Role of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in Professional Development of Preschool Teachers

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ABOUT DISTRICT INSTITUTES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DIETs)

- District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) is a nodal agency for providing academic and resource support at the district and grassroots levels for the success of various strategies and programmes undertaken in the areas of elementary education.
Until the adaptation of NPE 1986, academic and resource support in the area of elementary education was being provided largely at national and state levels only by institutions like NCERT, NIEPA (Now called as NUEPA) and SCERTs.

Below the state level, there were elementary teacher education institutions. The NPE and PoA envisaged addition of a third district-level tire to the support system in the shape of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET). DIETs were established with the financial support from the Central Government in pursuance of NPE 86.
ROLE OF DIETs IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

- To provide leadership in innovating pre-service preschool teacher training.
- To contribute to development of quality learning materials for preschool education.
- To carry out innovations for improving the functioning of preschool schools.
- To conduct in-service training programmes for preschool school teachers.
- To carry out field base empirical studies to improve the preschool schools.
- To train functionaries of Non government organizations and volunteers.
- To provide support to district authorities in implementing quality preschool education.
EXPERIENCE OF NCERT IN RELATION TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS FROM DIETs

- For professional development of teachers and teacher educators, a Diploma Course in ECCE was initiated by the NCERT in the year 2006 and was found beneficial for state level training institutions and private and voluntary agencies running nursery teachers’ training.

- The course was basically targeted to teacher-educators working in DIETs, SCERTs, ICDS and private Nursery Teacher Training Institutions including NGOs catering to disadvantaged population of society.
The objectives of the diploma course in ECCE were to:

- To increase the knowledge-base of teacher-educator (trainees) in the area of ECCE
- To develop competence in conduct of a quality ECCE programmes in different settings
- To orient participants on various teaching-learning strategies to be used in training of teachers.
- To give a hands on experience to participants for conducting research studies
**Duration of Course was: Six Months**

- Thirteen weeks (Three months) face to face training at NCERT
- (ii) Ten weeks (Two and Half months) on the job exercise in their own place of work
- Two weeks contact program at NCERT after on the job exercise
The course was visualized as an innovative, interactive, participatory and learner centered programme with minimal of lectures. It was divided into ten units inclusive of 12 days of internship.

The course was conducted through practical workshops, case studies, role-plays, simulation exercises, hands-on experiences, observations, field visits, utilization of various resource materials, and audio visual aids such as; films on early childhood education, extracts from books, articles, pamphlets.
Group discussions, panel discussions, assignments and library work were the core of the transactional strategy.

Internship and practical activities were given major emphasis. The internship was of two weeks in the Anganwadi Centres, nursery school or MCD schools. During the period of internship, the trainees were expected to plan ECCE activities and carry out child development activities in the selected ECCE centres.
Trainees developed teaching learning material to impart the developmental activities with children.

In this attempt they would get chance to work with community, organise parent-teacher meeting or advocacy programmes to seek support from parents in the strengthening of ECCE centres.
MUSIC AND MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES
DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL
INTERNSHIP
Evaluation strategies included assessment through observations, assignments and peer evaluation.

Such a process enabled the teacher educators to transmit the message of innovative teaching learning methods to teachers.

Follow-up of all the batches was done and the results were positive. States like Nagaland, Sikkim, Assam, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and others made efforts for quality improvement.
EVALUATION
EXHIBITION
Some learning’s related to teacher and teacher education programmes in ECCE are as following:

- There should be uniformity to some extent in the structure of teacher education programmes in all the States and UTs. w.r.t. duration, nomenclature, content, pedagogy, assessment etc.
- The access and coverage of teacher training institutes needs to be enhanced.
- There is inequitable distribution of ECCE teacher education institutions across states at present. The physical facilities are also poor.
- Teaching methodology is limited to copying of notes or lectures or rote learning.
There is no lab school facility available for Internship. So, ECCE centres attached to primary schools should be made available for internship.

It is observed that admissions in the teacher training courses gets late and just after enrolment trainees are attached to schools for internship having no idea what to do in field and how to do? They are left on their own. As a result they do not get clear idea of programme planning, development of teaching learning material, teaching methods, assessment procedures etc.
Capacity of ECCE teachers is also required to be strengthened to handle multi-age and multilingual contexts (National ECCE Policy, 2013).

The role of open and distance education in teacher preparation needs to be clearly conceptualized and regulatory norm and standards need to be developed for offering courses through the distance mode for pre-primary and grade 1 and 2 teachers, which are at present lacking in the NCTE regulations.
Creating a single cadre of teachers for the pre-primary and primary levels of education, which together form the foundation of all school education, would go a long way in giving this stage its due importance. An integrated approach will also allow the possibility of the preschool teacher moving along with her group of children through grades 1 and 2, thus providing the much needed continuity and emotional stability to children during this tender age.
A common cadre of teachers for ECCE and Primary stage with similar nomenclature and pay scales and terms of employment are required to be formed.

Training of functionaries (both pre-service and in-service) is very essential particularly keeping in mind the specialized nature of early childhood care and education. Organizations offering ECCE programmes should ensure that there are regular refresher courses, workshops, visits to other schools, self-evaluation techniques etc. for teachers and assistant teachers so that they can update their knowledge and enhance their efficiency.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop training programmes that will provide opportunities to teachers to teach in any programme that caters to children up to 8 years.
- Introduce flexibility in training by creating modular programmes, which help teachers to move from a certificate to a diploma to a degree; each of these achievements will make them eligible for specific programmes, like being crèche worker, day-care workers or anganwadi/balwadi teachers or schoolteachers.
- Emphasize practical ‘hands-on’ training rather than resorting to outdated, formal, and heavily theoretical approaches, particularly in those aimed at grass-roots-level workers.
Emphasize short and medium-term in-service training programmes rather than pre-service training.

Develop innovative and practical in-service courses, distance-education models, etc. spread over a period of time, to meet the needs of the vast numbers of the so-called ‘untrained’, especially in the private sector.

Develop training approaches and courses employing participatory methods to involve the various players, especially teachers.
Certify and recognise ECCE training to promote both self-employment and employment that can deliver quality services.

Strengthen inter-sectoral development, sharing, and networking of resource expertise and resource materials in ECCE.

* Thank You *