

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Mission on
Teacher Training, Strengthening of Academic Support Institution and other
aspects of Quality Improvement under SSA**

The First meeting of the Sub-Mission on Teacher Training, Strengthening of Academic Support Institutions and other aspects of Quality Improvement under SSA was organized at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 30th May 2006. The List of members who attended the meeting is at **Annex-I**.

Member Secretary of the Sub-Mission welcomed all members and briefed them about the aims, role and functions of the Sub-Mission. After a round of introductions, the following points were discussed briefly:

I. Background

The Executive Committee of the National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) had approved the constitution of six Sub-Missions for SSA at the National Level on 23rd March 2005 . This Sub-Mission is one of the six Sub-Missions constituted under SSA. Each Sub-Mission would review the performance of states on the dimensions allocated to it. The Sub-Mission could also suggest and facilitate capacity building exercises that may be state-specific or in the nature of cross-state sharing workshops to promote best practices. The Sub-Mission is expected to prepare a half yearly report to be placed before the Executive Committee of SSA. The TOR of the Sub-Mission provides details on the scope of its work.

II Scope of work for 2006-07

The Sub-Mission members were briefed about the **scope of work for 2006-07** in the following areas.

- To review the commitments to outcomes made by the States/UTs in the Project Approval Board of SSA. (As recorded in the Minutes of the PAB meeting). To review State/UT wise expenditures and utilisation against items covered in this ToR.
- To review the progress of teacher training with focus on annual in-service training, induction training and training of untrained teachers
- To review the progress of training of untrained teachers in the North Eastern States to be trained with the help of IGNOU.
- To review the progress of distribution of free textbooks.
- To review operationalisation of BRCs and CRCs.
- To review operationalisation of Resource Centers in urban areas.
- To review operationalisation of Quality Monitoring systems developed by NCERT.

- To respond to State governments for capacity building of BRC's/CRC's in J&K, Punjab, NE States, UT's in particular.
- To utilize findings of studies undertaken on (i) teacher absence study, (ii) time on task study.
- To strive for dissemination of good practices in National/regional workshops.

III Documents shared with the Sub-Mission

The members were provided with the following reference materials to facilitate the review of progress and inform them about the various initiatives undertaken so far under SSA for quality improvement: -

- i. TOR of the Sub-Mission.
- ii. Information about some quality related parameters under SSA including the physical and financial progress against the PAB approvals during 2005-06. This included progress in teacher recruitment, teacher training (20 days, 30 days and 60 days), BRCs, CRCs, Resource Groups at different levels, distribution of free textbooks to children, learners' evaluation systems in states, learners' achievements and PAB commitments for further improvement, quality monitoring etc.
- iii. Detailed information about the National Resource Group of SSA.
- iv. Draft NCERT guideline for in-service Teacher Training under SSA
- v. Glimpses from grassroots- a synthesis of case studies of successful practices of BRCs and CRCs
- vi. Copies of 'Issues in Primary Education'
- vii. Copy of presentation on Initiatives for Quality Improvement under SSA
- viii. Reports of five case studies on innovative practices in the areas of Pupil Assessment and School Monitoring in states under SSA
- ix. Quality Monitoring tools developed by NCERT.

IV Presentation on Quality related issues in SSA

A presentation on 'Initiatives for Quality Improvement under SSA' was made (**Annex II**). The presentation touched upon different quality related parameters including the progress in the areas of teacher recruitment; teacher training; teacher performance; free distribution of textbooks; establishment of BRCs, CRCs, constitution of resource groups at national, state, district, block and cluster level, trends related to PTR, SCR; curriculum, textbooks renewal, learner's evaluation strategies, learner's achievements; distance education programme; EDUSAT activities; computer aided learning; quality monitoring; capacity building of states; Research and dissemination of good practices etc.

Each of these components was discussed as the members wanted to know details of such interventions. Discussions centered around three major components. They were as follows:

- a. Discussion on 20 days Teacher Training guideline developed by NCERT on progress made under 20 days, 30 days and 60 days teacher training

- b. Discussion on progress of BRCs, CRCs, Resource Groups, State/ regional and national academic institutions
- c. Discussion on progress of material development, free textbook distribution, Grant utilization, Research studies, Documentation and sharing of good practices, Quality Monitoring, overall direction towards achievement of goals under quality.

(a) Discussion on 20 days Teacher Training:

Regarding the 20 days annual in-service teacher training, the members were briefed about the genesis of the initiative. States with DPEP experience were better able to design their teacher training programme in a systematic manner whereas new states under SSA without DPEP experience required greater support in organizing teaching training. The DETE, NCERT has revised the in-service teacher training guidelines in line with the National Curriculum Framework 2005. NCERT developed guidelines are based on the constructivist approach to learning in schools and redefine the role of teachers in facilitating learning process of students in different subject areas. The members were requested to go through the guidelines and send their observations for consideration by MHRD & NCERT. Contextual issues like pedagogy for tribal children, multi grade situations, experiential learning in classrooms with wide diversity of learners needed to be addressed through well planned teacher training. The members agreed to send their observations on the annual 20-day teacher training guidelines to the member secretary of the sub mission.

It was observed that teacher training under SSA needs to be linked to the classroom processes and the regular activities of the BRCs and CRCs for school improvement. Members felt that teacher training and activities of BRCs and CRCs needed to be reviewed to assess their overall contribution to school improvement, Capacity of states needed to be built, especially at block and cluster level, to enhance school performance and effective classroom processes. It was suggested that processes and inputs involved in teacher training also needed to be looked at along with the outcomes. Members felt that findings of such studies / reviews on teacher training can be shared with states at different National and Regional level pedagogic consultations like the National Quality Review Meetings.

Members also wanted to know if DEP-SSA and EDUSAT like facilities could be effective modes for teacher training. They were briefed about how DEP-SSA & IGNOU were engaged in material development, capacity building of BRCs and in training of un-trained teachers in States where percentage of professionally un-trained teachers was high. DEP-SSA has undertaken teleconferences on issues related to teacher training to make States aware of good practices related to teacher trainings and also to discuss various issues like scope for blending face to face and cascade mode of teacher training with audio visual modes like radio, television etc. In states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu EDUSAT was being used for teacher training. Other than teacher training, EDUSAT was also being used for enriching classroom transactions. Members also suggested that EDUSAT could be utilized for capacity building and communication with BRCs and CRCs.

Members reviewed the physical and financial progress of teacher training (20 days annual in-service teacher training, 30 days induction training and 60 days training of untrained teachers) during 2005-06. They emphasized on the quality of these training programmes and wanted to know if they were contributing to the improvement in classroom processes and also in enhancement in learners' achievement, thereby satisfying the aims of education. They emphasized that teacher training should center around the emerging issues related to children's learning under various circumstances and should be designed as per the local needs of teachers and children while working together for knowledge construction.

(a) Discussion on BRCs, CRCs, Resource Groups:

Members deliberated on the role of BRCs and CRCs as crucial academic resource centres at the sub-district level and emphasized that their capacity building is of the most essential components of pedagogical renewal in states. They expressed their concern that in a number of states personnel at BRCs and CRCs were more into data collection and administrative activities than into academic matters. They urged on the academic direction of their activities in collaboration with DIETs.

In this context, the role of resource groups was pointed out to be very crucial. Although majority of the states constituted resource groups at state, district, block and cluster levels, it still demanded better clarity of their understanding and performance related to school quality improvement.

It was also felt important that people at these crucial places needed to be full time workers. It was reiterated that keeping in view the valuable role of these resource centers near the schools, states needed to plan for their sustenance in DPEP districts beyond the project period for ensuring quality in the concerned schools. It was felt that with the operationalisation of the quality monitoring tools, it was very important for the personnel at BRCs and CRCs to consolidate the information received from schools, identify the emerging issues and act upon them.

Members wanted to know if some large-scale study could be undertaken accommodating issues related to teacher training, effectiveness of BRCs/CRCs etc. It was clarified that an appraisal of teacher training materials & modules being used across States, and modules for training of trainers (BRCs/CRCs) was being undertaken with a view to evolve teacher and trainer performance standards & to modify/tailor teacher training programmes to help teachers attain these standards. Further, Committee for Approval of Research Projects under SSA has approved research studies on 'Impact of teacher training on classroom transactions' and a study on 'Effectiveness of BRCs/CRCs in providing academic support and supervision to elementary schools'.

(c) Discussion on other quality related parameters:

This included parameters like material development, free textbook distribution, Grant utilization, Research studies, Documentation and sharing of good practices, Quality Monitoring, overall direction towards achievement of goals under quality. The discussion was as follows: -

- a. The curriculum and textbook renewal groups needed to look at the DPEP experience in these areas. Several studies undertaken on the curriculum/ textbook renewal in Kerala, UP, Tamil Nadu and other States should be referred to during such exercises. Some of the members felt that the DPEP experience on several occasions was not effectively utilized. It was agreed that rich DPEP lessons needed to be consulted from time to time.
- b. It was observed that nation wide learner's evaluation surveys on many occasions failed to capture the approach of States like Kerala to language learning as they emphasised only on reading and grammar usage skills of the learners during the surveys where as States like Kerala interpreted language learning in a more pedagogically sound manner by emphasizing on areas such as comprehension, creative articulation of thoughts etc. which never get depicted in national level learners' achievement surveys.
- c. Members expressed concern about the far from satisfactory learners' achievement as discovered by the Learners' Achievement surveys and emphasized on focused interventions in states for enhancing quality of classroom transactions especially at classes I, II and III level. Corrective measures and preventive strategies needed to be designed to identify the problems associated with children's basic reading and arithmetic learning and remedial strategies needed to be designed for addressing issues on individual basis.
- d. Members felt that curriculum and textbooks developed by NCERT and other academic bodies at national level needed to be projected as examples before the states instead of being prescribed for use directly in classrooms as on many occasions they were found to have limitations in terms of their contextuality to rural, multi grade and multi lingual classrooms with much diversity in children's background and learning processes. Members also indicated that states like Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Uttaranchal etc. had undertaken rigorous consultative processes while renewing their curriculum and textbooks in recent times. Their intensive processes centering round dialogues and debates on educational issues and their bearing on quality of textbooks in the states needed to be documented for sharing with other states as examples. Already processes of some of the state initiatives such as in UP, Delhi, etc. had been documented and needed wide dissemination. Each of the participants felt that such 'good processes' needed to be promoted rather than promotion of end products in the form of textbooks and other materials. It was pointed out that the ongoing National Quality Review Meetings under SSA could strive for the same.
- e. Regarding distribution of free textbooks to target children, members wanted to know if the books were available to children at the very beginning of the academic sessions. Information provided to the members revealed that except in Jharkhand and Bihar the performance of the states in these matters was satisfactory during 2005-06. Nearly all the states could manage to provide free textbooks to children in the beginning of academic sessions through innovative practices like Book Day, Book Bank etc.

- f. Members appreciated the efforts of the MHRD to monitor quality through a series of measures including operationalisation of quality monitoring tools. They indicated that other than the state and district level personnel, capacity of the BRC and CRC personnel needed to be enhanced for consolidating and analyzing the available information at their level and strategize contextually for meeting the challenges.
- a. Members discussed about the documentation and sharing of good practices related to pupil assessment and school monitoring systems in selected states. Along with these they also recommended that similar initiatives needed to be undertaken in areas related to BRCs, CRCs, Teacher Training, education of socially marginalized groups, etc.
- b. Members also suggested that television, newspapers, wrappers of different consumer items, radio etc. can also be creatively utilized for promoting children's learning on a continuous basis.

Other than this, members highlighted some other issues affecting quality of elementary education and drew attention. These included the following:

- i. The need for a renewed approach to multi grade classroom situations as our textbooks and pedagogy designed for mono-grade situations have limitations.
- ii. Need to understand 'how teachers learn'.
- iii. Need to enable teachers and teacher educators for local level adaptations in material, pedagogy and other related issues.
- iv. The NCERT tools for quality monitoring tools need to be on the Internet and its findings disseminated for larger usage.

Way forward

Based on the discussions, the Sub-Mission members proposed the following activities that could be undertaken for further improving quality of elementary education under SSA:

1. Two Regional workshops on process of Curriculum Renewal/ Textbooks Renewal may be organized, to help States understand the process aspect better. Sub – mission members would participate in these workshops and work more closely with States that require resource support in this area.
2. Arrangement of State visits for Sub-Mission members to assist States with other specific quality related issues, as identified at the National/State level.
3. More research studies on quality related issues from the National level.
4. Members would send their observations on teacher training guidelines developed by (NCERT).
5. National Quality Review Meetings (NQRMs) may be organized on specific themes such as Teacher training, Training of BRCs, CRCs, etc. Sub-Mission

- members could take part in the thematic sessions and assist States in conceptualizing/implementing interventions where clear gaps are identified.
6. Review of textbooks, textbook development guidelines etc. may be undertaken. Pedagogy unit of TSG would identify the States where this work is to be done on priority and Sub –mission members would visit states and provide resource support, as needed.

The Member Secretary assured full cooperation and thanked the members for their active participation in the day's discussion on various issues affecting quality of education with a request for their continuous support in various activities being undertaken for quality improvement as per SSA goals.