



DIETs: AN INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT

The DIET produce primary school teachers and they give primary education, which is the basis of education and whole edifice of education stands upon this foundation. So, the teacher educators have the special responsibility of equipping the student teachers and the in-service teachers with the new knowledge and try to enhance the teaching competencies. For the enhancement of quality an elaborate decentralized policy has been developed to facilitate the provision of academic and technical support to the school development. The process of decentralization and creation of local and appropriate structures began in 1992 based on the recommendations of the National Policy of Education (1986). In this decentralized process DIETs, BRC, and CRC entities were formed for the enhancement of quality. In AP DIETs, Mandal Resource Centre's, and School Complexes were constituted. These organizations at each level are expected to function well, wherein academic discussions will take place for the enhancement of quality. These institutes must undertake action research for the improvement of quality. The results may provide some useful avenues for the improvement of quality.

KEYWORDS: DIETs, BRC, CRC, Professional Knowledge, School Teachers, Classroom

INTRODUCTION

The success of every profession depends on the up-to-date professional knowledge, devotion and dedication along with efficiency and effectiveness. Advancement in technology and communication has brought about a lot of changes in the field of Education. Teaching occupies an important role in the society; therefore, there should be a sound programme of professional education of teachers in the country.

It is well-known fact that the teachers are the builders of the Nation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said the

destiny of the nation is shaped and moulded within the classroom. Reiterating the same the New Education Policy (1986) also laid a special attention is being paid on quality of teacher education. The teachers are the builders of the nation and the training institutes produce these teachers. Thus, it implies that how much importance and priority should be given to the quality of education imparted in the training institutes.

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ROLE OF DIETs

The revised Programme of Action (1992) of the National Policy of Education (1986) envisaged the setting up of DIETs to produce quality pre-service and in-service education to teachers, academic and resource support to the elementary education systems to engage in action research and innovation in these areas. Based on this vision, the mission of a DIET was defined as follows:

To provide academic and support at gross-root level for the success of various strategies and programmes being undertaken in the areas of elementary education. The mission implies that DIETs are expected to work in multiple areas viz., teaching, training, curriculum and material development; research and extension; planning and management.

CHALLENGES

DIETs were established with a vision to improve the quality of elementary education and more specifically to improve the quality of available human resources. DIETs are trying to fulfill the objectives but unable to attain enshrined the objectives because –lack of sufficient staff, lack of co-ordination with the gross-root functionaries in conduct of action research works, lack of autonomy in the planning of need based programmes. DIETs are not having functional autonomy in initiating activities mostly following the guidelines of SCERT/SSA.

REVISION OF PRE-SERVICE

Curriculum contents and teaching strategies are closely inter-connected with each other. Even the best content will remain ineffective, unless, it is translated by

suitable teaching strategies and methodology. A curricular programme is brought into action only through appropriate method of instruction. The use of an appropriate or particular instructional strategy may increase the effectiveness of teaching. In the field of primary education different measures have been taken to raise the standards qualitatively. Subjects and their syllabi and the commitment of the teachers especially at the primary school level are the important elements that ensure the quality of education. The quality of teaching school subjects are to be increased at every level. The most effective way for a young student to learn the concepts through activity, activities are the better channels for enquiry, but enquiry emanate from the motivations and curiosity of the students. At primary level, if the basic concepts are not properly understood by the students, it is too difficult to understand the higher order concepts in higher classes. Hence, the teacher must employ real objects and teaching- learning material in the teaching of primary school subjects to primary level students and must avoid mere stream of talk to learn qualitatively.

Learning is a process through which knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes are to be acquired and achieved, applied and executed by the students. Hence, the teachers must possess the competent skills and also must have effective performance skills in the teaching of school subjects, where there is a mismatch in between teaching style and learning style, the learning may become adversely affected (Entwistle,1981). Hence, every teacher or teacher trainee must reflect upon his/her own teaching, and take up remedial steps for the betterment of teaching. Then only the teaching performance would improve.

REFLECTIVE PROCESS: A COLLABORATIVE MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Reflection is an element of learning cycle. It is widely accepted as a tool for learning in the field of education. It is considered essential to professional practice. Reflection gives meaning to experience and promotes a deep approach to learning because it encourages framing problems, question on their own assumptions and look at situations from multiple perspectives as they analyze their live experiences. Reflective process is particularly important in the field of education. It enables the student teachers to recognize their own assumptions basing on the analysis and how those assumptions and plans might influence for the enhancement of professional development. Reflection also facilitates the trainees to improve their skills needed to update their knowledge. As Schon (1996) put it the

reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline. Reflective practice has also been defined in terms of action research. Action research, in turn, is defined as a tool of curriculum development, consisting of continuous feedback that targets specific problems in a particular school setting (Hopkins&Antes, 1990). The teacher-educator as a researcher and role model encourages students to put theories they have learned into practice in their classrooms. The students bring reports of their field experiences to class and analyze their teaching strategies with their mentors and colleagues. This collaborative model of reflective practice enriches student's personal reflection on their work and provides students with suggestions from peers on how to refine their teaching practices.

IMPORTANCE IN TEACHING PRACTICE

Reflection is particularly important in the field of education. Self analysis enables the trainees to recognize the limits of their own knowledge, which facilitates additional exploration and avenues for learning new domains of learning. It is this ongoing critique that leads to continuous improvement in practice and encourages a quest for lifelong learning. By engaging the students in the reflective process the student trainees can enrich their latent talents, competencies and capabilities.

It is witnessing fact that all the staff members are paying concentration on the PSTE course only rather than focusing on the child developmental activities. Thus, the reflective process in a true spirit enhances the professional growth of the teacher educators and also the teacher trainees. Teacher educators and teachers should participate in the seminars and workshops organized at various levels for the improvement of their capacities and also to acquire new trends. Observance of child-centered and activity based practices for the clarity of concepts.

STRENGTHENING OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The responsibility of providing in-service training to teachers at primary level lies with DIETs, but majority of the programmes are running without support of DIETs in some cases. Majority of the programmes are organizing both at DIET and at MRC and SC level as per the designing of SCERT and SSA. SSA is providing as many inputs to the DIETs, MRCs and SCs for the enhancement of quality at school level. More autonomy and participation of DIET faculty, however, is needed for planning of the programmes and also conduct of research studies basing on the field experiences.

ACTION RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF DIETs

DIETs are the best places for conduct of action researches at the district level. The DIET faculty can have interaction with the teachers or the field functionaries in undertaking action research works. SSA is giving various inputs viz grants, trainings, content application strategies and other facilities etc., the DIET faculty can undertake research works and disseminate the findings for the strengthening of school system. The research findings also help the teacher educators to identify new dimensions of developments of the society and accordingly concerted policy-measures can be conceived, initiated and implemented.

SUGGESTIONS

- Provision of infrastructural facilities to the DIETs, MRC, and School Complexes.
- Sufficient staff must be employed.
- Staff must be deputed to training programmes conducted by the national institutes like NCERT/ SCERT for the enhancement of professional competencies.
- Encouragement for conduct of action research works at DIET, MRC and School complex level.
- It is suggested that more number of child-centered practices are to be adopted in teaching learning practices.
- It is also suggested that priority should be given to conduct of action researches and also on the ongoing programmes.
- It is also suggested that reflective practice process is to be adopted in the practice sessions both by the teacher educators and the student trainees.

Above all, the role of DIETs in enhancing quality education can be ensured only when these institutions are provided sufficient funds, coordination between different functionaries in conducting action research at gross-root level, autonomy must be given them to conduct need-based programmes.

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