, it is equally possible that people who are ready to comply, or ready to do a program are not ready to change. The main point to understand is that people are ready for change if they are able to act as their own agents of change.

Teacher educators in India may have to teach a new textbook, orient to new methodologies, change pattern of exam, syllabus etc. University system in India has still its traces of colonial ghost. Developed on a strict hierarchical model, it gives little leeway for the teachers to initiate changes in academic activities. Teacher education follows a pattern which teacher educators can well adopt to changes, but not as change initiators. Change is a complex process and one part of that complexity is the role of teachers' attitudes in the implementation of change (Kennedy and Kennedy,1996). Teachers may comply or attend programs, but if they do these things only because they are forced into doing so, they are not really ready at all. They may be ready to be changed, but they are not acting as their own agent in the process. They are not acting as change leaders. They are allowing others to set the agenda for them. They may comply, but inside they may also resent what they are being asked to do, and they may actively or passively resist the proposed initiative (Barlow, 2000). Change readiness is exactly what it says - readiness to change, as distinct from readiness to be changed. The person with change readiness strengths is not a different kind of person to those who aren't so ready for change. All people can develop change readiness, if they have commitment to do so. For commitment of course people look at education and teachers, which in turn trace back to process of educating teachers and developing policies of education. However, the point is that people with change readiness strengths are more likely to be ready for change in more places and at more times than people lacking in change readiness (Coach, Lester, French & John, 1948).

This is the context in which, teacher education attains premier importance as a grass root level agency to inculcate change readiness among prospective teacher educators. How far present

teacher education system helps the students to imbibe the attitude of change readiness is the major question we are trying to answer through this paper.

What does the Literature say about Change Readiness?
Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) argue change is a complex process and one part of that complexity is the role of teacher's attitude in the implementation of change. Kennedy (1986) observes some strategies for change. Avramidis ,Norwich (2010), Avramidis ,Bayliss and Burden (2010), Guskey (1998), Morris (1988) found that teachers attitudes varies in implementing new policies and innovations. Burtton, Lauridsen, and Obel (2004), Lewin (1951) says that change must be continuous and in congruence with the organizational norm. Fossum, Ardey, Paradise, and Robbines (1986) observed mismatch between staff capacities for change. Rogers (1983) showed that in every change, there will be "innovators" who advocate and lead new ideas and practices; "early adopters" who also demonstrate the possibility of change; an "early majority" who are cautious about change but willing to embrace new approaches with guidance and support; a skeptical but ultimately responsive "late majority" and "laggards" who may never change. Struyven , Dochy & Janssens (2010), Dochy, Segers, Sluijsmans (1999) says that students varies in their opinion about assessment criteria. Guskey (1989) studied the attitude and perceptual change in teachers and found that it varies among them to great extent.

After going through the available literature the investigators found that there is no study carried out to find the change readiness among the students of teacher education either at the secondary or at the tertiary level in India. Being the very important agents for change implementation in the educational field, the readiness for changes among the M.Ed students is paramount. This view was the motivation for the investigators to undertake this study.

Methodology
For this study, a questionnaire was constructed with 8 questions. With the support of suggestions obtained and also with the help of literature reviews the final questionnaire was developed having multiple responses. The validity was ensured through multiple level discussions with the research scholars and the research supervisor. For each question there was an ideal response. The ideal choice was finalized after thorough discussion in the research group. The remaining responses were distracters, which may appear to be a good answer in the context of modern society, but they often indicate dependency and lack of imitativeness from the subjects. The questionnaire was administered to the students pursuing M.Ed from Pondicherry University and its affiliated colleges. Pondicherry University is a Central University, which means it is funded by the central government and the students from all over India is admitted to the courses through a

common entrance examination. So the M.Ed students varied in all the aspects like language, region, Socio Cultural and political background. Both the male and female students were considered and their age level varied from 23 to 35. Most of them had teaching experience either in school or at graduates level. In addition to Pondicherry University data was collected from four affiliated colleges of Pondicherry University. The sample selected was 100. Among the 100 sample 50 were male and 50 were female. Scores were assigned to each response of all the questions and was analyzed using proportion analysis.

Results

The result of the study is given below.

Table.1
Q1.Information available must be

Applied	Evaluated	Modified and applied	Applied according to need	Total
15 %	26 %	35 %	24 %	100 %

It can be seen from table 1 that 15 % of the student teacher educators are supporting the view that when information is given it should be simply applied. This group is not ready for evaluating or modifying the information and also they don't have an opinion that the given information must be applied according to the need. 26 % of them have a view that the available information must be evaluated. It means that they don't prefer either to apply or modify before application or to apply according to need. Another 35 % of them prefer to modify and apply the information. This group is little advanced in comparison to the first two groups in the sense that they support applying only after modifying the given information. Since modification happens only after evaluation this group covers the tastes of first two groups. And the final 24 % of them likes to apply the information according to need. They believe that the given information must not be applied blindly; instead the evaluation and modification must be done according to the need. The results show that majority is interested to modify and apply the given information. In an information society where there is overload of information, selection is more important than access. Students who are exposed to instruct and other online resources rarely evaluate information for its genuineness and applicability. Slight modifications will satisfy their academic needs like preparing assignment and preparation of projects etc. This trend is well supported by the findings of this study. This could be the reason why majority of the students clustered around the option that "information available must be modified and applied. This can be assumed as the lack of interest of people to act according to the need.

The responses regarding treating a given information were very much matching with the findings of Powell, Steele and Douglah (1996),Brinkerhoff, Brethower, Hluchyj, Nowakowski (1983) arguing that more number of people should be involved in evaluation process to ensure that the information collected is relevant and that there is a commitment to use it.

Table 2.
Q2.When you join an institution as a teacher you will;

Follow the existing teaching method	Adopt a new method used in developed nations	Modify the existing method according to need	Total
16 %	29 %	55 %	100 %

Table 2 explains that 16 % of the student teacher educators have the opinion that they will follow the existing teaching method when they join a school as a teacher. It means that they are not ready to take pain for using innovative methods in classroom. While a 29 % of student teacher educators responded that they will adopt a method which is popular in the developed nations. This group may be under the conviction that the methods fol-

lowed in developed nations can be followed blindly and also they might have taken it as a fashion to follow some methods from abroad. 55% of the student teacher educators like to modify the existing method according to need. It shows the readiness of their mindset to change according to the need.

Studies by Kennedy and Kennedy (1996), Guskey (1998) reveals a mismatch between teacher's attitude toward the innovation and implementation of changes in methodology of teaching. This view supports the findings of the present study that people differ significantly in taking initiative for change in methods of teaching.

Table 3.
Q3.Any change should be accepted when it is

Brought about by you	Forced on you	Unavoidable for your survival	Giving any benefit	need of the hour	Total
18 %	6 %	14 %	32 %	30 %	100 %

Table 3 gives the information that 18 % of the student teacher educators have the view that any change should be accepted when it is brought about by them. This group believes in their ability to bring changes or it can also be taken as their willingness for change; but according to their own wish. The next 6 % of them says that the change should be accepted when it is forced on them. It shows their wish for status quo. And It also shows that their resistance towards change can be overcome by forcing them for a change. 14 % thinks that the change should be accepted when it is unavoidable for their survival. It means that this group is not bothered about the need or the benefit or they will not compromise for force but they are accepting change only for their survival. The next 32 % supports the view that it should be accepted when it gives any benefit. This can be taken as a wish for the benefit from a change without considering the need or force or survival. And the final 30% has the opinion that it can be accepted if it is the need of the hour. The result shows that the percentage of students who are ready to accept any change when it gives any benefit and the percentage of students who are ready to accept a change when it is a need of the hour are more or less equal. So this study shows that benefits and needs are the most important expedites of change.

The findings confirm Chin and Benne's (1970) view that different people use different strategies to accept or reject new changes. Study by Kennedy (1987) has analysed these strategies. Rogers (1983) identifies five type of people according to their readiness for change.

Table 4.
Q4.Teaching the same syllabus will make you

An expert in the subject	Boredom of the subject	Capable of finding lacunae in it	Take initiatives for change	Total
34 %	17 %	10 %	39 %	100 %

Table 4 say that 34 % of the student teachers have the opinion that teaching the same syllabus will make them an expert in the subject. This group does not believe that it will create boredom or it will give them capacity to find gap in the syllabus and also they don't think that it will make them capable of taking initiatives for change. While a 17 % of them believe that it will give boredom of the subject. This group doesn't have an opinion that this will give them any benefit or give them any kind of sharpening of capabilities. Another 10 % prefers looking in to the lacunae tacit in the syllabus. This group believes in their own capacity to find the gaps if any when they teach the same syllabus for years. The response saying that it will make them capable of taking initiatives for change is given by the majority of 39 %. It means Majority prefer the option that teaching the same syllabus will make them an expert in the subject instead of getting boredom of the subject. It will make them capable of finding

lacunae in it and finally they will be ready for taking initiatives for change. It shows that they are bored. They have attitude for initiatives. They have confidence for understanding such changes. This can also be considered as the readiness of mindset for change.

Successful change will persist over the long term only when individuals alter their on-the-job behaviors in appropriate ways (George & Jones, 2001; Porras & Robertson, 1992). They also argue that many change efforts fail because people often underestimate the central role individuals play in the change process. The current findings also support this view.

Table 5.
Q5.Criteria for student assessment must be

Fixed permanently	Two or three systems used in alternative years	Modifiable according to the situation	Total
18 %	12 %	70 %	100 %

Table 5 explains that 18 % of the student teacher educators have the view that criteria for student assessment must be fixed permanently. This group love status quo. 12 % believes that two or three systems can be used in alternative years. It shows their wish for a change in the alternate years rather than a permanently fixed criterion. But they don't prefer to take initiatives for changing the situation. And 70 % thinks that student assessment criteria can be modifiable according to the situation. The result leads to a conclusion that there is strong preference exists among the student teachers for an assessment criterion which must be modifiable according to the situation. It is interesting to note that 70% of the students wish to bring changes in assessment system.

Struyven, Dochy and Janseens (2010) found that students hold strong views about different assessment and evaluation formats. Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans (1999) found that the use of a combination of different new assessment forms encourages students to become more responsible and reflective. The present study also supports this argument.

Table 6.
Q6.Changing policies

Should be welcomed	Should not be welcomed	Should not be welcomed if it creates additional work	Should be approached critically before welcoming it	Total
36 %	10 %	10 %	44 %	100 %

From the table 6 we can come to know that 36 % of the teacher educators have the opinion that changing policies should be welcomed. They just wanted to welcome the policies blindly without approaching it critically. They will not bother even if it creates additional work to them. 10 % says that it should not be welcomed. This group is very rigid on changing policies that they may feel like it gives them additional work or it is not worthy or we can say that they like a status quo. Another 10 % thinks that it should not be welcomed if it creates additional work. This group is not ready to undertake additional work whether it is good or bad. And the final 44 % of them believes that it should be approached critically before welcoming it. There is a strong support for the view that changing policies should be approached critically before welcoming it. This shows that people who are ready to accept a change in one situation may not be ready to accept a change in another situation. And this group is ready for a change only after analyzing the situation.

The responses were very much in accord with Avramidis and Norwich (2002) Avramidis , Bayliss and Burden (2000) observa-

tions that teacher attitude towards changing policies like inclusive and integrated education varies to a great extent.

Table 7.
Q7.I like

Status quo	Frequent changes	Minor changes that do not disturb equilibrium	Changes according to needs	Total
6 %	14 %	21 %	59 %	100 %

Table 7 gives us the explanation that 6% of the teacher educators likes status quo. They are very rigid towards frequent changes or to minor changes that do not even disturb equilibrium and they are not ready to be changed according to need also. 14 % likes frequent changes. They don't like status quo but they are not ready for a change according to need. The next 21% likes minor changes that do not disturb equilibrium. It shows that this group likes to be in a state of equilibrium and they are ready to promote such kind of changes which do not disturb their equilibrium whether it is frequent change or it is the need of the hour. And 59 % likes changes according to needs. The result speaks that majority of the subject are ready for a change according to the needs. They do not prefer status quo. They don't bother about the frequency of change or the state of equilibrium but they wish to bring changes according to need.

Teachers don't change. They resist change. They just get in a groove of doing what they have always done and what they are comfortable with." that teachers resist doing whatever is being proposed because they want to cling to their old ways. Change makes people feel uncomfortable. (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Fullan, 1991).This view is debated by Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, (1991) they found that teachers sometimes do make major changes on their own (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). Our study also depicts the difference among the teachers in treating changes.

Table 8.
Q8.I follow any system

Because it is traditionally followed	Because it is easy for me to follow	After analyzing it logically	Total
18 %	17%	65%	100 %

From table 8 it can be said that 18 % of student teacher educators having the opinion that they do follow any system because it is traditionally followed. This group wanted to follow systems blindly whether it is easy or difficult. And also they are not ready for the analysis of the system. While a 17 % follow a system because it is easy for them to follow. It says that this group looks for the easiness in following a system without considering the logic or the traditional background. The majority, 65 % supports the view that they will follow any system after analyzing it logically. It shows that majority prefer to follow a system only after analyzing it logically. This means change readiness is also bounded with logical analysis.

The findings confirm Schuttloffel's (2000) view that Professors of teacher education courses often do not model the requisite new behaviors like using the technology in education. Guskey (1998) reports that measures of teacher efficacy, teaching effect and learning self – concept were significantly related to teachers attitudes regarding the congruence, difficulty of use and importance of the recommended practice.

CONCLUSION
The study throws light on some facts like people who are ready for a change in one situation may not be ready for a change in another situation. Student teacher educators have a strong opinion that the student assessment criteria must be changeable according to the need and situation. Change readiness is bounded

with logical analysis also. The student teacher educators also believe that the changing policies must be critically analyzed before welcoming it. The major finding which can be inferred from the study is that there exist a considerable percentage of people who are not at all ready for welcoming a change and are liked to be in a stage of status quo. It shows their resistance towards change or the least amount of change readiness and this might be a serious reason for the diminishing quality in the education sector even after so many modifications and policy proposals.

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