

**Minutes of the Third Meeting of the SSA Sub-mission on
“Teachers Training, Strengthening of academic support to institutions
and other aspects of quality improvement under SSA”**

1. Introduction

1.1 The third meeting of the SSA Sub-mission on “Teachers Training, Strengthening of academic support to institutions and other aspects of quality improvement under SSA” was held on 13th October 2009 at Scope Complex, New Delhi (List of participants attached as **Annex I**).

1.2 After a brief welcome by Mr. Binay Pattanayak, Ms. Neelam Rao (Director, MHRD) explained that under SSA, 6 sub-missions were constituted out of which 2 were to focus on quality-related areas. The particular sub-mission was intended to look at overall aspects of monitoring quality improvement which include (i) Teacher Training including in-service training, induction training and training of untrained teachers. (ii) quality improvement in the North East region as well (iii) academic resource support mechanisms such as BRC/CRC. Discussions have begun as a follow-up to the findings of the recently completed study on effectiveness of BRC/CRCs, and this Sub-mission’s suggestions are invited to be taken into account in the upcoming Workshop on BRC/CRCs and Academic Resource Support Structures to be organised by MHRD in November 2009 (iv) Discussion on the development of teaching learning materials and how to ensure coherence and avoid multiplicity of materials to avoid increasing learning a burden on the child. (v) research and documentation, which MHRD has been trying to make more robust by modifying the SSA norms to allow for Rs. 200 per school at the national level and Rs. 1300 at the state level for Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and Supervision.

1.3 In the context of above the sub-mission was requested to develop at this meeting an action plan for the coming months including the date of the next meeting and to decide on a certain number of states where more focused support could be provided by the Sub-mission.

2. Overview of progress in Quality interventions under SSA

2.1 Mr. Binay Pattanayak (Chief Consultant, Pedagogy Unit, TSG – SSA), made a presentation (Annexure II) which apprised members of the progress in quality interventions under SSA over the last year, and highlighted some of the major issues in each area including teacher recruitment, training, teaching learning materials, Learning Enhancement Programs, academic support and monitoring systems. For example, he pointed to the large state teacher vacancies that still exist, especially in states like UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan and MP. This means we need to plan not only for teachers’ recruitment but also for their appropriate training. Regarding the training of untrained teachers, this is especially an issue in the North East where some states like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have up to 70% untrained teachers. In the ensuing discussion, some of the points that were brought up by participants were as follows:

- States with the greatest shortfall in reaching their training targets should be invited to the next sub-mission meeting

- The course content of the IGNOU distance education course also needs revisiting, to ensure the quality of the training curriculum and this needs to be flagged at appropriate level.
- Need for greater exposure and capacity-building of the mid-level (district/ block level) academic and administrative personnel. The content and nature of training that is given to BRC/CRCs needs to be looked at, as well as training for School Heads.
- Need for greater understanding and focus on the needed processes, that will lead to improvement in children's learning.
- Need to invest not only in the planning and monitoring stages, but to focus especially on the implementation stage, by providing adequate on-site resource support
- Involving subject teacher associations and their suggestions or resources during training programs

2.2 It was suggested by the group that a major thrust should be placed across the board on ways to enhance teacher effectiveness, in the form of a focused, goal-oriented, time-bound mission that will ensure that a significant percentage of teachers' capacity are built and performance improved. Ms. Neelam Rao agreed that the need is to inter-link different components under a coherent framework, with a focus on teacher effectiveness, which would include looking at a series of processes starting from pre-service teacher education, processes of teacher recruitment, induction training for new teachers, of deployment and grievance redressal systems, plan for capacity building, academic support, accountability mechanisms, etc.

3. Feedback from Quality Monitoring Tools

3.1 Prof. K. K. Vashishtha, Mr. Yogesh Kumar and Mr. S.C. Mehta (DEE, NCERT) made a presentation (Annexure III) regarding the feedback provided through the Quality Monitoring Tools. These tools provide grade, subject, gender and social category-wise quarterly data on achievement levels, as well as details about teaching learning materials, teacher training, monitoring and support systems, community participation, etc. Prof. Vashishtha explained that the idea behind implementing the tools was not to flow the information from the ground to national levels for the purpose of comparing states with each other. Rather, the idea was that teaching learning processes should be supervised, monitored, shared and analysed at the local level itself by local stakeholders. The Block level should be a key unit for collecting needs-assessment information, which should then feed into the next round of teacher training. One positive result of the Quality Monitoring Tools, which has now been rolled out across the country, has been to increase awareness about quality and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each person in the system.

3.2 Following this presentation, Mr. Subir Shukla inquired whether any correlations have been drawn out between those schools where the BRC/CRC are well-performing or community participation is good, and the children's learning performance. This kind of analysis could help identify what are the factors contributing to children's learning achievement, and which factors need strengthening to increase children's learning. Ms. Rao requested that perhaps those states present (such as Uttarakhand, Himachal, Maharashtra, Punjab), could undertake such analysis on a sample basis in selected blocks or districts. In addition, some of the other points that were brought out by participants in the discussion that followed were:

- Block/cluster level functionaries need to be trained in developing thinking skills such as analysis of trends, comparison, prioritization, inference, etc. so that the data can be properly analysed at the local level
- To strengthen the analysis and use of QMT data at decentralised levels, we should highlight 3-4 case studies of states who have been able to carefully analyse monitoring data and use the data to bring about visible improvements in quality
- We need to highlight what models of CRCs actually work, and also examples of what kind of support or feedback are useful for BRC/CRCs to give to teachers
- There is need for more realistic job charts for BRC/CRCs, since often what is expected of them amounts to more than the time that is available in a month
- Greater linkage should be built with DIETs to provide support and monitoring of BRC/CRCs
- Evidence needs to be analysed of whether the issues in teacher training being reported over the years are actually being addressed through concrete steps
- The role of State Resource Groups needs to be strengthened, by outlining a process for the selection and recruitment of Resource Persons based on some form of performance appraisal before selection. Perhaps some indicators of well functioning SRG/DRGs should be shared to facilitate this process.

4. Framework for Building Teacher Effectiveness

4.1 In the afternoon session, the sub-mission members were of the opinion that there is a strong need to consider the key issues and design a way forward to help the States address them in an effective manner. Ms. Neelam Rao initiated the discussion by stressing that the key issue before the Sub-mission is how to take forward the understanding that all elements relating to quality must be seen in a cohesive, holistic manner and not as isolated components, since all are inter-linked (for example, BRC, CRC and DIETs; SCERTs and SSA; BEOs and BRCs, etc.). It was resolved that the sub-mission should take the opportunity to plan a cohesive framework for 'Building Teacher Effectiveness' and accordingly to design a concrete road map by drawing up an 'Annual Work Plan' for 2009-10 and 200-11.

4.2. What followed was an active discussion on the critical issue of bringing in teacher effectiveness, which was felt to be of utmost importance and a prerequisite to ushering in quality. At the outset the members discussed what are the key components involved in teacher effectiveness, what are the key challenges in each of the components, and what would be the possible modes to address those challenges. The key components identified were (i) Pre- Service Training of Teachers, (ii) Recruitment, (iii) Induction Training, (iv) Service conditions including career growth and grievance redressal mechanisms, (v) Teacher development process, (vi) School & systemic environment, (vii) Capacity building over time, (viii) Relationship with stake holders, (ix) Ongoing teacher support mechanism, (x) Accountability mechanism, and (xi) Performance assessment mechanism. There was a detailed discussion on some of the key challenges in various components and probable ways to address those challenges (Attached as **Annexure-IV**).

5. Annual Work Plan for Sub-mission:

5.1 In the final session, the sub-mission evolved a basic framework for an Annual Work Plan to prioritise activities and contributions by the sub-mission over the coming two years (2009-10 and 2010-11). It was designed as a flexible framework, with scope for further enrichment as per suggestions to be invited from various quarters. The main **action steps** decided upon are as follows:

1. To help carry out a **situational analysis** of teacher effectiveness in selected states (Himachal Pradesh, and Nagaland or Arunachal Pradesh in the NE).
2. Development of a **reference document** for States, outlining a Framework for teacher effectiveness and quality improvement (for Punjab, Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, J&K, Manipur & Andhra Pradesh).
3. Follow up in States on the **4 Regional Workshops** held by MHRD on “Education of Equitable Quality”
4. Development of a suggestive **framework for strengthening BRCs and CRCs** with exemplars and illustrations, to be based on research.
5. Facilitating more rigorous **use and analysis of the QMT at local levels** (Cluster, Block and District levels), and analysing causal relationships between different quality-related parameters. The sub-mission would also assess how much time is needed to fill up the QMT formats at each of the levels.

5.2 The key **outputs** identified by the sub-mission to be achieved through this framework are:

1. Trying to strengthen **Resource Pools** in states by developing a Resource Directory in different subjects, preferably online.
2. Tracking of **integrated Quality plan development** in States.
3. Helping States in using the **feedback from QMT** towards enhancing quality improvement

In particular, the Sub-mission will contribute towards the key **SSA programme outcomes** of increased evidence of improved teacher effectiveness in schools, and enhancement in students’ learning levels.

5.3 It was also decided that in order to achieve the targets of the sub-mission effectively, the activities will be carried out in small groups through **Task Forces** which will meet every quarter with the coordination of TSG. On the suggestion of Prof. Amitabh Mukherjee, it was agreed that a researcher may be supported for a limited term, along with a minimum office management support, in the event of a request proposal from the Task Force. The four task forces are identified as under:

1. **Reference/ Resource Directory development: Prof. Amitabh Mukherjee, Prof. Srivatsan, Dr. Venita Kaul, Mr. Pavnes Kumar, Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri**

2. **QMT with NCERT: Ms. Amukta Mahapatra**, Dr. Soma Sablok (Punjab), Dr. D. R. Sharma (Guj.), Mr. S. K. Soni (UP)
3. **Teacher Effectiveness: Mr. Subir Shukla**, Ms. Malini Ghosh, Dr. Venita Kaul, Ms. Sheila Tiwari (Mah), Mr. Rajesh Sharma (HP)
4. **Quality Framework development: Mr. Subir Shukla**, Mr. Dhir Jhingran, Mr. K.K. Shukla (Uttkd), Mr. Rajesh Jain (Punj), Mr. Upendra Reddy (Andhra).

5.4 It was suggested that these activities could be trialled in some states, and the experiences could be shared on a website for other states to benefit from. The members suggested that Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand can be chosen to carry out these practices.

5.5 The sub-mission granted further flexibility to add more members to the Task Force groups, as found suitable. Each Task Force group is to submit (by October end 2009) a brief note outlining the overall approach, major strategies, activities, team composition, budget, timelines and expected outcomes.

5.6 It was decided that the next meeting of the Sub-Mission will be held tentatively around 20th – 23rd Dec 2009. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.