

In-Service Training Programme in the State Of Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

The in-service training programme is pivotal in a teacher's profession. Effective professional development programmes are known to make a difference in the teaching competency and improvement in the classroom teaching. The main aim of the study was to evaluate the training programmes conducted by DERT and DIETs of Meghalaya, for the last five years. The result reveals that the teachers were updated with new teaching pedagogy which is beneficial in enhancing their teaching competencies. They try to utilize what they had learnt in their classroom teaching. However, there are certain areas that they find difficult to implement in the classroom such as CCE and Constructivist Approach to learning. The data also indicates that there was lack of follow-up after conducting every training programme. Regarding, the attendance of the participants, at times when deputed some, do not attend the training programme. Training programme on ICT became a problem because of the non-availability of computers at the training centres and electricity problem. Procurement of teaching learning materials and other training module, materials for the participants were very less. As reported, there were lack of space and room for practical sessions like laboratory for Computer, Mathematics, Science, ECCE, etc. Also, proper training hall and other facilities like internet connection, transportation and accommodations facilities too were some of the challenges.

KEYWORDS: teacher training institutes, In-service training programme, teachers

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play an important role in the development, progress and welfare of a society. A teacher is a person who is expected to help student learners acquire knowledge, competence, skills, inculcate values, be self-sufficient etc. Teaching as we all know it is understood as a noble act, who's role is to shape and mould student's life. The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly stated "A sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education. Investment in teacher education can yield very rich dividends because the financial resources required are small when measured against the resulting improvements in the education of millions". Therefore, teacher education is the great essence of the whole education system in general and has its impact on school education in particular. The functional roles of teaching, from time to time, become greatly significant to fit with the changing situation. Teacher education provides and propagates the methods of dissemination of instruction. It is the system which specialises teacher, especially in methods subjects aimed at enabling the students to make out good exposition. Training is important and the course prescribed for the in-service teachers has its place. Training has its functional important because it provides a sense of direction, enhances and upgrades knowledge as well as the required skills. Thus, there is a need to improve the teacher's institutions as well as training centres since teachers are regarded as the procurer of knowledge as well as facilitator of learning. Hence, in-service teacher education is undoubtedly a significant programme aiming at the continuous development of teachers in the desired direction.

Thus, in-service education programme refers to the education a teacher receives when he has entered the teaching profession after he has had his education/training in a teacher's institute/college. It is a vehicle by which goals and multiple articulated means are available to achieve. There are many organisations as well as institutions which organised different types of in-service training programme for teachers from time to time, for their continuous professional growth and development. For instance, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), constituent unit i.e., the Regional Institute of Education across the country; situated in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysore and Shillong.

Besides, these institutes the National Institute of Education (NIE), Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), and the Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE).

Other organisations and institutes like the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), State Institutes of Education (SIE), State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and Directorate of Educational Research and Training (DERT), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs), University Departments of Education, SarvaShiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Samagra Shiksha, etc. All these have been placing emphasis on continuous in-service teacher education with quality in-service training programmes.

Moreover, various Commissions and Institutions such as the University Education Commission, NCTE, etc. has emphasized and pointed out the importance of in-service education programmes for teachers in view of the explosion of knowledge in the various fields which demands changes in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, etc. Hence, in-service education programmes provides that platforms for teachers to enhance and acquire such knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and competencies for overall development and enhancement of their teaching proficiencies.

In Meghalaya, the DERT is responsible for bringing about quality improvement in the field of school education through quality teacher education programmes. The main thrust of teacher training in Meghalaya has been towards reducing the backlog of untrained school teachers. Teachers are encouraged to avail the opportunity to participate in the enrichment and various training programs which are being organized from time to time by the different educational agencies both at the state as well as those at the national level. The DIETs being the nodal agencies at the district level provides regular preservice and in-service training to the elementary school teachers.

Need and Significance of the Study

DERT as the State centre for providing training and support in all realms of school education in the state of Meghalaya has been conducting several programmes every year. Significant time, effort and finances are involved in conducting these programmes. The programmes conducted were usually positive, indicating that those who participate do get enriched. Furthermore, these training programmes need to reach the classrooms and bring necessary changes in students' holistic development. However, most of the time it appears that the training remains confined to those who participate in a particular programme and very rarely does it get percolated to the other stakeholders in the educational set up. In this light it calls for an evaluation of the impact of the training programmes conducted by DERT and DIET in the state of Meghalaya.

Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study was to find out the number of training programmes and types of training programmes conducted by DERT and DIETs of Meghalaya. Another objective of the study was to find out the opinion of head of schools and teachers on the training programmes conducted by these institutions and to suggest remedial measures in order to help bring about quality in conducting in-service training programme.

Methodology of the Study

For data collection purposive- random sampling was adopted. The sample of the study includes all the faculty members (teacher educators/ programme coordinators) of DERT and DIETs. All Principals of DIETs are also part of the sample. The sample also constituted 50% of the trained personnel; trained by DERT and DIETs (Government school teachers; including SSA school teachers and secondary school teachers of Meghalaya). To examine the implementation part in the classroom; further, the sample include 10 government schools from two districts, i.e., West Jaintia Hills and East Khasi Hills Districts of Meghalaya. All the teachers as well as head of these government schools are the sample of the study. The in-service training programmes conducted and organized during the last five years were covered in this study.

The tools used for data collection were questionnaire for faculty members, principals of DIET, teacher educators and programme coordinators of DERT. The questionnaire contains, the detailed performance of the information on the diverse aspects, such as themes covered, target groups, number of participants invited and attended, the duration, venue etc., of all the in-service training programmes conducted by DERT and all the DIETs of Meghalaya, during the last five years. Moreover, the Interview scheduled for the trained personnel, heads of schools and teachers (Un-structured), Focus Group Discussion with the teachers and classroom observation schedule was also used. Information from both primary and secondary sources was also collected.

II. FINDINGS

From the study, the findings are-

(i) DIETs and DERT of Meghalaya had conducted a number of 119 in-service training programmes during the period of five years. The training programmes were conducted in all the districts of Meghalaya and in the

Block Resource Centers (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs). It was conducted for the teachers of elementary, primary and secondary levels, heads of schools, master trainers, in-service teachers, Village Education Committee (VEC), School Management Committee (SMC) members and community leaders. Depending on the nature of the training programme, the duration of training programmes varied from a minimum of 5 days to a maximum of 10 to 21 days.

(ii) The data also tries to find out on the themes covered during these training programmes which includes programmes on NCERT Maths and Science Kits, activity based methods, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), guidance and counselling, language education, constructivist approach to teaching and learning, effective communication skills, psychological testing, use of Teaching

Learning Materials (TLMs), action research, inclusive education, content enrichment, environmental education, ICT, art integrated learning, psycho- education Intervention, leadership, disaster management, school management, use of improvised/ low-cost teaching aids, play way method, learning outcomes, among others.

(iii) Under this, the trainings conducted had targeted certain groups. These are heads of schools schedule tribe, schedule caste, anganwadi workers, community members, elementary and secondary school teachers.

(iv) In this study, it was found that need assessment was rarely conducted before preparing and conducting any training programme.

(v) Teachers felt that there should be enrichment programme on the content and proper understanding about constructivist approach to apply in their teaching. They were of the opinion that new teaching methods are not applied practically in the classroom. Teachers need to understand the significance of child-centric and learners-centric approach.

(vi) The heads of institutions expressed that training on action research is needed to organize so as to equip them with the procedures and methods on how to conduct such studies. participants during the training need to get more experience on hands-on approach with the guidance of the resource person.

(v) Again, from the data it was seen that there was lack of follow up after conducting every training programme. Hence, no proper follow up procedures were conducted.

(vi) The supply of training materials/packages during the training programme was inadequate.

(vii) The training programmes as revealed by the teachers were not subject centered. Teachers were invited to attend the training regardless of their subject background. More training programmes related to subject specific should be conducted. Emphasis should also be given to training on language education.

(viii) Development of training module through workshop mode before the training programme was not a focused area.

(ix) The study indicates that no feedback format was provided to the participants to evaluate, at the end of the training programme.

(x) The study reveals that there was no follow- up conducted after the training programme.

(xi) Report on the training programme was prepared and submitted to the higher authority for future records. But only 25% shared the report with the participants and other stakeholders.

Merits of the Training Programmes

The merits of the training programme as per the data collected can be summarize as follows.

- The training has helped the teachers developed new teaching skills, innovative activities, better problem solving for the students and methods on how to deal with them through lively and relevant activities and learnt how to make relevant teaching- learning materials suitable for student learning.
- Through the training programme, the teachers were taught how to teach Mathematics and Science in an easy and practical way. They also learned how to use Mathematic kits/ laboratory which is vital for school education.
- The teachers were updated with new teaching methods which is beneficial in bringing about competency in teaching. They try to utilized what they had learnt in their daily classroom teaching.
- Participants have gained knowledge on the advantages of the concepts like CCE and Constructivist Approach in school.
- The enthusiasm of the teachers was seen through their active participation in the programme. The resource persons were also enthusiastic and interacted with the participants and shared their knowledge.
- Participants were taught the basic knowledge about computer operation and this in turn were taught to students in their respective schools.

Demerits of the Training Programmes Conducted

Following are the demerits of the training programme.

- The duration of the programme was too short and not enough for certain subject areas. Also, due to insufficient funds, the programme could not be extended.

- The attendance of the participants were not up to the mark. Less number of teachers were deputed to attend the programme. At times when participants were deputed, some do not attend the training programme.
- Training programme on ICT became a problem because of the non-availability of computers at the training centres and electricity problem.
- Teachers were doubtful about implementing in real classroom settings, such as CCE and constructivist approach.
- Procurement of teaching- learning materials and other training module/ material/ package for the participants during the training programme were very less.
- As reported, there were inavailability of space and room for practical sessions like laboratory for Computer, Mathematics, Science, ECCE, etc.
- Also, proper training hall and other facilities like internet connection, computers etc are required at the DIETs.
- There were problems of transportation and accommodation facilities too.
- Shortage of subject related faculty members at the DIET level is another challenges faced while conducting in-service training programmes.

Opinion on In-service Teacher Training Program Heads of Schools

- It develops the teachers professionally.
- Can manage the school smoothly with trained teachers.
- Ensure academic responsibility.
- Familiar with the RTE Act, 2009.
- Positively enriches the teachers towards quality education.
- Acquired new techniques in transacting the curriculum.
- Improves leadership qualities.
- Provides different knowledge related to school management and administrative skills.
- Help in building rapport with the teachers as well as students.
- Learnt different rules and regulations, duties and responsibilities.
- Acquired an idea on how to carry out small/ action research.

Teachers

- Able to update with new teaching techniques, strategies and innovative methods.
- Acquiring more skills after the training programme.
- Enhancement and update the knowledge, information in specific subject area.
- Build confidence.
- Felt encouraged and motivated to do and teach better.
- Helps to assess the students in a proper way.
- Helps to deliver better during classroom teaching.
- Helps to strengthen the teaching process, identify weaknesses and rectify them.
- Brings about a change professionally and attitudinal change.
- Sharing of experiences and expertise during the training.
- Improves relationship with students and helps in learning together.
- Gain knowledge related to concerned issues like Substance Abuse, HIV/AIDs etc.
- Helps the students to learn effectively and also perform better.
- Learnt about joyful learning, which improves students learning outcomes.
- The students learning is enriched and enhanced through the teachers' application of what they had acquired during the training programme.
- Contributes a lot in terms of classroom transactions which improves the teaching-learning process.

III. SUGGESTIONS

Some of the suggestions which could help in improving the in-service training programmes are as follows.

- Since, need assessment was not conducted before the training programme, this should be proposed and accepted by the concerned authority. This is highly required to check the areas that need training.
- It is also suggested that a meeting at the higher level may be held in order to identify the training needs.
- Teacher educators, heads of schools, teachers, SMC members, BRPs, CRPs, other stakeholders and educational functionaries, may be thoroughly trained in the areas such as research methodology, action research, constructivist approach, CCE, ECE, RTE Act, 2009, learning outcomes, leadership skills, school management, guidance and counselling, vocational education, science kits, community participation etc.

- There has been many incidences as reported by the trainees where, they were invited for training programmes, that were not relevant to their subject area. This may be checked so that they benefitted from the training programme they attended.
- Development and distribution of training package/ module, training material etc., at the beginning and at the end of the training programme respectively.
- Strict attendance may be maintained.
- Basic facilities like provision for PPT, internet facilities, availability of hall/ room, electricity, proper accommodation and hostel facilities, transportation, drinking water, toilet facilities, are all very important for successful conduct of the training programme.
- Enough funds may be sanctioned on time, so that they could run the training programme smoothly.
- Incorporating more activities and practicals during the training programme.
- Field visits may also be included as part of the training programme.
- Proper monitoring and follow- up mechanism may be planned and should be taken up seriously.
- In-service training is important as they help the teachers to obtain new techniques and update their knowledge. Such training which is based on pedagogy on different subjects should be conducted regularly to improve the teachers teaching proficiency as well as quality school and teacher education.
- The training should also come up with better action plans for the future.
- There is a need to conduct training programmes for SMC members, BRPs, CRPs, as well as other stakeholders and educational functionaries on the latest development in the field of education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Government are trying their best in rendering quality education to the teachers through in-service training programmes. Through this study certain gaps have been identified, that need prior attention to improve the training programmes in the future. Several innovative steps may be taken up, in revamping the in- service teacher education programme. Moreover, the findings also had showed that their exist issues as well as challenges, which required to be looked upon in consideration for quality training programmes. Therefore, programmes need to focus on continuous professional development of teachers, to guide, monitor and support necessary skills, knowledge and new ideas that tend to be more successful in bringing about a change in the classroom teaching- learning process. However, teachers are the source of inspiration for the students. So, they need to be well skilled and motivated to teach them in the best possible way. To achieve this, they need to participate and attend the in- service training programmes; for their continuous professional development. Such trainings act as backbone in a teacher's teaching profession to sharpen their skills. Thus, there is no doubt, that the DERT and DIETs of Meghalaya had been trying their level best in provided quality in- service training programme from time to time, in order to bring about quality school and teacher education.

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