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DISTRICT INSTITUTES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN THREE INDIAN STATES

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Researching the Issues 2004 55

DISTRICT INSTITUTES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN THREE INDIAN STATES

by Caroline Dyer with Archana Choksi
and Vinita Awasty, Uma Iyer, Renu Moyade, Neerja Nigam,
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2004

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Abbreviations

ADEI/SDI	*School inspector*
AS	*Alternative Schooling*
BTI	*Basic Training Institute*
BRC	*Block Resource Centre*
CMDE	*Curriculum and Materials Development*
CRC	*Cluster Resource Centre*
DIET	*District Institute of Education and Training*
DPEP	*District Primary Education Programme*
DRU	*District Resource Unit*
EGS	*Education Guarantee Scheme*
ET	*Educational Technology*
GCERT	*Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training*
GPSC	*Gujarat Public Services Commission*
GNP	*Gross National Product*
HSC	*Higher Secondary Certificate*
IASE	*Institute for Advanced Study in Education*
IFIC	*In-service Programmes, Field Interaction and Innovation Co-ordination*
INSET	*In-service Teacher Education*
LJ	*Lok Jumbish*
MEd	*Master of Education*
MHRD	*Ministry of Human Resource Development*
MLL	*Minimum Level of Learning*
MP	*Madhya Pradesh*
NCERT	*National Council of Educational Research and Training*
NCTE	*National Council for Teacher Education*
NGO	*Non-Government Organisation*
NIEPA	*National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration*
NPE	*National Policy on Education*
OIC	*Officer in Charge*
PAC	*Programme Advisory Committee*
P & M	*Planning and Management*
PhD	*Doctor of Philosophy*
PSTE	*Pre-service Teacher Education*
PTC	*Primary Teacher Certificate*
Pre-set	*Pre-service teacher education*
OB	*Operation Blackboard*
SCERT	*State Council of Educational Research and Training (Madhya Pradesh)*
SIDA	*Swedish International Development Agency*
SIERT	*State Institute for Educational Research and Training (Rajasthan)*
SOPT	*Special Orientation for Primary Teachers*
SSA	*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*
SSC	*Secondary Schooling Certificate*
TLM	*Teaching Learning Materials*
UEE	*Universal Elementary Education*
WE	*Work Experience*

Executive Summary

Research for policy and practitioner development: key areas of this report

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), founded during the late 1980s and early 1990s, are expected to play a key role within India's current drives to achieve Universal Elementary Education of quality. This research project focused on six DIETs, two each in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In each state, one DIET was in a District where an external intervention was running (Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan and the District Primary Education Programme in the other two states).

The study adopted an ethnographic approach to data generation. This approach, by focusing on understanding realities as perceived by teachers, their educators, and educational officials and making connections between them, leads to grounded and contextualised findings. The report contributes to policy and practitioner development in four main areas:

- It provides otherwise absent ethnographic detail about educational processes in DIETs and related schools, identifying links and gaps between teacher development programmes and teachers' professional development needs
- It considers how decentralisation has affected DIETs, and identifies areas of unresolved tensions in relation to power and autonomy that constrain effective functioning
- It engages with the pressing question of teachers' will to adopt change messages through a critique of the relevance of the transmission-based training model that dominates both pre- and in-service training
- It explores an alternative approach to practitioner development, based on collaborative reflection and action, that stimulates engagement and contextualised actions

Aims and objectives of the study

The study's overall aim was:

> Through the use of participatory methods, to evaluate the functioning of selected DIETs within the decentralised framework of District Planning initiatives; and to initiate where necessary, and otherwise support, a process by which the capacity of these institutions to meet their objectives is enhanced through critical reflection and action.

In order to achieve this aim, the objectives of the research were:

1 To appraise existing situations in selected elementary schools vis-à-vis physical conditions, clientele, availability of teaching-learning materials, teacher motivation, classroom management style, pedagogical approaches, administrative and pedagogical support, interaction with village communities, and so on.

2 To analyse each DIET's contribution to the professional development of teachers by examining:

a) the extent to which pre-service education prepares teachers for the circumstances in which they will find themselves once in post
b) the quality of in-service inputs and delivery mechanisms, and fit between training programmes and teachers' perceived needs
c) the capacity of each DIET to engage in research that relates to their own and teachers' needs.

3 To assess each DIET's internal managerial capacity and its external relationships with institutions in the District and other levels of the administrative hierarchy, and review how they are integrated into the strategy of universalising elementary education.

4 To use research findings in a continuous process of providing support and initiative to assist the development of capacity in DIETs, and to use this research project to strengthen and expand that capacity through both participation and example, both at the District and other levels of the administration where stakeholders have been identified.

Findings

Trends across the sample sites indicate a need for readjustment and focused development of DIETs in a process of institutional renewal if they are to be effective in systemic support for teacher development. The report raises four areas of key concern for policy and practitioner communities:

- The need for a sharper conceptualisation of institutional purpose and the roles of DIET branches and DIET staff in relation to that institutional purpose
- The need for a holistic rather than compartmentalised approach to teacher development through DIETs
- The need to recognise the specialised nature of elementary teaching and teacher education and recruit DIET staff, as elementary teacher educators, accordingly
- The need to provide for continuous professional growth of teacher educators to extend their understanding of, and engagement with, the field, for example through encouraging processes of reflection and action

A sharper conceptualisation of institutional purpose

Processes of devolving power and autonomy for teacher development to DIETs remain, despite policy intentions, incomplete. Tensions of decentralisation hamper the DIET in emerging as an institute firmly embedded in, and serving, its District. In-service teacher education programmes are *designed* and funded at state level or above, and *delivered* at the District level, according to numerical targets. Although evaluation and follow-up of training impact in the field are rarely undertaken, DIET staff deliver programmes they sense are not meeting teachers' needs. Current centralised arrangements fail to challenge their sense that it is their duty to deliver what they are given, rather than adapt materials to local conditions and

requirements as the DIET mandate envisages. A further barrier to effective decentralisation lies in DIET staff's lack of the technical skills needed to assess teachers' needs, and respond accordingly – which can serve as a justification for not challenging state-generated programmes. Decentralisation initiatives in Madhya Pradesh address some of these issues, but the need to support DIET staff in developing appropriate skills to work effectively in a decentralised context remains.

Not all staff members were aware of the functions of each of the DIET's branches. Staff related easily to the 'traditional' occupations - pre-service and in-service training - but had less clear understandings of the role in elementary education of, for example, planning and management or curriculum development. Reflecting this, teachers saw the DIET as a training institute, rather than as the holistic teacher development institute policy envisaged.

The apex State level institute in each State, itself undergoing revitalisation under the same scheme that established DIETs, tended towards an evaluative rather than supportive role. The majority of sample DIETs would benefit from proactive support in forging a meaningful purpose and identity, and in resolution of the apex institute's role vis-à-vis DIETs.

Within their District, two of the six sample DIETs had created their own niche through proactively developing a profile for the DIET. Through proactive leadership by its Principal, Surat DIET in Gujarat had become firmly established as a prime local educational resource. It was a hub of educational activity and had undertaken needs analyses, developed programmes with local relevance, and effectively mobilised local human and financial resources. Indore DIET was also establishing a similar identity. Both these DIETs also demonstrated not only the importance of partnerships with Cluster Resource Centres for effective outreach, but also the continuing relevance of the DIET idea.

With a network of support institutions for decentralised teacher education now in place, action is needed by each to ensure that they interact effectively with one another. Decentralisation requires the creation of meaningful of State-DIET-Cluster Resource Centre partnerships, where links and purposes in relation to teacher development are clearly defined. Proactive nurturing of new identities and capacity development is needed to assist in maximising the strategic position of each institution, and moving away from embedded centralised relations.

Towards holistic teacher development

The model of teacher education adopted in both pre- and in-service training is a transmission approach to developing skills and knowledge. Development of skills

follows the format of learning to deliver a model lesson; and knowledge relates to learning and/or reinforcing subject content. Many DIET staff are reluctant to model the approaches they lecture about.

Transferability of what is learned in training, from both pre- and in-service programmes, to multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-ability and multi-grade primary classroom contexts remains problematic. Teachers report the lack of relevance of training and have often developed low expectations of its being able to make any difference. Another issue that is hampering quality improvements is the pattern of once-off, off-site training courses for teachers. The current approach to teacher development through DIETs is focused on the individual teacher, and short-term inputs of technical skilling. Training of this nature is not able to challenge teachers' often negative assumptions about the intelligence and capacities of children from lower socio-economic strata, which create barriers to their *will* to change their practices. Training that comprises skilling and content reinforcement is failing to *engage* teachers with training ideas, and sees elementary teachers as mere 'classroom technicians'. Further thought needs to be given to how training can work towards developing teachers' potential as creative practitioners, and validate and extend their existing knowledge.

There is a pressing need to improve the 'ecological validity' of the training offered to teachers through DIETs, to improve its contextual relevance. The current model, even if improved significantly in quality, lacks the capacity to be contextually sensitive and thus has shortcomings in relation to the professed aims of establishing DIETs as responsive local institutions. However, to enhance the transferability of what is learned during in-service training under current arrangements, further thought must be given as to how inputs from DIET training courses articulate with opportunities for peer reflection offered at the Cluster Resource Centres. Effectiveness of DIET training would be enhanced by advance planning of how Cluster Resource Centres can assist in working with teachers on transferring training messages into practice by experimentation and discussion in a supportive peer group; and the DIET's role in this process.

In the longer term, it is desirable that these structures shift towards providing support to a strategy of whole school, rather than individual teacher, development. Whole school development offers greater potential to address in a integrated way current concerns about enhancing community participation, embedding schools into their socio-economic context, and improving internal efficiency.

Recruitment of primary teacher educators

Recruitment criteria for DIETs specified that staff should have two Master's degrees and seven years of elementary teaching experience. Few elementary

teachers have these academic qualifications, but as they have been prioritised over the practitioner experience criterion, DIETs have largely been staffed by ex-upper secondary teachers, who hold higher degrees but have no relevant practitioner experience. Many staff have been posted to DIETs by routine government transfer procedures, resulting in a widespread lack of enthusiasm for their new post. Short staffing of Principals was widely in evidence and had a detrimental effect on staff motivation and direction-setting for DIETs. Specific recruitment criteria developed by Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan brought interested elementary practitioners to the DIETs Lok Jumbish adopted, but despite official acknowledgement of this success, personalisation of recruitment criteria was seen to be too risky to be adopted for government recruitment across the State.

Once appointed, DIET staff in all three States judged induction processes to be inadequate. They left a significant proportion of staff unfamiliar with the role of the DIET itself, or of the branch within they worked.
A posting to the DIET is a clear change of career direction, from being a teacher to a teacher educator. Elementary teacher educators who do not have relevant practitioner experience lack the pedagogical authority needed to support elementary teacher development. Current recruitment norms are not designed to assess the knowledge, skills and understandings required of a primary teacher educator. This study provides evidence of the desirability of revising those norms; and of the need to recognise the specialised nature and challenges of working as an elementary teacher educator and recruit accordingly.

Continuous professional development for teacher educators
Professional development opportunities for DIET staff are very limited and appropriated by a handful of staff. In addition to the recommended review of recruitment procedures, there is a need to develop a policy strategy to address teacher educators' ongoing professional development needs.

The study trialled collaborative action research as a means of developing DIET staff's research capacity and supporting systematic investigation of field realities. This reflection-on-action approach departed from the 'expert'-led, transmission approach which dominates practitioner development initiatives. It aimed instead to stimulate critical reflection by teacher educators themselves, with project team members, by undertaking structured research activities that acted on concerns identified by DIET staff. Issues of accountability and autonomy were raised during this process, and proaction by DIET staff in generating their own research agenda to address their own concerns helped illustrate the possibilities for more autonomous action by DIET staff.

The processes of action research project design, collection and analysis of data, assisted staff in reflecting on their own practices, and gaining clearer understandings of the issues teachers face, and of their own role in facilitating teacher development and *engaging* with issues. Stimulating this sense of engagement emerges as central to making processes of practitioner development meaningful enough to result in changes to practice.

Introduction

0.1 Introduction

The voluminous literature about teacher development pays comparatively little attention to the people who teach teachers – teacher educators. This is a consistent, but rather surprising omission given that, as Avalos (1991: 52) points out

> The best intentions of reform within teacher education programmes can founder if attention is not given also to improving the quality of teacher trainers.

This report focuses on teacher educators in the context of a system of elementary education in India that has been decentralising and establishing a competency-based approach to teaching and learning since the early 1990s. Both were triggered by widespread concerns over unsatisfactory school enrolment and retention patterns, and underlying quality issues, that were leaving unfulfilled the constitutional pledge to provide all children with Universal Elementary Education. Much of the quality debate has focused on teachers, and the nature of their training and professional identity – all of which have generally attracted negative commentaries (e.g. NPE 1986 / 92; PROBE 1999, Raina 1995, NCTE 1998c, 1998d; UNICEF 1991, World Bank 1996).

Following a national policy directive in 1986, two key institutional innovations were introduced to augment the previously limited resources for teacher education. In almost all Districts across the country, a new structure at the District level was established – the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) – which reports to the previously established nodal institution at the State level, the State Council for Educational Research and Training, or equivalent. In selected Districts only, under the District Primary Education Programme, Block and Cluster Resource Centres (BRCs and CRCs) were set up at the sub-District level. Cluster Resource Centres are now being rolled out across the system. These structural innovations offer considerable potential for continuing professional enrichment for elementary school teachers.

0.2 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Over the years, several different schemes have been put in place to try and achieve Universal Elementary Education. Despite individual gains, this has contributed to a national scenario of fragmentation and overlap which is to be addressed through the creation of an overarching programme, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan embraces almost all existing schemes in order to achieve convergence and coherence.

Two of the external interventions that have provided a learning context for this project and which have now been subsumed into the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Lok Jumbish project (see Boxes 0.1 and 0.2). The DPEP has for example encouraged decentralised, District-based planning; enhanced community participation in schooling; provided new and improved learning environments through extensive civil works programmes; improved the preparation, motivation and deployment of teachers through teacher training and teacher recruitment and deployment; strengthened management; and, through its textbook renewal programme, improved the quality of textbooks and teaching and learning materials. Lok Jumbish has also furnished many insights into the challenges of developing meaningful community participation; and both of these programmes also underline a continuing need to strive towards gender equality.

Challenges for the future under SSA are to draw the whole system into building on and consolidating from project gains – for example to improve planning so that is more holistic and locally consultative; to help teachers become better able to respond to multi-ethnic, multi-caste, multi-grade and multi-ability contexts; to improve the capacity of institutions that provide on-going technical and professional support to teachers – such as SCERTs, DIETs and Cluster Resource Centres – and to continue to improve management capacity.

DIETs are written large into the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework, and many of its aspects require their involvement (DEEL 2002). This is an opportune moment to reflect on the performance of DIETs so far, and to identify ways in which they may be further strengthened and supported in pursuit of the many roles and responsibilities intended for them in future.

0.3 Project intentions and methodology

Earlier research (Dyer 1994, 1996, 2000) had identified several gaps between the expectations of teachers articulated in policy discourses, and the situations observed on the ground in schools. That teacher education is implicated in sustaining rather than closing such gaps is made clear in official commentaries, but there is little ethnographic description of processes of teacher education to draw on to explain from the (all too often neglected) practitioners' points of view why this might be.

The main concerns of this research have been to inform and guide policy making and practitioner development by:

- providing otherwise absent ethnographic detail about educational processes in DIETs and related schools

- focusing on DIETs in relation to other educational institutions in a systemic context of decentralisation
- engaging with the pressing question of teachers' will to adopt change messages through a critique of the dominant training model, and exploration of a model based on collaborative practitioner reflection and action.

0.3.1 Research with a commitment to action

A two month pilot project of one DIET in 1996, funded by the University of Manchester (Dyer and Choksi 1997) led to the DFID-funded study reported on here. The pilot project was invaluable in framing the substance and approach of the longer one that followed. Substantively, it provided themes, issues and concerns to follow up in a larger, longer and more in-depth project. The methodology of the larger project also grew from one key substantive finding of the pilot: a lack of professional development opportunities for DIET staff. We felt that a future project should attempt to respond to this gap, and wanted the larger project's processes to be directed as much as possible by 'research with' which encouraged joint reflection and subsequent action in collaboration between DIETs and research team as a mode of professional development. Ethically, we wanted to make a commitment to action, expecting that research would be more likely to 'make a difference' if it draws people in as participants in shared research processes, rather than as subjects (or objects) of research carried out by outside 'expert' researchers. The intention was thus to engage through action with issues that emerged, rather than restrict the research project focus to observing and reporting.

0.3.2 Aims and objectives

The project intended to provide a case study of policy innovation for teacher education (the innovation of DIETs) drawing on six sample Districts to identify and illustrate larger trends and issues. The overall aim of the research was:

> *Through the use of participatory methods, to evaluate the functioning of selected DIETs within the decentralised framework of District Planning initiatives; and to initiate where necessary, and otherwise support, a process by which the capacity of these institutions to meet their objectives is enhanced through critical reflection and action.*

In order to achieve this aim, the objectives of the research were:

1 To appraise existing situations in selected elementary schools vis-à-vis physical conditions, clientele, availability of teaching-learning materials, teacher motivation, classroom management style, pedagogical approaches, administrative and pedagogical support, interaction with village communities, and so on.
2 To analyse each DIET's contribution to the professional development of teachers by examining:

a) the extent to which pre-service education prepares teachers for the circumstances in which they will find themselves once in post
b) the quality of in-service inputs and delivery mechanisms, and fit between training programmes and teachers' perceived needs
c) the capacity of each DIET to engage in research that relates to their own and teachers' needs.

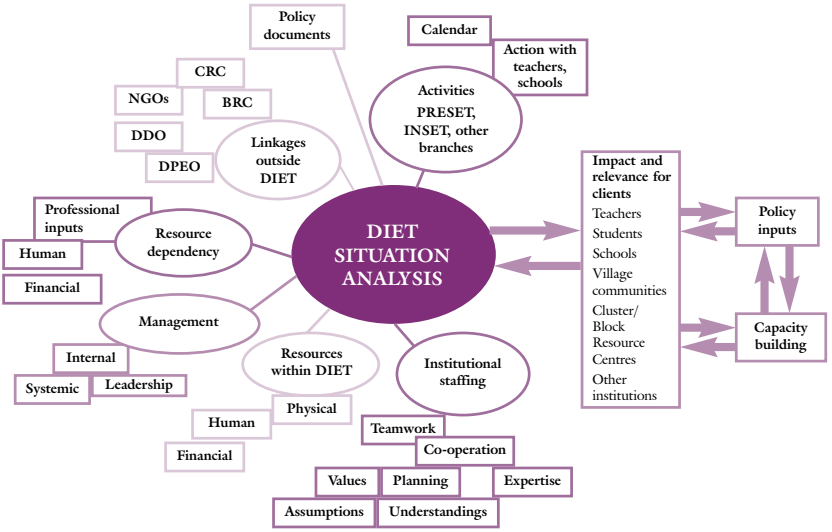
3 To assess each DIET's internal managerial capacity and its external relationships with institutions in the District and other levels of the administrative hierarchy, in order to assess how well they are integrated into the strategy of universalising elementary education.

4 To use research findings in a continuous process of providing support and initiative to assist the development of capacity in DIETs, and to use this research project to strengthen and expand that capacity through both participation and example, both at the District and other levels of the administration where stakeholders have been identified.

These aims and objectives were conceptualised visually (Figure 0.1). This diagram served both as a comparative framework for a situation analysis across the sites, and as a reminder of the importance of relating the DIET to its surrounding context, rather than view it in isolation.

There were two interwoven strands of project activity. One was an ethnographic situation analysis of the DIET, structured round Figure 0.1 (reported on in chapters 1-6). The project team worked within the interpretive paradigm, using a range of qualitative methods such as interviews, participant observation (including longitudinal case studies of selected elementary schools), focus groups, open-ended questionnaires and document analysis. The second project strand broadly concerned professional development for DIET staff and took several forms: collaborative action research projects with staff which offered opportunities to reflect on working practices (chapter 7); an action research project with teachers to gain detailed insight into their developmental needs (chapter 8); and research commissioned by the Government of Gujarat into its cascade model of training, with a focus on future development of teacher educators (chapter 9).

Figure 0.1: **Situation analysis framework**



0.4 Site selection

Two DIETs each were selected from the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, to gain a range of social and governmental contexts. An added dimension was the inclusion in each State of one DIET from a District where an external intervention was running (the District Primary Education Programme in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, see box 0.1) and the Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan (see box 0.2). The other DIET in the State was internally resourced – a regular 'government DIET'.

Sample DIETs were selected in consultation with each apex State body. No preference for a particular DIET was shown, although in Rajasthan, the then Chairman of Lok Jumbish encouraged the team to work with Masuda DIET (Ajmer District), which he considered the best developed of the three DIETs adopted by Lok Jumbish. Otherwise, it was acknowledged that the vast majority of DIETs were not meeting expectations, and the project was expected to shed light on reasons for this. State-level officials in all three States were supportive and available for discussion and feedback throughout. For DIETs participating in the project, this would be a first experience of a process-orientated research approach, and of a project that intended to provide developmental support according to their priorities. There was openness towards these ideas and widespread agreement of the need for support, although in practice the extent to

which DIETs saw the project as an opportunity and were able to make use of it varied considerably.

The two sites in Rajasthan were Udaipur and Ajmer Districts. The situation analysis was completed in both these DIETs but professional development activities were somewhat constrained in both of them, for different reasons. In Madhya Pradesh, two DIETs in the west of the State were selected. Indore DIET is a large and well established DIET in a large city; Dhar DIET is in the neighbouring, predominately tribal, District. All proposed activities could be undertaken in both these DIETs. Unfortunately, the team was not able to continue work with the pilot project DIET in Gujarat, owing to a change in leadership. Full access to the second intended sample DIET in Gujarat was also problematic despite the support of State-level officials; the staff development strand of the project could not be initiated in that DIET although a situation analysis was completed. As a result, the team worked closely with the State government, and directly with teachers; towards the end of the project, the government invited the team to work in Surat DIET, which had begun to emerge as the State's leading DIET, but there was insufficient time to embark on the collaborative professional development strand. Fig. 0.2 shows the site locations.

0.5 The research team

The research team consisted of six local researchers, coincidentally female and under 30, each of whom was attached to one DIET and came from the State in which she was employed; the Project Manager (Indian) and Director (British); and local support staff.

Most of the project researchers were new to qualitative research, so their ongoing professional development was an integral part of the project (a full reflection on this process is given in Dyer, Choksi et al 2002). The research team had an initial intensive week of training in qualitative methods and professional development was sustained by whole team workshops of 5-6 days every two months throughout the project term. Senior team members visited each site between workshops to provide support to the researcher and discuss findings, and to engage with DIET staff on professional development aspects.

Box 0.1: **The District Primary Education Programme**
The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in 1994 with twin purposes:
1 to operationalise decentralized planning and management
2 to accelerate the pace of universalisation of primary education in the country.
Consciously the districts where female literacy was lower than the national average and where the total literacy campaign had generated enough demand for the universalisation of elementary education were selected for the implementation of the programme. DPEP aims to reduce gender and social disparities that prevail in the existing system. Its specific objectives are:

- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups [*sic*] to less than five percent;
- To reduce overall primary dropout rate for all students to less than 10 percent;
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25 percent over measured baseline levels and ensuring achievement of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40 percent achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children;
- To provide, according to national norms, access for all children to primary education classes (I-V), i.e. primary schooling wherever possible, or its equivalent non-formal education.

[Source: DPEP Calling, Volume VI, No. 11, December 2000, Government of India, New Delhi http: www. arunmehta.freeyellow.com/bose1.htm downloaded 15.4.03]

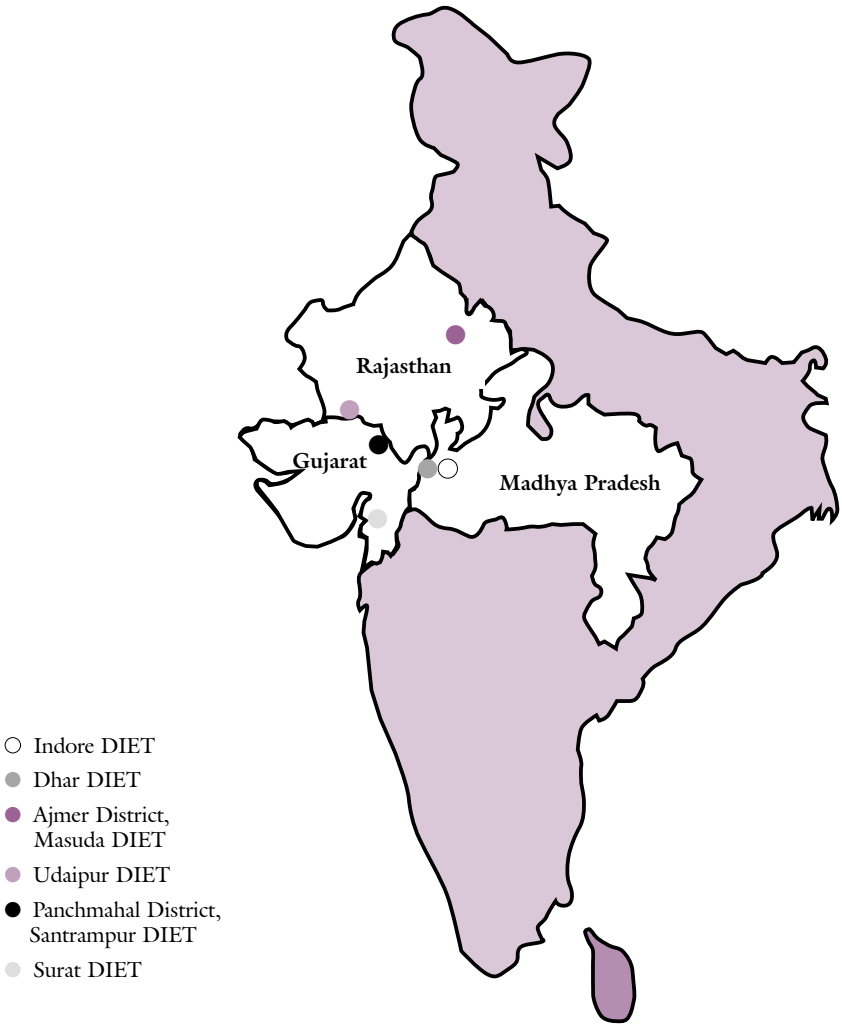
0.6 About this report

The 'data' generated in this project take the form of words rather than numbers, and this report has been written to allow the views and voices of teachers, their educators, educational managers and members of the research team to be heard. The narrative develops accounts that are based on observations and interview, and excerpts from both are reproduced throughout. They are referenced in brackets, giving the State, District, designation and date. These data were generated over two years, and it would be invidious to attempt to enumerate the number of interviews with teacher educators and teachers held over that period: project researchers were in constant contact and conversation with both, and immersed themselves thoroughly in the DIETs' activities during the whole time.

The report contains ten chapters. The first six reflect the 'situation analysis' strand although some of the data were generated through the professional development activities; chapters 7-9 report on professional development with DIET staff,

teachers, and in collaboration with the Government of Gujarat. The final chapter summarises key findings and presents 'learning for policy' that may be useful in guiding further development in teacher education.

Figure 2: **Site locations**



Box 0.2: **Lok Jumbish**

Lok Jumbish (people's movement) was launched by the Swedish International Development Authority in 1992 as a people's movement for universalization of primary education, for women's equality and to re-establish the dignity of teachers. It was implemented in phases: phase I from June 1992 – June 1994; phase II July 1994 – June 1998, with a 3: 2: 1 expenditure ratio between SIDA, the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan. SIDA terminated funding in 1998, following India's nuclear tests; funding was taken up the UK's DFID on a share basis with the DPEP.

The aims of LJ (LJ 2000) were to:

- Provide education to all children below 14 years of age by strengthening the present educational system and by adopting non-formal education where necessary.
- Ensure that all children who have taken admission regularly attend their respective schools or *sahaj shiksha kendra* and finish their primary education.
- Adopt such a structure and activities that results in empowerment of women and that education enforces women equality.
- Improve the quality of education and to establish such a system that the all children achieves at least minimum level of learning.
- Make an effort to bring equality in education so that equality is fostered between boys and girls, between socially and educationally deprived sections of society and other sections of society.
- Improve upon the content and delivery of education in such a way that it relates to their local environment, local culture, their life and their work.
- Draw communities into planning and managing education.

Its seven guiding principles were:

1 People's Participation
2 Decentralisation
3 Equality for women
4 Respect for Teachers
5 Quality and improvement in education
6 Training
7 Evaluation

LJ espoused a process rather than product approach, achieved through partnerships, decentralised functioning and participatory learning. While there would be integration with the mainstream education system, there would also be flexibility of management through multiple levels of leadership, commited to quality and the mission mode.

Chapter 1 Towards Quality Improvements for Teacher Education: Decentralising the System

1.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly outlines how the professional development of teachers has been structured, what official commentaries have to say about the quality of teachers, and introduces the structures of management for teacher education, including the two new innovations of District Institutes of Education and Training, and Cluster Resource Centres.

1.2 The professional development of teachers

The decades of post-Independence expansion of elementary schooling saw many tensions between quantity and quality. They led to the establishment of a wide network of schools, but those schools tended to have low internal efficiency and disappointing learner achievements (see Annex 1). For many years, a teaching post was virtually guaranteed to those who trained, entitling the incumbent to a lifetime's security as a civil servant in return for a relatively short and inexpensive training. Unlike secondary teachers, elementary teachers are not graduates. For several post-Independence decades, completion of seven years of elementary schooling plus one year of professional training was considered adequate preparation. This went up to a Secondary School Certificate (+10) in the 1970s and later a Higher Secondary Certificate (+12); Gujarat was the last State to implement the +12 requirement, in 1998.

A national survey of elementary teacher education in 1970 lamented

> It is really sad to note that the quality of teacher education suffered at the cost of quantitative expansion. Qualitative improvement did not receive the attention due to it from educational planners and administrators (NCERT 1970: 114).
>
> The syllabi used in training institutions are quite old and outdated. New items have been added to existing syllabi bit by bit. They do not cater to the needs of future teachers. […] There should be a balance between theory and practice (NCERT 1970: 117).

Twenty years on, the revised pre-service syllabus of 1991 noted that the 'status and quality of teacher education of our country especially at the elementary level is far from satisfactory' (NCERT 1991: 1). Training has been provided by a dispersed resource within a variety of training institutions or colleges; and there has been a prolific and rapid growth of correspondence courses. In the late 1990s, one apex national body gave the following verdict on pre-service teacher education:

> The system still prepares teachers who do not necessarily become professionally competent and committed at the completion of initial teacher preparation programmes (NCTE 1998a: 5).

The need for in-service education was noted in the 1944 Sargeant report, but while some arrangements were made, in-service training has not been provided for all teachers as a regular part of career development.

1.3 The organisation of teacher education

1.3.1 National and State-level apex bodies

There are two apex national bodies for teacher education: the long established National Council for Educational Research and Training Teacher Education (NCERT) and the newer National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). NCERT has a wide range of activities which include developing national school and pre-service teacher education curricula which individual States are expected to amend; it develops in-service teacher education packages which States offer in their training institutions and offers specialised training courses itself; and it undertakes research and policy advice. NCTE has so far had a more regulatory role and engaged with quality issues primarily through its legislative functions, although it plans to expand its remit under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (personal communication, NCTE Director, October 2002).

At the State level, modelled on the NCERT and with a similar remit, is the State Council for Educational Research and Training or its equivalent[1]. The SCERT steers and supports teacher development, but weaknesses have been acknowledged (see next section). Unlike the other two Councils in the project sample, the Gujarat State Council is one of the few autonomous State Councils in the country. This has allowed it greater flexibility to be responsive and proactive than was previously possible (personal communication, GCERT Director, January 2001).

1.3.2 The centrally sponsored scheme of Restructuring and Revitalising Teacher Education

The National Policy on Education of 1986 (revised in 1992) expressed concerns about the quality of teaching and teacher education. Provision to address those concerns was made through a centrally sponsored scheme[2] for Restructuring and Revitalising Teacher Education. This scheme makes provision for the revitalising of the SCERTs, for example by providing extra funds to initiate research activities.

[1] State Institute for Educational Research and Training (SIERT) in Rajasthan; GCERT (Gujarat Council for Educational Research and Training) in Gujarat; SCERT (State Council for Educational Research and Training) in Madhya Pradesh.

[2] Joint, although not necessarily equal, Government of India and State funding for a scheme whose parameters are defined by the centre.

It has also provided for the establishment and staffing of District Institutes of Education and Training; in a drive to ensure quality, 'sub-standard' teacher education institutions were to be phased out and DIETs introduced in each District, either by upgrading an existing institute, or establishing a new one if this was not possible.

1.3.4 District Institutes of Education and Training

The rationale for the introduction of DIETs was that the elementary and adult systems were 'already too vast to be adequately supported by national and State level institutions alone' (MHRD 1989: 3) for the further expansion and qualitative improvement advocated by the policy directive. The DIETs were thus conceived as 'addition of a third – district level – tier to the support system' which would be 'closer to the field, and therefore more alive to its problems and needs' (ibid). They were added as a component of an existing top-down, centralised approach to teacher education, adopting similar structures to those already in existence at the State and national levels. It was stressed that the DIETs

> are part of a larger strategy to achieve national goals in the areas of Elementary and Adult Education. […] DIETs cannot…afford to view themselves in isolation, and must faithfully discharge their role of supplementing and complementing other parallel initiatives (MHRD 1989: 4).

The official DIET guidelines (MHRD 1989) expected them to pursue three key functions:

1. Training and orientation of the following target groups (elementary school teachers; Head Masters, officers of Education Department up to Block level; NFE and adult education instructors and supervisors; members of District Boards of Education and Village Education Committees, other community volunteers; resource persons who will conduct suitable programmes … at the centres other than the DIET).
2. Academic and resource support to the elementary and adult education systems in the district in other ways.
3. Action research and experimentation to deal with specific problems of the district in achieving the objectives in the areas of elementary and adult education (MHRD 1989: 8).

It suggested that the DIET should comprise seven branches (Table 1.1), but States could change this structure if they felt an alternative would better suit their purposes. So for example, while Gujarat and Rajasthan retained the suggested structure, Madhya Pradesh opted for 11 branches.

Table 1.1: **Suggested branches and staffing of a DIET**

		DIET branches	Staffing
1	PSTE	Pre-service teacher education	8 + 1 Lab. asst.
2	WE	Work Experience	3
3	DRU	District Resource Unit	5 + 2 clerks
4	IFIC	In-service programmes, Field Interaction and Innovation Co-ordination	2 + 1 clerk
5	CMDE	Curriculum, material development and evaluation	2
6	ET	Educational Technology	2 + 1 technician
7	P & M	Planning and management	2 + 1 statistician
		Total	24 + 6
		Library staff (librarian + clerk); office superintendent, accountant, 5 clerks (incl. 1 for hostel); 6 class IV staff, hostel warden (faculty member)	15
		Grand total	45

Staff would be required to teach in the following areas:

1 Foundations of education and pedagogy
2 The subjects taught at the elementary stages, namely:
   i languages taught at the elementary level in the district
   ii mathematics
   iii environmental studies, social science
   iv environmental studies, science
   v work experience
   vi art education
   vii health and physical education
3 Non-formal education
4 Adult education
5 Curriculum, materials development and evaluation
6 In-service programmes, field interaction and innovation co-ordination
7 Planning and management
8 Educational Technology (MHRD 1989).

Staff should have a Master's degree in both a subject area and in education, and seven years of elementary sector experience. Ideally, a principal is expected to have a PhD.

1.3.5 Resource Centres in the District

A second major structural change in relation to teacher development has been the advent of Cluster Resource Centres (Box 1.1). These were initially instituted by

the District Primary Education Programme, but are crucial for the effectiveness of a DIET. If DIETs and Cluster Resource Centres liaise effectively, the DIET can reach out to more teachers than if it attempts to work directly with them. Through its monthly teachers' meetings and school visits, the Cluster Resource Centre can provide the DIETs with feedback about the impact of its training programmes, and inputs about teacher development needs arising from such discussions and visits. Cluster Resource Centres were not a further extension of the NCERT-SCERT-DIET system; rather they were intended to group existing schools as a unit for teacher development through peer led processes. The District Primary Education Programme also introduced Block Resource Centres, but these are not to be rolled out across the system.

Liaison between the DIET and the Block / Cluster Resource Centres is via a designated member of the DIET staff for each Block.

Box 1.1: **Cluster and Block Resource Centres**
Resource Centres were new structures instituted by the DPEP, often housed in new buildings or in an additional room within an existing school. Cluster Resource Centres have helped to end teachers' sense of professional isolation by providing a platform for regular monthly meetings and peer-generated teacher development activities. They were overseen by Block Resource Centres, which were linked to the District level DPEP office. Cluster Resource Centres are being rolled out across the system, but Block Resource Centres are not.

Cluster Resource Centres are led by a Cluster Co-ordinator. In the DPEP Districts, this was the sole job of the elected Co-ordinator while in non-DPEP Districts this role was additional to regular teaching duties. The Co-ordinator is expected to be a pace-making teacher, offering leadership, guidance, and support to others in the Cluster by visiting teachers in schools and offering pedagogical support, and leading meetings at the Cluster Centre. In the DPEP Districts, administrative work is dealt with by Cluster Convenors, who are principals of pay centre schools. In the non-DPEP Districts, the Cluster Resource Centre head is an elementary school teacher who carries a normal teaching load in addition to Cluster Resource Centre duties.

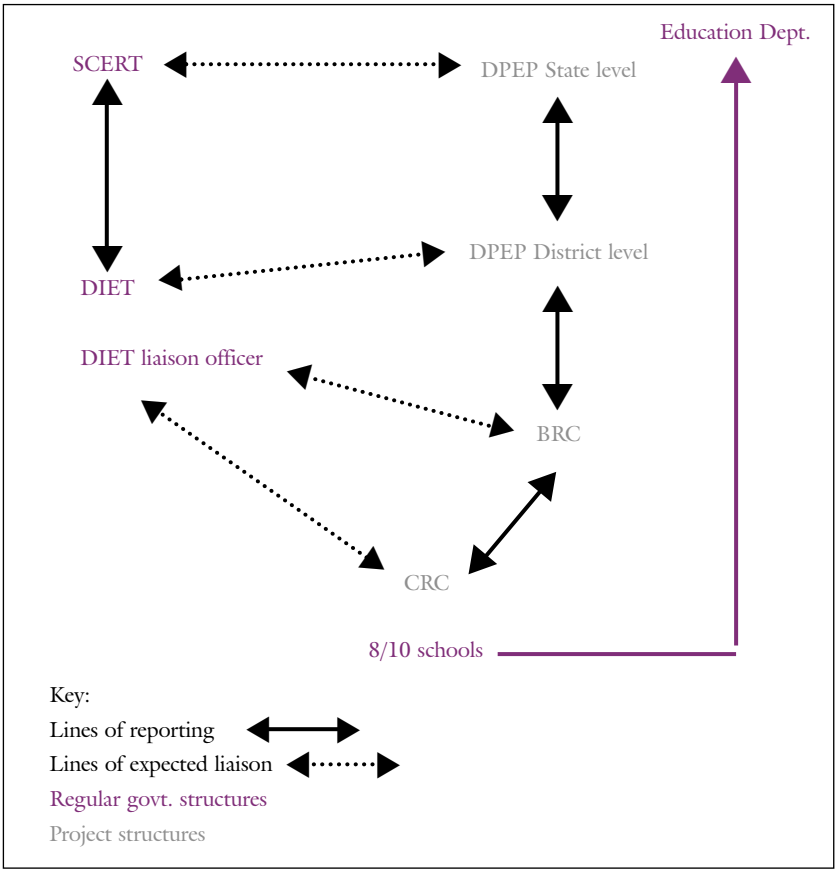
1.4 Reporting relationships

Reporting relationships in DPEP Districts were more complicated than in non-DPEP Districts, as DPEP provided its own, additional project staff. Each DPEP District had its own officer in-charge, but there would also be the Education Department's District Education Officer or equivalent who had normal

responsibilities for teachers, with whom the DPEP officer-in-charge would liaise. Whether in a DPEP District or not, the DIET reports to the SCERT/ equivalent. These arrangements made for complex lines of co-ordination between regular and intervention structures. In non-DPEP Districts, these lines were less complex, in that Cluster Resource Centres respond directly to the DIET and there is no additional Block Resource tier (Fig. 1.1). However, whether in DPEP or non-DPEP Districts, schools do not have direct links with DIETs, since they report to the Education Department, and DIETs do not.

The DIET depends for delivery of many of its in-service training programmes on its 'outreach' trainers, Master Trainers and Resource Persons who are teachers at local Cluster or Block Resource Centres, and other talented teachers. It is however up to the Education Department to make these teachers available to the DIET.

Figure 1.1: **Relationships between the DIET, DPEP and Cluster Resource Centres**



1.5 Quality of the District Institutes of Education and Training

A national study of teacher education initiated in 1997 by the National Council for Teacher Education and accompanying State-level reports[3] provide indications of official dissatisfaction with DIETs (boxes 1.2 and 1.3). They are critical of the quality of the in-service programmes; and also of the recruitment and calibre of the trainers. The National Action Plan for Teacher Education also says:

> There is very little provision, if at all, for training and retraining of teacher educators. In fact teacher educators are by default and not by training since about all teacher educators in elementary teacher training institutions possess a secondary teacher training certificate, and were trained to be a secondary school teacher. They too need training if the quality of elementary teacher training – both pre-service and in-service – is to be improved (NAP 1996: 15).

Box 1.2: **Madhya Pradesh State critique of teacher education (NCTE 1998a)**

The picture that emerges after the study presents a rather grim situation of teacher education in Madhya Pradesh, with weaknesses outweighing strengths in almost all areas (p. 90).

In-service programmes have generally been ineffective […] There is generally no evaluation of the training at the end of the programme which makes the training more of a ritual rather than a meaningful activity (p. 285).

One of the basic reason for ineffectiveness of the in-service programmes is lack of interest of the trainees in training. Neither is there any incentive for those who take the training seriously, nor is there any deterrent for those who take it very lightly (p. 285).

The set-up of DIETs, CTEs, and IASEs do not satisfy the NCTE norms – many posts in all categories are lying vacant. Even when they are filled, it is only by placing unqualified persons against the post (p. 108) [and the numbers of such persons] are important factors which contribute to the sub-standard quality of teacher education (p. 281).

There is no systematic effort at present to upgrade the professional competency of teacher educators. High quality of teacher educators is essential for raising the quality of teachers and teaching-learning in schools (NCTE 1998a: 287-288).

[3] A report from Gujarat State is not available.

Box 1.3: **Rajasthan State critique of teacher education (NCTE 1998b)**
The following issues require immediate attention:

- Training of trainers
- Development of quality training materials
- Development of a system at district level for need assessment of in-service training of teachers
- Development of follow-up mechanisms (p. 98)

…it has to be admitted that while physical growth was attained speedily, strengthening of the human resource has not taken place. The manpower of requisite quality could not get placed in these institutions [DIETs] (p. 53).

There is a need to design a special course for teacher educators so they are able to perform their role (p. 139).

The Head, at the time of his comment, of Teacher Education at the NCERT noted that:

> A considerable investment is made in further training and development of teachers but the benefits flowing from it in terms of improvement in pupils' learning outcomes are not visible… It is generally observed that the training provided to teachers is often irrelevant, excessively theoretical, outdated and far removed from the work situation. (Arora 1998: 1-2).

Another senior former staff member of the NCERT who has written on teacher educators in India also speaks disparagingly of his subject:

> In a world of blinding, accelerating change, Indian teacher education and teacher educators show tremendous resistance to change. One must tell the hard truth: The picture of teacher educators is dismal and disappointing (Raina 1995: 50).

1.6 Summary

Teacher development policy faces many challenges in supporting teachers in a movement away from a teacher-centred approach to the learner focus that underpins the competency-based approach.

While the external intervention of the DPEP created a complex management scenario, in DPEP Districts there is now a system of support for teacher education that stretches from teachers right to the apex organisations in New Delhi. This will also become the case in non-DPEP Districts as Cluster Resource Centres are rolled out across the system. However, as official commentaries note, and complex lines

of accountability indicate, there remain many questions as to how those institutions do and should articulate with each other.

DIETs have attracted negative commentaries from official sources in the decade since their inception: those sources reflect on the norms by which they are appointed, attitudinal problems, and limited professional development. This report will investigate these issues in further detail.

The establishment of DIETs in itself, however, reflects a policy anomaly that has contributed to these issues of quality.

1.7 Policy issue

DIETs were conceived as a further tier of a system whose qualitative weaknesses had been signalled as sufficiently serious to warrant a targeted scheme for their improvement. The scheme that established DIETs simultaneously demanded the overhaul of the institute that the DIET was modelled upon (SCERT), would report to, and whose role, as the parent institution, would be to provide the DIETs with resource and other support. In the context of a hierarchical system gradually initiating decentralisation, this was a policy anomaly that has had far reaching consequences for the institutional development of DIETs.

Chapter 2 Teachers and Teaching

2.1 Introduction

The focus of all teacher development efforts, and the reason for setting up District Institutes of Education and Training, is to improve the quality of children's learning. We present here two case studies of classroom processes, as textured and detailed illustrations of learning and teaching in two government schools[4]. These accounts are not intended to be 'typical'; rather, they provide illustrative examples of contexts, and demonstrate from within classrooms some of the key issues in teacher development which confront DIETs[5]. They also provide a sense of how the professional support structures introduced in the last chapter interact with these schools. The themes the case studies raise are explored in greater detail in the second part of the chapter, which draws on data generated through interviews, observations and questionnaire responses with teachers across the three States.

Box 2.1: **Curriculum innovation: the competency-based approach of Minimum Levels of Learning**

The competencies all Indian children are expected to attain during elementary schooling have been defined as 'Minimum Levels of Learning' (MLLs). MLLs were intended to 'ensure access to the education of comparable standard to all learners irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex' (NCERT 2000: 37) and are 'expected to be achieved by one and all' (NCERT 2000: 38) and to function as a measure of accountability (ibid). The classroom environment should be joyful, activity-based, and child-centred.

MLLs have been controversial, and adopted to a different degree across the country. In Gujarat all elementary schools officially adopted MLLs when they were first intiated; new competency-based textbooks have been introduced up to Std. 4. In Rajasthan MLLs were initially introduced by Lok Jumbish in the blocks they adopted but not elsewhere in government schools until textbooks were re-drafted in 2000-2001. In Madhya Pradesh MLLs were introduced across the State as a part of the process of textbook reform under the Shikhna Shikhana Package.

The competency-based approach calls for a fundamentally different relationship between teacher and child from that which had gone before: no longer is the teacher to be the purveyor of a body of knowledge contained in the textbook – rather, she is now cast as the facilitator of a child's learning. Providing teachers with the new knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for them to make this switch lies at the core of current teacher education initiatives.

[4] Very little ethnographic material of school processes is available. Official studies using qualitative methods such as Nagaraju, 2000 have been extremely rare; DPEP has supported some qualitative studies, but there remains a need to ensure that such work really is in the public domain by improving its availability. See however Clarke, 2001 and 2003; Sarangapani, 2003 for ethnographic accounts of classrooms.

[5] Nine such detailed studies were developed over the project term, but space permits the inclusion here of only two.

The school observations focus on literacy learning and teaching in Year One, since the gaining of a firm base of literacy skills and habits in the early years is a prerequisite for all future educational achievement, and contributes also to retention of children in school. The two school case studies included here illustrate teacher responses to the policy push towards a competency-based, child-centred, and joyful approach to elementary teaching (see box 2.1); the impact of the DIET and other support structures upon the school; and the impact of an externally sponsored programme which could be expected to provide 'value added'. The first case is of Gaamru[6] school, which is in the Santrampur DPEP District in Gujarat where new activity and competency based textbooks in mathematics, and language with environmental science, were piloted. The second case is Rajpur school in Rajasthan, which was covered by Lok Jumbish and is also in Masuda DIET's 'laboratory' area[7].

2.2 School observations

2.2.1 Case study one: Gaamru school, DPEP District Santrampur, Gujarat

The 591 inhabitants of Gaamru village (1991 census) are mainly tribal farmers who usually have to supplement any farming income with labouring work, often by migrating to cities with their families. Its school was established in 1955, initially with one class. Over time it became a full elementary school (Stds. 1- 7) with an annual enrolment of 350 - 400 children, and 22 teachers. Now there are eight schools with an upper primary section in the same 6 km radius. Gaamru's enrolment has almost halved and the school is down to eight teachers.

The school buildings are on a small campus: the main building houses the principal's office, and each class has its own room. Class 4 uses a room constructed by DPEP which also marks out the school as a Cluster Resource Centre serving teachers of 13 other local schools. There are water and toilet facilities on the campus. During the midday recess, teachers share their lunch boxes and chat – always, it seemed, about various aspects of marriage and family life:

> Their profession is not a priority in these discussions - it is the money earned from the profession that is important. On none of my visits did I observe teachers doing what I thought would be good: sharing things about children, sharing their own styles, difficulties they face dealing with children…(researcher diary)

The enrolment pattern shows characteristic patterns of drop-out and gender imbalance (Table 2.1). Std. 6 has an intake of new students from local schools who

[6] Case study schools and all names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

[7] Each DIET is supposed to work intensively with 'lab area' schools for experimentation and innovation.

do not have upper primary classes. With the exception of one 3rd Std boy and a 4th Std. girl, all the 250 children enrolled here are from communities who are entitled under the Indian Constitution to the special protection of the state for their advancement (Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and 'Bakshi Panch' groups).

Table 2.1: **Gaamru school enrolment 2000**

Std.	Boys	Girls	Total
1st	26	19	45
2nd	14	10	24
3rd	16	12	28
4th	16	13	29
5th	16	8	24
6th	29	15	44
7th	35	21	56
Total	152	98	250

The age for enrolment in Std. 1 is six, but children ranged from 4-10. None had had any pre-schooling. Although 45 children were registered in the first year, the number usually present varied from 18 to 27. Some of the 'missing' children had begun to attend a new small school opened near their home; others had joined parents on seasonal migration. The social make-up of the teaching force did not reflect that of the community it served: only two of the teachers were from the same communities as the children.

The Year One teacher is a woman called Veena, in her late thirties. After her marriage, she opted for Gaamru because it is a roadside school – a common teacher preference because, as the principal commented, 'it is quicker and easier to leave as soon as time is over'. The new textbooks had been the core Year One material for the last two years in the District and although Veena had been teaching Year One for that time, she had not attended the new textbook training that should have included all teachers.

Classroom environment: unequal partnerships

Gaamru school was included in the UNICEF-sponsored Joyful Learning scheme, so the first year classroom is decorated with sums, stories, animals and birds; a child-level blackboard strip runs round the room. There are a few charts made by the teacher last year during a teaching-learning materials making competition; some rough clay beads, made and threaded by children, hang on the window. The blackboard strip is rarely used, unlike the main blackboard which the teacher constantly uses; and there is one board on which the letter cards can be

placed, which the teacher uses occasionally. In the other classrooms, the walls are mostly bare, and half the Std. 2 room is occupied by piles of dusty, broken desks.

Veena knows all the children personally and often chats to them at the beginning and end of teaching sessions. Her teaching behaviour however veers from friendliness to harshness, her friendly interactions intermingled with threats, scolding and slaps:

V Did you comb your hair?
P Yes
V But it is a mess. You are wearing the same clothes as you wore yesterday. They are the same, aren't they?
P Yes
V Why? I told you not to wear the same ones. I told you if you wear the same clothes then you would lose your brains. Did I tell you or not? (26.7.00)

Veena (herself of higher caste) differentiated between children of different caste backgrounds, particularly if they were in any way disruptive. In the class were two children she described as mad. One of them (Nani) attended school regularly and was observed to be responding more accurately and frequently than many other children. When another child (Rini) passed a comment about Nani, the teacher's view of Nani emerged clearly:

V Come on Nani.
Nani reads *nama* instead of *mana*
V Is it *nama* or *mana*?
Rini She says at home that she doesn't want to study. Saturday, Sunday also she doesn't get up when her mother calls.
V Tell her mother to heat the (*chappati*) tongs and stick them in her mouth. [to Vipul, Nani's brother] If she doesn't get up, hit her (11.9.00).

Veena also commented that the whole community is stubborn and uncooperative. She and Gaamru's teachers all displayed a lack of empathy towards the villagers through stories they narrated about their interactions. Such incidents and comments illustrate a significant gap between the moral code espoused in the new textbooks (Box 2.2) and teachers' perceptions and actions in their interactions with children of the lower social classes and castes.

Box 2.2: **A code of conduct for teachers in Gujarat's new Std. 1 textbook**

The new Std 1 textbook [for Language and EVS combined] not only tries to re-orientate teachers' teaching styles. It also presents its expectations about a teacher's behaviour in what amounts to a code of expected personal conduct. This code respects the child as an equal, thus promoting a classroom environment which is joyful and friendly, and contributes to student retention. For example:

- The teacher should be lively, enthusiastic and charming
- The teacher should have a good rapport with children, be patient, encourage them in new things and respect them
- Go around in the class and look at all the children's work, check it, show their mistakes and explain them
- Be unbaised, and show justice while dissolving quarrels between children
- Do not beat or scare children, bribe them, insult them or tell them they are stupid
- Do not ignore any child, do not have equal expectations from all children
- Never show your bad habits to children and if possible do not follow them

Literacy in the Year One classroom

In the first three months, according to the new curriculum/ textbook, a teacher should only have children play, sing songs and narrate stories so they settle into school comfortably. This is important where, as in Gaamru, children do not have pre-school experience. Veena had collected many songs, some with actions, which she would teach the children – always from a seated position, while children would repeat after her, while either seated or standing. Children would initially sing with enthusiasm but were often asked to go on singing until they got tired and fidgety. Veena stressed learning and singing the song correctly rather than having fun.

Box 2.3: **The school day in Gaamru**	
11.00 – 11.30	Assembly
11.30 – 11.45	Teacher – principal administration: children move to classrooms
11.45 – 1.30	Teaching
1.30 – 2.20	Recess
2.20 – 2.30	Children return to class: toilet break for teachers
2.30 – 3.45	Teaching
3.45 – 4.00	Recess

In contrast with the policy intention, Veena began teaching children numbers and letters of the alphabet right from the beginning of the new school year. Her rationale for this was that otherwise she would not finish the course. She said,

V We are not supposed to make them write during the first three months. We have to only do songs and stories and all that but I make them write.
SS Do you have any timetable or periods?
V No, for the first 3 months we are not supposed to teach anything. So we must do only songs, stories and all that. Usually till 1:00 p.m. I make them do that and from 1:00 to 1:30 I get them to write.
SS So how do you get them to write? Do you write on the board?
V No, we cannot write on the board. If the supervisors come and see … because we are not supposed to. But if we wait till August it will become too late (24.7.00).

Aware that if found doing this by the inspector she might be punished, Veena did not use the blackboard but taught numbers and letters mainly by writing them on the children's slates. Children were encouraged to participate in a conspiracy with the teacher, should the inspector visit (a possibility of which they made aware at the very beginning of the first school year):

V If *saheb* [the inspector] comes then quickly turn your slates over, otherwise he will ask me "this is not in the course then why are you teaching?" (2.8.00)

According to the curriculum design, the emphasis while teaching literacy should follow the sequence of listening, speaking, reading and then writing. Veena however believed that learning to write is the first step and that once writing is mastered, reading and recognition of letters will soon follow. Although when initially asked, she said she would draw pictures on the board as in the textbook and combine these with presentation of letters, she later said she would write letters on the board and ask children to repeat them over and over again – a more accurate reflection on her practice that was borne out through the observations.

Veena focused first on writing accompanied by reading aloud what is being written. Initially this was through a process of her writing a symbol on the slate for the child to trace over, and by guiding his or her hand where necessary. She would also often rule up a slate into columns, completing one column herself and asking the child to fill in the others. After the initial three months when use of the blackboard became legitimate, she would write the symbol on it for children to copy. Once the copying had been done, each child would come to show her the slate, and she usually judged the marks on it 'right' or 'wrong' without much attempt to identify reasons for errors. Sequences such as the following were very common:

[Muno has come to show the teacher his slate]
V writes *ma* on it.

V What is this?
M *ma*.
Veena writes *na* on his slate and asks 'what is it?'. Muno does not respond. V writes *ga* on his slate and asks what it is. Muno says *ga*. V writes *ja* and asks what it is. He says *ja*. V circles the *na* on the slate and asks again what it is. M does not reply. V turns over the slate and says:
V This is *na*. Go and fill up the whole slate.
Punam comes and shows her his slate, V asks what he has written.
P It is *ra* (he has written *va*).
Veena pulls his cheek and hits him on his back.
V This is *va*. Go and write it again (14.9.00)

The traditional method of teaching a letter is to associate it with the beginning sound of a word (a for apple / *ka kabutar no ka*). This teaches children to associate the letter with a particular picture or word, rather to learn to listen for a sound and know which symbol represents it. Veena struggles in her transition between the two methods, modelling the old way herself at the blackboard, yet telling children they should not do it that way.

Veena again begins with letters. This time she writes *ta* and reads out t*a talwaar no ta* then writes *ana* and asks Punam to read it. Punam reads *fana no ana*[8]. She tells them another two letters, *da* and *pa* and says 'you should only say the letters and not say t*a talwaar no ta, da dabla no da, ana fana no ana*'. After that she writes *ba, cha, a, ka* and asks them to read them (5.12.00)

She believes that children learn faster by the old 'a is for apple' method and, unconvinced by the new method DPEP had tried to introduce, continues to teach her way – although she cannot really explain her belief:

V Children learn *ekade ek* faster than only *ek*.
SS Why?
V Yes, they learn *ekade ek*, *ma marchanu ma* that way…according to DPEP you have to teach that way [the new way]. But I teach them the other way at times and tell them that when saheb asks you must not say it this way but only *ek* or *ma*.
SS Why like that?
V Children learn much faster that way (2.8.00)

Although she has not changed her teaching approach, Veena does now follow the changed order of introduction of letters given in the new textbook, which begins with letters that have simpler sounds and orthography. As the orthography

[8] The letter 'ana' cannot appear at the beginning of a word, hence its use in this way.

becomes more complex, children find it difficult to distinguish between letters that look similar.

Veena points with her finger and Punam is moving his finger across the word as he reads.

V (to me) Once the child learns to recognise letters, there is no problem.

Veena makes him read the next lesson i.e. page 41. Punam is again confusing *ghə* and *dhə*. [The two letters are very similar. He had the same problem with *sə* and *rə*] So V explains to him the difference between the two.

V In *dhə* the line is lower than the wing and in *ghə* the line and the wing are equal (9.2.01).

Veena's belief, reflected in her practice, is that enough time spent on repetition will ensure that children grasp the alphabet, which is her goal for the first year:

V Have you written? Write one sentence 5 times. Write 5 times. How many times?

Sts fi….ve

V then writes one more sentence on the board: 'cows eat grass'.

V Write this sentence 25 times. Not 5 times but 25 times. How many times?

Sts 5

V How many?

Rini 25

Sts (repeat after Rini) 25 (13.2.01)

Several months into the school year, Veena is teaching just as the new textbooks try to discourage, by writing letters or words on the board and asking children to repeat after her. If she has taught them before she simply asks 'what is this' pointing to each letter or word on the board. Mostly, the whole class chants in response to teacher-led activities of this sort. For some children the activity is repeating what they already know and can do, while some others are initially silent and then follow their peers without apparent understanding. After such a teacher-led session, children may take turns to make the class read like her, with stick in hand pointing at the blackboard; or, after she has made them read, she asks them to copy from the board. Against this backdrop of whole class activity, some children are called individually and asked to read from their textbooks. Veena also keeps track of individual children's progress by checking each slate:

V I make them write individually on their own slate. They are all at different levels. So, depending on how much they know I make them write. Therefore I have to remember who knows how much (24.7.00)

However, her classroom management style often left children sitting without

purposeful occupation. For example, long lines form to have slates inspected, and many children go temporarily off the specified task while the teacher is thus occupied. Given such space, they exploit this informal opportunity of freedom, perhaps to experiment alone.

3:45 Rini looks at the small board on which letters *ma, na, ga, ja* are written, along with the letter *ya*. She puts the *ya* in between to form the sequence *ma, ya, na, ja, ga*.

Rasila is moving her fingers over the outline of the animal painted on the wall (27.7.00)

The decorative classroom environment supports an expectation of a richer literacy menu than the teacher offers: children often look at the walls on which pictures are drawn, or the teaching-learning materials on which letters can be arranged, and also manipulate them. In these informal spaces, they also work together and learn from each other:

Vipul Vimala, write *ga*
Vimala looks at Vipul.
Vipul Write *ma*
Vimala writes *ma*
Vipul Now *na*
Vimala looks at Vipul and the other children, who prompt *na nagara no na*. Vipul traces it with his finger to show how to write it. Vimala writes *na*. (14.9.00)

A boy from a higher class comes and asks for some number the principal has requested. Veena begins searching, then calls Rini and sends her to another teacher's class to ask for it. She sets the whole class a task:

Veena Come on, write 1 to 10 and show me.
She searches in her bag for the number.

2:56 Kiran shows her slate. V says "yes" without looking at it. Kiran goes back to her place, sits and looks at the walls. V is still searching. Sameer has written and shows V his slate; she looks at it but seems to be thinking about something else. Vipul writes *ma, na* on his slate [not the designated task]. He shows V, who says it is wrong, and goes back. Mohan is writing something on his slate.

3:02 Kiran has done something on her slate that Mohan, Vipul and Vimala lean over to see. Then Sameer and Uday also lean over. Vipul has got his own book, which contains letters and pictures. The little group is sitting, turning pages and looking at the pictures. Uday has a similar book and now opens it. Vipul shows one picture and asks Uday

Vipul Do you have one like this?
Uday Yes.
Vipul Where is it?
Vimala also joins the group. They look on as Uday turns the pages of his book. Another child in the class is playing on her own. She places all the slate pencils on the slate and slants it downwards. The pencils roll down (11.9.00)

Veena does not make use of the textbook until December, half way through the first school year. Until that time, her literacy approach is dominated by rote memorisation of the letters of the alphabet, which is neither contextualised within everyday language, nor within the world of text. Her reason for withholding the textbook is explained:

SS Have you given them the textbooks?
V Yes, I have given the textbook to those who know to read and write. But not to take home. They only use them in the classroom. They tear it if they take it home so I don't let them. I had given them the books to cover and while doing that so many of them tore them.
SS Tore them?
V They have torn so many pages.
SS So you have not given the books to everybody?
V No I have not given to all. Some are so small that they are not all getting the idea as to how to hold a book, how to see pictures. I have not given to them. I have given to those who know to read and write.
SS How many such children are there (i.e. who know to read and write)?
V Those who stood up today - 6-7 are there. And the other thing is that their parents do not pay attention at home. This time there are very young children (5.12.00)

Once Veena had introduced the textbook, each new lesson was introduced to the whole class, although some children learned and were ready for a new lesson before others. Group work was used for reinforcement and exercises: the class was divided according to children's knowledge of the textbook content, which she evaluated by calling them individually and hearing them read. This evaluation was focused exclusively on the child's reading skill. Veena asked no questions to see what sense each child was making of the textbook content. If a child was progressing faster with the reading, s/he would be shifted into the group a step ahead. At the end of the day Veena would tell all the children to read the specified lessons but then would point out groups of children which lesson in particular they should prepare at home.

Veena also made a list of students according to how much they could read by that time, grouping them into those who could read simple words, and those who

could read words with vowels which are perceived to have varying degrees of difficulty. This listing was used to record progress rather than to design new activities that would help those who had specific difficulties explore other ways of developing their skills. By January she had decided that there were five children whom she would definitely not promote to Year Two. The reason she gave is that they are too young, sit idle during the class and just look at the pictures on the wall. She did not plan ways of occupying them in ways that would stimulate them at the stage they had reached.

Figure 1.2: **Children studying in Gaamru school**

Figure 1.3: **Year One boy writing on blackboard, Gaamru school**

Academic support for Gaamru school

Discussions with the school principal rarely touched on classroom processes; his vision of his school in future focused exclusively on improving its physical facilities. He explicitly did not feel his role was to 'interfere' with teaching in classrooms, rather: 'At the end of the year children should know. I want only that much and not anything more. You teach them by any method.' (20.2.01).

Gaamru school was a Cluster Resource Centre. Sentiments echoing those of the principal were expressed by the Cluster Resource Coordinator and other teachers, who all seemed to feel that if money and power were there, things would improve in future. In this District, Cluster Resource Coordinators articulated many constraints in their role as peer teacher developers (see chapter 6) and this has tended to focus them on the enrolment and community outreach aspects of the DPEP goals. Gaamru's teachers value this role, which they say has improved enrolments, but did not appear to look to the Cluster Resource Coordinator for academic guidance. For this, they looked to the inspector.

According to the principal, inspectors come occasionally during the year but definitely visit in March before the annual exams. As this is a roadside school, teachers reported that inspectors often come and they therefore always have to keep their diaries updated, as they can be checked at any time. The principal reported that on a visit, an inspector will look at the registers and diaries, and go to the class and question the children. This was corroborated by Veena, who said that inspectors know how much each child knows and ask accordingly, and give guidance in terms of doing more repetition of the same, or using charts and cards. This seemed more a theoretical than an actual position however: in practice academic support from inspectors is negligible. The inspection book revealed a set of concerns that focused on the tidiness of the school, enrolment and such issues. Furthermore, it appears from what Veena said that the inspector shares her belief about the central importance of repetition to learning:

SS What does he say, then?

Veena Nothing. That is…he asked one child to stand and then I said that this child can read only words with *kana* [vowel a] and he makes mistake in words with *matra* [vowel e]. Then *saheb* would make him read only words with *kana*. Then [he] will tell me, "It doesn't matter, you should take him individually, put some more effort and make him read. He will learn". [He] does not tell anything else - why would he scold us?

SS Do they give any kind of guidance?

V That is only the guidance. "Make charts and make them read over and over again and they will learn". That's it. What other guidance will they give us? "Revise the words again and again, they will learn" (9.2.01).

There were no reports that any member of the District Institute of Education and Training had visited this school. Teachers knew of the DIET only as a place where teachers went for in-service training. Veena had never been there.

Talking to Veena about her work

Veena did not seem to mind having the observer in her classroom, but did not actively seek any feedback on the observations made. While requests for clarification of events or interpretations were satisfied with factual information, conversations with the researcher tended to go no further. There was no evidence (through conversations or observations of teachers in classes or in recess periods) that teachers engaged in self-reflection or questioning – or that the Cluster Resource Centre meetings had managed to promote a professional discourse. Although teachers would observe the researcher occasionally interacting with children during break times through activities such as drawing, telling stories and eliciting their reactions, and encouraging children to narrate little stories from their own lives, this did not draw forth any questions or particular comment. For these teachers, teaching seemed to be functional – a means of earning a living and duty of service, rather than a stimulating or interesting occupation.

2.2.2 Case study two: Rajpur school, LJ block, Rajasthan

Rajpur school was established in 1911. It began as a co-educational primary school until a move to a new building and single sex (girls') status in 1980, and it was upgraded to a middle school in 1999. On average, 70 – 80 children enrol in the first year, but admissions continue in the lower classes throughout the year. About 400 children attend Rajpur school. They are predominantly from poorer families, whose parents are potters, labourers or are engaged in farming, small scale animal husbandry etc. Better off parents, who are also the upper castes of the area, send their children to private schools. This leaves the teachers feeling that they get the 'second class' citizens, in terms of both social class and caste:

Sheila All these children are from very poor families. They all are either SC or ST or OBC. Even Rajpur has got four private schools, so all parents who earn well like to send their children to private schools. Only the families who can't afford private school send their children here. And their parents don't pay the sort of attention to their studies that parents in cities pay. They just send them, "You go, so that we can do our work" and when there is work at home, they aren't sent.

Asha In a private school, they send their children regularly, there they are paying fees.

Sheila Whenever there is any fair or marriage or any festival in village, a large number of children are absent. They won't come for whole week or so. For boys, they are much more aware that they have to be educated but

> for girls, they have a set notion that after all they will have to marry and work at home so they keep them at home at will (22.9.99).

There were until July 2000 ten teachers, all of whom had the basic elementary teaching qualification, and all of whom came from higher castes than the children. The role of principal was adopted by the oldest teacher present. All these teachers were female, and native to or had married into Rajpur village – a factor they saw as positive, claiming that they know the children better, can understand their problems and, as they put it, 'tackle' them accordingly.

In mid-July, at the start of the new school year, staffing patterns changed as the addition of higher classes to the school meant it was upgraded to middle school. This entailed a move from one educational authority – the Panchayat Samiti (local *panchayat*) in charge of elementary schools, to another, the Education Department. The teachers appointed under the Panchayat were to be transferred to other Panchayat schools, while the six new teachers and new principal would continue to work in Rajpur school. Throughout much of the year, as the old teachers waited to go and the new teachers waited for them to go, there were two distinct factions with no-one attempting to establish a rapport or get down to work – a state of affairs that subordinated children's needs to the politics of teacher transfers. In March, the arrangements changed again; the Panchayat teachers would not now be transferred.

A source of internal dissent was that the principal had given the Panchayat teachers the higher classes while the Education Department teachers had been given lower classes. The Panchayat teachers were aggrieved by this as the upper classes, in their view, are less labour intensive. The Department teachers also had to commute to the village from the District town, well over an hour away, and the Panchayat teachers complained about their lack of punctuality.

The year groups were divided into parallel classes, although these were often combined when one teacher was absent. The observation focused on teacher Asha's class, which was sometimes combined with teacher Ruchi's. Children were seated in lines, facing the teacher and the blackboard. The classrooms were not brightly painted or adorned although the walls bore the uplifting sayings by national leaders found in every government school.

Controversy about the literacy 'method'

Rajpur school is in a block covered by Lok Jumbish, which had ushered in innovations such as a Village Education Committee, and Block and Cluster Resource Centres. Enquiries about changes to the school as a result of these

structural innovations met with little response; their benefit to these teachers was not obvious. Teachers did however have a lot to say about the 'Lok Jumbish method' which used a different textbook based on the 'word method' rather than the alphabet method of the older textbook. This, for them, was Lok Jumbish; and teachers stated that teaching could not be done by the LJ method - although one of them claimed to have tried but stopped when she saw that children were not able to retain it. No mention was made of any training in the new approach, and none of the teachers was able to describe or demonstrate what the 'word method' was, or the difference between the two approaches. There was no evidence from classroom observations of any attempt to implement the newer approach to literacy teaching. Part of their reason for this was entirely logistical, but teachers also had a weak belief in the appropriateness of the word approach:

> Asha Now it is the end of September and we haven't received books yet. When these LJ people ask us to teach by this book they should have made it available to us. We have only six books and how can we teach about 70 children from these six books? If in class 1 children are not taught the letters of the alphabet then how can they learn words? This is the foundation, if the foundation is left weak can anything be done? Now, can you build a building without a foundation? It will definitely fall (Asha 22.9.99).

There was also annoyance at repeated changes of textbook: Ruchi said 'we teachers form the habit of teaching by a book, so we can't keep on changing'. This remark was qualified by Asha, who said, 'we wouldn't mind changing but the change should have some meaning. In private schools also, this *matra* system runs [the old system which is the one they prefer] and in Pol and Ara blocks, LJ books have been boycotted, they are not improving the standard of education but making it deteriorate' (28.9.99). In the absence of a sufficient supply of the new textbooks, with little understanding of the alternative approach to literacy or faith in the need for change, these teachers ignored the innovation. They continued to use the method they had become comfortable with over the years.

Literacy teaching and learning in Rajpur school

In Year One, teachers expected children to learn the letters of the alphabet, vowels and simple two or three letter words, which they should be able to recite, write and read by the end of the year. Formal literacy learning takes place from the beginning of the school year. Teachers used a textbook that is not provided by the Education Department but contains the method they like:

> Look, in this book, vowels and consonants have been given separately. First they are taught and then how to form two letter words is taught, then three letter words, then one by one vowels are taken. All is done in a systematic way. Each chapter includes only the examples that are related to that chapter so if the

chapter is on the vowel Aa, then all the examples will of be "Aa", not any other vowel (Asha 22.9.99).

Children were taught to draw different shapes and curves and then to combine them with the first letter of the alphabet (*ka*). Teachers reported that they teach letters in order of simplicity (*va, ba, ka*) but observations revealed that they were taught in alphabetical order.

Students begin rote memorisation and writing exercises as soon as classes begin in the morning:

Asha completes the attendance register and puts it down.

11.02 Asha to students Take out your slates

Asha is standing and is looking towards children as they are taking out their slates, she tells them again to take out their slates.

Asha Put *aa matra* [long a].

Some girls have taken out their slates, some 6-7 are looking for something in their bags.

Asha Write down the whole alphabet and then put the vowel *aa,* hurry up (6.3.00).

Literacy learning in Rajpur school was characterised by much copying from the blackboard onto the slate. No relationship was made between the sound of the letter and the symbols children were busy learning:

Both Year One classes are sitting together in the outside verandah corridor near a group of teachers sitting in the ground, who show no hurry to go to their own classes.

Asha Write the letters [which ones are not specified, children are writing something anyway] and put the *aa matra* [long a].

One girl comes to show her slate to Asha.

Asha Very good (meanwhile rubs out and corrects her mistakes). Now put the *matra*, *aa matra* on all the letters.

All the children are doing something on their slates.

Asha Puja, now I'll hit you if you don't start writing.

One girl comes and shows her slate.

Asha Put *matra* on all the letters.

Asha gets up from her chair and looks at 3-4 children's slates.

Asha Write…you two (points to two girls) you haven't come and shown me even once. What are you writing? Write *chacha, papa, dada*…write fast. Heena, write fast.

One girl comes and shows her slate. Asha corrects the mistakes. [The child looks elsewhere while the corrections are done. No explanation is given.]

Both these teachers were critical of the new Hindi textbook, which they found uses difficult vocabulary and is not relevant; Ruchi commented 'no doubt, the girls would be able to write it by seeing it [ie. copy] but their understanding isn't going to develop and they won't be able to read it'. Neither seemed to notice that her own teaching follows exactly the practice for which she criticises the book - routines of copying, with little attention to meaning-making.

The teacher's directions were often implicit - children were just told to write although what they should write was not always elaborated. Once they had settled into classroom routines, children became adept at keeping out of the teacher's notice by staying busy, or at least quiet, by covering their slates with symbols. This also happened in the many instances when the teacher was in the classroom, but attending to something other than the children:

> Letters from *ka* to *gya* are written on one side of the board, on the other side are some words – *ghar, par, chal, rath*, *jug*. Both classes are sitting together, only Asha is in the class, and she is doing an administrative task while children are writing on their slates. After about 2 minutes Ruchi comes in and straightens up the lines of children. There are 44 girls in total.
>
> 12.05 about 4-5 girls are writing on their slate, others are talking. Asha sends Ruchi to bring her a register. Asha asks me 'can you control the class, I'm busy doing these letters and I have to do some accounting'. I stand up and find that some girls haven't taken out their slates. I ask them to get them out. Meanwhile the principal comes, sits and discusses something with Asha. Some girls are writing, others are talking among themselves, but after some time, all girls are talking among themselves. I start looking at their work, and they show me what they have written, only 5-6 have written the letters correctly. This goes on; I don't know what they are supposed to be doing and the teacher goes on with her admin work […]
>
> 12.30 Ruchi comes and says that they will recite a poem. She doesn't remember the poem, and recites it after looking in the book. The children recite it lifelessly after her. After the poem, she asks the children to clap. Asha goes out.
>
> One girl is called upon to read the letters on the blackboard aloud, others repeat after her. A second girl does the same. When she says "*Ta se Dawat*", nobody corrects her.
>
> Ruchi asks whether they have written on their slates. The girls do not respond, and carry on calling out the letters, putting up their hands. One girl who is asked to call out can't do it. Ruchi tells me, 'I knew it, she isn't regular, she is usually absent'. She tells me 'two classes can't be taught together. With so many children, one teacher is needed to keep them quiet but as there is no separate room we have to make both classes sit together. In private schools there are only 5-7 children in a class and so teaching is better there'.

> Children are occupying themselves while she talks to me. Ruchi rubs out the letters written on the blackboard and says aloud as she writes *bal, baal, baja, baaja, baba, badal, jala, jaal, jala, lala, jal, la*. She asks the children to write. […]
> 12.55 Asha has returned and they are both sitting. Children are talking, doing something on slates, or sitting with their bags packed.
> Lunch Break (28.9.99).

Asha's request to the observer indicates that she feels the children should be kept under control and busy (i.e. writing) but there is no classroom management to promote a purposeful learning environment. Neither Asha nor Ruchi used teaching learning aids and said that to do so is not possible when there are so many children.

With two teachers present, there were opportunities to divide the classes into groups doing different activities at their level of achievement; and to undertake team teaching. The Panchayat teachers should have been familiar with some of these possibilities: they had taken training provided by the DIET in multi-grade teaching, group teaching, and peer-tutoring as useful strategies for schools where there is a single teacher or where there are children of different age groups and different capacities. Teachers in Rajpur school saw these as solutions for multi-grade situations only and disregarded them as theirs was not a multi-grade school. The training programme had not, for them, sufficiently stressed the applicability of such strategies for managing heterogeneous learning needs in large classes.

By the end of year, independent testing of the children's progress in reading and writing the letters of the alphabet revealed that, with the bulk of their time spent on literacy activities in the manner described, ten children could read and write all the letters correctly. These children informed the observer, who chatted with them as she looked at their slates, that they got help at home. Teachers cited this as a further reason for retaining the familiar alphabet method:

> We follow the LJ method also but we prefer the old method. In that, we also get help as some parents who know the alphabet teach their children, so it become easier for us (Asha 22.9.99).

Other children had developed expertise in copying, so by the end of the year they could copy exactly what the teacher had written on blackboard or what was in book. When the teachers wrote the answers to exam questions on the blackboard (!), they were able to copy them down in their paper and this was deemed sufficient for them to be promoted to the second year.

Attempts to probe teachers' views on why some children would learn faster than others generated explanations that had nothing to do with the teaching process.

Asha, Ruchi and other teachers claimed that only dull children attend government schools, while bright children go to private schools. This fails to explain why some children still do well at the government school. They also claimed that parents do not pay attention and children do not do any school work at home, although this was clearly not the case with all children. The most cited reason was that children attend irregularly and so lag behind. Teachers did not volunteer remarks or observations on possible relationships between their teaching styles and children's learning: children's progress was implicitly attributed to their inherent intelligence. Linked to this perception, Asha expressed her view that it was sufficient if only about half the children in her class were promoted to the second year, having reached appropriate attainment levels (which she describes as 'becoming clever') even though the achievement of those children might be at the cost of offering more time and attention to the rest. She said:

Asha In my class, there are 42 children, out of which 32 come … and out of these I would pass 22-23 children. Not more than that. By sending rubbish to the higher class, we would only face problems…..there are at least 10-12 children who can read and write, you too must have noticed (points out 2-3). This one can read and write; she can write; she can also write, but speaks less, shall I tell you more….that Lata, she can read and write, Pinky can read and write, this Pushpa can write - at least 15 girls can write very clearly. I would have to wield the stick until at least March (mild laughter) to get a result. Even if 15 girls become clever [pick up] then other girls also alongside them will get a push, 2-4 other will pick up, there would be no problem, that's why I am paying more attention to these 15-20 girls. I do not touch the remaining girls - what to do with them? If I touch them, these girls of mine would lag behind.

NP How?

Asha If I pay attention to them there the other girls who know the alphabet would also get stuck on this……

NP Then couldn't they be taught one thing and the slower ones taught something different?

Asha […] If only 15 children can learn, then I have taught 15 only, no use sending rubbish to the higher class. It might be that by April if their parents teach them and they learn vowels and consonants, then [the teacher] would teach *matra* in class II, what is the problem in this…..otherwise I am preparing 15 –20 girls fully (7.3.00).

While a disrespect for children is evident in Asha's account, it is also clear that she does not understand her role as a teacher to mean she should try and ensure that all children succeed. She does not envisage that the children who learn more slowly (her 'rubbish') should manage to cover the same ground as the 'clever' ones, and

this lack of aspiration for all children to succeed shapes her practices. While often as many as half the children were not engaged in purposeful activity related to the lesson, they did not come to Asha's attention as they appeared occupied and quiet. Children who did not get support from home fell behind as undifferentiated whole class teaching pushed forward, in keeping with Asha's intention of completing the course within the year.

Academic support to Rajpur school

Inspector's visits to Rajpur were rare and routinely addressed administrative issues only. Lok Jumbish might have provided academic support, but the interface with Lok Jumbish had been unsatisfactory for these teachers:

A Here in LJ children are asked to recognise the letter and circle it. Children circle it but it they don't necessarily know the letter, they might have just copied from their neighbour, so even if one or two know the letter, all the others copy from them. Actually there's no fun in teaching by this method, we always ask them [LJ] to give reasons for this thing, then we'll adopt it. We have to teach and we have to teach in a better way, if it can bring some improvement in our teaching, then what else can we need, what else can we ask for?

NP What explanation do they give ?

A Nothing, they [LJ workers] just say that this thing has been forced on them from above so they are forcing it on us (22.9.99).

Asha also revealed how she coped with reconciling what she does, and what she is expected to do:

> Last time, Jumbish people came and asked me how I teach subtraction. I asked children to throw this many pebbles from all pebbles and asked how many pebbles are left. (laughter) What to do then, I had to lie, I have not taught them (7.3.00).

Despite the close proximity of the District Institute of Education and Training, teachers saw no direct link between it and their school. For them, the DIET was the place where camps for the Special Orientation of Primary Teachers (see chapter 5) are conducted; some of Rajpur's teachers had attended one such camp, but the training had done little to change their practices.

There was potential for a strong link as Rajpur was one of the DIET's 'laboratory' schools, and was used for the DIET's pre-service students to carry out teaching practice. In this contact with the school, DIET staff were concerned with students' practice teaching: the school was perceived as a venue for teaching practice, rather than as an institution with a life of its own. The possibility of using this activity

as a link to enrich the life of the school had not been explored by teachers or DIET staff.

Asha would respond to the researcher's questions about what she had observed, but those interactions did not prompt reflection on her practice. Her idea of teacher development was not discursive, but based on the dominant in-service model of being shown or told what to do by an external 'expert', as the researcher's diary note reflects:

> In the break, Asha came to me and said that she thought that I would show them how to teach and that they would get a chance to observe that (22.9.99).

2.3 Teachers' attitudes

In addition to raising questions about teachers' technical approaches to teaching literacy, these two case study accounts raise several issues about how teachers relate to children, and to adopting change messages. These issues were explored in detail in the project, drawing on teacher observations and interviews more widely across our sample sites.

2.3.1 Teachers and children: attitudes and expectations

Rapid growth of the private sector has now provided a range of choice for parents who can afford to pay for their children's education. Government schools remain the only option for those who cannot exercise such choice – predominantly the weakest economic strata. The two case studies reflect a trend among teachers in government schools of perceiving themselves as being in a 'deficit' situation, working with substandard material (the children):

> All these children are without cream!! All the fat has been extracted already (GUJ/VUDA T5 25.2.00).

Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, a teacher taking training in Indore DIET said:

> Children are from such a lower category, such a lower mentality it's difficult to teach them. Their minds don't work and at that time you get very angry. You want to give them something but they don't accept anything. They just sit. You tell them, you tell them this is teaching and these are the subjects, you explain completely but after that when you ask them they just look at each other's faces. That time we get really angry, we worked so hard but all our time was completely wasted. The problem is just one – they come to us from such a low category, just third grade (MP/IND T94 June 2000)

'Cream' is a teacher metaphor for both socio-economic status, and intelligence. Low socio-economic status impacts on educational processes in various ways, such as for example long or short-term absenteeism:

> Due to their parents' weak economic condition in most of the rural areas the children are not able to achieve their education. As they are economically weak they go for labour work from their homes with their children and family. They come back after one month and sometimes the situation is such that they come after 3-4 months. In such a situation the child is not able to acquire the competencies. This mostly happens in rural areas because they are economically weak. On one hand the child remains absent for 1, 2, 3 months and the *Saheb* [officer] says 'make the child achieve all the competencies'. In this condition how can the child be made to acquire the competencies?…if the child does not come to the school how will s/he acquire the competencies? (MP/T 038 July 01).

Teachers object more to short-tem absenteeism, perhaps because it has greater day-to-day consequences than more permanent absence, and because it seems to them more avoidable. Their sympathetic reading of absenteeism, based on an understanding of economic hardship and the imperatives of subsistence, is often blurred by teachers' sense that many parents do not care about their children's education, and thus do not make sufficient effort to ensure that they attend school regularly.

> The environment in the rural area is not there. The people of the rural area are highly conservative. They have many bad habits like child marriage, gambling…when a child returns from school back home s/he goes back to that kind of environment and is moulded in that manner. The most a child takes part in the teachers' activities is 3-5 hours. The child is influenced by the family environment, s/he is involved with the teacher and activities for some time, most of the rest of the time they get knowledge from their surroundings…So why not open a hostel…It is clear from this that if we want to give good education to the children they will have to be separated from their old conservative ideas and thoughts. Then only can we evaluate what talent rural children have, otherwise they won't be able to be enlightened because their talents remain hidden behind their conservatism (MP/T 016 July 01).

Teachers often use words like 'irresponsible' and 'careless' when commenting on such parents, and their illiteracy is usually implicated in this equation too:

> Here the parents of weak children are always illiterate. It's not like we don't make any effort but these parents don't understand the importance of education (GUJ/ T 013 23.10.99).

A minority of teachers relate parental illiteracy to problems in, for example, providing practical support with homework. But literacy itself is inflated to mean much more than literate or numerate; it also connotes a desirable and civilised state of human development, in contrast with the backward state of being illiterate

which is neither of those things. 'Backwardness' is intrinsically linked in teachers' accounts with negative and often prejudiced views about children and/or their parents, which are used as explanatory factors for children's limited progress at school:

> We accept this change and are also making efforts to implement. But with this level of child…to recognise the [letters of the] alphabets, to make words, to make sentences and to read them etc. are all things the child is not able to achieve (MP/T 006 July 01).

2.3.2 Appropriateness of the syllabus: content and language issues

Very few teachers among those we interviewed and observed did not use judgmental and essentialising categorisations of 'weak', 'average' and 'intelligent' children (see also chapter 8). These are used as explanations for their educational progress, although this may in itself conflict with the rationalisation that teachers can be expected to do nothing with children of this nature. Reading beyond the rationalisation that the 'level of the child' is the problem, teachers are raising – either implicitly or explicitly – a significant point about the appropriateness of the school syllabus:

> The mental capacity of the rural and Adivasi [tribal] children is less. The curriculum should be made according to the rural environment by which the interest of the children would increase. The curriculum is developed with respect to the urban area and hence it will be a little difficult due to which the Adivasi children are not able to understand fully (MP/T 014 July 01).

A poor fit between the urbanised model of schooling and local conditions has been the subject of critical commentary for decades, and remains an issue for teachers:

> All changes in the teaching work are possible, but these changes are possible for urban children. All these changes can be implemented but to implement all these changes in the rural area is difficult (RAJ/T 011).

Another aspect of this perception of the 'problematic' non-urban area relates to issues of language. Many teachers work in situations where the local dialect differs significantly from the State language, or indeed a different language is spoken locally – particularly in the tribal areas. The dominant pedagogy of literacy (illustrated here in the case studies; see also chapter 8) does not interact with the local linguistic ecology since no sustained attempt is made to make literacy acquisition meaningful by relating the sounds and language children use to the symbols and print conventions used to represent them on paper.

2.3.3 Teachers and time

Many teachers raised with the research team a familiar litany of complaints about infrastructural facilities; a high student-teacher ratio; considerable form-filling and administration generated by non-education related activities; repetitive requests

for written information by the education authority; and so on. These concerns are often put forward as explanations for why children are not 'completing the course'. Those in authority positions tend to see these as teacher excuses used to mask an unwillingness to work, rather than heed an underlying issue: the resultant constant pressure of time.

The Indian state requires teachers to carry out a significant element of work that is related either to social development (e.g. pulse polio drives), or to the maintenance of the democratic state (e.g. running polling stations). Training for teachers ignores this contextual reality and focuses only on their formal classroom role; and the content and competency load of syllabus over the year is organised on the assumption that teachers spend 100% of their time on classroom activities. Officially, the number of working days in the year is about 180, but teachers present overwhelming evidence, particularly in the lower primary stages, of a much shorter working year, into which the syllabus has to be crammed (see chapter 8).

A further complication is that since the abolition of examinations at the lower level, children must be promoted if they attend school for 70% of the school year. This policy conflicts with the policy of using attainment of competency levels as an indicator of readiness to proceed:

T11 In the 1st and 2nd Stds. we have to pass on the basis of attendance. So even if the children don't know anything but they are regular we have to pass them. See this girl Chandrika she doesn't know even *k-ko* [abc] but she comes every day so I have to pass her (GUJ/ T 011, February 1999)

This policy conflates attendance with learning. In so doing, it denies a teacher the opportunity to make professional decisions about a child's educational progress.

2.3.4 Teacher agency

Teachers' sense of being in a 'deficit' situation was a pervasive component of their accounts and actions across the study sites. This sense of deficit significantly shapes classroom processes, powerfully determining teachers' expectations of children and of themselves, and impacting substantially on their *willingness* to engage with training messages. A striking feature of many discussions with teachers is their relatively low sense of professional agency, which is linked with their views on the contextual factors that for many of them seem to determine the possibilities of success. Teachers often report that they need to be made to work, and that unless supervisory arrangements are strengthened, they are unlikely to work harder. The onus for improving the quality of classroom processes is widely perceived to lie with the authorities, rather than to be dependent on any intrinsic motivation among

teachers. Teachers' locus of accountability remains oriented towards the administration, rather than to children. Teachers who construct their situations in this way project a strong sense of disempowerment that is reflected in many of the citations in this report.

Motivated teachers: what makes the differences?

Interviews with teachers locally known as 'good' teachers are revealing as to why, in broadly similar contexts, some teachers make positive efforts while others are not thus motivated. Two factors emerged as common to renowned teachers. Firstly, (whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian) they either perceive teaching as their duty to God; or they refer explicitly to, and follow, Gandhian principles. This teacher in Rajasthan, for example, powerfully evoked religion, self-consciousness and patriotism as his motivating factors:

> It is a matter of your self-consciousness. Before you go home, you need to think about what you have done today….I think that if we give a labourer Rs 50 and he doesn't work well, we don't call him the next day. If the government gives me Rs 400 and I don't work, it is treachery towards the country, and towards myself… So if each one ponders on what return he is giving to the government…if the government wants me to teach these children and I don't teach then it is against the government and then if I boast of being a patriot it is wrong. Is the work I did worth the salary for today?…the salary I got was Rs 400 and the work I did is not even worth 4 paisa, then you are getting money but that money doesn't help. I believe this, if I do my work honestly, God will be happy and then the money will also help. […] If the teacher is devoted the course is no problem […] I think it all depends on the person, any outside force doesn't work, someone has to realise it on their own (RAJ/T 076, 11.12.99).

Secondly, such teachers see their prime responsibility as being towards children and their parents, and derive their pleasure and satisfaction from positive interactions with them, rather than looking for positive reinforcement from representatives of the education authority. While most teachers' accounts are dominated by their concerns about barriers to effective *teaching*, these teachers adopted a perspective that considers matters from the point of view of *children's learning*. Once this key message has made sense to a teacher, other change initiatives such as the adoption of a competency-based approach fall more naturally into place.

2.4 Summary

A competency-based approach to learning requires a teacher to recognise, respect and facilitate a child's individual learning needs. These accounts show that in many cases, teachers have negative perceptions of children's socio-economic status, and link this with an idea that such children have low intellect. These perceptions of deficit shape the effort

a teacher feels inclined to make, her expectations of success; and her will to engage with change messages. Teaching follows a 'delivery' model, where the teacher teaches but with a limited focus on what children are learning from that teaching. Children spend a significant amount of time keeping themselves busy to avoid reprimand, but are not necessarily 'on task'[9]. Teachers also raise issues which relate to longstanding debates about the nature of the curriculum, unfulfilled policy norms governing teacher: student ratios (set at 1: 40), and struggles with time that reflect their own view of the importance of completing the syllabus (ie. the textbook) while coping with competing demands arising from the various educational and non-educational administrative demands of the Indian state.

The evidence presented in this chapter reflects the findings of the 1999 PROBE report on primary schooling in northern and central India, which says:

> Teaching activity has been reduced to a minimum, in terms of both time and effort. And this pattern is not confined to a minority of irresponsible teachers — it has become a way of life in the profession (PROBE 1999: 63).

The teachers in the two case study schools display an ambivalent attitude to recent innovations in textbooks and the underlying pedagogical changes in literacy teaching they reflect. In one case training has not taken place at all; and in another, the training messages are not seen by teachers to be relevant. In our study, these issues were by no means confined to a small number of teachers: they were found across the sites. Reasons for ambivalence, non-attendance at training, and lack of conviction about the usefulness of training are explored later in this report.

2.5 Policy issues

The accounts presented here illustrate the need for training to encourage teachers to develop not only the *technical expertise* to promote learning for children with different learning speeds and styles; but equally crucially, the *attitude* that each and every child matters. The evidence from locally renowned teachers is that a grasp of the centrality to the educational process of learning, rather than teaching, is the key, and should be a central concern for teacher development. On the evidence presented here, these are key issues for teachers' professional development in relation to articulated policy goals, not only of Minimum Levels of Learning, but the wider national commitment to Education For All.

Another issue emerging from these accounts, which will be a theme in this report, is the question of how an education system that has been centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic (Kumar 1991) can encourage among teachers the development of professional agency and decision-making in relation to children's learning.

[9] Alexander (2000) and Sarangapani (2003) provide further useful discussions of processes of teaching and learning.

A further issue that emerges is the silence from case study teachers on the role of support structures such as the Cluster Resource Centres and DIET at the school level; and the correlation that is made between the power of an inspector and a teacher's inclination to follow what he says. Very many teachers in our study shared the case study teachers' perceptions of the DIET as nothing other than a training institute, for reasons discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 Infrastructure, Staffing, Institutional Aims and Leadership

3.1 Introduction

With these understandings of the roles and responsibilities of institutions comprising the teacher education system, and some of the pressing concerns for teacher education evident in the case studies and findings from teacher interviews, we now turn to an exploration of how the six sample DIETs of this study were working.

Patterns of establishing DIETs varied slightly across the States. In Gujarat, which then had 19 Districts, all DIETs were established at about the same time. In Madhya Pradesh, DIETs were set up in 45 Districts in three phases, 15 in each, the first beginning 1988-89. Out of 32 districts of Rajasthan, 27 had DIETS, three of which were adopted by Lok Jumbish, and new DIETs were planned for the remaining Districts.

There was wide variation in the numbers of teachers and schools, adult literacy rates and so on across the project Districts (Table 3.1). In addition, three of the sample DIETs were in Districts with an external intervention. DIETs were found to be poorly integrated with DPEP in both DPEP sample Districts, although there was more contact in Santrampur than in Dhar. Lok Jumbish, in contrast, had made considerable efforts to integrate and ensure the capacity of its DIETs.

Table 3.1: **Socio-educational profile of the six project Districts**

	Rajasthan		**Gujarat**		**MP**	
	Udaipur	**Ajmer**	**Panchmahal**	**Surat**	**Dhar**	**Indore**
Literacy rate (%)	51.3	52.3	43.8	64.4	27	74.8
No. of blocks in District	11	13	11	13	13	4
No. of primary schools	2955	909	591	1412	1831	874
No. of primary teachers	–	2613	12695	14015	3382	3469
External intervention	no	LJ	DPEP	no	DPEP	no

Source: From DIET internal documents. The statistics are internally inconsistent so these should be taken as indicative figures only.

This chapter reviews four aspects that critically shaped how the sample DIETs functioned: physical infrastructure; staffing; the activities of each branch and how staff understood and related to them; and leadership. For three DIETs in the sample, these aspects were also shaped by external intervention programmes, and a brief overview of the DIET-intervention relationship is given first.

3.2 Relationships between DIETs and external intervention programmes

3.2.1 DPEP and the DIETs

Unlike DIETs, which were a system wide innovation, the innovative DPEP was a project within the wider system. As a project, DPEP had its own timescale, imperatives and accountability mechanisms; and these project imperatives often resulted in DPEP setting up parallel structures that could quickly respond to its requirements. Its failure to work from the outset at promoting the sustainability of project gains through strengthening mainstream institutions (such as DIETs) and the resultant dual system it created was seen as highly problematic by Joint Review Missions (e.g. DPEP 10th JRM 1999) and has been identified in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework document as undesirable and unsustainable (DEEL 2002). In Dhar District there was a very clear example of this, as the DPEP District Officer reported unequivocally:

> I have identified about 18 good teachers as resource persons and that is the group of our resource persons. That is our parallel DIET. They are specialised in different fields. I have trained them in the various fields of education. Like 3 of them are specialised in the field of curriculum, some of them are in the field of mathematics, some of them are in language, some of them are in environmental science, like that. Among them I have identified 2-3 people who are working in the field of monitoring and assessment and measurement of learners (MP/DHA/DPEP i/c 7.1.1999).

His reason for doing so was his view that the DIET itself was inappropriately staffed and did not have people with the necessary expertise to meet the teacher education demands of DPEP. This had led to demoralisation among the DIET staff, which is seen later in this chapter.

In Panchmahal District, DPEP management had explored the contribution the Santrampur DIET could make, but had drawn less on it over time, finding it more effective to work directly through its own Resource Centres. The new DPEP District Officer there, who was trying hard to build bridges, said:

> Lack of co-ordination has been a major problem in Panchmahal District, especially co-ordination between the DIET and DPEP. There is no compulsion for any of the regular system officers to co-operate with DPEP: the memorandum of association does not include DPEP (GUJ/SNT/DPEP i/c 14.12.00).

Any programmes for teachers introduced by DPEP tended therefore to be run via Resource Centres, rather than the District's DIET. Teachers in a DPEP District would attend programmes run by the DPEP and also programmes run by the DIET.

3.2.2 Lok Jumbish and the DIETs

In 1995, after Lok Jumbish had covered Ajmer, Bikaner and Dungarpur Districts, it adopted and reorganised the DIET in those Districts, to make them resource institutions for its programmes. Detailed recruitment procedures were framed; buildings were inspected and plans drawn up for repair, additions and alterations; attempts were also made to create a resource network and provide training for faculty staff. The three DIETs adopted by Lok Jumbish were also re-organised from seven into five branches (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: **Organisation of the Lok Jumbish DIETs**

1	PSTE	Pre-service training
2	ISTE	Induction (ET + WE + IFIC + Communications Officer) Orientation/ attitudinal/ induction / reorientation programmes for teachers, HMs and resource persons. When any new cluster was drawn into LJ, it helped screen and then conducted an orientation programme for the Resource Persons needed to train teachers. The emphasis was more on attitudes and mentality of the person; DIET staff reported that if a person is academically weak, s/he can be helped to improve but if her/his attitude is negative, whatever the input, this will affect the quality of work. During the observation period, LJ issued an order that no new block would be taken up; no further orientation programmes were conducted.
3		MLL Minimum Levels of Learning The LJ pattern in schools is based on MLL. This branch takes care of MLL based training programmes for teachers by preparing Master Trainers in all subjects taught in schools. Out of 8 blocks, 2 clusters of 5 blocks had started MLL up to class III; in another block all clusters had an MLL based curriculum up to class V; in a further block, all clusters up to class VII were on the MLL. The MLL department is also supposed to monitor schools and training programmes of the teachers conducted by the resource persons at each of the block.
4		Sahaj Shiksha This branch takes care of the NFE programmes of the district, by training NFE centre instructors
5		P & M This department plans DIET programmes, but it was observed that its key focus was the planning and management of VIII board exams. The head of P&M was initially introduced as the person who takes care of the VIII board.

In contrast with the solely qualification-led procedures adopted by governments, Lok Jumbish recruited carefully to its DIETs. It advertised for staff, to attract direct recruits and people already working in the government sector. Applicants followed a three step process which combined a written test with group discussion and interview. Entry qualifications were also relaxed: in Rajasthan, only first grade teachers (upper secondary teachers) were eligible to become DIET staff, but Lok Jumbish also allowed second grade teachers (secondary teachers) to apply, if they met recruitment norms. Existing DIET staff were screened and those who did not wish to continue, or did not pass the test, were redeployed.

The direct Lok Jumbish recruits saw a difference in attitude between the government employees and themselves:

> We were selected on the basis of our curiosity. That's how we have come. Those from the Department have that stamp on them, and they don't want to learn anything. As far as I am concerned I want to learn. This is my hobby but in a government institute that doesn't happen. It's 5pm so it's time to go. They say it's routine work and we'll do it tomorrow (RAJ/MAS TT1 19.7.99).
>
> In the government, someone who gets the stamp will be appointed or people who had influence got their transfer into the DIET. Even if they don't work, the principal can't say anything to him because behind him there is the hand of a politician or someone. He can't do anything. He will tell the principal you do your work and I will do what I like. So there is a lack of commitment (RAJ/MAS TT2 19.7.99).

Although the government transfer posts were sanctioned, the State government was slow to issue 'joining orders'. Without these orders, the move to the Lok Jumbish DIET could not take place, and this contributed to staffing shortages. The then Chairman of Lok Jumbish commented 'we have not succeeded in persuading the government to be liberal and generous about sparing staff' (RAJ/LJ Chairman 20.1.99).

The SIERT Director commented favourably on the Lok Jumbish recruitment process but did not think was possible for the government to adopt similar procedures for its DIETs. He believed that paper qualifications offer a better promise of impartiality than personal interviews. Aspects of his view were shared by a direct Lok Jumbish recruit to the DIET who commented on the ever-present possibility of patronage:

> If one talks honestly, it starts from the beginning, right from recruitment. My name was also on the selection list. The written work was OK but interviews – that's the biggest problem in India. Anyone can get through that. In the interview we can see, and our experience tells us that this candidate will not be able to perform but - he is my relative (RAJ/MAS/TT2 19.7.99).

Despite these efforts, it proved difficult to recruit the full staff to the Lok Jumbish DIET, and only three members of staff had elementary teaching experience. An initially severe and then acute shortage of staff was evident throughout the project term, and staff members reported they had never had a full staff (during 1999 there were only 10 academic staff, who were all deputed except one contract lecturer). Unfortunately, once Swedish SIDA withdrew its funding, Lok Jumbish was in limbo until DFID took up funding, and the staff was reduced by 13. Posts left vacant were not re-staffed, leaving a skeletal staff to try and manage the DIET's full programme. Masuda DIET subsequently became a regular government DIET.

Teachers in a Lok Jumbish District would attend programmes run by the Lok Jumbish and also programmes run by the DIET as part of the government programme calendar.

3.3 Physical infrastructure in the project DIETs

All of the case study DIETs had been upgraded from former pre-service colleges or, in the case of Udaipur DIET, a Refresher Training Centre.

3.3.1 Government DIETs

The three government DIETs across the States were fairly similar: each had a long history as an educational institute but was housed in accommodation that was not well adapted to contemporary demands as a DIET. Residential accommodation was problematic, either because it was not available at all (Surat and Udaipur DIETs) or insufficient (Indore DIET). Both Indore and Udaipur DIETs owned several acres of land but did not have the budgetary capacity to develop it. Classrooms contained heavy wooden benches and tables, always arranged in rows facing the blackboard, usually with a platform for the teacher, which made them inflexible environments for training.

In Indore and Udaipur DIETs, one room was allocated to the Educational Technology branch, and this was a place where hand-made teaching learning materials were displayed. Both these DIETs had a science laboratory but in each case this was equipped with outdated equipment useful in the secondary school curriculum; pre-service students commented that little practical use is made of this lab. Surat DIET had closed this lab and installed an externally funded computer lab for students with dedicated support staff. Indore and Udaipur DIETs had an outmoded computer and the absence of adequate computing facilities meant that all materials development, record keeping, accounting etc. had to be done by hand or on outdated and cumbersome technology. Library facilities existed but the basic stock of books had poor relevance to primary education and in Udaipur was used

mostly for reading newspapers. The Surat Principal had added to the library stock his own collection of relevant articles and notes which staff were encouraged to read, and add to.

In each of these DIETs, the Educational Technology branch was comparatively well equipped and active, producing cassettes on teaching techniques, participating in State level programmes and in the case of Surat DIET, also generating TV programmes on educational issues that were regularly broadcast on the local channel.

3.3.2 DIETs with external interventions

Both Masuda and Santrampur DIETs were former pre-service colleges which had relocated to purpose-built DIET buildings constructed from external funds. They had light and airy rooms and modern furniture, a well stocked library and adequate computing facilities and office space for the staff, and residential accommodation for staff and in-service teachers and pre-set students on campus. While Santrampur DIET was located in a village adequately served by public transport, Masuda DIET was located 2 km from a small village, served by erratic rural buses and overcrowded jeeps, and relatively inaccessible to all but the determined visitor.

Dhar DIET in Madhya Pradesh was housed in very poor conditions, in the wing of a secondary school. It shared the hall, the only room large enough to house teacher trainees, with the school; there was one room for the Principal, partitioned to make room for the administrative staff. The single other staff room also functioned as a storage space for discarded furniture and textbooks. There was no ladies' toilet, and no serviceable large wall blackboard in the building, let alone any possibility of a library, Educational Technology room or science laboratory. A brand new building on the outskirts of the town stood almost ready throughout the life of the project, but had yet to be commissioned.

All three of these DIETs had an institutional vehicle, but this was used almost exclusively by the Principal in Santrampur and Masuda. Dhar's jeep had been commandeered by the DPEP.

Across the project sites, only Masuda and Santrampur DIETs enjoyed a physical infrastructure that was fully conducive to flexible modes of training involving trainee movement, activities, group work, and so on. Elsewhere, physical aspects of the DIET infrastructure themselves were a constraint to the emergence of a dynamic new institution.

3.4 Staffing

3.4.1 **Recruitment**

From their inception, it was difficult to staff DIETs. When DIETs were upgraded from their former status, existing staff were absorbed if they had the necessary qualifications and expressed interest. Reponses to advertisements for DIET staff drew few applications. Remaining posts were filled by transferring into them teachers who had the necessary qualifications, even if they showed no interest and did not apply for the post. The following was a common refrain among staff in Udaipur, Indore and Dhar DIETs:

AC How did you come to the DIET?

TT03 They pushed us. We got transferred. We didn't know what it [the DIET] was (MP/DHA TT 03 21.6.99).

This was possible because the DIET staff and secondary teachers were of the same civil service grade, so personnel could be freely transferred between DIET and the secondary schools of the Education Department.

With the exception of Masuda, discussed earlier, sample DIETs had adhered to the stipulated qualifications of double Master's degrees, which virtually exclude elementary teachers, leaving a pool mostly of secondary teachers to draw upon. Only a handful of staff across the sample DIETs had any practical elementary teaching experience. The emphasis on higher level qualifications is linked with official expectations of the role of the DIET, and a view of elementary teachers as not having the capabilities required to discharge it. In practice, this creates a tension, for recruitment from the secondary sector is seen as logical, but has not proved satisfactory. This ambivalence is reflected in the words of the Rajasthan SIERT's Director:

Dir [DIET is seen as a higher post] means ... they have to manage all the academic activities in the State. So those people must have the vision and they should be qualified. This type of qualified staff is not available in elementary. From where they will come? Either from direct recruitment or from the transfer. There are two possibilities.

CD So you had to look to secondary education?

Dir Yes. There are certain posts which are equivalent in secondary education so far as the grades are concerned. The government transfers those people to the DIETs in the same pay scale. They are expected to ...but the drawback is that, many times, people of the secondary do not have sufficient experience to bring such types of activities into elementary. And that's the problem. How to solve this is a problem (23.2.01).

It was also challenging to recruit staff to DIETs in the rural areas, while DIETs in urban areas tended to be overstaffed. Recruitment of a Principal for any DIET was particularly difficult. Table 3.3 illustrates the findings in the sample Districts.

Table 3.3: **Staffing across sample 1999-2000**

Post	No. sanct'd	Indore	Dhar (DPEP)	Surat	Sant'pur (DPEP	Udaipur	Masuda (LJ)
Principal	1	–	–	1	1	–	1
V-P	1	1	1	–	1	1	1
Sr. lecturer	7 (MAS 4)	6	4	0	6	6	1
Lecturer	15	15	7	13	15	23	9
Total	24 (MAS 21)	22	12	14	23	32	12

Except in the Lok Jumbish DIETs, the DIET pay scale is the same as for a secondary teacher, but there are no vacations, no opportunities to offer tuitions, and there is a good deal of travel. For staff who are deputed, rather than appointed to, a DIET there is a penalty since years of service in deputed posts do not count towards the seniority on which promotion rests.

A minority of staff had applied for a DIET post for vocational motivation and were generally positive about their posting. In Madhya Pradesh, the State had made efforts to recruit known persons for the first round of DIET recruitment and while many of those had since left, the 3-4 left each in Indore and Dhar DIETs were leading figures. A different set of motivations had brought into each DIET in our sample some staff members who had sought a posting in the place of their choice, achieved if necessary by tugging political strings or offering incentives.

Responding to problems with initial recruitment to its DIETs, Gujarat created its own DIET cadre in 1998. Applicants to advertisements (see Annex 2 for required qualifications) were also invited for an interview. However, for posts other than in the pre-service branch, Master's degrees remain a requirement. In this State, there was a bottleneck for Senior Lecturers and Principals who are required to pass the Gujarat Public Services Commission exam (unless they have a PhD) – amendments to this arrangement were in process.

In Udaipur, Indore and Dhar DIETs, some staff had high levels of discomfort about postings, and this was related to a lack of role clarity discussed in the next section. This discomfort tended to be low among pre-service staff, for whom there was no such lack of clarity:

NN Which do you like more, school teaching or DIET work?

TT13 This work is more challenging, multi-dimensional, different activities are going on and we can get different experiences at the same time. Teaching has only one dimension (RAJ/UDR PSTE lecturer June 1999).

For others, the post in the DIET was making little call upon their Master's level expertise. This had led to a sense of stagnation:

TT03 Everything was changed and we got nothing out of it. I was the only lecturer of geography in Dhar District. I was devoted to my subject and now I feel so bad.

AC In the DIET, how much geography can you use?

TT03 Nowhere.[…] Where there is a little bit of history, geography and civics. That's all (MP/DHA/TT03 21.6.99).

SF MComm is not of any use but BEd and MEd have some correlation with this work. […] My computer training is being killed here. I am in-charge of computers but it is an outdated one. No-one takes the initiative to change the drive and update it (RAJ/UDR/ TT11 June 99).

Table 3.4 illustrates from Dhar DIET a poor fit between qualifications and current deployment in the DIET. This DIET had 4 Senior Lecturers and 7 Lecturers but only three members of staff with the M.Ed were actually appointed as DIET staff. All the others were deputed from schools to work in the DIET. Only one lecturer had experience (7 years) in elementary education.

A lack of academic environment was commented upon by those who had had high expectations of the DIET:

TT10 Initially, I thought that a lot of literacy activity would be going on in the DIET. I would read books and be more academically involved. But when I came here I was disappointed. There is no academic atmosphere in STC teaching. […] I want to grow. The atmosphere is not very encouraging (RAJ/SS TT 010 June 99).

During the project period, many DIET staff in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were waiting to be redeployed, and this detracted from putting energy into current activities. In Madhya Pradesh, institutional restructuring was taking place and rumours about the impact this would have on the DIETs were rife. This led to a great deal of uncertainty about future roles. In Lok Jumbish, with the withdrawal of funding, there was uncertainty about whether Masuda DIET would be absorbed as a regular government DIET or continue as it was; and in Udaipur DIET, several senior staff members reported that they were waiting for the call to serve at SIERT, or for retirement.

Table 3.4: **Qualifications and previous employment of staff in Dhar DIET**

	Position in DIET	Qualification	Caste	Sex	Posted in DIET	Postheld before joining DIET
1	Principal (in-charge DDO)	M.A., M.Ed	ST	M	March '99	Deputy Director; District Education Officer
2	Vice-Principal	M.Sc. (Chem),	ST	M	March '97	Higher Secondary Principal (in Dhar)
3	Sr. Lecturer ISU	M.Sc. (Maths), B.Ed	Gen	M	March '97	Lect. Higher Secondary School No.1 (in Dhar)
4	Sr. Lecturer P&M	M.A. (Geog), B.Ed	Gen	M	March '94	Lect. Higher Secondary School No. 2 (in Dhar)
5	Sr. Lecturer CMD	M.A. (Hindi), B.Ed	Gen	F	March '95	Lect. Bhoj Kanya (in Dhar)
6	Sr. Lecturer MEU	M.Sc. (Chem), B.Ed	OBC	M	March '95	Lect. Bhoj Kanya (in Dhar)
7	Lecturer ET	M.Sc. (Phy), B.Ed	Gen	M	March '94	Lect. Higher Secondary School No.1 (in Dhar)
8	Lecturer WE	M.A. (Eng), B.Ed	Gen	M	March '94	Lect.Urdu High School (in Dhar)
9	Lecturer AAEU	M.A. (Hindi), B.T.	Gen	M	March '95	Lect. Higher Secondary School (block level)
10	Lecturer EEU	M.Sc. (Zoology), M.Ed	Gen	F	March '95	HM. Middle School (block level)
11	Lecturer PPDU	M.Sc. (Chem), B.Ed	Gen	M	March '95	Lect. Higher Secondary School (block level)
12	Lecturer DRU	M.Sc. (Chem), M.Ed	OBC	M	March '95	Lect. Higher Secondary School (block level)
13	PTI	M.A. D.P.Ed	OBC	M	March '95	Sports Teacher, Higher Secondary School No.2

This evidence supports the comment made by a member of Udaipur DIET about DIETs in general:

> I think the DIET has lost its objectives. The right kind of people are not coming. Staff should be selected rather than coming here by promotion or transfer (RAJ/UDR/TT 06 June 1999).

3.4.2 Induction procedures

Induction procedures were not seen as satisfactory by any staff in our sample DIETs. In Rajasthan, there is an annual six day orientation training to which SIERT invites new recruits. Gujarat also had an induction programme. However, these programmes are not tailored to demand, so staff who had gone through induction reported that by the time it was conducted, they had already become familiar with the working of the DIET. These staff also felt that the induction is a theoretical orientation that did not assist much in guiding practice. In Madhya Pradesh, longer-serving staff remembered an induction, but more recent

appointees did not. The nature of induction procedures impacted heavily on DIET staff's understanding of their roles, explored later in this chapter.

Box 3.1 **If a teacher educator doesn't have the skills…**
"If you want to improve the quality of elementary education, you have to start with teacher educators. It will only go further if they are of quality. Particularly if you want to bring quality in elementary education. We think, bring quality in teachers then in teacher educators. What you should do is bring quality in teacher educators, only then would quality go to teacher. […] If the teacher educator doesn't have skills how is he going to give skills to teacher? Take an example of teaching swimming. I am teaching swimming, I don't know swimming. I draw a swimming pool on the blackboard. Show the students the pose for swimming and tell them, 'children, this is the pose for swimming, push your hands and legs'. This way I can't teach them swimming. This is the basic difference. If the trainer doesn't have skills how can he teach the teachers?"

3.4.3 Professional development for DIET staff

Professional development opportunities for DIET staff were observed to be very limited, although the need for such opportunities is recognised in policy documentation from the 1990s onwards (e.g. NAP 1996). Some development opportunities do exist: training for example in Planning and Management is offered at the national level, as is training for DIET Principals, but such courses are elective rather than mandatory. Effectively, as one former Lok Jumbish DIET principal in Rajasthan pointed out:

> Teachers in DIETs are assumed to be already trained and have the right to train teachers, but are in fact untrained so you have untrained teachers imparting training (personal communication Gupta, January 1999).

Occasional opportunities at State level tend to take the form of activities related to specific projects or training programmes and are content-related, rather than opportunities to enhance expertise and skills as a trainer. Typically, DIET staff are called to participate at State level as Key Resource Persons in the initial round of training for new programmes conducted in the cascade model. Another option is when DIET staff are invited to contribute to materials preparation at the State level. A trend observed across the DIETs was that usually the same small handful of DIET staff attended such events. These were more senior people who had established a good name for themselves, and whose input would be expected to be useful to the successful execution of the proposed programme. There is no specific provision for those who do not self elect in this way. Such opportunities tended thus to be appropriated as avenues for personal development rather than seen as a means of enriching the institutional portfolio. Surat DIET was the only DIET in

our sample that routinely made arrangements to ensure de-briefings for staff members who had not attended trainings; some element of this was also found in the Lok Jumbish DIET. Elsewhere, those in the DIET who would be involved in a cascade programme but did not attend training received no benefit at all from the discussions and training which a colleague had attended.

The research project was warmly welcomed by those staff who sought a professional development opportunity:

> We are working as practitioners. With you we will be able to share your experiences as educationalists and researchers. We will be able to share research experience and that's a big thing. This is our first need. We who are working in this faculty, for our own capacity-building there is nothing. We try to build our capacity and apply in the field. We learn from the people in the field and improve ourselves and again do it. Today this is the only thing we have for learning. Nothing else (RAJ/MAS TT01 25.1.99)

However, not everyone sought such opportunities. There were staff in all these DIETs, except Surat and Masuda, who were content to do the minimum of what they described as 'their duty', reflecting the 'government mentality' unfavourably commented on by some of the handpicked Lok Jumbish recruits.

Another avenue for professional development opportunities might have come through links with non-governmental organisations. The link between Masuda and the resource organisation for the Lok Jumbish programme was the only strong link in our sample: Surat DIET had explored possibilities but not found any relevant non-governmental organisations in the District. Indore DIET had been approached for help by a local non-governmental organisation working with slum children and collaboration possibilities were being explored. Udaipur, Santrampur and Dhar DIETs did not have any links with non-governmental organisations. The idea of linking DIETs with non-government organisations had, in these ways, been explored, but had not really flourished. Since the DIETs' developmental needs are diverse, it is likely that they could be better met by drawing on a network of non-government organisations, perhaps put together at the State level, who could provide support for DIETs within identified areas of their own expertise.

3.5 Activities of the DIET

3.5.1 Branch activities

As the project progressed, the research team found that the pre-service and in-service branches of the DIETs were active, but there were tensions in the other branches. These findings reflect the views of the teachers in the Gaamru and

Rajpur schools, and of teachers more widely, that the role of the DIET is a training institute. Pre- and in-service training are discussed in chapters 4 and 5 respectively, and this section focuses on the remaining branches of the DIETs.

Planning and management (P&M)

Planning and Management is seen as one of the most prestigious DIET branches and occupied by the most senior or most respected staff in all DIETs. However, none of them had any formal training in planning and management, or experience beyond what they had gained as former upper secondary teachers.

In addition to providing direct training in planning and management (for example to school Principals), this branch should help other branches with their planning and management to help the DIET run smoothly. This integration was absent in Udaipur and Dhar DIETs, but happened by default in Masuda and Surat DIETs because of short staffing. In Udaipur DIET, P&M would collect data about training programmes and compile them, but did not work with each branch to assist them in using those data; each branch would prepare its own plan independently. P&M should also maintain a teacher's profile of the district which is continuously updated and modified, and is an important planning instrument; its effectiveness is shaped by relationships with the Education Department which is responsible for deputing teachers for training (see chapter 6). P& M also collects data and information from the field about enrolment, retention, drop-out, and so on, to be shared with the relevant administrative offices. Use of these figures was made by Masuda DIET, via Lok Jumbish, and by Surat DIET, but in other DIETs these were not seen to be issues of the DIET's concern.

All P&M staff acknowledged a need for further training in this area.

District Resource Unit (DRU)

The DRU is intended as a resource centre for the District, reaching out via non-formal education, early childhood education, and collaboration with the Social Welfare and Tribal departments. Dhar DIET had one incumbent of its DRU. He was very active with the Madhya Pradesh Alternative Schooling / Educational Guarantee Scheme programmes and frequently called on in an individual capacity by DPEP as a resource person. At the other end of the scale, the DRU of Udaipur DIET was mainly concerned with training teachers in how to integrate population education into regular teaching: staff reported that these programmes have failed to make any impact: 'Two percent of the formal educational budget is spent on NFE and the output is also 2%'. Observation of their training programmes revealed a lecture-based approach to imparting the values of the module designers to teachers.

Educational Technology (ET)

The ET branch conducts training and workshops for teachers for developing low cost teaching learning materials, develops video material for training, and provides technical support to other departments during their programmes. Dhar DIET, which lacked even the basic technology of adequate staff toilets, had not been able to get funds to have its Xerox machine repaired for six months (personal communication, 21.6.99) but did have a satellite dish for teleconferencing. Staff members were unenthusiastic, saying they found the relevance of teleconferencing materials low for their District. Indore DIET was also a teleconferencing centre but it, in contrast, had an active ET branch, whose head was frequently called to the SCERT to contribute to tele-conferencing programme design. This DIET had a reputation for strong ET although this expertise remained individual and was not shared to develop an institutional resource.

In Udaipur DIET, the ET branch had developed a series of video cassettes and transparencies for training teachers in Hindi, Maths, English and science teaching. The research team looked in detail at the English videos. The videos were long, were not broken up into teaching sequences, and were used as an alternative to the teacher, rather than as a learning aid. The team made various suggestions along the lines of those discussed in chapter 9. These were well received by Udaipur DIET staff, whose professional development in this area had been technically rather than pedagogically oriented.

Surat DIET had a well established ET branch. One of the main uses to which this had been put was in making links with local TV, so that coverage of DIET activities was regular. This helped the DIET gain and maintain a high profile and visibility for its activities in the District. Elsewhere, there was an enthusiasm for the technology, but there was a tendency to see this technology as an end in itself, rather than as a means of supporting learning.

Curriculum, materials development and evaluation (CMDE)

According to the DIET guidelines, the CMDE branch should develop new locally relevant curricular units in dialects and work with the District Resource Unit. There was no evidence across the DIETs of work on curriculum development. Similarly, nothing was to be found in these DIETs on developing the methods of formative evaluation that are crucial to the competency-based approach. All CMDE branches focused on the production of teaching-learning materials, samples of which were displayed in the DIET. These teaching-learning materials generally comprised a single aid rather than multiple sets, and were therefore primarily teaching, rather than learning, aids. Many elaborate teaching-learning materials were made with only a single application. The DIETs' approach to

teaching-learning materials reflected the problems encountered also by DPEP, where in keeping with the content-dominant model of teaching, teaching-learning materials have themselves become content - an end in themselves, rather than a means to support learning. DIET staff themselves needed support in relating teaching-learning materials to their pedagogical uses.

In-service programmes, field interaction and innovation co-ordination (IFIC)

The IFIC branch conducts in-service training programmes that are not directly related to a particular branch, such as the national programme of Special Orientation for Primary Teachers, Action Research workshop for teachers, orientation programmes or resource persons of in-service programmes, etc. This branch was active in all DIETs and is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Work experience department (WE)

In all the DIETs in our sample, the WE branch had a very low profile. In Udaipur DIET, it was acknowledged that teachers attend programmes for the sake of it, and application in the field is negligible. This notion of work experience can be traced back to Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Basic Education which intended to dignify manual labour and give it a place in the formal school curriculum; it has been carried forward through Socially Useful and Productive Work in pre-service training (the activity of which, in keeping with the Gandhian tradition, has often been spinning). There is a need to reconceptualise work experience within the contemporary context.

3.5.2 Understandings of the functions of the branches, and of the DIET

In Madhya Pradesh, there were nominally 11 branches. The research team found however that, in common with Udaipur DIET in Rajasthan, this had little meaning for DIET staff as there were gaps in staff's understandings about the functions of the branches, as well as the intention of the DIET as an institute. Some staff lacked familiarity with the aims and intentions of the branch in which they worked, or their roles within it. The further away the branch from 'traditional' training pre-occupations, the less faculty members seemed to comprehend it. Everyone in the DIET was fully aware of the functions of the pre-service branch; but the roles and functions of, for example, Planning & Management and of the Curriculum and Materials Development branches were poorly understood, both by its own members and by other faculty as well. The training role of the DIET was familiar but other aspects, such as proactive outreach into the District, programme evaluation, and action research, were not readily cited.

Where there were limited understandings of roles, staff members were unable to be proactive in developing the profile of their branch. This left them

underemployed, which fuelled disinterest. A staff member of the Work Experience branch of Udaipur DIET said, for example:

> Here most of the time we have little work. We train teachers, give talks etc. Teachers do not come for training. I am more interested in school (RAJ/UDR TT 05, June 1999).

Staff were aware that this combination of factors left them unable to make the DIET work properly. In these three DIETs, staff held the parent institution responsible. Indore's Vice-Principal commented:

> In DIETs they have made branches but the SCERT is not even giving the training one requires for that. Work is not going to happen just by making branches. […] They tell us these are the functions but to make it function we require training programmes, which we are not getting. Because of this we feel we are backward in the area (MP/IND VP 4.2.99).

In these three DIETs, few members of staff were familiar with the NPE 1986/92, the document that identified the directions and rationales for the national policy on teacher development and quality improvements in elementary education. This meant that some DIET staff had limited understanding of how the programmes they were delivering fitted together to make their specific contributions to bringing closer the over-arching policy goals.

The project provided Udaipur, Indore and Dhar DIETs with a two day workshop each, to clarify the roles of the DIET, its branches, and how they relate to policy intentions. Reflecting on this workshop, one participant said:

> TT02 I felt very happy that this type of workshop was conducted in Dhar DIET. The person who came was very knowledgeable. He had knowledge of all the things, specially about all the 11 branches and also he talked about each branch, its functions and the work that the DIET does.
>
> VA Did you find it useful in relation to your branch?
>
> TT02 That is what I am saying. He explained about the 11 branches and there was quite a bit of information that we did not know. Till now we did not meet a person who could have given us the information about the branches (MP/DHA/ TT02 31.9.99).

There was no such lack of clarity in Masuda DIET, because of the Lok Jumbish interaction, nor in Gujarat. Santrampur had earlier been involved in training for DPEP and the role of the branches had been clarified through that experience; in Surat DIET, the Principal had been proactive in orientating staff himself to the purposes and role of the DIET and staff members within it.

3.5.3 Isolation of branches

Except in Masuda and Surat DIETs, branches tended to operate individually and with little or no cross-fertilisation of ideas or needs from one to another. There was generally a pronounced divide between the pre- and in-service branches, and the overriding target of the pre-set branch was on completing the certificate course:

> In pre-service training there is a syllabus, the full force is towards finishing it. That has to be done (RAJ/MAS VP Aug 99).

This was regretted by students who saw the potentially wider scope of studying in a DIET:

> So many trainings are conducted in the DIET. So we would like whatever new things are given to in-service teachers to find a place in our syllabus. I mean innovations in teaching (MP/IND/2nd year PSTE st. 26.12.99).

In Masuda and Surat DIETs, there was some integration - in part as an outcome of short staffing which necessitated more flexibility across branches; but also because it was actively promoted. The Vice-Principal of Masuda DIET said:

> Pre-service students do get a chance to see how in-service training is going on. We also give training of this type to them. They also see teachers, see the attitude of teachers and in a way learn something like how teachers are participating and that they have to do the same things in future. Besides this, it is quite possible that they learn from weaknesses that such and such things are problems of an education department. We also discuss with them about the attitude of a teacher being a problem and that this shouldn't happen with them […] Now from the time the DIET has come under LJ, we have of course attempted to conduct at least one programme a year on MLLs, which is what we give to in-service teachers, so they [pre-set trainees] know about the attitude of teachers which LJ expects them to adopt, which they have to adopt – then probably they won't need such training in future (RAJ/MAS VP 25.8.99).

This DIET, like Surat, used the DIET potential to keep pre-service trainees abreast with latest developments and in dialogue with serving teachers – two benefits that are not available to trainees in an isolated pre-set College. A further benefit of doing this is to overcome the gap between the pre-set course and innovations in school which was pronounced in Rajasthan, where MLLs for example are not included in the pre-set course.

3.6 Leadership in the DIET

3.6.1 The post and role of the Principal

DIET staff unanimously felt that the institution could not function well without a Principal, who is very influential and sets the tone for the Institute:

TT08 The chair directs the whole DIET. The DIET works according to the chair. The initiation is always from the chair. If the chair looks forward, the DIET will move forward. If it looks backwards, the DIET goes backwards (RAJ/UDR/TT 08 June 99).

Good leadership is seen to require strengths in both the academic and administrative domains. Few candidates match the criteria for the post (the academic qualification of a PhD, plus high civil service ranking). DIET staff reported that Principals rarely managed to combine both, and tended towards an administrative orientation. This led to the following issue:

The problem with the DIET is that it is not directed by people who have academic thinking (RAJ/UDR TT 018 June 1999).

Furthermore, if the Principal did not understand the academic work s/he could, in the name of containing expenditures, put administrative obstacles in the way of staff who did try to go to the field; for example by questioning entitlement to Travel and Daily Allowances, overnight stay arrangements, and transportation issues. A recruit from a non-government organisation who had had a term as Principal in Indore DIET reported that one reason he felt he had not been able to make the expected impact was his relatively limited understanding of, and patience for, bureaucratic procedures.

3.6.2 Joint charge and acting Principals

Few DIETs in the sample had satisfactory Principal appointments. In Indore DIET, 12 Principals had come and gone between the inception of the DIET in 1988 and March 2001, and this included acting Principals (the Vice Principal) and joint-charge Principals (the District Education Officer takes up DIET leadership as well). During the project term in Udaipur DIET, the Principal's post was occupied by two Vice Principals, with one Principal posted in between for about two months prior to his retirement from service. Dhar DIET had both an acting Principal (the Vice Principal) and a joint-charge Principal during the project term. Both sample DIETs in Gujarat had Principals. The post of Principal in the Lok Jumbish DIET was filled through competitive selection.

The temporary solutions of joint charge and acting Principals each have drawbacks. The District Education Officer role is more prestigious and long established, and the DIET is an additional charge, so is allocated less time. This and the administrative orientation of the District Education Officer was observed to lead to a focus on clearing paperwork, rather than academically orientated planning for teacher development. The Vice Principal, ranked only equal to his/her peers, and known to be only in-charge, is not of a sufficiently high civil service

grade to be able to complete all administrative matters internally, as s/he has to seek for certain activities signatures from senior-ranking officers outside the DIET in order to run the DIET. This undermines the functioning of the DIET both internally, and from the outside.

While in the other two States the issue was unresolved, Gujarat had created an administrative solution - 'ad hoc' postings. The ad hoc route allows an interested teacher who wants to work in a more senior capacity in a DIET but does not have the requisite qualification to opt for a DIET post – but at the cost of civil service security. The Surat DIET Principal explained:

P They resign from there and after 6 months here they are dismissed as it's a 6 months ad hoc senior lecturer post. When the word 'ad hoc' comes it's obvious that they won't come. With ad hoc there are problems like you don't get leave or increment. So as soon as those who were ad hoc got a chance somewhere else they left here and went. When GPSC last issued appointments for class 2 education officers as [school] principals, 8-10 colleagues from different DIETs left and joined there. Our senior lecturer who was here also went to school. In other places they get security and steadiness so they will go - it's but natural.

A So at present there is no provision to take them permanently in the DIET?

P Here the Principal is ad hoc and a senior lecturer is also ad hoc. Junior lecturers are secure (GUJ/SUR Prin 18.1.01).

The ad hoc arrangement suits people such as this Principal who are not averse to taking a risk:

> Here I got a space. Things I wanted to do, things which I couldn't do, something I thought but couldn't do.. I got the opportunity to do everything here. Means whatever dreams I had seen here I got an opportunity to make them come true (GUJ/SUR Prin 22.12.00)

3.6.3 'Distributed' leadership

In Indore and Dhar DIETs, while there was instability at the Principal level, stability and leadership emerged from a different quarter – a group of senior lecturers. In Indore DIET they had been able to put their DIET on the District's educational map but they did not enjoy the authority to carry all staff with them.

In Dhar DIET, there was three highly proactive staff members. The contribution they could make was also recognised by the DPEP, and offered them interesting opportunities. However, the nature of the DPEP relationship with this DIET meant that they were drawn as individuals into DPEP initiatives, rather than into developing the institutional profile of their DIET.

3.7 DIET staff's perceptions of constraints to effective functioning

In workshops with the research team, DIET staff themselves raised with a number of concerns that, in their view, presented constraints to their effective functioning. The concerns raised were broad and general, and similar across the DIETs:

1. Facilities in Udaipur, Indore and Dhar DIETs were seen to be lacking: so for example in Udaipur DIET, the Planning and Management branch listed: 'Expectation: we want modern facilities like computer, training package, other instruments, vehicle for the Dept. etc. Apart from this we need more rooms, separate lecturers' rooms with full facilities' (July 1999).
2. Poor facilities and high teacher: student ratio in schools
3. Need to change the pre-set curriculum to make it more relevant
4. Attitude of teachers: no motivation, teachers don't think teaching is important
5. Low content knowledge of all teachers, including para teachers
6. Training packages developed outside the DIET have no flexibility but have to be delivered as a total package
7. Need for support and development for DIET staff themselves through training, exposure visits
8. Teachers need skills in working with communities to stress the importance of education and sending children to school regularly

While the concerns were common across the DIETs, there was variation in attitudes to those concerns. In relation to the DIET as an agent of change, this variation illustrates differing levels of institutional agency, ownership and responsibility. In Dhar and Udaipur DIETs, and among some staff in Santrampur, Masuda and Indore DIETs, there was a tendency to interpret the issues they noted as things they could do nothing about. As a result, they located responsibility for any remedial action elsewhere. Udaipur DIET for example had identified limited use of teaching learning materials in schools as an area of concern; yet the final solution is a systemic change that can only be effected by the Education Department:

> Goal: Whatever TLA are made in this department should be used in schools as much as possible. As many teachers as possible should get involved in the programme to improve the quality of primary education and to make the training programmes more effective. To achieve this goal: for training and development of TLA, the training programmes should be conducted at the school cluster level. For this, 30-40 school clusters should be made in the area (RAJ/UDR July 1999).

These DIET staff rarely made connections between, for example, a high student: teacher ratio and the relevance of training inputs they gave; or whether teachers

had classroom management skills to try out suggested innovations in crowded schoolrooms – which were within their purview. While they acknowledged that their training programmes could have more impact, they did not cast themselves in proactive roles to address this issue. The list of concerns noted above came down to two key issues: the need to improve physical infrastructure was one, but the paramount 'problem' and root cause for the failure of their hard work to yield the expected results was teachers' perceived unwillingness and lack of motivation to implement training. This was summarised by a staff member in Indore:

> By the time they receive training they develop a habit of teaching. After that it doesn't matter how many trainings we give, they will do the same once they go back. We don't have fundamental working conditions. We don't have school, classroom, duster, blackboard, drinking water. Look here in this institute, there is so much noise here we want to talk but we can't hear each other. In reality near schools, colleges and hospitals there shouldn't be any noise. We are facing problems while talking. Until we have improved working conditions how can we improve all the things. There are so many other factors that our approach doesn't work at all. The first thing is to improve this. We are doing what we can but we don't have confidence after doing all the things. We also face the same problem, we are also not confident that the scheme we are giving will reach them, and from them, the students. For SSP all the staff are working so hard but the results it should give them are not coming. We also don't understand why it's not coming. The reason is the person who has to deliver it is not right [i.e. the teacher]. People who have been working for the last 20-25 years have their own methods and it's very difficult to change them (MP/IND/TT 014 4.2.99).

These 'commonsense' reasons served as rationales to explain perceived low levels of implementation of training messages. In contrast with these perceptions was the view of the majority of Surat DIET staff that the DIET did have a role to play in addressing these concerns, along with other educational institutions in the District, and that the DIET was there to support teachers.

3.8 Policy implications

Appropriate staffing of DIETs has been compromised by recruitment policies that do not match individuals to job specifications. The double Master's norm does not emerge as a crucial qualification for elementary teacher educators. This is to some extent recognised:

> It has to be acknowledged that M Ed provides only theoretical background and orientation in some research techniques. It does not prepare teacher educators for educating teachers. It does not train trainers (NCTE 1998b: 53).

It also does not equip them with the pedagogical understandings they need for elementary education. Paper qualifications are seen as a guarantee of standards (personal communication, Director NCTE October 2002). An underlying theme of this recruitment norm is the idea that hard, scientific knowledge is superior to soft, practitioner wisdom. The evidence presented here illustrates the low validity of this assumption in relation to understanding teaching and learning at the elementary level; the rationales teachers have for acting the way they do (as illustrated, for example, in chapter two); and the complex processes of changing practices – all of which an effective DIET is required to do.

The government procedures of transferring personnel broadly within the 'service' is shown here to be problematic, in that it imposes a civil service norm of generalism within a sphere that demands recognition of specific professional identities. Gujarat has set an encouraging example of reviewing the fit between the initial guidelines and its requirements, leading to a change in recruitment norms. In making permanent appointments to the DIET (so far at the level of the Lecturers) it has begun to promote the DIET as a significant educational entity which is not interchangeable with secondary schools, and for which specific professional expertise is required.

While this is an encouraging movement towards seeing teacher educators as the specialists they are, there remains in all three States a gap in recruitment. The competencies and skills required of teacher educators do not form the basis of recruitment procedures (even for revised procedures initiated in Gujarat or by the Lok Jumbish). The need to base recruitment on identified competencies for DIET staff, rather than generic educational qualifications, is urgently indicated, and there is further discussion of this in chapter ten.

Induction for newly appointed staff has been cursory, and opportunities for professional development are very limited. The result of this, demonstrated in our sample, has been that some staff simply did not know enough about their post and the expectations from it to engage with fulfilling an adequate role. This did not allow them to develop a stake in their work, and this hinders the emergence of the DIET as a fertile environment for the generation and application of local knowledge, innovations, or academic exchange. Recruits to a DIET are not making a minor career change. Elementary teacher educators need pedagogical understandings, social awareness, and adult educator skills that are different from those of secondary school teachers. Professional development for DIET staff once in post to help them develop those understandings and skills is a pre-requisite for DIETs if they are to take up the roles envisaged for them under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The organisation of the DIET into branches, which has tended to lead to compartmentalisation within the institute, may be counterproductive. The reorganisation of DIETs into subject areas may be an alternative, providing that emphasis is put on the need for subject specialists to have knowledge, skills and understandings in the areas that formerly comprised branches, i.e. curriculum, planning and management, and so on; and increase the emphasis, required to make the competency approach work, on learning outcomes and evaluation.

This chapter has also drawn attention to the importance of institutional agency, ownership and responsibility in relation to DIET instrumentality in bringing about educational change, and identified the lack of professional development opportunities as an important omission in trying to build these essential aspects of a successfully functioning decentralised teacher education institute.

Chapter 4 Pre-service Education

4.1 Introduction

Both case studies presented in Chapter One illustrate the continuing dominance of a 'transmission' model of teaching. This model sees the learner as an empty vessel into which selected knowledge, represented in the textbooks, should be poured. This approach to education casts the learner as a passive recipient of the expert knowledge of others. Elements of this were clearly seen in the ways in which teachers in Gaamru and Rajpur schools interacted with children, and perceived learning.

The competency-based approach to learning still sets benchmarks for what should be learned, but recognises that each learner brings something different to the classroom, and has individual learning needs. This approach to learning is new to elementary schooling in India and runs counter to the practices of many teachers – such as Veena, Ruchi and Asha. It also post-dates the educational experiences of student teachers, who in their own schooling have not been exposed to the practical aspects and underlying philosophy of the competency-based approach, with its stress on learning. They need to gain this exposure through their pre-service training. This chapter discusses the processes and model of pre-service training observed in the DIETs, and the extent to which they prepare emergent teachers to respond to contemporary classroom situations.

In response to the concerns about teacher quality, all sample States have considered steps to reform pre-service training. Rajasthan has proposed that all teachers in years one and two be para teachers; its final formal pre-service course ran in 1999, so that from 2001 the pre-service wing of the DIET could focus on the training of para-teachers, while the State focuses on reformulating the formal course. Gujarat revised its pre-set course during 1997-98; this State appoints only fully qualified teachers as para teachers so no extra courses are necessary for them. Madhya Pradesh continues to run its regular pre-service programme, correspondence courses and a conversion course to regularise para-teachers who have served for over three years. We restrict our focus here to teachers who take the full pre-service training (see Box A1 in Annex 1 for a discussion of para teachers).

4.1 Student teacher intake

Government training places are heavily subsidised, and cheaper than private colleges. Two categories of places exist: 'general' and 'special reserved'. Special reserved places are filled with candidates from the social groups who enjoy the protective discrimination of the state. In Rajasthan, for example, the entry

requirement of 50+ plus at Higher Secondary Certificate is relaxed to 40% for those candidates. In 1999 in Udaipur DIET, there were 71 'special reserved' places: among them, 15% of trainees achieved over 60% in HSC, 50% had 50-60%, and 35% scored between 40-50%. In the 'general' batch, there are also reservations and these account for 70% of general seats; leading to fierce competition for the remaining places, which are then filled by candidates scoring 80-85% at HSC. Top marks among reserved candidates did not exceed 65%. In Indore DIET in Madhya Pradesh, staff reported that many reserved seats were going unoccupied, but could not be filled by available candidates from the general category.

The generous proportion of places for protected social groups is an indicator of state proaction for social equity. However, it simultaneously raises issues in relation to teacher quality when about a third of student teachers have only just passed their higher secondary school certificate; and about reservations policy when in Madhya Pradesh, which has relatively large proportions of untrained teachers, valuable training places remain unoccupied. Both were a matter of concern for staff in DIETs across our sample.

4.2 The pre-service course

4.2.1 Course content and organisation

Pre-service training is a two year course, during which a student is required to register a minimum attendance of about 80%. The course students were following during project observations consisted of three core elements: theory, teaching practice, and practicals.

Box 4.1 illustrates the organisation of the course in Rajasthan during the project period. As in the other States, it is heavily weighted towards subject content: practice teaching accounts for less than a quarter of the available points in the first year, and drops to a fifth in the second year. The course organisation, similar in all sample States, reflects a model of initial teacher education that puts theory and practice in opposition to one another, valuing 'theoretical' and content aspects far more highly than the development a teacher's 'craft' knowledge. This dichotomy is reflected in student teachers' views:

> Theory is only for studying. We study and pass the exam. If we do practical work, we will benefit more. How well a teacher can teach is what is important. Theory does not come into that (RAJ/UDR 1st yr.sts).

Box 4.1: **the PRESET course and marks in Rajasthan (up to 2001)**

First Year (focus on school Stds. 1-5)				
Paper No.	**Subjects**	**Internal**	**External**	**Total**
1.	Principles of education	25	75	100
2.	Educational Psychology	25	75	100
3.	Special paper (any one) from options a – e	25	75	100
a.	Early Childhood Education			
b.	Population education			
c.	Educational Technology			
d.	NFE and Adult education teaching			
e.	Education of children with special needs			
4.	Hindi	25	75	100
5.	Maths	25	75	100
6.	Environmental studies (physical & social environment	25	75	100
7.	Physical and Health Education	25	75	100
8.	Socially Useful Productive Work / Work Experience	25	75	100
		200	600	800
Practical work				
1.	Physical Education	50		
2.	SUPW	50		
3.	Art Education	50		
4.	Moral Education	50		
		200		200
Practice Teaching		100	200	300
Integrated Marks				
1.	Theory	200	600	800
2.	Teaching practice	100	200	300
3.	Practical	200	–	200
Total				**1300**

Second Year (focus on school Stds. 6-8)				
Paper No.	**Subjects**	**Internal**	**External**	**Total**
1.	School administration	25	75	100
2.	Hindi	25	75	100
3.	English	25	75	100
4.	Third language Sanskrit	25	75	100
5.	Maths	25	75	100
6.	Social Science	25	75	100
7.	Science	25	75	100
8.	Art Education teaching	25	75	100
		200	600	800
Practical work				
1.	Phy. Education	50	–	50
2.	SUPW	50	–	50
3.	Art Education	50	–	50
4.	Moral Education	50	–	50
				200
Integrated Marks				
1.	Theory	200	600	800
2.	Teaching Practice	100	200	300
3.	Non format Ed. Teching	100	–	100
4.	Capsule preparation	–	100	100
5.	Practical work	200	–	200
Total		**600**	**900**	**1500**

Course work is marked, and there is a summative examination at the end of each year. Students reported that passing this is largely a matter of study technique, as by selective preparation of topics carrying more marks and careful selection of options in the exam, it is relatively easy to pass. A newly-qualified teacher may thus know only about a third of the curriculum content. This helps explain why teachers' subject competence remains a quality issue. A DIET lecturer explained how this cycle is perpetuated:

> In English, the comprehension part carries ten marks and tense and clause carry only one mark. The students prepare the unseen passage and leave tense and clause. During their school education, the teachers keep shifting the burden. In the 6th Std. the teacher feels it is for the Std. 8 teacher to teach tense. The 8th Std. teacher feels it should have been taught in the 6th Std. When [the student] reaches the 10th Std. the teacher feels it is too late to teach clause or tense. A student does not get to study these topics. After he has joined STC, he himself feels 'why study tense or clause when I get only one mark'? So he skips them and instead he studies the other topics. Again he is unclear on what tense is. When he goes to the field to teach he just leaves the topic (RAJ/UDR/TT4 October 2000).

In Gujarat, the pre-set course was revised in 1999 (see Annex 3). Development of the new course was intended to be a participatory exercise with DIETs[10]. A five day training programme took place in 1998 for all pre-service college / DIET principals and senior lecturers, but it was reported from Santrampur that it was delivered via 'Lecture method plus group discussion. For some parts the question method was used. No TLM were used' (GUJ/SNT/TT 01 15.9.99). The pre-service course in the other two States lagged behind changes that were occurring in schools, notably in the failure to introduce students to the idea of competencies. Proaction by the DIETs was required to avoid this. In Indore DIET, staff had prepared their own materials to ensure that students knew of packages being presented to in-service teachers; and in Masuda DIET staff ensured that students were familiar with the idea of competencies although this was not in the pre-set curriculum. Adopting a less proactive role, Dhar and Udaipur DIETs delivered the course as set.

[10] GCERT invited each DIET to contribute one module, to be collated at the State level and discussed, prior to issuing a consolidated syllabus. DIETs submitted their modules; but at the same time a funded contract for the work was issued from a different quarter to a local university. Before any official modules could appear, a series of privately published guides reflecting the university modules appeared on the market. During observation, DIETs were coping with the fall-out of this.

Box 4.2: **Hindi language teaching, first year, Indore DIET 3.3.00**

Topic revision of 'swar' [vovel] Attendance 12[g] and 8[b] out of 33
TT= teacher trainer

11.50 [period starts from 11.10 but he wasn't there till 11.55.

TT Sound is necessary to convey our expression. Communication conveys our expression to others. So for communication sound is vital. How can we find the place of the sounds 't', 'th', 'd', 'dh', 'l'? The tungue contracts. See where is it touching. 'sh' and 'ssh' have '*murdhanya*' and '*talvya*' '*sparsh dwani*'. '*Swaichchik* means with one's own wish '*swechcha se*'. [he gets up and goes to BB to write 'swaichchik.' Students are listening not writing]. Can you tell me symbols?

St2 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,

TT So symbols are given for identification. We have classified alphabet into how many classes? Like 'p' *verg* and 'f' *verg*. So how many '*verg*' are Hindi alphabets divided into?

12.00 St 'Ch', 'P', 't', 'k', 'f'.

TT Ch', 'P', 't', 'k', 'f'. How to write the art of speaking was a difficulty for man. You must have seen pictorial script of China and Mohenjodaro. Still now one knows about the script and its meaning. Pictorial script has more alphabets which are not easy to remember. Some pictures can be used to represent different words with one picture. In symbolic languages like English and Hindi alphabets are fewer. How do we write 'road' in Hindi? Some people put a dot below 'd' which is not proper. Similarly in Urdu script people put 'zabar', and 'z' below alphabet. This has been adopted in Hindi script. But while reading people don't read 'zabbar' [these are dots put under a letter].

Students start to write in their note book.

12.05 'Is' translated into Hindi doesn't have an exact pronounciation. People who study English through Hindi usually have a different English accent. We need to revise the Hindi alphabet. Similarly a computer which types Hindi language ca not type nasal sounds and '*anuswar*' [one which has half moon with a dot on it]. Kansh, Hansh becomes Hasna with '*anunasik*' Hansna

[students still writing.] In Hindi we have half letters which we don't emphasise while speaking. Like if a Sindhi talks in Hindi he will always stress the last word. How can we speak 'iswar' in its pure form? We won't speak 'r' fully. A Sindhi will put stress it. Tell me how a Sindhi will say 'iswar'?

[students are quiet]. 'Iswarrr'. When a consonant is after a vowel than the consonant has a mixed vowel sound. Vedas were transferred from one generation to another. Not in a written form but by recitation so Vedas are called what?

St Veda

[to the student] oh dear…even girls can tell you, is there no girl in this class with that name? Shruti. Language has a colloquial form. Animals' language cannot have any form so we can't understand their language. My period is over.

12.20 [he sits there] In the beginning I dictated 12-13 pages to you. I will take the test from those pages. The test will be within 1-2 days. A committee will prepare the time table. Tentatively it will be on Tuesday..

[He leaves the class and I start talking with the students. Two students had B.A. guide. I asked them why they had them. They told me this year they are appearing for 1st year B.A. I asked P about those 12-13 pages which were mentioned in the class. He didn't have it so I asked the girls who had some written pages but they weren't sure they were the same. The students told me teachers dictate Hindi lessons.]

4.2.2 How the transmission approach to teaching is sustained

Observations of pre-service training across all States illustrated, and further interviews with students confirmed, that despite the now well established notions of 'child-centred, activity-based' education, pre-set is dominated by lecturing, with students sitting in rows taking notes. Boxes 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate processes of pre-set language teaching observed in Indore DIET, and reveal a significant gap between the language issues facing teachers in complex dialect environments and the 'theoretical' approach to language instruction given to those who will soon be teaching in those environments. Similar approaches to training were observed in all the sample DIETs.

Not only content refreshment is taught in this way: pedagogy – which is separated from content - is too. Pedagogy consists of familiarising student teachers with a set of 'methods' (for example introduction, questioning, blackboard, giving examples, reinforcement and so on) through which to deliver content. After the lecturer has modelled the skills involved in delivering a lesson, each student teaches a micro lesson of 5-10 minutes, focusing on one skill, to 10-12 peers acting as school students. S/he is observed by a further 3-4 of his peers and a lecturer, who give feedback. This could present an opportunity to talk about practice; but feedback did not encourage this, and comprised instead remarks such as 'The lesson was interesting / the lesson was difficult / I did not understand the concept'. At the beginning of their course, trainees felt that micro-teaching helped them gain confidence in skills they would need in classrooms, but second year students felt that as the same thing was repeated, it was 'just a formality'. Students reported that staff preferred to inform them about the various steps of a method, rather than model them. Thus methods themselves are delivered as content, rather than being modelled for students by the trainer, and practised by students:

S2 Lecturers ask us to apply practical teaching more but nobody here actually demonstrates the methods to us. They just tell us about the various methods. After that it is our perception and understanding which we apply

S3 They tell us once and then revise it. Similarly whatever they write on the black board, they revise it two three times therefore it settles in our head (RAJ/UDR/2nd yr sts).

Students also comment on a discrepancy between what DIET staff ask them to do, and what they do themselves:

> DIET teachers do not demonstrate lessons the way they ask us to prepare. You were present on that day when Sir was giving a lesson on cells. You know what happened that day? He did not prepare a lesson plan. He can't even demonstrate the lesson properly (MP/I/2nd yr st 26.12.99).

The competency-based approach requires not only a broader repertoire of methods, but relating a chosen method to a learning outcome, which can be assessed to evaluate student progress. This was not observed in any DIET's pre-set training. Students understood competencies to be either lesson aims, or content.

RM Do you know about MLLs?
St.1 No.
R What is a competency?
St.1 What we teach students. How much a child has achieved.
St.2 A competency is what we have to bring in students (MP/I/ 2nd yr sts 26.12.99).

They were not able to identify to the research team a learning outcome, choose a method or methods by which this might be taught, or explain the basis for making the link between the two.

Box 4.3: **English language teaching, first year, Indore DIET, Madhya Pradesh, 26.2.2000**

2.10 Deepa enters the class and closes the door. She asks one boy, whose name she doesn't know, to give her the guide. She tells me so many trainees are coming to the DIET, what is the significance of a name?

21 out of 33 students are present. [Normally only 9-10 students are present in the class. DIET staff feels students are not interested. Most of the students also join other courses while at the DIET. DIET feels they lack the attitude of taking Pre-set training as they don't have government job security. Students feel teachers don't turn up in the class. They teach from a guide, which they can buy from the market. Teacher give dictation notes in the class from the guide book. So they are not interested to come to the class.]

Deepa E ... *Ladke* (A boy) I want Prakash Prakashn not Vidya Prakashan [name of the guide publishers].

She turns the pages and asks students 'what do you want to study? Sts look at her.

2.15 Deepa We will learn how to use 'A' 'An' and 'the'. Write down on the paper.

She starts dictating from the Guide. All students except one are writing in their notebooks.

Deepa 'A' and 'an' are indefinite articles. 'A' is used before consonants and 'an' is used before vowels. If you are not familiar with them, they are a, e, i,o,u. You can note down for example, 'A man' and 'An elephant'.

St 1 When to use 'an' ?

Deepa See 'M' is a consonant and 'E' is a vowel so 'a' for 'm' and 'an' for 'e'. [Students are writing the explanation] Language is a traditional thing. No one thinks before using language for example prepositions like 'at' and ' in' . There is confusion, some people may use 'at' and some may use 'in'. There is no hard and fast rule. Rules do not exist in English. In India Hindi is our main language. So 'a' and 'an' are indefinite articles and 'the' is a definite article. [she starts reading from the book]

Box 4.3: **English language teaching, first year, Indore DIET, Madhya Pradesh, 26.2.2000** *continued*

St 1 How ?

Deepa 'The sun' , 'the moon', I mean a speciality. 'The' is used before a common noun. Like 'the man', 'the rose' [she reads from the book]. For example many flowers are blooming. [use of 'the'?].

2.20 [she reads] We use the article 'the', when the entire class is shown by singular noun. [Class is quiet]

St 4 How can you say that this is a speciality?

Deepa 'The Gulabjanum', 'the koprapak' [names of sweets]. It depends on an individual whether he uses an adjective or an article. [I felt confused and students were passive but looked confused and puzzled]. [Deepa reads an example from the book] 'The valley', 'the mountains', such small things are also included. Note down these examples too [she reads] 'The Ganga', 'The Yamuna', 'The red sea'. Use 'the' before objects which are different, names of historical places.

2.25 Students are writing quietly.

Deepa 'The' is used before religious books 'the Ramayan', 'the Quran'. Next to the names of season, names of newspapers for example 'The Indian express', 'the winter', and 'the summer'. [She reads] use of 'the' before adjective. 'The' is used for special. 'The rich' should help 'the poor'. In 'the rich' all the rich people are included. [Students are noting down] 'The' is used with superlative and comparative degree, for example 'the sooner' you go 'the better' it is. [Students repeat after her]

2.30 [Deepa repeats] There is no hard and fast rule in English. See Hindi changes every 50 kms. We can use 'the' before names of trains 'rel'. (M.G is reading from the book. [Student are looking in each other's books and taking notes. I do not know what she is teaching]. She pauses. Students look up at her. She turns the pages.

Deepa The article is finished now.

A minority of lecturers was observed trying to develop a more participatory approach by throwing a topic open for discussion and asking for suggestions from students; or by creating a situation and asking them to react and respond to it. To some extent this is thwarted by the students' focus on gaining marks, since they view classroom discussion as a diversion from the 'real' work of learning content for written tests. It is also difficult for a few lecturers to sustain this approach if it is not shared by all colleagues.

4.2.3 Student teachers' expectations of the applicability of training

This training model, with its inherent limitations, is likely to become yet more

limited in practice. Student teachers do not believe that they will anyway put into practice what they have learned, and feel they most likely to imitate the models of their own teachers regardless of their training:

S1 It does not happen in the way we are trained here, or the way we teach in practice teaching, it does not happen that way in the field. The way they are giving us training in different skills nobody uses them there. They teach their own way.

NN Why?

S4 They get conditioned like other teachers and…

S2 When they go there they think – we will get the salary anyhow.

S3 The main problem is the mentality. Our teachers used to teach us in one way. For twelve years, we watched our teachers teach us in the old method. Sometimes teaching, sometimes not - then we will learn more from those twelve years than these two years of our training. We have been conditioned like that. Whether we want to or not we will just use that (RAJ/UDR/1st yr sts).

Here we are forced to prepare a lesson plan. In the classroom we cannot go beyond the lesson plan. I do not feel that lesson plan preparation is feasible in practice (MP/I/ 2nd yr st 26.12.99).

Box 4.4: **Learning to be a teacher: practice lesson by a second year trainee to year 6 students, SNT 5.9.00**

T today we have to learn the lesson of '*Talwar no varasdar*'.

[He writes the lesson name and date on the blackboard: Subject: Gujarati; Sub-subject: *Talwar no varasdaar*]

There are 20 students. 8 boys and 12 girls. They take out their textbooks.

T I am reading a poem. You listen. It is a long poem but we will read it.

3:16 He opens and reads out the whole poem. Children are looking at the book, some are looking around. 3 boys do not have textbooks so they are sharing with the neighbour. The poem was quite long.

[It is in a Kathiawadi dialect]. He reads out the whole poem. After this….

T what do you mean by sits and watches?

T [He answers himself] it means watching while resting.

He begins to read every line again and explain the meaning of the words.

T '*mara bapu ne be-be kuvaria*' means two brothers. '*be-be ne padia bhag*' means dividing between two brothers.

He explains all the sentences, giving synonyms of difficult words and writing them the board.

3:23 Few students are listening to him or paying attention to what he is saying. Some are are writing synonyms from the textbooks, some are talking, some are turning

Box 4.4: **Learning to be a teacher: practice lesson by a second year trainee to year 6 students, SNT 5.9.00** *continued*

the pages of textbook and looking at it. One girl puts something in her bag. Boys talk in the groups and again fall silent, listen to a few words, again start talking. Meanwhile the trainee continues to read and explain the story to them.

3:32 students are writing synonyms in their slates and notebooks.

T now I will ask you questions.

He starts asking questions…

T Where does Viraji hang his sword?

Ans: on his waist. (7 students finger up that they know the answer)

T how many sons has Bapu?

Ans: 2 (11 students)

T what does elder brother ask for from his father?

Ans: land (5)

T what does the younger brother ask for from his father?

Ans: sword

When elder brothers take rest in the palace what does the younger brother do?

Girl answers: he goes for battle.

T goes for battle?

Girl: no. goes for hunting.

T where does he sleep?

Ans: in mountains.

T at that time where does elder brother sleep?

Ans: in the palace.

T yes, on red carpets.

3:37 What did the younger brother do when their enemies surrounded them?

Ans: (he answers himself) the elder hides himself while younger brother fights with them.

T what is 'kasumbo'?

Girl it is a drug.

3:41 it is over. The trainee is picking up his things. Another student is preparing to give his lesson. [There was no feedback from the DIET staff member, who arrived after the trainee had begun]

Students seem to expect to use the lowest common denominator of the training they have learned, since their training has not really moved them on from a very restricted, and transmission-dominated, view of teaching:

NP When you go to school, which of the skills do you think you would be using?

S4 Madam, that would depend on the topic one would be teaching.

S1 Explanation
S2 Question answer
S4 The first thing is the book, which is used everywhere and the second thing is question answers.
N These two things…..
S5 No, we would use examples too, when we go to school, we have had the example method explained …
S6 Madam I tell you, here micro teaching is going on…. here we have to do all these things under pressure. That's why we do all these things, this is the skill so let's take this thing or this is the skill, let's take that one…. otherwise when we go for lessons nothing will remain except explanation (RAJ/MAS/1st yr sts 27.7.00).

This sense that they will be like their own teachers is strengthened by their assumption that when they go to work in a school, they will be forced to work as others work:

> In schools, the old teachers and atmosphere of the old system remain. If one STC trained person goes there he would not be able to change anything. It is only possible if all the old teachers are transferred and only fresh STC trained teachers are appointed in a school. With the old teachers, suppose I go and try to change and teach in this manner they will oppose me and I will not be able to change anything (RAJ/UDR 1st yr.st).

4.2.4 Teaching practice

Teaching practice has similar components in all three States. Before any teaching practice takes place, lecturers demonstrate a lesson in each subject, to illustrate the whole process and the steps of a lesson plan, which they develop on the blackboard in front of the students. This lesson plan includes lesson objectives and expected behavioural change, introduction, statement of the objective of the lesson, the teaching process which includes teacher's response as well as the expected students' response, use of TLA, evaluatory questions and homework. A student is supposed to adhere to all the steps of the lesson plan and is not encouraged to diversify or innovate, which underlines the lack of practical usefulness of the training:

> We do 40 lesson plans. This kind of lesson plan cannot solve the purpose. We are given competencies by our lecturer. When we are in class, we know that children do not have the previous competencies. We cannot do anything even if we know the correct situation. We have to teach according to the lesson plan (MP/I 2nd yr st 26.12.99).

Each student has to give lessons, and observe and critique lessons given by other students. In this system, the focus of teaching practice is delivering a carefully

planned lesson, and if this is not passed, the same lesson is to be polished and delivered again in order to gain the requisite number of points. This approach supports the notion that there is an ideal lesson to be delivered according to a particular formula. Gaining points is the major consideration, and no thought is given to the impact on children who have to sit through the same lesson twice.

> St.1 We have a system where if you haven't done well in practice teaching, they can give you the lesson to do again. The same lesson. He does his planning again and tries to give the same lesson better, so Sir passes him. 25 marks are required for passing in the lesson of 50 marks […] So in this case he gives a repeat lesson so that next time he can try to get 40 marks (GUJ/SNT/1st yr st).

All students also do block teaching in schools, spending 10 days continuously in a school, taking responsibility for managing it as well as for teaching. Surat DIET took a creative view of practice teaching, seeing it as a way of exposing students to various different types of schools, and children, so they get experience of the different situations. Student teachers were sent to cover for teachers attending a one-week in-service programme, in a block with 42 single teacher schools. The success of this training programme could be measured not only by enthusiastic student reports, but also by the offers the DIET received from other blocks to arrange similar teaching in their single teacher schools. Students also worked in an NFE centre for a week to gain experience of non-formal education.

Figure 4.: **Practice teaching, Indore DIET**

4.2.5 **Evaluation of teaching practice**

The broad parameters of evaluation by the DIET staff in the three States are mastery of subject content, questioning techniques, use of reinforcement, black board work, student teacher interaction, use of teaching learning materials, a trainee's self confidence, communication and expression skills, class discipline, and class management. Feedback in all DIETs tended to take the form of ticks against set criteria, which helps a student see how s/he is measuring up against expected criteria but not to reflect critically on practice. Instead of taking teaching practice as a learning experience and an opportunity to practise and refine skills, students across all DIETs reported that for them, it is as an exercise where what matters is to perform well for the observer. This can be hit and miss:

> PL Our lesson plans are checked on the spot. What kind of on the spot evaluation do they do? The teacher comes into our class for 5 minutes. In these 5 minutes, if we are not doing blackboard work or using TLA and suppose we are talking with students, the teacher will write a comment that st x was not using the blackboard, TLA etc. So those 5 minutes are crucial for us (MP/I/ 2nd yr st 26.12.99).

All States have external examination of teaching practice but in the sample DIETs this was also reported to be cursory. The brevity of this visit reinforces students' impression that

> The internal lecturers play a major role. They influence the marking. How could the examiner know in five minutes what the student is teaching? (Raj/UDR/1s yr. st)

Both Gujarat DIETs had made some changes to their evaluation procedures in response to the demands of the curricular changes. In Surat DIET, the internal marking system was changed so that students are continuously assessed throughout the year, where previously they were evaluated only by a written test. The evaluation process was changed to include an activity record card (containing information about cultural, social and educational activities they have done during the year); performance in internal tests (written and oral); and overall performance. Students are assessed four times in the year through exams conducted by the DIET, and a panel interview also checks their progress during the year. The Principal reported that this procedure is not popular with some students, who are themselves not entirely used to fair examination procedures. This is a reminder that, as various comments cited in this chapter have shown, students themselves can be a conservative force in bringing about educational change.

Surat DIET was the most proactive DIET in our sample with regard to its drive to improve pre-set quality. This Principal – himself a former primary school teacher – was the only one to stress pre-service activities, saying

> The branch I like the most in the DIET is PSTE. When I was doing my PTC I could see that in PTC training there were many things lacking and this much is left out, which is very necessary when you get to school (GUJ/SUR/Prin 22.12.00).

This DIET had made innovations, such as dismissing the usual low key prayer assembly that set a poor tone for the day, and replacing it with a child-centred prayer assembly, consisting of rhymes, action songs, reciting of poems, story telling, and dramatisation of a story, along with celebration of students' birthdays, and discussion instead of a lecture. Observations of this assembly confirmed that students learned to speak and read with confidence in front of an audience, and this helped teachers avoid monotonous recitations to students (see for example box 4.6). Another striking aspect was that the distance between staff and students was reduced through this less formal atmosphere. This also formed a link with in-service activities, as students demonstrated this type of prayer assembly to in-service teachers to encourage them to do the same in schools. The message had certainly passed among teachers: this assembly was favourably commented on by a teacher in Santrampur District during a training programme.

Observations of practice teaching in both years at this DIET indicated although the components of the practice lesson have been changed, and there is more discussion and formative feedback for students than was observed in any of the other DIETs, there is still a discernible 'ideal lesson' format: introduction (by teacher); 3-4 'open' questions on the topic by teacher to student; exposition of topic by teacher; demonstration of teaching-learning materials by teacher; group work (by children, but more a matter of different seating than interactive group learning); recapitulation (by teacher). Just as elsewhere, marks depend on students adhering to this format, even when it is not appropriate – if they do not use teaching-learning materials for example, or do not do group work, they forfeit marks. Classroom and multi-grade management are still weak areas, as is the recognition of differential learning speeds among students. No attempt to draw on student knowledge or experience, and expand those, or to encourage questions from students, was noted in ten lessons observed. The transmission model taught here is a stronger version than that taught elsewhere, but pre-service training in Surat DIET too adheres to the same model.

In Santrampur DIET, lecturers had made some changes to the evaluation format (Fig. 4.1). This alteration underlines the dominance of the teacher-centred focus of training process, as the format neglects evaluation of the trainee's performance in relation to student learning. Here, a pre-service lecturer shared his anxieties about the quality of practice teaching and its evaluation.

> There are very poor criteria for evaluating this practice teaching. That is why last year a few of us lecturers made new criteria for evaluation. We have prepared… but no one uses it. We now evaluate by the new criteria but some are still not using it. No one….they don't use it. I tell you… this evaluation is done very poorly. It is not going to help them (GUJ/SNT TT03 6.9.00).

In defending why the new evaluation procedures were only half-heartedly adhered to by staff, he offered a view that was heard many times during this research project with respect to student teachers' attitudes:

> Frankly speaking I know what these students do in practice teaching. It is useless for them. I still have doubts about the Gujarati practice teaching lesson. Have you seen how these students give Gujarati practice teaching? If I had been the supervisor, I would have not have given them marks. They don't take Gujarati lessons seriously. They don't know what to teach. If it was up to me, I would never pass any of these PTC students. They don't deserve to become teachers. They don't have aspirations of becoming teachers. This year I did a survey. I asked my PST students why they had come here. Out of 40 students, 25 said because our parents have sent us. A few think that after doing this we will soon get a job. Now why do parents want to send them for PTC? Because if a boy has his PTC he will get PTC girl soon. Now if you come here for such reasons, how can you become a good teacher? You don't have abilities, aspirations and aptitude for becoming a teacher (GUJ/SNT TT03 6.9.00).

Figure 4.2: **Revised practice teaching evaluation plan, Santrampur DIET**

Period	Roll no	Name	Std./class	subject	Subject content	Type of lesson	General points about the lesson						Teaching experiences			Competency based educational behaviour			Total marks
							Classroom management	Testing previous knowledge	Notes on BB	Method of evaluation	Self learning	Lesson plan	subject content Preparation	Presentation method	Make and Use of TLM	teacher student interaction	Interaction beteween sts-sts	Interaction sts/sts/edu'l material	
							3	2	4	4	2	2	10	7	3	5	4	4	50

4.2.6 Impact on the practice school

Another widely observed aspect of practice teaching was its poor integration into the life of the school. Teaching practice does not really reflect a normal teaching experience – it is orientated to the delivery of a lesson, without much regard to student learning, which the regular teacher is expected to take care of later:

St 3 If there is a Gujarati lesson, three students will do the same lesson in different schools. And if there are just two lessons in a month and setting is not possible we divide the class into A and B and give the lesson but in different classes so that trainees also can give the lesson and children can also understand. But it happens very rarely because normally a minimum of 3 lessons have to be taught in a month so we teach them and then the class teacher does the drumming in. What happens is this, the way I teach the lesson—one lesson in one period if we teach like this then we finish 3 lessons in 3 periods so it is not that whatever we have taught is final. The teacher has to drum in it. He has to take it again. There is a difference between what we teach and what the teacher teaches (GUJ/SNT 2nd yr st, 31.8.00).

St 1 Students can understand only 70% of our teaching. Use of TLM is good, but the problem is proper resources.

St 2 Children are not able to understand.

St 3 There is absolutely no benefit. Teachers from the school say that they have to repeat the course, as children may not be able to understand our teaching (MP/I/ 2nd yr sts 26.12.99)

Another observation made about teaching practice was that teachers more or less hand over the school to the student teachers when they come. Professional interaction between the two groups is rare, as we saw in Rajpur school in chapter two: a student reported about Rajpur that teachers enjoy having students in the school because:

> They have become free of their responsibility. They enjoy this, we take up their work so they are free and we have to do our assignment and so we are there to do their work. It is their work, we have come just for few days, we will go and then again they'll have to manage everything (RAJ/MAS/2nd yr st).

In the urban school where practice teaching was observed in Surat, teachers were nowhere to be seen. Indore DIET was the only sample DIET to report that it uses its laboratory school teachers to model some lessons, but this did not extend to engaging practising and training teachers in dialogue about teaching. Students of this DIET had tried to engage the teachers in helping them, but:

RM Do Bajliya school staff check your lesson plan?

[Students laugh at this question]

St We do not know what relationship the DIET staff has with Bajliya teachers. The first thing is that DIET lecturers are not available to check our lesson plan. So once I approached Bajliya school teachers to check it. The teacher checked my lesson plan. Later I showed to my madam. Madam said this is wrong and that is wrong. I think something happened between Madam and Bajliya teachers. So now Bajliya teachers are not checking lesson plans. They say that we have nothing to do with you. The DIET staff are going to take care of you (MP/I/2nd yr st 26.12.99).

An innovation observed in Santrampur DIET was that school children came with their teacher to the DIET so the DIET lecturer could model a lesson, on body parts, to the students. At the end of this session, students and the research team were invited to give feedback. This was an unusual attempt to engage students critically in evaluation of how a lesson had been delivered by a DIET staff member. However, when students made comments on seating and content, the two other DIET staff members present reiterated that teaching Std. 1 children is very difficult because 'they are like blank slates' and instructed the trainees that 'here positive matters should come and not negative ones. You not here to blame that this was wrong and that was wrong' (GUJ/SNT 31.8.00). In this way, student engagement with real practical issues in teaching was restrained; the unusual opportunity to reflect on and critique practice was contained rather than modelled and promoted. However, despite this containment, this reflects a movement in a positive direction that was observed more in Gujarat than elsewhere (see also chapters 5 and 9).

4.2.7 **Action research for trainee students**

Two DIETs had encouraged student teachers to undertake small research projects. In both Indore and Surat DIETs, they had been encouraged to look at children's attainments and relate them to lesson planning. This was extended into a piece of action research in Surat DIET, where each student selected 3 students of Std. 5 and 6 with weak reading and writing competencies. Following identification of weaknesses by a pre-test, each student worked to improve children's language skills, and at the end did a post test to measure any improvement. This action research project served as a useful introduction to the links between evaluation and teaching, and to the relevance of research to improving quality.

4.2.8 **Trainees' attitudes to teaching**

Across the DIETs, there was ample evidence that student teachers' attitudes to teaching did not bode well for dynamic future teachers. Students who did try to engage with the training were critical of its low relevance as a preparation for the job ahead, but it was unclear what they could do about it since the course, its evaluation and the staff were all locked into this mode of training. Students who

had come into teaching with positive intentions seemed defeated by the training itself before they had even begun to work in schools. Others did not engage with the quality of the training, since their expectation was simply to accrue enough point to license them to do what they saw other teachers doing:

> The teachers in village primary schools just go and sit there for the whole day and go back. We will also be doing the same (RAJ/UDR 1st yr st.)
>
> In this job there is less tension and work. In offices, you have to sit and work for the whole day (RAJ/UDR 2nd yr st).

In Surat DIET, where the training experience was more lively and integrated with school, student teachers shared many of the concerns about managing to assert a new teaching approach in existing contexts. In this DIET, there was a much stronger feeling among students that the students had been inspired by their trainers to try, and to understand that they could make a difference. In the longer term, since Surat DIET was well integrated into the District, there was also a likelihood of remaining in touch with the DIET, and so of sustaining some of that momentum through continued contact with their lecturers.

4.3 Summary

The accounts in this chapter illustrates many of the factors that create the gap between processes of pre-service training and required capacities of teachers. Trainers may lecture about a range of methods, but their preference for lecturing and reluctance to model a more dynamic and active teacher image sends out an unarticulated message that teaching can also be done in the usual way. Theory and practice are polar opposites, rather than integrated with a view to blending content and pedagogy in pursuit of children's learning. Training is dominated by content concerns, is weak in skills development, and does not begin to explore student teachers' attitudes and values. Practice teaching concentrates on the delivery of decontextualised model lessons according to a lesson plan that must be adhered to if points are not to be lost. Teacher training is approached as if it were secondary schooling, with a strong focus on content and a weak focus on pedagogical and community-related issues, rather than a course in professional development: any focus on learning by student teachers is orientated towards gaining marks.

Training of this nature reinforces rather than dispels the view that pre-service training 'has no practical use. It is useful theoretically. We only do it to get good marks' (RAJ/UDR 2nd yr. st). It is an example of an approach to education that Paolo Freire describes as 'banking', where deposits of 'knowledge' are accumulated without much regard to context and relevance. The currency of those deposits is not the currency that is required for school work. It also reflects a view of student teachers as empty vessels. Yet as these accounts show, these vessels bring to their

training ideas of the teacher and of teaching that need to be drawn out and discussed, and worked through in the course of their professional preparation.

Some DIETs have, within the existing framework of the curriculum, taken steps internally to promote quality – such as adjusting evaluation procedures, making practice teaching more meaningful, and linking pre-service activities with in-service training. Other DIETs deliver training without regard to such possibilities.

4.4 Policy implications

An area of major concern is that unless the DIET is proactive, the pre-service course lags behind changes in the school curriculum – even in Gujarat where it had been changed, the changes were within the existing transmission model that policy seeks to dismiss in schools. *All the DIETs in our sample were graduating teachers who, albeit to varying degrees, could not fully support contemporary classroom learning.*

This chapter provides considerable evidence of a need for a radical overhaul of pre-service training, linking it firmly with the initiatives that are being put in place in schools. This overhaul requires a fundamental change to the model of pre-service training. The transmission model does not provide a meaningful preparation for teaching and learning within the competency-based approach. Its focus on teaching denies student teachers the opportunity to evolve a focus on learning, or the stance of constant evaluation of practices in relation to that learning. Unless such changes are made, pre-service training will continue to promote the view of teaching as a technical activity that involves the passing of knowledge from teacher to student according to a set series of steps and methods. This can only undermine the efforts being made in schools to gear teaching and learning to individual competencies.

A view of teaching that is more in keeping with intended changes in the school curriculum requires the pre-service course to provide student teachers with opportunities to engage in experimentation, making sound educational judgements, and reflection on practice in contexts – not as a technician, but as an emergent craftsperson. It also requires that those who work with student teachers themselves adopt this approach, and points to the need for comprehensive professional development for DIET staff with a clear focus on learning.

Chapter 5 In-service Education for Teachers

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have illustrated that teaching and pre-service training are dominated by a transmission model of teacher education that is outmoded in the face of recent change initiatives in elementary education. This chapter reviews DIETs' approaches to in-service teacher refreshment, by providing illustrations of programmes observed by the research team. It demonstrates that there is variation in approaches across the DIETs, and some significant movement towards participatory work with teachers that if sustained, can over time come to challenge more 'traditional' approaches.

5.2 In-service training programmes

5.2.1 Programme format: tensions in decentralisation

DIETs organised their training programmes around an annual calendar that sets out what they intend to offer during the year. Their calendar is a modified version of the calendar developed by the SCERT. For reasons related to DIET staffing and skills, and perceptions of the nature of decentralisation, sample DIETs (except Surat) had rarely developed their own training programme in response to felt needs in the District. They functioned primarily as sites of delivery of programmes developed and funded either at the national level, or at the State level, or by an external intervention such as DPEP or Lok Jumbish.

These programmes come as packages, with a centrally pre-defined length and content, and target of numbers of teachers to be covered. The substance of those programmes tends to be related to informing teachers about new 'packages', or a textbook, or upgrading subject content knowledge. DIET staff themselves were critical of this centralised approach:

> TT1 Till you involve a primary teacher, there is no meaning in whichever package you bring, because he has to teach. Whatever difficulties are there he has to face them, not the person who is sitting in DIET. You have made a module sitting in Bhopal and sent it here saying teach this.
>
> TT2 Situations are different everywhere. The situation of A is different from B (MP/DHA/29.3.00).

In this mode of programme design, teachers are also not consulted – and this is to ignore the contribution that teachers might make through their local knowledge. As a teacher in Dhar District pointed out:

> Instead of this, what a teacher wishes should become the basis of all preparation, because we are the people who are in touch with them, not you. So if our situation, our problem, our curriculum is brought to the forefront their [tribal

communities'] education can progress otherwise, nothing can be said (MP/DHA T103 March 99).

DIETs are expected to provide adjustments to suit local circumstances but their primary concern was similar to those of pre-set staff: completion of the course module(s):

TT2 Teachers are not satisfied in those trainings which are pre-planned and fixed. We also know we don't need to teach certain areas but it is in the programme so we have to do it. If we get freedom and can work then we can solve teachers' problems and we will enjoy our work. They will be interested because they will get information on what they want (RAJ/UDR TT 02 1.4.99).

This centralisation of programme design meant that, across the DIETs, staff felt obliged to carry out in-service programmes that they sense are not appealing to teachers:

At present they give us a target and we have to finish that. It is completely useless. I can't do it till I get permission from the higher authorities…At present we call [invite for training] them to finish the target… There is no point in finishing targets. [Even] if we tell the government we have met our training programme target we will not be able to improve the quality of elementary education (MP/IND V-P 4.2.99).

You do whatever order comes from the top, give the training programme according to the time which is given to you (MP/DHA TT04 August 2000).

TT1 We get the programme [which says] for how long and in which area we will be giving training (RAJ/UDR/TT 012 1.4.99).

5.2.2 Training load and organisation

All the DIETs had a full programme of training programmes. In Udaipur DIET in 1998-99, for example, the training year comprised:

Branch	Training	Workshop	No. of participants
WE	14	–	610
DRU	33	5	1194
IFIC	11 + 12 SOPT	5	1060 + 600 SOPT
CMDE	8	4	677
ET	8	7	570
P&M	10	3	560
Total	84 + 12 SOPT	24	4671 + 600 SOPT

The 14 programmes in Planning and Management, for example, comprised: Training for UEE, 3 days 40 participants; primary Head Teacher training 6 days 2 x 50 participants; upper primary Head Teacher training 6 days 2 x 50 participants; school management 3 days 40 participants; newly appointed teachers' training 6 days 2 x 50.

A Dhar DIET report (1995-96) notes: 'curtailing of programmes is desirable. Programmes in large numbers result in failure of their successful implementation' (p. 11). Across the DIETs, staff reported that they are very busy with these programmes; this was often cited as a reason why they did not have time to visit schools, or work with the DIET's lab area schools. The training calendar, then, is full, but no official time is allocated to following it up in the field and assessing its impact.

Another issue frequently raised in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan was that sometimes, notices from the apex body about training programmes came at very short notice and this disrupted plans that had already been made[11]. A lecturer in Masuda DIET gave an example:

> Now see we are sitting here and just today I received an order that I have to go to SIERT for 3 days for training. I will go tomorrow. The letter has come today only and I have to report tomorrow. I will be there till 24th. Now the date for deciding the agenda [for a planning meeting] is 23rd so this will come in between. I will have to give it to someone else here so he finishes it (RAJ/MAS/TT08 18.7.99).

In Udaipur DIET, there were times of peak activity when the institute was overstretched with many simultaneous programmes, and other times when little was happening and people were under-deployed. When asked why all programmes take place at one time, a DIET lecturer responded:

> The school calendar is such that July is spent in the enrolment festival, then in August we conduct training. There are many holidays in August. In September, October and November, we have to conduct training. Then our work is to give training. How can it be possible that one department is giving training and other is not? Training is to be given all the time (RAJ/UDR/TT09 June 00).

[11] This had a significant impact on the research project's ability to carry out professional development activities as on several occasions, a planned workshop was compromised by the sudden departure of a participant called to the apex body, and re-scheduling was no guarantee that the same thing might not happen again.

Box 5.1: **Planning for MLL training, Masuda DIET, April 1999**

DIET TT1	Today, one thing to be discussed is the programme for post-5 training.
MLLi/c1	Last year, training for post-5 was not at all effective. Resources were not good; in P.. 50 were called and only 4 came.
DIET V-P	Also to be taken in consideration is what new can be done for the teachers who have been attending the training for the last 5 years – can any new thing can be added for them.
MLLi/c2	Yes, in the TLM workshop, teachers can be taught to make new things.
MLLi/c3	Puppet shows..
MLLi/c3	Drama, theatre education be included.
DIET V-P	Yes, for cognitive subjects, these can be used; these things help in making the subject lively and engaging.
MLLi/c1	For non-cognitive subjects, anything can be used.
DIET V-P	It seems teachers do not pay attention to the competency of children, they only worry about completion of the prescribed course.
MLLi/c1	But teachers have no other alternative.
MLLi/c2	Yes in 75% of schools, only a single teacher is working, and the whole responsibility is on him/her for course completion.

Planning in Masuda DIET was comprehensive for the Lok Jumbish programmes: administrative officials and Master Trainers were called to organise logistical details, such as date, duration and venue of the training; and to identify potential aspects where teachers might need particular support (see Box 5.1). A core group was formed to supervise and evaluate the training and would meet before, during and after the programme. However, the DIET staff did not follow these procedures for their government programmes. DIET staff did not see any anomaly in this, and rather than seeing these quality mechanisms as a generic good practice for universal application, said they were not a requirement of government programmes.

Another aspect of the intensive in-service activities in the DIETs was these took precedence over pre-set, so if there was any staff shortage – for example because so many programmes were running at once – the in-service programme would take priority: 'It happens many times most of the people are out, at that time I and 2-3 others who are there have to run classes. At that time, I have to take classes for 2 hours.'

In this way, the pre-set course also suffered disruptions and cancellations, and students felt that their course work suffered; this was acute in DIETs such as Dhar, Masuda and Surat where there was shortstaffing, but it occurred in all DIETs.

5.2.3 Needs analyses

Needs analyses did not precede training delivery for pre-packaged programmes. To some extent this is precluded by the centralised programme design, but the lack of inclination in DIETs to visit the field was also a factor. DIETs did however get feedback from teachers directly in training programmes, or would hear informally about issues of concern via Master Trainers, if they worked closely with them. This feedback led at best to very minor local adaptations, rather than the thorough adjustments expected by programme designers to improve relevance.

All DIETs had identified 'hard spots' – areas where student attainments were weak through feedback or small research studies. The assumption across the DIETs was that those hard spots were related to teachers' poor grasp of content. Training thus took the form of extra focus on drilling teachers in content, disregarding indications that at the elementary level, hard spots are likely to be related to pedagogical issues. DIET staff found it difficult, in conversation with the research team, to know how to find out why a hard spot was there and their approach was to treat the symptom, rather than its cause.

The DIET in our sample that was most responsive to teachers' needs was Surat DIET. This DIET was not under pressure to push through changes required by an external programme. It understood its autonomy to pick and choose from the menu of programmes offered via GCERT, and designed its own responses to issues identified by teachers through CRCs for further support. It was guided in this by its own survey, which augmented a State-level sample survey:

> Our sample is larger. Their sample is 2-5 selected schools from each district. In our sample all the schools are there, so it's not a sample, we have gone for universal. We have got data from each cluster, each block, subject-wise and standard-wise. Based on that this year we could work only in two subjects, maths and science in Stds. 5-6t. But we haven't done it in all blocks as the blocks are different. We found out that in Std. 5 science Surat District's achievement is 17.5% […] Some blocks are powerful, some are weak […] I may get some of them at 20% and some at 60% so I don't have to do things for the 60% ones (GUJ/SUR/P 18.1.01).

Surat DIET had also initiated a postcard programme where teachers could send a postcard to the DIET with their question or concern on it and the DIET would respond – if many teachers raised the same issue, this was taken up as an area for inputs.

None of the DIETs in our sample had comprehensive evaluation procedures to inform future programme planning. They did hand out evaluation sheets but these

were not structured to elicit formative feedback, since they tended to be closed questions (e.g. were you satisfied with this training, yes or no?).

5.2.4 Development of 'outreach' trainers

While some training programmes are done directly in DIETs by DIET staff, others are delivered at block level by Master Trainers who have taken training from the DIET. Since design of a programme does not take place at the DIET level, each programme involves at least some level of cascade training, where DIET staff attend training at the top of the cascade (the State level) to learn about the package, and return to their institute to deliver it directly, or train others (Master Trainers and Resource Persons) to pass it to teachers. Normally, the head of the relevant DIET branch to the training attends the apex level training. The issue of the DIET staff's competencies in their particular branch was discussed in chapter 3; so where there was weakness in this respect, that weakness would be present at the top level of the training cascade.

In the two DPEP Districts, the DIET used some Block and Cluster Resource Centre staff as resource people, but the DPEP was responsible for the development of their capacities, and those staff had their primary allegiance to the body that set them up – DPEP – rather than the DIET.

In Masuda, Indore and Surat DIETs, Master Trainers were regular visitors to the DIET, and all of these DIETs worked hard to develop them; there was less proaction about this in Udaipur DIET. Criteria for selection of Master Trainers varied across the DIETs: for Indore and Surat DIETs, since the Master Trainer role was additional to regular teaching duties, criteria were not fixed, but an important one was willingness. In Indore DIET, for example, a staff member who was very concerned to develop the Master Trainers said 'Criteria … enthusiastic persons, who are active, who are self-willed, who are developed in their work, this is one criterion… and those who can do activities without any hesitation… and then, their own personal problems should not get in the way of their work'.

The Surat DIET Principal had personally visited Cluster Resource Centres as they were set up and encouraged the new leaders, aware of the transition they were making:

> In the beginning… when classes were going on for 7 days I visited all blocks a minimum of twice during the training. There were around 32 classes. During my second visit I used to tell them if you still have any problem let me know and I will come a third time. Let me know if you need anything, if there is any work, any other problem, I will be coming tomorrow or the day after so if there is any thing which needs to be brought I will do it. They were never made to

work this way, or shown how to work in teacher training college, how to work with teachers.. they went to a school for 2 hours inspection, prepared files and came back. That's why in the beginning I adopted this type of strategy (GUJ/SUR/P 18.1.01).

Lok Jumbish had put much effort into developing Master Trainers though joint meetings between DIET staff, Lok Jumbish representatives, and teachers. For this, a point system was developed (Box 5.2):

> We felt that it was really necessary to find out in a person which 4-5 good characteristics are there, which weaknesses there are, so that in the coming 2-3 years we can minimise those weaknesses. So the person on whom we are spending so much money becomes useful. For that we decided 8-10 points. They also said that people who are weak should be dropped. If we can't find out a weak person and we send him to give some training at a particular place, he won't be able to do it and our programme will fail. How to recognise a weak person? We developed points like someone who observes time, expression, delivery… If they have important things like that, they will be fine. If a person has more than half the weaknesses he is not useful to us. That's what we decided after the rating. We also asked teachers who will take the training what type of person they wanted. They said someone who takes us along with him. So the point of participation was raised, who can make us understand properly - means a person should have a grasp of the subject – a subject expert. All this came from them, what we should see in our MT, so it becomes successful (RAJ/MAS/TT07 19.7.1999).

Box 5.2: **10 desirable points for a Master Trainer, Masuda DIET**

1. Participatory approach
2. Punctuality
3. Capacity to take initiative
4. Knowledge of content
5. Knowledge of skills
6. Presentation of chapter
7. Expression, oral
8. Expression, written
9. Retention in sessions
10. Attitude/outlook

It is interesting, however, that this trainer interprets what teachers are saying as a need for content expertise. An alternative interpretation might be that teachers are requesting trainers who are competent in the pedagogy of training, and able to relate training messages to teachers' understandings and aspirations.

5.3 The logistics of training programmes

5.3.1 Recruitment of teachers to programmes

Not all DIETs in the sample had satisfactory arrangements for recruiting teachers for in-service programmes. This resulted in both duplication and absenteeism. For example, in the seven day SOPT training in Udaipur DIET in July 1999, discussed below, no training was done on the first day as out of 60 teachers who had been invited, only 12 had arrived and as at least 25 were needed, one trainer spent much of that day directly recruiting teachers.

In Masuda, there were similar issues in the recruitment to training. A Sanskrit teacher in an upper primary school where a training programme was held observed:

T41 I have attended two training of 10 days each.
NP How did you like them?
T41 Madam, I feel the training was…. Now, in my 25 years of service, I have never taught children of class I & II, nor do I teach them now but for 2 years, I received the training of teaching children of class I & II. Now ask them what was the use of that training when I am a Sanskrit teacher.
T4I,T42, T43 We all have to attend.
T41 No distinction, we all have to go (RAJ/MAS 24.4.99).

Teachers in another block also confirmed that they had attended training for year groups they do not teach (RAJ/NP Sri 5.6.99). The procedures adopted by DIETs (see chapter 6) do not maximise resources; and they also lead to disaffection among teachers.

5.3.2 Financial aspects

Part of the issue is related to the levels of travel and daily allowances a teacher receives. Where this is inadequate, teachers who have further to travel end up paying out of their own pocket, and this is a disincentive to attend. For teachers who live nearby, there is an opportunity to profit from the allowances by attending again, and leaving the programme once attendance has been registered. The knock-on effect of such procedures is that training can be associated with making or losing money.

All DIETs commented unfavourably on the parent institute's untimely disbursement of funds. This often compromised DIET programmes, which had to run without paying teachers their travel and daily allowances.

5.3.3 Once-off programmes

In addition to their worries about target orientation, some DIET staff also felt that the dominant programme format also precludes the development of an adequate

skill base. The inadequacy of training in this model was captured by a Masuda DIET lecturer:

> We are giving them demonstration and we have faith. But in ten days we cannot give them all the skills. So he is not becoming an expert in those skills, that why to use those skills in the schools is difficult (RAJ/MAS TT01 January 1999).

Teachers in Dhar District also raised the issue of the sustainability of training inputs. They saw more potential in a different, cluster-level approach, as one said:

> All this money in training is being wasted. If you really want to utilize this money, then you motivate teachers to see schools which are becoming better and progressing, so that teachers will learn from teachers and enforce that particular strategy in that cluster. If any problem arises in implementation, its solution should be sought through those teachers (MP/DHA T077 September 99).

5.4 Training processes

During the project period, the project team observed many in-service training programmes. The following episodes of observation across DIETs in July 1999 give an indication of the training approaches that staff were adopting.

5.4.1 The transmission approach

Special Orientation for Elementary Teachers (SOPT) in Udaipur DIET

In Udaipur DIET, staff placed much emphasis on the national Special Orientation for Elementary Teachers (SOPT) programme. This centrally-sponsored scheme was launched in 1993-94 to cover 45000 elementary school teachers every year, and has three major foci:

1. To provide competencies as envisaged in the Minimum Levels of Learning
2. To develop competencies in the use of Operation Blackboard materials supplied to elementary schools
3. To encourage teachers to adopt a child-centred approach to learning (MHRD 1995: v).

The teacher handbook for the scheme is divided into two parts: an 'awareness package' containing information about schemes and issues (such as Operation Blackboard, Minimum Levels of Learning, evaluation, education of special groups, multi-grade teaching) and a 'performance package' with seven units focusing directly on teaching (teaching of language, teaching of mathematics, teaching of environmental studies, art education, etc.). It is up to the DIET itself to choose how this material is shared with teachers.

Special Orientation for Elementary Teachers training in Udaipur DIET was given by two staff members over seven days in July 1999. The entire first day was spent waiting for a sufficient number of trainees to turn up to allow the course to begin (see next section). The next training days were filled with lecturing and dictation of modules, although teacher handbooks containing the material were available. Half way through the first day of such teaching, in a lecture on language competencies, some teachers offered to read the module at home. The DIET lecturer told them 'We will give you the module but there is difference between explaining everything here and reading at home', although he had been dictating and not explaining. When a teacher said: 'We know all this. We are writing but it will be better if you explain each point you dictate', he responded 'I am explaining' (RAJ/UDR 20.7.2000).

At the end of that session, the researcher asked some teachers what they learnt from this lecture. They said:

T12 This is all given in the books. We all know this. We teach children, each one has his own method.

T23 We have read all this in B.Ed., we study how a child listens and understands (RAJ/UDR 20.7.2000).

Later, during a maths session, the other lecturer said, 'If you communicate your teaching well to students then they understand and absorb it. A student should be involved to the maximum extent in the teaching'. He himself had not noticed that only five teachers were responding to his questions while others made occasional notes or talked among themselves. This led to the following interchange:

TT2 When you teach you ask and expect your students to sit quietly and you yourself are talking in the class.

(F) I was sitting quietly for a long time that's why I felt like talking.

TT2 If you feel like talking you had better come up with some questions. It should be a two way process. If I keep on giving you and you do not get any thing then what is the use? You have come here to learn (RAJ/UDR 20.7.2000).

This trainer was not able to involve teachers, so over the week the training session did not become a two way process that stimulated teachers to respond.

Another session focused on Operation Blackboard and the items provided in it. Teachers listened to this, and then one said, 'these kits have not been provided to all schools'. The DIET lecturer responded with a comment that science kits are not used by teachers, and went on to say: 'The teacher in charge of the kits wants to keep them intact as at the time of transfer the charge of all the kits is to be handed over to another teacher. If something remains missing then it is his responsibility.

Therefore the in-charge neither takes it out nor gives it to others'. No attempt was made to elaborate on this, suggest a possible solution, establish how many teachers had tried to use Operation Blackboard materials and to what effect, or relate the information in the module to teachers' practices.

On the fifth day, one teacher left after the first period, and getting her attendance registered. The DIET lecturer did not seem to notice. When the researcher asked her why, she said: 'What's the use of getting bored here? I have attended one class of each subject and now I know these training programmes are of no use'. She said she had come because 'My HM sent me here. I did not want to come. Now I know about DIET programmes and will not come again. My HM had said that you have not got training so you go. When I asked him what if I do not like it, he said tell them I told you to go away if you did not like the training'.

In conversation with the researcher at the end of that day, three teachers raised the issue of the training's lack of relevance:

T19 Today he told us about symbols. These are useful for middle schools or secondary schools. You do not teach symbols in primary classes that do not even know how to write words properly.

T25 These are all theoretical things. We take this as it is useful for us but not for children. We cannot do this in villages.

T33 They should come to the tribal areas, understand the problems. The students are irregular. What can you teach in such a situation?

T25 These training programmes are only done for TA/DA and budget utilisation.

The language lecturer's perceptions of what he does, and what he actually does, were at odds with each other:

> In SOPT training we stress methods. We take up a subject and demonstrate how it can be taught and prepare TLAs. We stress on students' participation this we also stress during our training as well. […] We really discuss more than train teachers. Teachers come for seven days for training and we try to involve them as much as possible (RAJ/UDR TT09 June 00).

This approach also raises issues about the quality of the State-level preparation, since this lecturer had had orientation training to SOPT at the State level. Dictation of existing materials seems particularly indefensible; yet it was observed on a number of occasions in this and other DIETs. Similarly, in Indore DIET, a lecturer in non-formal education at the District Resource Unit said:

> We also conduct training programmes in NFE centres. There is a pamphlet of instructions to inspectors. Everything is given in that instruction book.

> Lecturers here just read the book. They read that instruction book in the class and the training is over. Training is just delivering lectures, nothing is done (MP/IND TT03 25.9.99).

At the end of the Special Orientation for Elementary Teachers training observation, the researcher noted that while the content of the modules had been conveyed faithfully:

> The training remained a typical DIET training in which neither the teachers nor the trainers seemed to be interested. As the DIET staff itself was involved in the training they seemed to be pre-occupied with their own work and came to the sessions at will. It seems that as in the SOPT training there is provision of allowance for the trainers, the DIET staff itself wants to give training and doesn't involve any external Resource Persons. The time schedule was not taken care of sincerely; the sessions sometimes went vacant due to non-availability of trainers. The teachers went away unnoticed and nobody seemed to care. Trainers stuck to the module and even the teachers prepared their lesson plans by just copying the SIERT booklets. Overall the training as well as the trainers seemed thoroughly disappointing to the teachers (RAJ/NN diary 25.7.99).

Shikna Shikana Package In Dhar DIET

In Dhar DIET, the main thrust of training was the Shikna Shikana Package, a reform that included teaching-learning material, teacher training methodology, revised student evaluation methods, and a facilitating administrative and

Figure 5.1: **The lecturing approach to INSET**

management structure. It led to new textbooks for Stds. 1-5 and training programmes for teachers to help them with the package's underlying principles:

- Children should acquire competencies against MLLs rather than do rote learning of specifics
- The teaching-learning process in elementary schools should be child-centred and activity-based
- All academic inputs at the elementary school level should not be seen in isolation but as part of a larger pedagogic intervention.

This training was delivered at block level by DIET staff, and Master Trainers and Resource Persons who had had cascade training from the DIET. The classes were mostly lecture-based, and the focus (contrary to the programme aims) was to complete the modules. In some cases this was observed to involve transmission of incorrect content. When asked about this, DIET staff said they are not allowed to change the module's content.

Teachers, interviewed on the sixth day of the programme, were dissatisfied with the competence of the trainers. The discussion of Master Trainer competence reflects tensions at preceding level of the cascade – the DIET's training of those Master Trainers:

T51 MTs are not very efficient, I am not enjoying it. Actually these MTs have been given a 5 day training. Whatever they got in those 5 day, they have to present before teachers in 12 days so they are not able to do it.

T52 Here not all MTs are efficient enough to teach the class V syllabus (MP/DHA/10.7.99).

Of all the teachers in the sample Districts, those in Dhar District seemed to have the least faith in the training's relevance. State-designed packages needed considerable adaptation to fit local situations. In this largely tribal District many children are first generation learners, and did not speak Hindi, which is the official language of instruction. Reluctant even to make corrections to wrong subject content, DIET staff did not engage with this requirement. The fit between package contents and prevailing circumstances also emerged as a prominent concern in the responses teachers gave to the DIET's action research project (see chapter 7); even so, this was felt by the DIET to be a problem of the State level.

The training episodes described here reflect the dominance of the transmission model of teaching within in-service training approaches, as well as in pre-service training and school teaching. Teachers were making it clear, either by articulation or through body language, that this training was not engaging them, yet in each case, the trainer pressed on without regard to their learning. Such examples reflect

the need to develop trainers' capacities so that they are able to engage teachers and draw on their experiences to inform training messages.

5.4.2 **Participatory approaches**

Minimum Levels of Learning training by Masuda DIET

As the case study of Rajpur in chapter two showed, Lok Jumbish was trying to implement a competency-based approach, using new textbooks. Resistance from teachers came not only for reasons such as those Rajpur's teachers gave, but because the Minimum Levels of Learning approach is more labour intensive, involving more preparation and assessment than the 'traditional' approach that other teachers in the State were continuing to follow. Discussing the likelihood of non-implementation of training with the researcher, one teacher attending the programme said of his peers:

> The reason behind this that they think it takes more time. Beside, wastage of time, there is one more thing. Who would like to do prior preparation? […] the most important thing is that thinking should change. If one has in mind that he has to work, then only work can be done otherwise no matter how many training programmes one attends, or the number of administrative orders issued, nothing will happen (RAJ/MAS/T19 23.4.1999).

This training was conducted by five Master Trainers in a school, with 46 trainees, after comprehensive planning in the DIET. No lectures were given: it was participatory, and teachers were asked to sit in groups to discuss issues raised by the trainer. Box 5.3 illustrates that during the training itself, teachers were participating in the sessions.

In later conversation, teachers felt that Lok Jumbish had made significant progress in enrolling children, but that had increased class sizes - a problematic side effect of success for the teacher. All these teachers commented that they if they are supposed to do activities such as singing and dancing with children, it would be easier if the government kept its side of the bargain by ensuring teacher: student ratios did not exceed 50:1. Even after training they had enjoyed, these teachers were thus hesitant about its applicability.

> Our problem is this, that in a class there should be the right number of children. That means only so many that we are able to pay attention to each one and are able to teach each one. Only by this can the standard of education rise… If you make 59 children sit with a single teacher, then it is not possible. It is not possible because they are small children and it is difficult to mould them. In colleges, or children up to class VII it can be managed but in teaching children of class I and II it is not without its dangers (RAJ/MAS T23).

Box 5.3: **Lok Jumbish training, third day 6.7.99 Summary of maths session**

Discussion and explanation of the competencies covered in the book. First of all MT (V) asked the teachers about the book's special qualities. Teachers gave points both in favour and against the book, noting questions not covering the particular competency for which they have been framed. While discussing competencies, teachers were asked to demonstrate how they teach those concepts in class.

Role of MTs: MTs showed grasp of content and their approach was also participatory. MT (K) was engaging and didn't react with any critical remark even when 1-2 teachers contradicted him for nothing. In making children learn numbers, MTs stressed the importance of song by actions. Home work was given.

Role of teachers: Most teachers were participating and asked questions, expressed their views, were not hesitant in doing things. Here, for most of the teachers, passive receiving wasn't observed.

Activity-based training for new textbooks by Santrampur DIET

The research team observed training of over 100 Resource Persons organised by Santrampur DIET in July 1999 to introduce them to the new Std.1 textbooks that would later be rolled out across the State, where they would train a further 3300 teachers. There were no specified aims or objectives for this programme, or outline to share with participants; on the first day, they were told:

> Today we will take one chapter from Gujarati and maths, on the second, third and fourth day we will take 3 chapters from each of the textbooks and on the last day 2 chapters. Thus we have to cover 24 lessons during this training (GUJ/SNT 27.7.99)

The people invited to give inputs ranged from DIET staff to representatives from the DPEP, officers of the Education Department and a leading figures in the State Resource Group who had also been part of the textbook writing team. Without exception, these persons all modelled activities, sang songs, and danced – thus demonstrating to teachers that the image of a teacher can and should embrace such diverse approaches.

The programme focused on familiarisation with the textbook, practising activities and making teaching learning materials. It was interspersed with speeches addressing motivational issues: 'We all are devoted people but what we require is encouragement'. The approach of this training was to model lessons and prepare participants for their later roles:

> Now after this master demo we will start with your demonstration lessons. Each of the members of the group should be involved in one or the other way. You have to tell in advance who is going to perform what. Whether making TLM or participating in expressive songs or educational games or covering content matter. And during the training you all have to participate like a child in the classroom. We will have a positive attitude during discussion. If you find any mistake or something missing in the presentation your intention should not be to bring out the fault (GUJ/KRP 27.7.99).

Trainers made efforts to involve participants by direct questions and seating them in groups to discuss with each other. Teachers were encouraged to ask the Key Resource Persons any questions to do with the new textbook and did so freely. They were also encouraged to evaluate the model lessons, but were warned that they were not to 'find fault'. As with the student teachers, their comments focused on small details and this process did not lead to in-depth discussions. This was noted by a key resource person:

> We are not receiving very many suggestions. I mean you are not giving feedback adequately. The suggestions are not coming from your side the way they should. Something is lacking in your observation. It is not micro level observation. So give us more suggestions so we can improve (GUJ/KRP 28.7.99).

Over time, this began to frustrate the Resource Persons:

> You people don't write - why? Whatever suggestion we give you or whatever problems solved you must write it down. Otherwise what will you teach the teachers? If they will ask you question you will not have any answer. So whatever is taught you must write. How many times do I have to tell you. Don't talk in between. You are RPs after all. It doesn't look good. You people don't take this training seriously. You should follow some rules and regulations, but you don't have any discipline (GUJ/KRP 29.7.99)

By the final day, teachers were participating less and less, and some were drifting away. Although this was a residential training, many teachers had not stayed overnight and this too was disappointing to the organisers, who saw it as a mark of a lack of sincerity.

The resourcing of this programme was good, with Resource People who could explain the content and intentions of the book clearly, and top-level official support. It began with strong participation from teachers, but all five days were similar and teachers became less and less active as the days passed. Their evaluations of the lessons focused on details of content rather than implications for children's learning.

This training programme was different from the lecturing method adopted elsewhere, in that it was asking teachers to engage with what was being discussed or modelled, and participate actively in learning about the content and methods of the new textbook. However any emerging dialogue was constrained by teachers' focus on content issues, and the organisers' ambivalence about critical evaluation which did not after all encourage teachers who lack practice in reflecting critically on classroom processes with their peers. Even among teachers who were selected as Resource Persons, the organisers noted a certain lack of interest by some in making this level of effort.

Figure 5.2: **Generating teacher discourse and participation**

5.5 Teacher motivation

Teachers across the sites expected that they would 'get something new' from the training, and the focus of that novelty was expected to be either the materials, or what the trainer said. No teachers mentioned that training provided an opportunity to interact with each other to discuss teaching issues although the socialising side of training was welcomed. The question of teacher motivation to accept the challenges of new training messages surfaced repeatedly in all sites. Teachers themselves were the first to say that their own attitudes are lacking:

> Actually, what is to be taught and has to be taught, what are the steps, one doesn't need to teach teachers these things are, they know very well how

> children are to be taught. But the question is of feeling. Teaching should be done as service, as worship (MP/DHA/T093 9.7.99)

A DIET lecturer in Dhar DIET summed up the key issue that he faced as a trainer; and his view reflects the view of DIET staff in all the sample DIETs:

> Many teachers come here for training but don't use it in their classrooms. To improve them we do monitoring and *keep on telling them*. We don't have any administrative power for that, the DIET's work is only academic. We can only do it through love and not through power. The reason I feel is this is about education and I feel it could never be done through force. We can't force someone that she has to teach, if she wants to, she will. If a person doesn't want to teach whatever you tell him he will go to the class but do other work only. You have to give trainings and through that you have to create interest and that is the meaning of training. I understand that it is my biggest aim to create interest (MP/DHA/TT06 10.5.99).

The key to much of the lack of impact of DIET training lies in the second line of this citation (italics added).

5.6 The model of in-service teacher education

The approach to teacher development described in this chapter falls within the 'skills- and knowledge-based' paradigm, which Hargreaves and Fullan (1992: 2) identify as 'the overwhelmingly dominant approach to planned teacher development activity in modern school systems' (see also NCTE, 1998). Administrators tend to favour skills and knowledge approaches because they are 'clearly focused, easily organised and packaged, and relatively self-contained' (ibid, p. 3). This approach also fits with a centralised approach to teacher development. These accounts have shown that the programmes tend to be rather weak on skills development, and stronger on knowledge development – although knowledge is restricted to content knowledge.

Critics of programmes within this approach object to the assumption that it is appropriate to impose them on teachers on a top-down basis by external "experts". This approach is liable to fail to involve teachers sufficiently to secure their commitment, particularly since 'little value is placed on teachers' own practical knowledge in the development of classroom skills' (ibid, p. 3). McNiff (1991) argues that this approach treats teachers as nothing more than 'technicians', expecting them to implement the ideas of others rather than develop their 'craft knowledge'.

Comments from teachers also illustrate that teachers are dissatisfied with training that does not relate to their needs, experience or take local context into account.

Training packages such as those described here do not take into account teachers' existing attitudes and skills, or their appropriateness for existing classroom contexts – the ecology of teaching. Very many teachers in our sample felt that implementing activity approaches in crowded classrooms is very difficult, yet this is widely dismissed by officials and DIET staff as teachers making excuses. The burden of blame for implementation failures falls on teachers; yet teachers will inevitably struggle to be motivated to adopt changes until the state ensures that they have conducive circumstances to work in (adequate numbers of staff and rooms, and adherence to the stipulated 1: 40 teacher: student ratio) and good quality support. The skills- and knowledge approach, with its weak regard for contextual issues, does not engage with what is widely acknowledged to be a key challenge in elementary education in India: teachers' will to implement change. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992: 6) make two important points about this approach (emphases in the original):

> It is too frequently treated as a matter of non-negotiable technical *skill*, rather than as an issue of professional *will* or of something whose worth should be discussed or debated.

Some teachers in training programmes did make efforts to initiate discussions about the value of some aspects of their training, but as the examples given here (e.g. the Operation Blackboard discussion, the need to talk when bored in a lecture, silence when unstimulated to respond) illustrated, this is interpreted by trainers as a personal challenge to the lecturer, and/or poor teacher behaviour.

5.7 Policy implications

Some trainers adhere rigidly to a lecturing approach and are not capable of demonstrating or modelling the concepts they are attempting to impart. The extent to which their suitability as trainers can be enhanced through professional support requires further consideration. Teachers have a right to expect that trainers can themselves lead the way through example and competence; training by persons who cannot do so undermines the training experience.

Other trainers are however trying to work in a more participatory and involving way with teachers, but the underlying aim of training is similar: to impart externally generated knowledge, even if the focus is knowledge about how to do things. This approach is also not needs-based and struggles with relevance, although the process is more interesting for teachers at the time. At present, the discourse generated through such approaches tends to focus more on 'traditional' concerns such as content issues. Further support for trainers can help them develop skills in facilitating discussions that focus on conceptual aspects – so for instance

moving conversations on from content detail to discussions of the curriculum in relation to student learning.

These accounts illustrated that some trainers feel it is not appropriate to 'deviate' from the module. This contrasts with the expectation of module writers that DIET staff make local adjustments to provide contextual relevance. Unless DIET are supported to develop their capacity to provide that relevance, training within this centralised model will continue to have many problems in relation to relevance. However, there is a need also to consider whether this approach to training can, even if its quality is improved, respond to the need for much greater ecological validity. The once-off and out of school, decontextualised nature of the training programmes described here and observed throughout the project may in itself be one of the greatest barriers to teacher's adoption of change messages.

None of the training programmes observed had a strong focus on children's learning and children's achievements: they tended to focus on providing teachers with information, knowledge, and activities. The end is, in this way, subsumed by the means. How information, knowledge, and activities relate to children's learning need to be stressed throughout training episodes. This might begin, for example, in programme formulation, by providing learning objectives for training sessions that are shared with trainees and form a framework for evaluation. This would model for teachers ways of doing the same things with children.

Chapter 6 The Diet and Decentralisation

6.1 Introduction

The discussion so far has drawn attention to some of the centralising forces that continue to exert a counter-pull directly on the DIET, and provide barriers to decentralisation in teacher education. These have included the nature of recruitment to DIETs, the centralisation of in-service programme design, and DIET funding patterns. These centralising forces tend not to promote the autonomy that is needed for the DIET to function in a decentralised manner, although there is evidence from Surat District that decentralisation is possible, despite these counter pulls, where there is proaction by institutional leadership. Autonomy is central to the emergence of decentralisation. The first part of this chapter continues our exploration of DIET autonomy in relation to the State level. The second part reviews relations between the DIET and other educational institutions within the District – such as officers of the Education Department, the DPEP's Block and Cluster Resource Centres, and non-governmental organisations.

6.2 The DIET and the State

Chapter one noted that in the DIET was conceived as the third tier of an established teacher education system. Relatively little power or control has been devolved to DIETs: the apex organisation for example sets training targets, and evaluates monthly progress towards them; it staffs the DIETs; and it retains control over INSET programme design and funding, and of the pre-service training course. Tensions between DIETs and apex organisation centre on untimely disbursement of funds from the State level, and differing views on the autonomy a DIET should be enjoying.

6.2.1 The impact of funding tensions on DIETs' responsiveness to local needs

Funding tensions were apparent across all the DIETs. In the DPEP and Lok Jumbish DIETs, the training budget was considerably larger than in regular DIETs. While the Lok Jumbish DIET was centrally involved in Lok Jumbish training programmes, in the DPEP Districts, the DIET was not the automatic choice for training programmes, and so the presence of the DPEP in the District did not necessarily enrich the DIET. Indeed, there is evidence from Dhar District of disempowerment of the DIET by the DPEP.

As far as regular funding is concerned, funds come via the SCERT/equivalent. SCERT may not be able to deliver the full budgetary requirement to DIETs, as the budget it submits to the State may not necessarily be fully sanctioned[12]. As the Surat DIET Principal explained:

[12] The federal tensions of centrally sponsored schemes and their monitoring are discussed in Dyer, 2000.

> There is a clear grant for in-service which is Rs. 12 lakhs. Now even GCERT can't say how much will be in the EDN[13] because they will give the budget to the department and only once it is sanctioned can they distribute, and we come to know what we will get (GUJ/SUR Prin. 19.1.01).

This makes it difficult to plan realistically, and a sense that funding might not be forthcoming does not encourage DIETs to become proactive in developing their calendar of training events:

> The calendar is expected but it is not sure for what, and how much money you will get. Every year we have to print [the calendar] so I get 2-5 copies printed and send it to GCERT but we don't use it. Even they don't know. Last year we made it but mostly it was useless…so the process of making a calendar is useless (GUJ/SUR Prin. 19.1.01).

For Surat, the DIET in our sample that had really moved towards fulfilling the policy expectation of undertaking needs-based planning, funding was a constraint:

> If we know…this is the need and this is the fund…our need is decided so we could do our in-service completely. According to my plan I could spend Rs. 8 lakhs by December on in-service, but that only satisfied 25% of the need. Most of the work was done for maths and science. So the work which needs to be done for social sciences is still remaining (GUJ/SUR Prin. 19.1.01).

In this way, funding patterns themselves constrain the emergence of autonomy and needs-based planning by DIETs.

6.2.2 Perceptions of autonomy

Autonomy emerges as a highly contested notion. This is in part a matter of practical constraints of the nature we have discussed throughout this report; but it is also about perceptions, which create less tangible but none the less very real barriers to the emergence of autonomy.

Civil service operating procedures themselves do not encourage a sense of freedom although they do not necessarily actually prevent it. DIET Principals, for example, are required on a monthly basis to report to the apex body on disbursements and progress against calendar programmes and targets, and then:

> What happens is, suppose we have a slight deviation, we have to face a lot of resistance. Sometimes there is a slight deviation and we have to give an explanation, a lot of time goes on that (RAJ/SIERT director 22.02.01).

[13] EDN is Gujarat's total Education budget at the State level. It is broken down into numbered EDN funding schemes for different activities.

The need to 'explain' places restrictions on the SCERT/equivalent, and this is passed downwards. So for example, staff in Udaipur, Dhar and Indore DIETs felt the SCERT/ equivalent was micro-managing them in a way that was inconsistent with their status and needs:

> We were asked, you tell us 3 problems at SCERT level. The first thing I told them is autonomy, give us autonomy. There shouldn't be any interference with the work we would like to do. If we do wrong things that's different, but if I am taking a school and I want to make it the best school and that's my project, there shouldn't be anyone interfering in that. Now the thing is, you have to take permission from there, and you never get permission from there. We have to do what they say – how can that work? (MP/DHA/TT03 21.6.99).

The perception at the DIET level of a State-level requirement to take permission is contested at the State level, however:

> It is not possible for us to include all kinds of programmes, it is not possible for us to write each and every thing in the guidelines so they have a Programme Advisory Committee. They can, seeing their needs, double the numbers of any training programme or conduct a different training programme. They are free in this, even in developing learning material or curriculum, they are free (RAJ/SIERT Director Oct 99).

While there are constraints to that freedom that are not acknowledged in this remark, this gap between the freedom to innovate and the perception that this freedom is not available persists also in relations between the NCERT at the national level and the SCERTs. An NCERT official reported:

> In our country people are always looking for some kind of model either in the bank of material or in the form of scheduling or some kind of lecture. They want some models should be given to them…. we are preparing new curriculum now. It is almost ready. It is going to be announced within 15 days.
>
> CD Aha?
>
> Now as soon as it is announced, again a pressure will come on us that we should prepare a model, how to translate this curriculum, in the form of books, in the form of teaching-learning process, in the form of evaluation, techniques, in the form of question papers up to that level. Because the State will bring a pressure.
>
> CD The State will bring a pressure on *you* [NCERT]?
>
> Yes – that, you *give* us a model. Then our team will see how this model can be adapted in their own area…. It is shame if we take this matter up ourselves. I don't know why it is happening. I don't know. But the country is so weak, when we have discussed in the past also, that if in our book if the arrangement is like this, why you have not changed this arrangement, keeping in view your own circumstances, they feel you seem to be of much wider experience, and let us

> make use of your experience. That could be lack of confidence, that could be lack of resources, that could be lack of confidence, I don't know, but it is not advisable. But somehow it is happening (January 2000).

The question of autonomy, then emerges not only as a structural issue, where there are clearly tensions between operating procedures and espoused aims for DIETs; but also as an issue of perception that is also a powerful force in promoting or preventing decentralisation.

DIETs in the project sample were at different stages in their capacity and will to accept the accountability and responsibility that decentralisation demands. Where that capacity is well developed, as in Surat DIET, there was little argument about autonomy as the Principal simply exercised it. He had the full support of the GCERT in this, as his DIET could translate GCERT policy ideas into action, providing good practices which were publicised across the State. At the State level in Gujarat, autonomy was also supported by the conscious official effort made to flatten hierarchies and be approachable, which was not the case in either Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh. Interviews with Surat DIET Principal and the GCERT Director also conveyed a strong sense that both these institutions were there to support teachers. This was less in evidence in the other two States.

6.2.3 Structural changes to promote autonomy

In 2000, autonomy at the DIET level in Madhya Pradesh was precipitated by comprehensive institutional reform, underpinned by a rationale that 'people and not bureaucracies should drive primary education and literacy' (RGSM 1999: 7). Responsibilities for District level planning and budgeting were devolved to the District level, where three convergent offices were created, with the DIET firmly attached to one of them; and responsibility for recruitment to DIET is also devolved. Further detail on this is given in Annex 4.

Neither Rajasthan nor Gujarat had initiated swingeing reforms to promote decentralisation and people's participation in this way, although both of them made significant changes that promised to impact positively on DIETs.

In Rajasthan, DIETs were transferred into the Panchayati Raj management of elementary education which brings them under the same umbrella as elementary schools. This should begin to mark out the DIET as a special posting within elementary education rather than a transferable post within the secondary sector, although the SIERT Director believed that the pool for recruitment to the DIET was still likely to be within the secondary sector (RAJ/SIERT Director 22.2.01). It may also lead to closer relations between relevant Education Department

officials and the DIET that were absent while they were in different sectors: Udaipur DIET hoped that would improve the deputation and attendance of teachers at training programmes. In 2000, the Directorate of Elementary Education directed all District Education Officers to stress teacher training, lending an official weight to the DIET's activities that had previously been missing. Even with such a directive, DIETs will still need to work to improve their profile and the quality of training programmes to convince District Education Officers of their relevance.

Gujarat had already developed its own DIET cadre which provided a stability and professional growth path for DIET staff that was absent in both the other States – although recruitment of senior staff had yet to be resolved. It had also orientated all Education Department officials to academic activities during which the GCERT led discussions of the role of the DIET, how it should be integrated into the Education Department, and the nature of support it requires from officials. Reporting on the favourable reception of the first such training, GCERT officials planned to continue this innovation through future programmes. The relevance of this newly instituted practice is underlined in the following discussion of what can happen when this is not done.

6.3 The DIET in the District

6.3.1 Relations with the local Education Department

Within a District, the overseeing officer of elementary education is the District Education Officer or equivalent. The District Education Office, working through its officers at Block level and the inspectors, has historically taken a primarily administrative, rather than academic, role with foregrounded concerns in teacher placement, school building and upkeep, and so on (Dyer, 2000). The lack of institutional support for teacher development at the District level was part of the rationale for the establishment of the DIET (e.g. NCTE 1998a). In effect therefore the DIET is taking on a set of responsibilities which, although nominally under the ambit of the Education Department, were operationally more or less excluded by other concerns. In principle, the Education Department and the DIET have different, but complementary, roles to play in the improvement of educational quality in the District. Achieving this synergy of focus on quality improvements in practice was achieved to different extents across the sites.

Until systemic decentralisation sweeps across from the DPEP, educational administration remains governed by the longstanding civil service culture of hierarchies and orders (Kumar 1991). The DIET operates from a position of weakness compared with the regular administrative structures, since it does not

have administrative powers over teachers. DIET staff acknowledge that it is hardly appropriate for sanctions to be a means of bringing about change in teaching and learning, but reported that this 'advisory' rather than 'administrative' status diminishes the chances of the DIET being taken seriously by either Education Department officials, or teachers.

> We don't have any administrative power […] DIET's work is only academic. We can only do it through love and not through power (MP/DHA/TT06 10.5.99).

In this sense, having in post a 'joint charge' DIET Principal / District Education Officer can be an advantage: it provides the DIET with a powerful administrative backing, and also exposes the District Education Officer directly to the DIET's mandate:

> Just now the Principal is also the DEO so work becomes easier… If he was only DEO he may or may not take interest. Now he is DIET Principal so he understands the importance of this. He can say 'send this information immediately' because he has power. If the person is only the Principal he doesn't have that power. We can just send a letter asking him to send this information or send a reminder. If they don't send then, we can't do anything as we don't have any power in our hand. We can't do anything (MP/IND clerk 9.6.00).

District Education Office role in seconding teachers

The Principal of the DIET is of the same civil service grade as the District Education Officer. Even so, administrative arrangements promote dependence by the DIET on the District Education office as the DIET itself cannot directly invite or second teachers for training programmes. This remains the prerogative of the Education Department. Unless such sanctions are given, a teacher is not free to absent her/himself from school. Any formal training programme that the DIET wishes to carry out is thus mediated by the District Education office. Since in-service training forms a major part of DIET activities, the quality of the relationship with this office is important.

The DIET, when organising a programme, should identify the teachers for training from a database held by its own Planning and Management branch, and send the list to the District Education office. That office then issues a letter to teachers advising them of programme details and releasing them from school. In Indore and Surat DIETs this arrangement worked as expected, but only as a result of strenuous efforts by clerks in Indore DIET, and the Principal and his personal assistant in Surat DIET, to cultivate relations. In Udaipur DIET the Planning and Management branch thought this was the job of the Education Department

officials and would thus advise them of details of a forthcoming course which it expected them to fill. These arrangements run the risk of being compromised if the Education Department does not pay attention to detail in the deputation of teachers. It was common to find duplication, where the same teacher attends one programme several times; and gaps, where some teachers do not attend training at all. If a teacher attends the same training twice and brings this to the DIET's attention, s/he is 'released' and the training place goes unfilled.

Clerk It often happens that a training is given and the teacher has already had that training. So if they have taken it before we let them go back.

RM M Why does it happen that the same teacher comes again?

Clerk Often it's because the BO [Block Officer] makes a mistake (MP/IND clerk 9.6.00).

Duplication may also be the result of a school principal's actions:

Clerk Or it could be that BO sends the order to the principal to send this many teachers from your school, 'send two teachers', like that. Sometimes principals don't pay attention and send the same one again. If there are four teachers and the principal favours two, they may give him some reasons why they don't want to go … then he will just send the old ones. Now those two will come here and will tell us that their problem is they have already taken training and we relieve them.

RM Does that often happen?

Clerk It hardly happens otherwise… a small percentage in every programme (MP/IND clerk 9.6.00).

Since DIETs are essentially concerned with teacher development, not having the power to depute teachers for training is an operational aspect that constrains the emergence of DIETs' sense of direct responsibility for teacher enrichment. Current arrangements involve duplication and wastage of resources, contribute to DIET inefficiency and are also costly in terms of the negative impact they have on DIET morale and public image. Institutional reform in Madhya Pradesh is likely to improve internal efficiency significantly in all these respects.

The opportunity cost of in-service training

While administrative procedures are beyond the DIET's control, perceptions of training quality play a part in whether the District Education office deputes teachers. Training courses are free at the point of delivery, so the issue to be weighed up is the potential longer term gain to the teacher, against the immediate loss of time for the students. Since in-service programmes usually last from three to ten days this can represent a significant loss of teacher contact time. There are

no cover arrangements for teachers to be released, and cover is done in an ad hoc way at the school level. If the dominant impression in the Education Department is that programmes are not significantly impacting on teachers' practices, a District Education Officer weighing up the potential costs of training against the potential for added value may be reluctant to be release a teacher if students suffer as a result. Although in-service education has become widespread, no matching system has evolved to provide cover for teachers who attend training.

Udaipur DIET had a poor relationship with the District Education office. Across our sample, it experienced the most problems with teacher attendance at its training programmes, with an average during the project period of only 45-50% occupancy of in-service places. It also acknowledged that it was failing to embrace teachers living far away from the DIET.

The Programme Advisory Committee

Statutory provision for convergence of the DIET and Education Department at the District level was made in the stipulation of a Committee 'for sorting out field level problems in operationalising the DIET' (MHRD 1989: 48), of which the District Education Officer/ equivalent is a member. A well-functioning Programme Advisory Committee would achieve convergence between the various offices in elementary education to draw on all available local knowledge to develop programmes to respond to local demand, and shape those suggested by the State level. Relationships with this committee were cited as problematic in both Rajasthan DIETs; Indore and Surat DIETs had good relations with the necessary officials; while in Santrampur and Dhar the DPEP diverted issues through its alternative structures.

In Masuda DIET the role of the Programme Advisory Committee was well understood but there was no evidence of any activity. Convergence was achieved through the Lok Jumbish procedures (discussed below) so this committee was not particularly necessary. Udaipur DIET had constituted a Programme Advisory Committee but it was not fulfilling the envisaged function of support. The researcher at Udaipur DIET summed up her observations as follows

> The DEO office and the DIET are supposed to co-ordinate with each other. The DEO needs to attend the PAC meeting of which he is a member but he always seems to send his deputy to these meetings. According to the DIET staff, the DEOs and SDIs need to play a positive role. They feel these inspecting bodies could identify the training needs from the field and bring it to the DIET's notice through the Committee. I feel if taken sincerely these bodies could also become a link for the DIET to carry out a follow up of its programmes. But unfortunately this sounds good on paper only as there is a

total lack of co-ordination between the DEO Office, BDO and the DIET due to which DIET plans its programmes according to SIERT calendar, bringing about minor changes only instead of making them need based (NN diary July 2000).

6.3.2 Who is responsible for monitoring for quality?

Another reason to forge relations with the Education Department is the need to work out effective systems for evaluating the impact of the training programmes. Some DIET staff continue to believe that the monitoring of educational quality has nothing to do with the DIET, but should be done by the Education Department, as the official inspecting body. This view sees the Education Department as responsible for identifying training needs from the field and bringing them to the DIET's attention, via the Programme Advisory Committee. It is however common knowledge that this sort of inspection of schools is not taking place, in part because of the inspectoral culture and also because there are too few inspectors to meet requirements. Exactly this inconsistency was expressed by DIET staff, for example:

> We give training but whether schools are working properly or not is done by the Development Officer or the District Education Officer. They are not able to do proper monitoring (RAJ/ UDR TT011 1999).

The DIET is unlikely through the Education Department to get the sort of feedback from the field that would help them to develop needs-based training. If it has not substantially developed other means, as for example Surat and Masuda DIETs had, it delivers programmes without local adaptations. Such training programmes support the Education Department's perception of low impact and relevance in classrooms.

The quality of Education Department monitoring is becoming less of an issue as Cluster Resource Centres are rolled out, *if* the DIET makes appropriate links with them. Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, many of the Programme Advisory Committee functions can be more appropriately and fully taken on by continuous links between the DIET and Cluster Resource Centres rather than occasional Programme Advisory Committee meetings. Co-ordination between Education Department and DIET would shift to a focus on creating feedback loops between the DIET, Cluster Resource Centres and Education Department offices. Here there may be a role for a Programme Advisory Committee proactively to promote linkages between DIETs and Cluster Resource Centres, as these have been found to be weak in the majority of the sample DIETs.

6.3.3 Innovation management: proaction at the DIET level

In Districts where there had been no external programme interventions, officers of the Education Department had themselves not had detailed and sufficient

induction into the role of the DIET or how their office should facilitate the DIET's functioning. Management of the innovation had overlooked the need to orientate existing organisations not only to the role and functions of the new organisation which are the subject of routine briefings; but also those roles and functions in relation to their own organisation and any support and other actions required by the new agency from existing organisations. The addition of a new institution in an existing structure *also* creates new roles and responsibilities for existing institutions and this aspect of change for existing institutions needs to be proactively managed to generate support.

The absence of such comprehensive briefing procedures (which has since been addressed in Gujarat) put the onus on the DIET to provide this information. The likelihood of this happening is enhanced if there is a well informed and proactive Principal in place to represent the DIET at an appropriate civil service rank, so DIETs in States that have yet to evolve adequate Principal posting arrangements are automatically at a disadvantage. However this can also be managed without a Principal, as Indore DIET demonstrated: this and Surat DIET both provided evidence of proaction to overcome obstacles in positioning itself as a resource in the District.

In Surat, the DIET Principal had invested much effort in visiting Education Department officials and explaining to them the aims and objectives of the DIET, and their role in supporting it. He and an inspector related an example of how the District survey about student attainment had been used as an opportunity to integrate an officer who might normally be more concerned about administrative issues:

> We also took our DEO with us and asked him to take personal interest in this and told him what we could do. So he took personal interest in the supervision of how much achievement is there, which child is how weak, and what is the situation now (GUJ/SUR/ADEI 21.12.00)

The DIET Principal also used positively the 'other work' that teachers complain about:

> [The union does] programmes for teachers and blood bank camps, eye camps. And to encourage this type of work I used to be present every time, as a priority. So through us they felt the activities they were interested in were worth doing. And this work really needs to be done. We talk about social responsibilities so this is social responsibility work. Slowly through such work we have come into contact and not just through talk so their trust must have increased (GUJ/SUR Prin 22.12.00).

In this vein, the research team was invited to attend several meetings for the planning of the science fair. This is a secondary education event but the DIET

Principal was on the planning board and used this opportunity to boost the DIET's profile – for example by offering its facilities. About the DIET itself, he said

> People saw it's all open, dealing is open. Whoever wants, could see. And they saw work happening. It may be the smallest teacher or anyone… the door was open, whether they take permission or not, they could come in. If I am meeting him for the first time I will definitely offer him tea and water and ask, take an equal interest in him (GUJ/SUR Prin. 22.12.00).

This DIET also worked very closely with its sub-District 'outreach' faculty, visiting them frequently in the field; and whenever the research team visited the DIET, some or other Cluster Co-ordinator was always dropping in to meet the Principal, giving a strong sense of integration with District staff.

In Indore DIET, where there was an acting Principal, the IFIC branch head was enthusiastic and capable, and had motivated DIET clerks to invest time and personal energy in cultivating support for the DIET:

> Clerk Everyone has to support. All do. Because if they don't, not a single scheme could run. All are linked with each other. If we write to Block Officer to send this many teachers and he doesn't, steps will be taken against him, not against us. He has to send teachers […] one has to maintain co-ordination [so] all the schemes which come run properly. We do go personally. Work is not done just by writing a letter. We get the letter prepared here, get it typed and go there personally [to explain that]…This letter has come from SCERT that you have to do this and that, we also bring back a letter from there (MP/IND Head Clerk 9.6.00).

The Santrampur DIET Principal also tried to ensure high visibility by visiting training programmes and other events taking place in the District. Although he had a high personal profile, there was less clarity among teachers in Santrampur District about the role of the DIET. This could be attributed to less effective public relations in publicising the role of the whole institute, but also to the blurring of roles due to the DPEP presence which was not a factor in Surat.

Masuda DIET achieved integration through its positioning within Lok Jumbish. Education Department officers had also been inducted into Lok Jumbish and given understandings of how institutional resources, including the DIET, should work together to achieve its aims and spread its values. Representatives from the sub-District Centres were often seen at the DIET, for example to attend planning meetings (see chapter 5). As a result, the DIET and sub-District structures converged, so that as Masuda DIET's Vice-Principal put it, 'when a training

programme is conducted here, all cooperate and associate with it with the feeling that "we have to do it"…in the last two years, a very nice *system* has developed' (August 1999).

Such proaction was not visible in Dhar DIET, where the DPEP had duplicated the DIET's role – although teachers wished DIET staff to visit them (see chapter 7) or in Udaipur DIET, with the exception of the only two members of staff who were frequently in the field.

6.4 DIETs and the Resource Centres

6.4.1 Making links

As noted earlier, DIETs can only be effective if they work through Resource Centres, although those were developed independently of the DIET. The official link is made by appointing one member of the DIET staff to each block as a link person, to attend meetings held there. In both Masuda and Surat DIETs, the intention to manage this was compromised to some extent by severe staff shortages but both had ongoing links with their Cluster Resource Centres through extensive networks. In both DPEP Districts, Block Resource Centre co-ordinators reported that the DIET nominee rarely put in an appearance at such meetings. DIET staff themselves did not dispute this, but cited their own busy schedules as the reason for not attending, although more compelling explanations are found in the way the DPEP had operated historically in both of those Districts. The effectiveness of Indore DIET's links related to the interest of an individual staff member, which was variable. Udaipur DIET had only two members of staff who were regularly seen in the field, and no Cluster network. Overall, then, in four of the six sample DIETs, the DIET was operating in isolation from the sub-District structures because staff members did not consistently attend meetings to receive feedback or provide input.

Because the DIET's other functions were limited, interviews with Resource Centre staff across the sites revealed that they viewed the DIET primarily as a training centre. The functions and potential support the DIET could give from its other branches, such as Educational Technology or Curriculum and Materials Development, were not well understood by these staff. Discussions with teachers, and even some Cluster staff, in the two DPEP Districts revealed that they could not differentiate between the functions of the Block Resource Centre and the DIET, other than that the DIET was the designated training institute. This indicates that the DIETs' institutional identity was very much less holistic than the policy intended, and points to a need to develop a more integrated joint strategy between the DIET and its Resource Centres.

6.4.2 'Power-coercive' and 'pedagogical-authority' approaches to change

The tension expressed by DIET staff about their lack of administrative power over teachers is mirrored at the Cluster level. Traditionally, teachers have been guided by inspectors, who have administrative powers over teachers and can therefore adopt a *power-coercive* approach to change: an officer uses power to 'persuade' a teacher. Unlike the inspectors, academic leaders at the Cluster or Block Resource Centre does not have powers to punish or reward a teacher.

The idea of the Cluster Resource Centre is that the lead teacher facilitates exchange of good practices among peers, and supports learning how to analyse practice by constructive problematisation, reflection and peer problem-solving. In this model, authority does not derive from power, but from demonstrable pedagogical competence – a *pedagogical-authority* approach. In terms of teacher development in general, a pedagogical-authority approach offers a greater likelihood of teachers internalising change messages, rather than just being superficially compliant; but in practice it has often been hard to make this strategy work with teachers. Across the study sites, in DPEP and non-DPEP Districts (except Udaipur), Cluster Resource Centre staff reported that they felt constrained by:

- A perceived lack of 'legal' authority so there are no sanctions for teachers who ignore their advice. This makes many Cluster Resource staff feel that their visits to such schools 'don't make any difference as teachers don't take any notice of what we say'.
- A lack of confidence in their own academic abilities, particularly in relation to lack of content knowledge in the upper primary Standards and an inadequate grasp of child psychology.

Gaps in these areas may mean they cannot answer teachers' questions and this undermines the Cluster Resource Centre role. Where there are real gaps in the academic monitoring of classrooms, Cluster staff's practical resolutions of these concerns have led to a trend in which they tend to involve themselves in administrative monitoring tasks which are more appropriately done by inspectors. In discussions with the research team, they emphasised their view that unless Cluster Resource Centre staff are empowered by the legal mandate that inspectors have, 'making' teachers change would continue to be very challenging. This was a concern for DPEP officials, as one reported: 'CRC's role is academic monitor. CRCs do not know their role, or if they do know it they don't accept it. So they perceive themselves as supervisors who gather data to feed upwards' (GUJ/SNT DPEP i/c 14.12.00).

Focus group discussions with Block and Cluster Resource Centre staff in Santrampur District in Gujarat for example revealed a matrix of concerns

(Fig. 6.1) clustered around structural constraints, impressions of teachers' pedagogical shortcomings; sense of their own pedagogical challenges; issues relating to community interactions. Very similar concerns were found in Dhar District, although there was in Dhar no overlap with inspectorate, which had been phased out.

Figure 6.1: **CRC concerns, Santrampur District**

Structural issues	Concerns about teachers' pedagogy	CRC/BRCs' own pedagogical concerns	Community concerns
CRC don't have power to make teachers follow them Lack of role clarity / overlap between role of CRC / BRC and inspector, inspectors may act as barriers.	Ts don't implement training; they are competent but don't do it. Multi-grade teaching – teachers can't plan. Teachers don't pre-plan lessons	Can't give sufficient pedagogical guidance: can't teach child psychology as they don't know it themselves Subject-wise expertise only really enough up to Std 5.	
Lack of resources, teachers, rooms, toilets and science kits.	Good quality TLM lacking or not being used.	Can't teach TLM preparation and usage	
Insufficient co-ordination with all other bodies, perhaps because CRC / BRC functions aren't known to others they could link with, eg NGOs.			Community mobilisation not enough – CRCs need teachers to do more, feel teachers don't make enough effort with parental interactions. Parental migration directly affects edu.
Pre-schools need to be increased in villages to improve school readiness.			

Capacity development of the Block and Cluster Resource Centre staff was a responsibility of the DPEP (Box 6.1); in Gujarat their training was done by DIET staff, while in Dhar District it was done directly by the DPEP. In Santrampur this arrangement was weakened by the DIET staff's limited interactions with DPEP in the field and with teachers in schools.

While once-off programmes provide inputs for academic staff of Cluster Resource Centres, this model of development has the same inherent weakness as the once-off programmes for teachers: it does not provide ongoing support to practitioners

to develop and refine their skills once the initial input has been provided. In both cases, however overall responsibility for capacity development of CRCs was not seen to be the DIET's. The opposite was the case in Surat and Indore DIETs where, without the DPEP, both DIETs understood the need to invest in development of the Cluster resource.

Box 6.1: **Capacity development of BRC and CRCs, Santramapur 1998**

- Competition among BRC/CRC co-ordinators, (PM 25.3.98; BK 27.3.98; Dang 30.3.98]: preparing TLM, self-composition of songs, stories, activity bank; debate on differents aspects of DPEP thrust areas; contents of Stds 1-5. outcomes: developed understandings about activities to be performed under DPEP for quality improvement and focus groups; developed self composition skills; developed understanding about roles they have to play for academic support to teachers; create enthusiasm for better performance of DPEP; motivate others to participate in educational activities at district / CRC level.
- Textbook training for RPs for pilot phase– 8-13 Aug 98
- Gender sensitisation – guidance on specific role on gender and specified activities to be followed under it, also what to be done when they find gender disparities on visits to schools and classrooms 13-14 April 98
- Pre-elementary linkages with ICDS officers 8.9.98
- Role in AS, satellite schools concept, and materials preparation
- Planning and management Dec 98 – CRCs and BRCs as a leader and motivater at the school level
- Orientation on GER and NER – interpretations and strategy to be adopted

In the two DPEP Districts, the team found that while DIET claimed a role in providing academic support to Resource Centres, Centre staff did not reflect this perception. Rather, the absence of DIET staff was noted, and therefore there was little to comment on in relation to their making inputs to meetings. This was comprehensively brought out by teachers in a piece of action research by Dhar DIET (see chapter 7).

Discussions with teachers indicated that teachers felt most of their academic problems can be solved at the Cluster or Block Resource Centres. No instances of DIET expertise having been helpful were cited in either interview or during school observations. There was a strong call for DIET staff to visit schools to evaluate progress in scheme implementation from teachers in Dhar District, linked to a view that if DIET staff visited schools they would be able to improve the relevance of training programmes. There were other instances where DIETs were seen to have a quasi-inspectoral role to play - as persons who may be able to convince recalcitrant teachers to adopt a child-centred pedagogy because they are perceived as being more senior, and therefore more able to exert pressure than the peer group.

Whether related to the DIET or inspectorate's perceived capacity to exert it, the 'power-coercive' approach to change widely appeared to be more firmly linked to possibilities of change than the 'pedagogical-authority' one.

6.4.3 Panel inspection as a mode of integrating CRCs and the inspectorate

In Gujarat, Surat District had piloted a 'panel inspection' experiment which was envisaged as a way forward, an optimum configuration of personnel with 'power-coercive' and 'pedagogical persuasive' powers between them. The panel consists of the inspector, alongside the Cluster Resource Centre leader, a school principal and two others, such as DIET staff. The Director of the GCERT and the Surat DIET Principal saw this as a means of assisting inspecting and Cluster personnel to understand each other's roles better, and to identify areas for mutual support and reinforcement.

6.5 Policy implications

The chapter has illustrated that the emergence of DIET autonomy is hampered by unresolved tensions of decentralisation. While the apex body believes the DIET has freedom to be creative, in practice there are still reporting requirements, requirements to gain permission to undertake research project, centralisation in training programme design, and so on that restrict such freedom. These are indications that DIETs and their apex body have yet to develop the sense of partnership implied in decentralisation, rather than the hierarchical relationship of a centralised system. As decentralisation gathers pace, State officials will increasingly need to become responsive to needs that emerge from the Districts. This points to a need for the State to identify new roles for itself in responding and supporting, rather than designing and passing downwards.

Not all DIETs were ready, however, to take on major decentralised responsibilities; they were at different stages not only of competence and understanding, but also commitment, to the DIET idea. These findings point to a need for the apex organisation to move away from its top-down orientation towards a role that is responsive and supportive, recognising that institutions at different stages of development may require differential treatment.

Convergence between various agencies working for elementary education differed greatly across sites. In Madhya Pradesh it has been promoted by institutional reform; in the Lok Jumbish site it was promoted by the Lok Jumbish network which drew various actors together; and in Surat District and to some extent in Indore District, it was promoted by the efforts of DIET staff to develop a profile for the institute in the District. In all States, this process would have been

facilitated if, when DIETs were initially established, implementers had paid attention to the effect on existing structures of introducing a new one. An aspect of innovation and change management that emerges from this study in that when a new structure is introduced, or an old structure takes on a new role, ***all*** officials need a full induction to the innovation itself, and their own direct or indirect roles in supporting it. This is now being done in Gujarat.

Across the sample sites, DIETs have achieved differing levels of integration with the Resource Centres. In the two DPEP Districts this integration was considerably less visible than it was in, for example, Surat or Indore Districts. As Cluster Resource Centres are rolled out, further resolution will be required as to how these structures and DIETs, independently conceived, should articulate with one another to achieve meaningful integration and create feedback loops. The trends reported on here indicate that there is a need for some DIETs to receive more concentrated support to help them achieve integration with their Cluster Resource Centres.

Chapter 7 Professional Development through Collaborative Action Research with Diets

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have illustrated that in the DIETs, pre- and in-service teacher development largely follow a transmission model, with a dominant focus on teaching, rather than learning. The evidence from across the case study sites is that this model is not really *engaging* with either pre- or in-service teachers on important issues such as their attitudes and values, or aspirations. While it aspires to build teachers' skills, it does so without informing itself about which skills practising and student teachers already have.

Although the evidence suggests this is a relative weak version of the internationally dominant 'skills and knowledge' approach, this kind of approach has intrinsic limitations. It pays little attention to the context in which those skills are to be used, and does not concern itself with the crucial question of a teacher's will to adopt change messages (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992). This is particularly important in the contexts we are examining here because, as the situation analysis has highlighted, there are issues around agency, ownership and responsibility - among DIET staff as well as pre- and in-service teachers. Developing educators' sense of agency, ownership and responsibility emerges as an aspect of decentralisation that needs to be actively encouraged. These issues are central to teacher development and the promotion of quality elementary education, but are not really being addressed by current training approaches. Pace-setting teachers and some DIET staff, on the other hand, have a strong sense of personal and institutional agency in relation to change messages, have ownership of classroom processes, and feel responsible for others' learning.

The following three chapters explore an alternative approach to teacher educator and teacher development that focuses on agency, ownership and responsibility. The approach adopted by the research team differed from the dominant model to practitioner development adopted by the state, in that it does not see the teacher as a 'technician' who is expected to implement the ideas of others, or training in terms of inputs towards skill building. Rather, it builds on Donald Schön's (1983) idea of the teacher as a 'reflective practitioner' and decision-maker, linking this with the idea of engaging practitioners with their practices in ways that make 'training' a more meaningful experience.

7.2 Professional development for DIET staff

7.2.1 Action research as an avenue for professional development

The possible avenues for professional development of DIET staff were many, but DIETs elected to focus with the team on the action research component of their

mandate. This was the area where they felt they had very little relevant knowledge and few skills, and in recognition of the importance of action research, they hoped the project would help with this. This was an area where the team could work effectively and directly with the DIET, given the contested nature of decentralisation; and the team saw the action research emphasis on reflection is a useful generic and cross-cutting aspect of professional development in any particular substantive area. Good research skills are also crucial to a DIET's ability to identify teachers' professional development needs, to which the DIETs programmes would respond.

This chapter begins with a review of DIET staff's understandings of, and involvement in, research and how they see the relationship between research and action. It then describes the action research projects that were undertaken collaboratively with DIET staff in response to these discussions, and draws out the implications of this mode of professional development.

7.2.2 **Research and the DIETs**

The circumstances of their recruitment, coupled with the pushes and pulls of decentralisation, were making it difficult for some DIETs to identify their own roles. The project team believed that collaborative discussion, reflection and proaction by a DIET with the project team might make a difference. Action research was a very suitable means of encouraging this, since all these elements are built into its process. From the workshop discussions and situation analysis, the research team could identify that research in DIETs so far had taken two forms:

1. SCERTs develop their own research agenda which is carried out by DIETs.
2. SCERTs have a list of what they term action research topics from which DIETs may select and submit a proposal for funding; or the DIET may develop a proposal on its own topic.

The first type of research is a further reflection of still existing centralisation, in which DIETs are seen as the executive agents of the SCERT. This type of research continues rather than challenges the established pattern of passing data collected at the field level upwards, rather than using them at source (Dhingra 1991). DIET staff had no ownership of this agenda or the research processes and findings; they reported that they did not know how the data they provided were used; and in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, enquiries of SCERTs revealed no evidence of any of these studies being used for example to provide even modest inputs for policy.

The second type of research, in contrast, has considerable potential to support the decentralisation effort. The stress on field research, in contrast with desk study, is

very important, and writing research into the mandate of the DIET also stresses its significance.

In all States, research at the DIET level was carried out by the few members of DIET staff who have experience of doing research, and reports were then passed to the SCERT / equivalent. This research was mostly quantitative and largely dominated by surveys, although occasional case studies were also found. DIETs' experience of doing research was not positively reported in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. DIETs felt that it took such a long time for the apex body to reach any decision on topics they submitted that the importance of research seemed negligible. This changed in Madhya Pradesh when the SCERT was merged with the RGSM, from when the DIETs were encouraged to develop their own research proposals and SCERT became more responsive. In Gujarat, GCERT was more proactive about research than the other two States; proposals were promptly financed and abstracts of DIETs' research studies were collated and published to encourage them to see research as an important activity (GUJ/SNT/Hch 14.1200). In the other two States, although the SCERT/equivalent defended setting the research agenda at the State level, as a means of *structuring* research activities to guide DIETs, this was interpreted at the DIET level as *controlling* the agenda.

In all three States, however, the missing aspect of the research programme was following up the research findings. Instead of being used as a means to an end, research had become an end in itself, and was not thus contributing significantly to shaping DIETs' responses to what research was telling them about issues in their District. Although this research was all described as action research, the essential component of action was largely absent.

The prevalent view of action research among DIET staff was of a small-scale project that, in contrast with a desk study, involves action, i.e. field work. No mention was made of any reflective component (see Box 7.1). Action research was therefore seen more as 'research on', and not an opportunity to engage reflexively with one's own practices; and was conflated with other types of research, rather than seen as the specialised and particular type of practitioner research that it is elsewhere. Interviews with State Councils revealed that they also see action research as a contrast with desk research, rather than as practitioner research.

Box 7.1: **Action research in cross-cultural transition**

Action Research grew out of the 'teacher as researcher' movement, initially in the USA. This understanding of action research sees the teacher as a reflexive and expert practitioner, ready to engage in critical reflection on his/her own practices, and committed to making changes by taking action (e.g. Elliott 1991; McNiff 1991). Action research is seen to be merely a more organised and perhaps intensive continuation of what teachers are already doing in the classrooms all the time – observing critically their own practices and making adjustments to try and improve processes (Stuart 1996). The view of a teacher or teacher educator implied here is the professional stance of a self-critical practitioner, who has a sense of personal agency and autonomy with regard to taking action, i.e. making changes in his or her own classroom.

When action research makes a cross-cultural transition, it is carried out in a different set of professional circumstances that shape the action research paradigm that will be practised. In this case, action research had moved into a context where practitioners' main focus tends to be on imparting content, within a transmission mode of education that has limited regard to the nature of the learners or the wider context in which the school is embedded. Practitioners' reflections on practice tend to prioritise issues of content, rather than question the appropriateness of transmission – or pedagogy. Content is, however, laid down in the textbook or training module and tends to be seen as a 'sacred icon' (Kumar 1991) to be conveyed rather than challenged. This has been a constraining framework for practitioners in that it has not much encouraged the development of autonomy to experiment or question. Taking cognisance of this cultural context, action research initiatives may need to incorporate steps that support practitioners in developing a professional identity that embraces self-directed questioning and reflection, and encourages the emergence of the sense of personal agency that is required to take action on that questioning and reflection.

7.3 The Action-Reflection cycle with DIETs

Action-reflection with DIETs began with two day workshops in the DIETs which expressed an interest in participating (Santrampur did not express interest; and Surat joined the project at a stage when pursuing collaborative action research was not feasible).

Box 7.2: **Understandings of research in Indore DIET**

What is research?

The plan you make to solve problems in our area of work is called research.

To discover new things or a method in an untouched subject or principle or problem is called research.

Research is a process in which a person says some new things about which people don't have information.

To find out problems in a particular area, and to find out solutions for the problem; to use new methods in the field and find out their impact.

To find new methods for solving a very old problem and to solve those problems – to some extent by finding the cause of the problem one can remove it.

To do analytical research on anything is research. Research is helpful in removing the problems in the way of related subjects.

What is the importance of research?

To increase scientific thinking through new research findings.

To know whether or not to continue the work.

To contribute to the achievement of society and country.

To know problems and solve them.

To see the quality of a work plan.

What is the difference between action research and other research?

No degree required for doing action research while for doing other research one needs to have master's degree like M.Sc. or MA.

Action research is done on a small problem.

Other research is done in different areas while action research is done in a particular area in a time period.

7.3.1 Exploring the concept

The first day of the workshop clarified the term and how action research is carried out; and discussed its potential uses in general and locally. Box 7.2 shows some examples from Indore DIET about how people understood research, its importance, and the difference between action research and other types of research. Clarification was needed on several of these understandings. During all of the collaborative action research work, the project team consciously tried to demystify doing research and in so doing, change DIETs' perception of research to create a more positive sense of it as a useful tool.

The second part of the initial workshop involved discussion about what the DIETs might undertake as action research. This was done by listing concerns in general,

and then generating prioritised themes for research by identifying an *actionable* list of concerns. This acknowledged but proposed no further action on concerns that neither the research team not the DIET could immediately do anything about. A discussion of methods of data generation and analysis completed the workshop.

Embedded in the concerns which DIET staff listed, from which a topic would be selected, was a sense that responsibility for addressing these concerns lay with others (teachers, parents, children). Considerable prompting from the project team was required to consider the following possibilities:

- the quality / relevance of INSET might be related to teacher interest and motivation;
- teachers might not have understood the training messages well enough to implement them;
- if they had understood the training messages, teachers might still find it difficult to see how to implement a training idea in school.

Action research thus took on significance as a medium by which DIETs might begin to define their own role in relation to the *impact* of their training programmes on teachers and their practices, rather than completing a training programme and viewing teacher attendance as the criterion of success. An aspect of professional development that underpinned the collaborative action research work was bringing their own accountability for outcomes into the DIET's focus, and so challenging a pattern that externalised all accountability to the apex body, officers of the Education Department, or teachers. In the contexts of DIETs, two important aspects of action research - reflection and agency to change – both needed to be nurtured and encouraged by the research team in order to make sense of the 'action' component as originally conceived in action research, rather than as the local counterpart of 'desk study'.

7.3.2 Inputs to help develop role clarity

During discussions with the project team in the first workshop to explore collaboration possibilities, it emerged that in Udaipur, Indore and Dhar DIETs, staff were quite unclear about the aims, objectives and relevance of some new programmes. Discussions about the impact of the DIET in the District also revealed a lack of clarity about the branch of the DIET they worked in, and their role within it. This was the first time that DIET staff had been in the position to discuss with an outside agency areas where they needed some support and direction. The team responded by arranging a two day workshop for these DIETs to clarify the intentions and purposes of the DIET in the context of the NPE 1986/92.

A representative from SCERT who attended the workshop in Indore DIET noted:

> What should be there in action research, what should be innovation, what should be in the project? Things like that till today even I don't know. You throw some light on that in a very simple manner in this workshop. You explained it like a master level. What is master level? When a master talks about very difficult things, it feels it's all very easy. There should be that mastery.

Given that SCERT is the apex organisation that in theory was supporting the DIETs' action research, this was a reminder that the apex organisation itself had been identified as in need of revitalisation and refreshment under the scheme that proposed DIETs.

In Dhar and Indore DIETs, the workshop was catalytic for DIET staff and led immediately to their taking new initiatives through action research. In Udaipur DIET, staff responded with expectations that the project team would deliver more inputs for each branch (particularly teaching methodologies for pre-set and in-service courses) and there was little response to the idea of jointly reflecting on practices and thinking about ways forward.

No action research projects were developed by Udaipur DIET. This was related to the in-charge Principal's strong administrative focus and less developed understandings of the academic functions of the DIET, or how research activities could enrich it. When the leadership changed, the incoming Principal stressed the importance of action research, and the project team helped three individuals design small pieces of research; but all those members of staff were transferred or retired shortly after the project design had been completed.

7.3.3 Action research topics

The action research topics emerging across the DIETs were:

No.	Title	Initiating DIET	Taken up by other DIETs
1	Teacher's attitudes to change	Dhar	Indore, Masuda*, (Udaipur)*
2	Transmission loss in the cascade model	Indore	(Santrampur)*
3	Time management in the DIET	Masuda	
4	Teacher motivation	Indore	(Santrampur)*
5	Language teaching	Indore	

* The DIET showed interest in the project and agreed that the questionnaire could be distributed, but did not take an active part in data analysis.

7.4 Processes and findings of the action research projects

This section describes the processes and findings of the action research projects carried out with the DIETs.

7.4.1 Teacher's attitudes to change (Dhar DIET)

In discussion about their concerns, Dhar DIET listed a number of issues that impacted negatively on quality – the achievement of which was their first concern. Discussion of the concerns moved the agenda towards a questioning of the reasons for issues raised. In this DIET, where staff perceived themselves to have been poorly treated both by DPEP and the apex body, the tendency to externalise all accountability was very strong. The facilitator worked hard to extend the focus to DIETs' own practices in relation to those concerns. The discussion focused on teachers' attitudes to change, which were perceived by the DIET to be generally negative. The most animated discussion was around this point, where the research team challenged this 'common sense' perception about teachers as an assumption that warranted investigation. This emerged as the issue DIET staff felt they understood least well but most affected their work. The DIET's openness to investigating their own view led to its selection as the action research topic.

The research team then worked with the DIET staff on designing a questionnaire that captured the issues they wanted to investigate. This was printed and given, with small blank notebooks, to teachers attending the next training programme in all blocks in the District. The project was introduced in some places by the research team which was observing the training, and elsewhere by the DIET. About 400 notebooks were returned.

The questions

The questions framed by the DIET with the team's help were orientated towards probing the DIET's belief that teachers did not take change seriously and understanding why they did not implement new changes. DIET staff wanted to know whether teachers could see what was underlying the packages and thus the continuity of change, so they asked:

1. In the field of education, which changes have come in the last five years?
2. Is there any relationship between these changes? Illustrate your answer with an example.

The next two questions tried to probe the acceptability of change messages and their relevance in the classroom.

3. Which change has been useful to you in your classroom teaching? Give 2-3 examples.

4. Which changes have not been useful in your classroom teaching? Give 2-3 examples.

The question following these was concerned to understand the practicability of change messages.

5. Which changes do you accept but feel you cannot implement in the classroom? Why?

Figure 7.1: **Discussing questionnaire design**

The sixth question elicited teachers' views of what changes they would like, and the final question was intended to draw forth teachers' understandings and views of the DIET:

6. Which changes would you like to see in primary education?
7. What are your expectations from the DIET in the field of primary education?

The questionnaire was piloted with Master Trainers in the next training programme. DIET staff were quite disappointed by the answers they received, and felt that while the questionnaire did not need adjustment, they themselves had to work harder in introducing the project and reasons for it in future. They promptly rectified this first mistake in the second round, with teachers.

After the questionnaire had been completed by teachers, DIET staff initially undertook analysis by generating their own analytical framework according to their own perceptions of the responses they felt teachers ought to have made. They tabulated responses numerically and derived percentages which were rough indicators as to how teachers had performed in relation to their expectations. However, much of the useful information for proactive responses by the DIET lay in the detail of what teachers were saying. The research team suggested that an

approach more in line with their intentions of trying to understand teachers' viewpoints was to generate categories for analysis from the responses themselves – the more 'grounded' approach of qualitative research. This second type of analysis was carried out with the project team. As the following excerpt shows, Dhar DIET staff immediately saw that this approach was more meaningful:

J Here they have to write. They have written for the first time. Till now what ever feedback has been taken - this is the first time they have written. Till now the work was done by tick marking. We also calculated this many agreed and this many didn't and wrote. No meaning came out of it.

AC Do you feel this will be useful for your District?

V We do feel so.

J At least we will be face to face with bitter truth. More than that what can happen?

AC Don't take it as a bitter truth. What we have to think is OK, we have to start from here. My teachers are at this point now what can I do?

Y To minimise their lacking.

This citation illustrates that taking action on these findings would however be shaped by the DIET's agency to be proactive and its perceptions of teachers - two areas where the action research process was attempting to promote more positive stances.

Outcomes – the findings

Teachers responded very well to this action research project, and many of them took the time to write detailed responses to the questions. One teacher later commented:

> We have filled in so many questionnaires by those university professors. They get someone to come and he just ticks the boxes. It never makes any difference to us. But the way you have been asking us questions, asking us to write our opinions…you have made us think for the first time.

Responses to the first question were full: teachers detailed schemes or their underlying concepts, and sometimes raised issues or noted points that could alert the DIET to some of their difficulties. The second question revealed that teachers found it difficult to link the changes with each other:

> *Shiksha Samakaya:* In this children are given through teaching the medium of play way method. This is a good scheme. Before, children used to fear school. Now that fear is gone and they have started to come to school happily. By this improvement in primary education has happened.
>
> Midday Meal Scheme: This is a good scheme but nobody has got special/significant benefit. In this children also do not take interest and nor does the teacher because most of the teacher's time goes in making information.

> *Sikna Sikana Package:* This scheme is also good. But we are not able to understand that why so many new schemes are being made. If you want to make them, then make only one scheme and let that scheme run in a complete form. All the schemes are good but a definite shape is not being given (MP/DHA/Kuk 003).

In their responses to question three, teachers responded favourably to the introduction of 'play way' methods, activity-based learning and the introduction of teaching learning materials and more songs and stories; for example:

> Work should be done on the basis of activities in primary schools, by play way, and also all the activities should be evaluated. By making use of pictures and words children are taught, they learn fast and learn how to recognise pictures and read words. So they will start to achieve their competencies. Thanks to the changes that have come some children are able to do activities while playing and hrough activities they are able to achieve the competency (MP/DHA/Kuk/028).

In response to question four, teachers reported that villagers, not they, were averse to some of the changes:

> Children also learn easily whatever is told to us. But the villagers are not at all ready to accept the changes. We are not able to make them understand that the aim of all is to teach the child. But they sit at the tea stall and criticise the teachers, saying it is all silly. All day they just dance and sing, they do not teach, rather they teach the child to dance and sing (MP/DHA/Kuk 003).
>
> It is a nice thing that the teacher teaches and explains any of the poems to children through expression or acting and dance again and again. But the villagers do not like this kind of teaching method, of the teacher teaching through dance to the children (MP/DHA/Kuk 032).

Question five was also revealing for the DIET staff:

> In the field of Primary Education there have been many changes in the past 5 years. There are such changes like through the medium of songs…we accept this change and are also making efforts to implement. But with this the level of child to recognise the alphabets, to make words, to make sentences and to read them etc all such things the child is not able to achieve. Thus we are not being able to implement this in the classroom completely (MP/DHA/Kuk 006).
>
> It is very difficult for a teacher wherever there is multigrade. Even after explaining to the students again and again they fight and are naughty. Children also do not listen to the monitor. For instance when the teacher is teaching the 5th std and noise is coming from the other classes, the rhythm of the teacher breaks and again and again the teacher has to go to speak to the children in the

other class. This is very difficult in schools. This way according to me multigrade teaching is not helpful. This is only possible when there are 2 teachers (MP/DHA/Kuk 022).

Teachers also made interesting suggestions in question six, and here too their answers provided the DIET with insights into the issues they faced and their views on processes of change:

I myself would like to have these kinds of changes in primary education. The curriculum or course should not be changed all the time, and if it is changed then it should be made a little less, according to the level of 5th class children because children are very small. Limited information should be given instead of the whole country. It would be nice if limited knowledge is given like of the District instead of the whole country. Because as and when the child grows his/her memory would increase. In maths also it should be limited to addition, subtraction only. According to the village if the child learns that much also it is considered an achievement. In maths the knowledge up to 1000 is enough for the child. For village children the topics/subjects should be very simple so that the child does not face any kind of problem. And questions should also be according to the level of village children. Further it is your wish but after you read this diary, you think about it and also try to find out a solution along with your colleagues. For 5th class the course is too much (MP/DHA/Kuk 003).

We ourselves want these kind of changes in primary education, that when you all implement/introduce a scheme, in order to understand it, one year practical training should be given. The training for the schemes which are introduced are for 3 to 12 days only, by which the teacher is not able to learn completely. For this reason the training period should be long. Apart from this, the 2nd reason is that you people introduce new books or a new scheme all the time. Instead of this, it would be nice if you would pay a little attention towards examinations because till now there has been no change in the examination method. Mostly when they fail, they start doing wrong things. That is why we want to take your advice, it would be nice if little difference is kept between the rural and city children. Because in rural areas even today the old customs are going on. The child who passes out will be made to study further while the child who fails will have to do household work. If you set the paper with respect to rural children this situation may not arise. We want to know your views in respect of this. If you people find it appropriate then certainly make an effort to do it. It would be very nice on your part (MP/DHA/Kuk 015).

The final question was not answered by many teachers, but those who did respond made a plea for DIET staff to go and see them in schools

All the schemes being introduced are good. But all people go for supervision and evaluation to each school. Why do you people not come? You should go to

each of our schools and see whether the scheme is actually running. Take some trouble and do come to our school because as it is others come to give us guidance, we are satisfied by their guidance but we need your guidance too, because in 5 years we have been unable to make the villagers understand that the scheme which is running is good, in which the child is learning easily while playing. We try 100 times to explain to them but are unable to succeed. It could be possible that you come to our school and satisfy the village people that this scheme really is good, your child will be able to read and write very soon. It might be possible that they would listen to you. As it is, the whole world that the grass is greener on the other side you would be new for them and they would consider you as a higher authority. The villagers believe that we do a job free of cost and these words are not out of their heads. For this reason only we expect from you that you visit one school once a year but certainly do come because then we would also get a chance to learn from you. No-one in this world is perfect, somewhere or other, a person makes mistakes. This is the only hope: that you come for supervision for each of our schools (MP/DHA/Kuk 003).

Whatever scheme you people have introduced has never been evaluated. You people should go to each of the schools and evaluate the teacher and children. How will you come to know whether the scheme you introduced is running smoothly or not? For that, you yourselves should come to our schools. Whatever you do will be happy. We feel that you introduce a scheme and forget. For this reason, take some trouble to give inspiration to move forward. It would be very nice (MP/DHA/Kuk 015).

We expect the minimum from you. You come to our school and whatever improvement we are making, if you *evaluate* it, it would be good (MP/DHA/Kuk 017).

This action research project provided Dhar DIET with a wealth of insights into teachers' attitudes to change that challenged their initial assumption. Teachers' responses were impressively detailed and through the pages, some of them spoke personally to the DIET staff. Since part of this exercise had been aimed at helping DIETs identify a role for themselves, the feedback from the themes that emerged from teachers' responses to the final question was particularly helpful (Box 7.3).

Box 7.3: **Dhar teachers' expectations of the DIET**
DIET support needed for evaluation
School visits expected so teachers can get guidance and inspiration
Role in persuading villagers about validity of activity-based approaches
Role in achieving a better fit between curriculum and local circumstances
Provide TLM
Re-consider frequent changes and introduction of new schemes.

7.4.2 Transmission loss in the cascade

This project was generated by Indore DIET. Almost all DIET training follows a cascade model to some extent, typically along the lines of the pattern shown in Fig. 7.2 for Madhya Pradesh, and transmission loss within the cascade was a concern across DIETs.

Figure 7.2: **A cascade training model, Madhya Pradesh**

Personnel	Place and people	Mode and materials
District Resource Group *Briefing*	5 days at Bhopal Given by SCERT, RIE and College of Education (DIET + RPs 12 people)	Materials – same module throughout. Training focuses on content, activities, demo lesson. Classroom activities for each unit, how to evaluate teaching, how to make it effective and interesting
Master Trainers *Expansion*	5 days in I Given by those who went to Bhopal to the 80 Master trainers in I District	
Teachers training *Detailed*	12 days: 5 (content-based) + 7 maths and EVS Given by MTs at block level in 7 places in I district to about 800 teachers	

In the discussion of this topic, the DIET felt that they would enrich the training they gained from the State, and so there was no question of transmission loss at that point – rather, they talked of transmission gain at the DIET level. They strongly felt that transmission loss occurred at the point of the cascade where they trained Master Trainers:

> Transmission loss starts at the MT level, teachers are not expert in training. Their major role is not training so this loss takes place there. MTs are not mentally prepared to teach teachers. Administrative slackness is another cause. In the message some percentage is lost. For example, for Child-Centred Approach they don't convey exactly what the concept is. They then define it according to themselves. Our assessment is that most of the MTs failed to grasp so in the field they do it according to their own ideas. Some continue to do evaluation traditionally, some just ticked, these children have achieved this much (MP/IND/Ch April 99).

However the DIET wanted to try and find out more about what could be going wrong at each level. It was decided that at each level, when receiving and giving training, the trainer would keep a diary of reflections on the training programme, including areas where doubts and concerns remained, and try to see how these gaps might impact on training the next level. The diary writing was structured by prompts on a sheet stuck into the diary:

Box 7.4: **Prompts for transmission loss diary**

What happened during the day today?

What questions came to mind?

Did I get a satisfactory answer to my questions?

Did I have my doubts clarified or are there still some questions – if so, what are they?

Were there any points where I needed clarification but didn't get it?

Are there any aspects discussed in the training that seem unlikely to be taken up at schools – if so which?

Are there are points you can identify now where you think you will find difficult to train other people?

This project intended to prompt reflection on the relevance of the training and on the trainer's own training needs. Overall, however, the cascade project was not able to generate very much insight into problems that a trainer faces during cascade training. The DIET staff themselves, who initiated the project, did not keep their diaries accurately, pleading a lack of time. In part this can be traced to an unwillingness to commit to paper, even in an anonymous diary, areas where difficulties might be perceived to compromise prestige and status. Teacher educators are not accustomed to writing for their own professional purposes since as teachers, written records are used to guide planning and for inspection: the idea of using a diary as tool for reflection and self-growth had to struggle against a long history of making a written record for scrutiny by an inspector. For the DIET staff, there was in addition a serious practical issue: they reported the quality of the training at State level as so poor that their evenings were devoted to discussing how they could improve on what they had heard during the day, rather than diary writing. The State level training also only discussed the development of teaching-learning materials without demonstrating it; and how teaching-learning materials could be developed was another focus on DIET staff's evening discussions.

Further down the cascade, whatever writing was done tended to be a record of activities, and a note of shortcomings in relation to content. Master Trainers confined their focus to issues of content; the following citation from a diary was one of the very few that considered practical applications and did illustrate, as the research intended, a major flaw in the training programme that meant this trainer had no faith in the applicability of the training in schools even as he took it:

> In my mind I had a question as to how it could be simplified so that children would learn it in a simplified way. To me, my questions were not answered because the trainer was not clear how children could be taught and didn't really know how SSP [the Shikha Shikana package] works. If you teach according to SSP you need staff, TLM and so on, and so the whole requirements of the SSP

> package are not available. I asked, in those circumstances how can we teach, and the trainer could not give a satisfactory response. That means, whatever is taught in the training programme cannot be implemented in school (MP/SAW/MT/04).

The few diaries that did make useful comments, such as the one cited above, did also point out to the DIET that transmission loss can occur when Master Trainers *take* training, rather than only at the point when they *give* it, as they had previously thought. On the whole, however, diaries did not reveal concerns among trainers about the pedagogy of training; the focus firmly remained the transmission of content. In this respect, the silences in the diaries were very revealing. The focus on content was so sharp that process was neglected, and trainers up and down the cascade did not focus on their own roles as facilitators of learning. Learner viewpoints are missing throughout the cascade training. The research team drew out of this action research project these important points in respect of professional capabilities.

7.4.3 Time management in the DIET (Masuda DIET)

This action research project was initiated by Masuda DIET and aimed to resolve disputes arising among staff of an understaffed and busy institution about workloads. Staff meticulously documented how they spent their time over one week and this was fed back in a workshop which brought all staff together to discuss their activities.

The feedback session laid to rest any suspicions that anyone else was shirking as everyone in turn read from their diaries to describe their activities. This led to further discussion of the lack of understanding about how information was disseminated and how workloads and new opportunities were apportioned. Like the other DIETs (except Surat) this DIET had no regular staff meetings; a monthly meeting was instigated. To help this process the team led a further workshop on holding effective meetings (generating an agenda, chairing, minutes, action points). This initiative was welcomed in the DIET as a means of increasing transparency. The research team had played a role as external facilitators in easing tensions in the DIET and helping staff move forward; but as the Lok Jumbish funding stalled and further staff left, fewer and fewer of those who could have sustained the project's gains remained in the DIET.

7.4.4 Teacher motivation (Indore DIET)

The question of teacher motivation came up very often in discussions with DIETs. Indore DIET initiated an open-ended questionnaire which could be modified and used with various groups, and made a start with studying the motivations of the

new intake of para-teachers under the Education Guarantee Scheme. These para teachers came to DIET twice yearly for on the job training. The DIET's intention was to see reactions to the training, what they felt they had learned, and its applicability in the field. The same questionnaire was given in the second training to try and see how para teachers were developing, and what gaps they had found when they tried to implement training messages. The DIET staff took this up as a longitudinal study which continued after the project term.

7.4.5 **Language teaching**

In Indore DIET, five DIET staff members expressed their interest in researching language teaching in government and AS/EGS schools by comparing the teaching-learning materials and examining their contribution to the overall effectiveness of the teaching approach. This research arose after the team had shared with the DIET its teacher action research project processes and findings (discussed in chapter 8), which the DIET found very interesting and wanted to replicate. This proposal was one of four that was approved by the DIET Principal for submission to SCERT for funding under the State scheme for supporting action research.

The DIET staff in Madhya Pradesh had all been instructed to take up two schools for intense visits and improvement. This project was dovetailed into this instruction, as DIET staff could work intensively with their schools on language issues. The researcher in the DIET also observed the language teaching in the DIET and in some primary schools, to generate a dialogue with the DIET staff.

This project began with great enthusiasm but in the wider context, re-organisation and reform of the DIETs was now beginning to take shape. The DIET was re-focused onto developing its own District plan for the next five years; and there was much discussion about potential re-staffing of DIETs, according to which those serving as Block-in-charge at the DIET would be expected to work at the Block level. These sweeping changes inevitably took precedence over the action research projects. This led the DIET to make different demands on the research project leaders, and resulted in four days of close consultation about how to do effective District planning.

7.5 Professional development issues

The collaborative action research work with DIETs had several positive outcomes which contributed to staff's professional development in the short and medium term.

7.5.1 Skills and understandings of action research

All staff who attended the workshops and participated in the research gained technical skills relating to the purpose and nature of action research, questionnaire framing, thematic analysis, and relating findings to future action steps.

7.5.2 Role clarity and action plan

In DIETs where there was a lack of clarity as to the basic roles and functions of a DIET, staff felt able to ask the team for inputs to help them understand those roles. All three DIETs agreed that this had been useful. Dhar DIET moved a step further by developing its own action plan, detailing not only what each branch would try to do in future, but also how they would integrate work across the branches. This workshop was empowering for this DIET in particular as it helped the DIET think about developing an identity that was different from the DPEP, and less dependent on the apex institution. In both the other DIETs, this workshop helped members of staff who had needed clarification make more sense of their roles, and relate more positively to their posting. This clarity was a first prerequisite for the DIETs to begin to fulfil the functions for which they were established; yet some people had been posted in the DIET for up to four years without such clarity.

7.5.3 Reshaping DIETs' collaboration patterns

Another effect of the action research projects was to open up routinised working patterns. None of the DIETs with whom collaborative action research was taking place held staff meetings, so the workshops provided a rare opportunity for staff to hear from each other and feed back across branches. This helped to reduce the compartmentalised approach to activities reported in chapter 3.

Usually, training opportunities are open to a selected few and take place outside the DIET, and may bring only marginal gains to those who do not attend. The research project workshops, in contrast, were open to all staff members, and brought them together on a single platform where everyone was encouraged to speak. An unexpected side effect of the frequent absences of some senior staff in Indore DIET was that members of staff who were more hesitant found themselves in leadership positions, and volunteered for responsibilities that would otherwise probably have been appropriated by more senior people.

The project team could also respond to different interests among staff members, since it derived research topics from their interests, rather than providing an agenda for the staff to follow. These discussions also provided opportunities to engage DIET staff in further clarification of their own roles, and to consider how they might liaise with personnel who were more appropriately placed to address some of the issues they raised.

7.5.4 **Keeping up the impetus**

The project team provided all the physical resources necessary to undertake the work that was initiated. As a result, there were no delays which would have contributed to a loss of momentum, as happened with the SCERT/equivalent research agendas. Where official permission was required, the project team facilitated rapid processing of the necessary paper work. Human resources in the shape of a project researcher on site and regular visits by experienced facilitators (senior project team members and external resource people) were also on hand to work with DIETs and help them through any patches of uncertainty in an environment where raising questions was encouraged.

Indore DIET hosted, with funding from the research project, a two day conference on educational management and competencies where the speakers were drawn from a local university, University of Manchester visiting staff, and project team members.

7.5.5 **Learning to be reflexive**

The action research projects contributed to a level of DIET empowerment as they were actively involved in work directed towards understanding some of the constraints they experienced. The workshops, in bringing staff together to discuss issues, generated a discourse about education that went beyond constraints, and set DIET staff onto a track of reflexivity that had not been characteristic before the collaborations. A Master Trainer who attended a project workshop at Indore DIET also commented on his new understanding of action research as a process of constant reflection on practice:

> The second thing you said is that action research keeps going on - that was not in my mind at all. Mainly we do research and results come, but here it is the next step for a second one. […]. This is something which never stops. In the faculty of DIET, it's about us and teachers, us and teachers […] I am block coordinator for Gurujis - so I will be there, Gurujis will be there, them and me, me and them, time after time. So it's my gain if I can find out how much change I could bring in them. We would have documentation of how much improvement has come because of us, and what we did to get it. This is necessary. I liked this point in today's workshop. I came to know action research is not about a degree, this is for us, and only us (MP/IND after Indore workshop)

With the DIET staff, the analysis stage of the action research projects, in particular, gave opportunities to talk through issues that teachers were raising, and to focus through supportive prompting on directions for action or further reflection that the responses indicated. Table 7.2 gives an indication of issues that teachers raised, and samples of prompts made to Dhar DIET staff:

Table 7.2: **Reflection on teacher responses**

Issue raised by teachers	Corresponding prompts for action / reflection
Continuous turnover of schemes, yet a lack of evaluation of their success	Is the case or is it a perception – if the latter, why might teachers think this? Where might continuities lie? How the DIET can assure teachers that these are bits of change that fit together? How can we improve evaluation?
[in relation to lack of evaluation] Frequent mention (directly or indirectly) of the lack of DIET presence in the field	a) why don't we go to the field? b) do we know clearly what we should be doing if we do go?
High proportion of responses praising teaching by pictures – no reasons given	Why might this be? Could it be related to language problems in this tribal area? Think more about language problems – possibly more action research on this?
Some teachers seek further simplification / reduction of curriculum. Don't say why.	What might be their their thinking? Further research by DIET to find out what Ts mean? Teachers remarks about tribal children are often very negative – is this a cause for concern? What might we do about it?

7.6 Role of the process helpers

For the project team, supporting these processes was also a process of learning, and learning in particular about what was required of the more research experienced colleagues who were providing a 'scaffolding' for the DIET colleagues. At each site the role of the research team always included:

- Workshop inputs on action research as a concept and as a practice
- Support in identifying with reasonable precision a researchable topic from the issues of concern and refining that to create a research question
- Technical inputs on an appropriate methodology and methods for data generation around the proposed topics
- Support in planning the conduct of research (e.g. time, logistics, roles and responsibilities of personnel)
- Ongoing mentoring visits for trouble-shooting / problem solving
- Inputs on qualitative data analysis (DIETs tended to produce summative analyses rather than formative ones that could direct changes in practice)
- Inputs on structuring and writing up a report / other means of dissemination
- Inputs on relating action research findings to professional practices and designing the next phase of action.

7.7 Tensions for action-reflection

7.7.1 Systemic instability

Over the life of the project, various systemic changes were taking place in both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh that impacted on the DIETs, and therefore on professional development activities in the research project, in various ways. Although the external influences were different across the DIETs, they all resulted in an unstable environment for the action-reflection cycle.

In Masuda DIET, it took a year to resolve the Lok Jumbish funding crisis and this left staff in limbo, which did not encourage them to invest heavily in making efforts in an action-reflection cycle they were unsure they would be able to see through. As resolution took place, and the DIET reverted to a normal government DIET status, people who had initiated the time management project began to leave and the DIET was so severely understaffed no further action research steps could be contemplated. At the same time, the State government suspended pre-service training courses which meant that staff had to be redeployed back in schools or in other DIETs.

In Madhya Pradesh, institutional reform made major changes to arrangements for elementary education by decentralising management to the District level. The whole process was fraught with uncertainty for DIET staff since little information was available to them about their futures. As in Masuda, this did not provide a very conducive environment for engaging in action-reflection, although Indore DIET in particular was very enthusiastic about doing action research. As decentralisation progressed, new responsibilities came to the DIET, in the shape of drawing up the District's five year plan and gathering base line data to inform that plan. This did not allow them further time to engage in further action research steps, and in this way processes of reflection that had tentatively begun to emerge at the DIET level were overwhelmed by new imperatives for action that were generated by systemic reform.

7.7.2 Leadership

The Principal's leadership in the collaborative action research work was highly influential. In the prevailing culture of bureaucratic administration, DIET staff are used to following orders and this was no different when it came to initiating and following through action research. Unless the Principal supported this strand of activity, DIET staff were not able to prioritise it within their working routines. Much also depended on the Principal's vision of the DIET and its role in the District. In Udaipur DIET the first in-charge Principal was not academically inclined and this made it difficult for her to pick up on the project's potential to

develop this aspect of the DIET's work. In Masuda by contrast the Principal fully saw a role for the project team and ensured that the staff was involved and the work moved forward. In Indore DIET, the in-charge Principal also facilitated staff members' involvement but did not participate himself; in Dhar DIET the in-charge Principal participated fully and encouraged others to do so. The Santrampur Principal offered some support to the project team in doing what he saw as the team's research, but did not encourage his staff to get involved.

The stance of the Principal was a major factor in shaping the level of ownership each DIET developed towards the action research projects and clearly impacted on time made available and commitment to following through processes.

The culture of orders in the bureaucratic system also presented logistical barriers to the DIET staff. Orders were frequently issued without warning and the DIET was expected to respond immediately, which meant that other planned activities took lower priority. Since the research was not governed by hierarchical orders, and depended on having the will and finding the time, accountability to the research process was very low compared with accountability to the apex organisation - even though staff valued the research process and the opportunities it was affording staff for professional growth.

7.7.3 Issues of autonomy and agency

The collaborative action research projects made small beginnings in demonstrating to DIET staff that they had the autonomy to carry out research, and use findings to inform the DIET so it could understand and respond to the District's needs. In this respect, this work began to stimulate a sense of agency that had not been pronounced before the collaboration. As this sense of agency grew, so too did concerns about how findings could be fitted into the framework of programmes designed at the State level. In Madhya Pradesh this issue was in many respects resolved by institutional reforms that put the DIET charge of developing its own action programme, ending the days of centralisation when this was done by the apex body. Decentralisation in Rajasthan remained incomplete. In this respect, action research had more potential in Madhya Pradesh, since the wider context was also changing in ways that supported the development of autonomy and agency, and immediate application of findings at the source of data generation.

The collaborative projects were also a reminder that the emergence of autonomy and agency had to be nurtured and encouraged as part of a development process. Teacher educators had become used to externalising the locus of accountability for concerns and using this as a legitimation for low programme impact. The will to make changes could not be taken for granted: rather, with some staff, cultivating

that will was an important aspect of the collaboration – and it was not always possible. While the traditional action research cycle begins with problem identification, in this context the work began earlier, as there was an initial need to work consciously with some staff on developing a sense that they could take action (see also Pryor, 1998).

7.8 Policy implications

In relation to the action research agenda that is part of the DIET mandate, the key findings of this project strand were:

- Where professional cultures of primary teaching and teacher education do not embrace a self-critical, reflective and proactive stance, action research does not necessarily build directly on what teachers are already doing. It may therefore be an innovation that is much more radical than the familiar term acknowledges.
- Practitioners have been used to a model of research that is not participatory, and they lack confidence in a new approach. Building trusting and mutually respectful relationships is essential and this process has to be engaged upon consciously and consistently over time.
- The initial action research phase – problem identification – is complex for practitioners who have not been encouraged to think reflexively about their own practices before. Committing time and resources to this phase is very important, as this step is a precondition to any further research work.
- Practitioners are busy, and while engaging in research is always an extra commitment, it may be much more so when so little about the action research process is familiar. Although reflection on practice can be incorporated into normal routines, extra time is required for training in research techniques and meetings. Professional development needs to be timetabled within a busy calendar of activities.

Within the collaborative action research approach to professional development undertaken here, there is an inherent methodological stress on the development of autonomy and critical reflexivity. DIET staff who opted into this strand of the project benefited from spaces presented by this collaboration to review their own practices and attitudes to teachers with the support of professional 'process helpers'. This offered an opportunity to *engage* with their own practices in ways that they had not done before.

However, this engagement takes place within a wider context that places limitations on such processes. Development of professional agency, and of institutional autonomy which are prerequisites to effective decentralised

functioning of the DIETs are constrained by the incompleteness of decentralisation and unclear roles and relationships between the DIET and its apex organisation in this respect.

Chapter 8 Action Research with Teachers

8.1 Introduction

Since the collaborative action research strand of the DIET project had not taken off in Gujarat, the project team followed up on its interest in literacy with an action research project with teachers in Baroda District. In consultation with the Municipal Corporation and the Government of Gujarat, and reflecting our concern with approaches to early years literacy teaching and learning, the team developed a small project with the following aim:

> Through action research, to describe and reflect on the strategies teachers use to teach children to read and write through case studies.

The objectives of the project were :

- To record what teachers do as they start children on reading and writing
- To encourage teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of those activities
- To record how teachers use the materials available in the classroom (textbooks, library books, TLA) to support the teaching of reading and writing

The Municipal Corporation identified 25 Std. One teachers, who were in its view among its leading teachers, who were invited to participate in the project. Meetings were held once monthly over eight months and teachers were released from teaching to attend. Teachers had diaries in which they noted their activities and these formed the basis for group discussions in the meetings. The research team also visited some schools and observed classes.

8.2 Learning to reflect

None of these teachers had participated in an action research project before. When the project idea was explained to them, their expectation was:

> We want to know what new methods and techniques which can we use to overcome the problems (T8).

Their immediate expectation was that the research team would provide inputs – 'solutions' to problems. The idea that teachers, through reflection and exchange, might be useful resources for each other was new. It was agreed that over the first few months we would talk about what they were doing to find out what kinds of inputs might be useful if we decided to call in other people; and that the focus of some of the joint work would be looking more closely at the 'problems' themselves.

Teachers agreed to write diaries describing what and how they were teaching which they would bring to sessions, and they would be discussed. Through

sharing, the team hoped to demonstrate the richness of practice and provide a platform for sharing to enrich that practice from within the group. Teachers were invited to write their diaries when they found time, and to record what they were actually doing in their classes, and they voiced concern about the possibility of exposing themselves if they reported honestly[14]. The Corporation chairman and a supervisor attended the first meeting, and the supervisor reassured teachers:

> It is not an administrative thing, it's not on your record. You just write whatever you do in your schools. It is not going to harm you in your job. Nobody will question as to why you are doing like this and why not like this. So you write whatever you do. No false observations. You have to write what methods you are doing what materials you are using.

It also took some time to create a supportive atmosphere so that teachers did feel able to report honestly in front of peers. Teachers were initially critical if others seemed not to be following 'prescribed' practice – in this case teachers thought this teacher was behind with what she should be doing:

> She had written the diary on the daily basis and then she read it out and said how the activities were done. While she was presenting, another teacher said that all these were things they had to teach children in the months of June and July. Bhavna then defended herself and said she had written whatever was going in her class and she does all these for a few children on a regular basis (researcher diary October 1999).

Describing practice was difficult for these teachers, as they had no prior experience of trying to do this. Some of them wrote brief points about actions:

> 16.9.99 subject - Gujarati: content - letters k, kh, g, gh
> Std one children: A and B together A= 38; B= 28 total 66
> Show letter card k with picture of *kamal* [lotus]. First of all, make them draw horizontal, slanted, vertical lines and curves. Show them letter curves by drawing them. Write k on their slates and ask them to copy (T 16).

But even this brief description gives a window onto the approach adopted by this teacher, which is a 'traditional' alphabetic approach beginning with the first letter. Others wrote about what they thought they ought to be doing, rather than what they were doing:

> T5 16.9.99-30.9.99
> The educational methods of what I did with children this week:
> In std one it is necessary to have the method of individual reading so that children can read properly. Children's reading speed can be increased by using

[14] The lack of incentive in the bureaucratic system to report honestly is comprehensively discussed in Dhingra (1991).

flowers and leaves, or the sets for reading development. By using games, recognition of letters is solid – after that children can read and do writing properly. If children are asked to write repeatedly, they can write properly. Repetition of curves like horizontal, vertical, slanted, half circle. When children write k in a mirror image, if you make columns in their note books, and make them write, they start writing properly.

Here too the same approach is reflected, and the discussion of the letter k at this point early on in the school year an indication of the alphabet first approach. Some teachers recorded in more detail, which gave an insight into classroom processes:

8.10.99 after recess, made children speak simple letters and letters with *kana* (a) as I wrote on bbd. Then told children to identify the letters written on bbd.

K ka
Ch cha
T ta

I observed that 10 children of the class recognised the *kana* but they speak wrong. For example, for *ka ne kano ka* they say *ch ne chano cha* and *ta ne tano ta*. Explained to these children with clear pronunciation by making them sit in the separate group. Simultaneously also made use of toys.

During this period, gave *kana* cards to the bright children of the class. They read them and simultaneously write the words 5 times.

Average learners just read alphabets with *kakka*. For them I used alphabet toys. Then individually made them read words written on bbd. Like *kaan, naak, haath, vaad, chhar, aanth, baar, laav, khaav, taav, bhaathm shaak, gaay, gaam, bhai*. Then told children to speak and write. Made children write each word 5 times. Average children wrote each word 5 times. Then made the 12 bright children sit with each child and bright children made each average child read.

Slow learners of the class will see the pictures drawn in the class and will write letters. Lastly gave them clear understanding of letters.

Lastly at 5 o' clock, I sit with children on the floor and listened their talks. Asked reasons of not doing homework to those children those who don't bring homework. Lastly, made them sing a song about good children. Told them to do their homework after washing their hands and feet and taking some snacks. Then did a small prayer and dispersed.

Project workshops usually followed a format of introduction by a member of the project team, then work on diaries in small groups (5-6) to engage teachers in discussion about practice, followed by a tea break during which discussions often continued, and a plenary session.

Figure 8.1: **Action researchers discussing practices**

The commitment to keeping a diary was difficult for some, as it added a competing demand for their limited time. In addition to the time dimension, written text has connotations of supervision, since teachers are supposed to make timetable diaries, and so on, that were also uncomfortable for some. At the beginning, the completion of the diary seemed like an end in itself, but over time some teachers began to see the diary as a tool for themselves.

After a couple of workshops, to help teachers develop their skills in describing their practices, the team drew out from their diaries six topics and asked them to refer to each other's diaries to see, from what was written, what information they could find out about those topics. This generated very animated discussion in the groups about what they found, and comparisons with their own practice. In the plenary session, the teachers themselves came up with a checklist of the following aspects they thought should be reported upon:

1. pre-preparation
2. objective of the activity
3. what difficulties you find to do particular activity
4. sequence of the activities
5. evaluation procedure
6. teacher's opinion and feeling
7. Any other points like problems in school or anything else they want to tell us.

During one workshop, we made use of the international dimension of the larger project by inviting the visiting head of the University of Manchester's Primary Centre to talk about practices in the UK and participate in their discussions about

their own work. One another occasion, the leading literacy figure of the State Resource Group came to work with the group. He discussed the textbook in more detail, and teachers asked questions reflecting their concerns about how its aspirations could be met in their own circumstances. Much of this discussion was deflected towards teachers' concerns about the fit between their physical circumstances and expectations of the textbook designers. The visitor was unable to assist them much with these issues. This session was important in demonstrating to him that teachers had very real concerns and constraints which future training would need to address.

8.3 Constraints to teaching

8.3.1 Class sizes and time

Discussions in the first workshops quickly turned to constraints, as teachers revealed some aspects of their work that made any meaningful teaching very difficult. Class sizes were very large – sometimes more than 100 (the national norm is 1: 40).

> 17.9.99 In total, 2 classes of 110 children were present. Could not do letter or number teaching properly individually. Today I told the story of the tortoise and the hare. Showed them story pictures, asked small questions in between as I told the story. Made them sing a children's song, *khati nathi, piti nathi*. Got them to write whatever letters had been taught previously, and taught numbers 1 – 10. Wherever I felt necessary I tried to teach individually but it was very difficult with so many children there.
>
> 18.9.99 Today too like y.day there was the problem of too many children. Made them stand in line according to their height and did some PT. Hands in front, top, side…touch toes, hands on head, shoulder, tummy. Children worked well according to my instructions. Gave understanding of standing to attention and at ease. Revised the week's work; got them to read and write words made from letters n, m, k, r, j, g, t, d. helped when necessary and corrected mistakes (T 11).

Often this was because two parallel classes were combined. This tends to happen where Principals believe that as subject matter in Year One is limited, teachers can be deployed to cover higher standards where the curricular load is heavier. Working days are also lost when teachers are deployed out of school. This was a frequent occurrence and dramatically reduced the amount of time available for teaching. In March, one teacher was able to work only 10 days out of the available 26. Table 8.1 shows how many days teachers worked in March 2000, and how many children were enrolled and, on average, present during that month.

Table 8.1 also shows that the average attendance is lower than the numbers enrolled, a familiar statistical scenario. Some enrolled children do not turn up at

all, others are regular, but there is often a 'floating' population who attend irregularly. Helping them catch up is another call on teachers' time.

Table 8.1: **Students enrolled, present, and average working days in March 2000**

Teacher	boys enrolled	av. boys present	girls enrolled	Av. girls present	total enrolled	total present	Working days (out of 26)
1	35	23	37	22	72	45	14
2					47	28	22
3					44	29	26
4					34	30	18
5					77	62	20
6					115	85	20
7	38		28		66	45	14
8					62	49	18
9					54	42	19
10					50	40	16
11	36	33	33	27	69	60	15
12	25	22	24	21	49	43	15
13					39	32	19
14	24	20	25	21	49	41	11
15	41	36	35	30	76	66	14
16	42	34	37	30	79	64	10
17	40	33	39	34	79	67	13
18					68	45	18
19	30		20		50	45	19
20					42	35	22

8.3.2 Social background of children

With the rapid growth of the private sector, Municipal schools cater to the social groups who cannot afford fee-paying schools. All the teachers in this group perceived these children as second-class citizens.

T5 In private schools they take interview. These students are ready, they are prepared by their parents at home. They are the cream. While here these are children who are left, ones who don't do anything at home. Or else a lower level course should be prepared for them. If you teach the same thing to private school students, where they have the best students… when we teach the same thing to children with low catching power… the course for them should be simple.

T4 This course is easier for private schools children. It is bit difficult for these children. The course should be simple (25.2.00).

Teachers have mixed feelings about these children, since they are sympathetic to the circumstances of labouring families but also find the lack of support from home difficult: 'How do these labourers live? How can they give their time when they are tired after work?' (T6). This is acute with large class sizes and few working days, for with no support from home, the children depend entirely on the attention they get at school:

[Discussion is about teaching vowels which has been going on for 4 months, but teachers were saying students still get it wrong.]

SS How many students are making this mistake?

T3 25%.

T4 Some children.

T1 Some children. Some children are able to catch up immediately.

SS Hum… 25%. So why is this problem occurring?

T1 It is not possible for us to do revision with all of them. The grasping power of all the children is not the same… no!!

T 25% of the children have more problems.

SS OK… so what do you do, then?

T3 We have to teach them personally because nobody teaches them at home. At home they don't do anything. Next day they come back the same. They don't even open their bags. They go home and forget what they have learnt.

SS Yes.

T3 How can it increase? We should also have that much time. That is why some remain *kachha*. Why do they remain *kachha*? When sufficient time is not there for each one of them.

T5 Al these children are without cream!! All the fat has been extracted already.

T3 We have to take them personally…or else some children don't write if we just say. But personal with each one… even if there are 10-12 children… even then…

T5 If they are asked to do something for tomorrow at home they forget to do it. At home nobody asks them what lesson has been given. If there was someone at home to take care and ask… they would make the child do work. But if there is no one at their home to take care and ask. They forget and next day come back the same. And if we ask why haven't you brought it… they say miss, I forgot (25.2.2000).

In discussion, teachers correlated symptoms of poverty, such as irregular attendance interspersed with working, and poor nourishment and resultant low concentration with low learning achievements, and would offer sympathetic explanations:

T6 Their memory power is less. Some are malnourished and come with an empty stomach so their learning capacity is less. Some don't come regularly

so they miss in between. When we teach them the next step, some do not know even the previous one because they were not present.

T9 Sometimes they come, sometimes they don't. They come with an empty stomach. They come without combing their hair properly, in torn clothes. Don't even take care about books. They tear their books.

CD What can we do about this?

T10 We can tell the parents. We have to torture the parents. We tell some parents when they come to pick their children up from school. But some parents don't come at all. So we cannot talk with them about this.

T11 Some parents think 'my child is very young. If he fails, it's okay. He is not going to suffer much. Next time he will do again'.

T6 Sometimes they don't even bring their slate and pen. If we burden them with writing then they sit to cry. The child will say, miss, I don't have a pen, I don't have a slate.

T1 When we tell them to write they ask us for a pen or chalk. If we have to teach them we have to give them. They don't have anything…we give whatever we have. If we have a piece of chalk we give them so that they at least write 'one' (23.10.99).

Observations revealed however that teachers feel under pressure to complete the syllabus and to this end, whatever their sympathy for the children's personal circumstances, corporal punishment is still a feature. A researcher diary reported on one observation:

> She starts checking the work of 1st grade. She sits on the bench of children and checks. She asks 'what have you written? You have just written this much?' She slaps him. She takes a slate from another child and checks. While checking his work she says 'write in good handwriting. You have very bad handwriting'. She takes another's notebook and says the same. She also instructs 'bring a notebook with squares. This is no good'. Now she goes towards the back, sits on the bench and checks one boy's work. Without saying anything she rubs out whatever he has written and draws squares in his slate and gives him back and tells him to write. She now takes his neighbour's slate and tells him 'is this a way to write? Such poor handwriting! You have very poor handwriting". She feints a slap and the boy raises his hand towards his face as he tries to protect himself. She goes to the last bench and takes a slate from one boy's hand and draws squares. She comments, 'get another slate, will you? You can't see anything clearly on this slate'.

Such issues were brought back to the workshop for discussion. On this particular one, teachers justified their actions indirectly through an extension of their views of the low social standing of these children: they say children are beaten at home,

and that parents expect them to be similarly punished at school to 'chase in the learning'.

8.4 Approaches to teaching and learning literacy

8.4.1 Classroom management

Most of these teachers work in highly unconducive circumstances. Classrooms, particularly in the old city area, are poorly lit and ventilated, and schools are very noisy. Most of the older schools have heavy wooden desks on which 2-3 children sit in rows facing the blackboard and it would be almost impossible to move them to accommodate group work. These present significant physical constraints to the creativity possible in such classrooms.

8.4.2 Labelling of children

All teachers divided students into groups of 'intelligent', 'average' and 'weak' students. 'Intelligent' children who had 'learned' were used to coach the 'weak' ones:

T8 We make them sit with the child who already knows. It is not possible for a teacher to reach all the children. We make a group and make the bright child sit in that group and tell that today I am giving you 4 letters and ask him/her to teach this child.

T5 So that the bright child does not get bored as he has already learned and there is nothing new as we teaching the same only. If we ask him/her the same thing again and again they get bored. The child feels that even I know something and I am getting promotion.

Discussion of the categorisation and teaching of the 'weak' children generally met with explanations that weakness related to their physical condition or lack of parental input into educational processes. There was no analysis of the link between the issues they described and their learning needs, other than that they needed personal attention at school. The research team encouraged teachers to use terminology that put the emphasis on learning. and was not pejorative.

8.4.3 The beginnings of activity-based learning

Compared with observations on literacy in other contexts (see for example chapter two) it was encouraging to see that all these teachers really did make use of teaching learning aids and some activities even in the difficult classroom contexts described above. These two diary excerpts give a sense of best practice among these teachers, showing a use of mixed methods (confirmed in observations):

T7 To teach step one, for the introduction of the letters n m k r, I'll make children sing rhymes […]. Like this, all the letters are introduced by

rhymes. Then I write a letter in big writing on the bbd, then give letter cards and give recognition. For example, after making n, what is this letter called? They'll give you an answer, n. Come on then, whose name starts with n? if some child's name starts with n, you'll get an answer. That way, through letter cards letters are introduced. After that, four corner card game – put letters in the four corners, make a circle of children, make them run, and through this game they learn. With that, write this letter m n r k and after the game, words based on those letters, like *man, ram, nam, naram, kamar, naman, kar*, etc – to be read individually.

T5 Made them recognise letters by letter cards. Put the consonant and vowel cards together and showed them what it means. Put cards in the magic bag and took out one after another and got them to recognise them. Made children stand in a circle and put cards in the middle, then banged the tambourine so they ran round and then stopped, asked them to say the name of the letter they stopped by.

8.4.4 Approaches to literacy teaching

Through the workshops and diaries, five ways of starting children's writing (and by implication reading) were identified.

1. Number symbols are taught first, and then letters which are similar to numbers in shape are taught.
2. Letters which have similar curves are taught together.
3. Letters are taught according to alphabetical order (alphabetical order is according to sound groups but this aspect is not used significantly). K kh g gh etc.
4. N m k r This is a new method which displaced methods 1- 3. It is not related to alphabetical order. The justification for this is that these are the most frequently occurring letters in Gujarati words (this is not expressed as frequently occurring sounds but as frequently occurring 'alphabets'.)
5. The method which was introduced from 1999 and is not popular with teachers has been introduced on the basis of being the easiest letters orthographically. G m n j. Objections to this include the problem of adding *a*, the symbol for which is a line, to letters which already seem to end with a line, particularly g but also n.

Using these approaches to beginning literacy teaching and learning, by the end of March, teachers typically summarised the children's progress along the lines shown in Table 8.2.

8.4.5 'Easy' and 'difficult' aspects

Relating their progress to the identified competencies in language, teachers could identify which competencies children find easy and difficult. They believed that

children find it easy to hear and narrate (although in observation this was not seen to be practised at all), and sing songs, stories, rhymes. They can do letters with 'kana' [vowel 'a'] and write dictation of simple words, sentences and letters. They can speak simple sentences and answer 'yes' or 'no'. They can copy sentences and read lessons from the text book.

However when the discussion turned to what children find more difficult, they noted that children are not able to pronounce rhyming words and can't read difficult words. They cannot read 'u', 'uu', 'e', 'ee' and find it difficult to manage conjunct-consonants, joint words, and some vowels. Most teachers felt that writing remains difficult and children find it difficult to write a sentence and read a long sentence. They all believed that the most difficult competency is reading, but also that writing independently is hard. Words that have a 'lot of curves' are also difficult for them to write, and so is writing the answer to a question.

Table 8.2: **Children's literacy progress by March 2001**

Language TLM	**Slow learner**	**Average**	**Fast learner**
Simple words, sentences, alphabet cards, magic bag, words made on cardboard which can be rotated, flannel board, story charts. Some also used a word clock, word and sentence cards. One mention by a teacher each of alphabet blocks, small books, quiz	Some sts recognise and speak letters but can't write Some sts can't read and write all the alphabet If we show a picture of house 'ghar' and ask they can say and write 'ghar'. Can write letters and two letter words but can not read eg. 'jam', 'tar'	Can read simple sentences which are just made out of consonants (no vowel) Can write simple words made out of letters like '*Nayan naman kar*', '*Jagan jaman kar*' Some can write simple words but can't read. After constant repetition some are successful in reading but they don't have confidence	Can read and write all type of writing [*lakhan*]. Can write fast Can read and write up to '*raswai*', '*dirghai*' Can read and write '*kana*' and '*matra*' Can do the textbooks steps Can write. Can read simple and easy sentences. Can write in a straight line and answer the questions.

8.5 Limitations of current approaches

This project provided further evidence (see also chapter two) that early years literacy teaching largely comprises technical decoding aspects, and that literacy teaching is not embedded in language work. Teachers know that speaking and listening are two of the four skills associated with language, but believe that speaking and listening goes on at home, while homes do not give any opportunity to work on reading and writing. Their classroom efforts are thus directed at reading and writing, but in such a way that it is largely devoid of meaning for children.

None of these teachers modelled reading with children by reading story books aloud to them. Teachers did not encourage children to tell them stories which could be written up on the blackboard to involve children in the creation of text – or innovate language games. These ideas were suggested during workshops since all of them are feasible even if children cannot move around.

What is missing from the diaries and was also missing in workshop discussions was any linkage between these decoding skills and comprehension. The extent to which children comprehended anything they read or wrote was not evaluated by teachers.

The discussion of what is easy and difficult for children is an indication of what teachers know how to teach effectively and the limitations of the methods they adopt. It also raises questions as to the expectations of children in respect of literacy in their very first year at school, and the appropriateness of the curriculum load. Many of those expectations however stem from the teachers who, as the diaries indicated expect children to know all the letters of the alphabet within a very short time after arriving at school – even if they have not been (and most of these children do not go) to pre-school.

Another issue that emerged clearly was that teachers did not know what to do with children who did not learn well by the methods they used. This group required support and professional development in coping with the different speeds at which children learn. The 'intelligent' children also did not have their understandings or skills extended, since the role for them once they had learned was to help the teacher get others to learn.

Overall, it was evident from these workshops that while a variety of approaches to literacy teaching were identified, it was mostly programmatic and bound by the 'steps' in the textbook. Pressures of time and limited teaching strategies precluded

infusing the decoding of symbols with any meaning, and meaning making was not seen as part of literacy learning. The project established an urgent need to work with teachers on developing a pedagogy of language and literacy teaching that could cope with the classroom contexts in which they work.

8.6 From reflection to input

Over the course of the project, teachers became accustomed to sharing in small groups, and peer reflection and discussion helped teachers share their own repertoire and approaches. This was favourably commented on, and when there was a potential clash between a project and a Cluster Resource Centre meeting, teachers opted for the project meeting on the grounds that they felt actively involved and the Cluster Resource Centre programme usually comprised listening to 'experts' invited for the meeting. This was an indication of how teachers' ideas about the notion of expertise had shifted over time, as a result of modelling a more interactive, peer sharing model of teacher development.

In the process of facilitating discussions, the project team also fed in some ideas from beyond the group in respect, for example, of classroom organisation, doing things with language that helped literacy learning make more sense, and considering the learners' perspective along with the teachers. However, it became evident that peer knowledge had reached its limitations, and that teachers needed to know more about how children learn to read and write if they were to develop more meaningful, and therefore more successful, approaches to early years literacy work.

8.7 Project termination

The action research project was ready to move into an experimentation phase and the project team was preparing for this when the Municipal Corporation abruptly withdrew permission to carry on[15]. This was disappointing as no further direct work with teachers was then possible. However, the work with teachers raised many issues about early years literacy teaching that were subsequently raised with the State Resource Group member who had attended a workshop, for feedback into the Group's literacy grouping. Findings were shared with the Government of Gujarat so they could be fed into future in-service training, and consideration be given to further skills that would be needed by teacher educators to develop and support teachers in this area. In this process, the link between the working conditions of teachers in this urban area and policy aspirations in terms of quality education were also highlighted.

[15] The project did not, on principle, pay any 'fees' and it appears that this work foundered on this ethical principle.

8.8 Policy implications

This project demonstrated the care and time needed at the very first stage of action research – problem identification. It took several workshops for teachers to begin to reflect on their own practice, and to move away from locating problems in the nature of the community and administrative issues. Facilitating this process is demanding and requires gentle persistence in the face of the low expectations of children that often dominated the discourse.

This also reflects the importance of doing research with teachers before designing programmatic inputs, to identify with precision the aspects of professional development that training is addressing. Had the project been input-led, it would not have understood well what teachers are already doing, and how to build on that. In this case, teachers were already doing several activities and using aids – yet training continues to target this as though all teachers are not doing so. The areas where teachers immediately needed more help were in developing strategies to cope in very large classes with the varying speeds of learners; more technical understandings of literacy acquisition to guide practice; and guidance on how to develop language work to make literacy acquisition more meaningful.

As the project progressed, teachers began to appreciate that there are new skills involved in offering supportive critical suggestions to colleagues. Another skill to develop was the ability to direct those suggestions towards practical problem-solving in existing realities, instead of an expectation of how things should be according to a notion of ideal circumstances.

Helping teachers to see themselves and each other as resources, and to develop the necessary skills to be so, is a challenging project – and particularly in circumstances where, for many understandable reasons, teachers exhibit quite high levels of disaffection. Yet it demonstrably made teachers view their own development, and professional requirements, in a different light. This really emerged as the crux of the difference between the reflection into action approach to teacher development, and the dominant 'input given by expert' approach that appears legitimate without ever really engaging with classroom realities.

The approach to teacher development that was undertaken here reflects the idea of peer-learning underpinning the Cluster Resource Centre concept. The implications for the Cluster Resource Centres from this experience are that for a peer learning platform to be effective, it is essential for teachers to be able to describe, reflect and comment supportively and critically on their own and others' teaching. This research project established that this does not happen easily or automatically.

Teachers do not find it easy to turn the focus away from more usual issues, many of which are indeed pressing, such as class sizes, attitudes of parents and administrators, onto their own teaching practices. They need encouragement to become reflective practitioners, and support in developing the necessary skills and attitudes.

Chapter 9 Research into Action: The New Textbook Training Programmes in Gujarat

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on research carried out with the Government of Gujarat, which was in the process of revising its primary textbooks and had organised a cascade training programme so that all Year One teachers would be introduced to the new textbook. As part of the continuing dialogue about the teacher educator resource, the research team was invited to follow the cascade and report back to the government. Suggestions were discussed and incorporated for the Year Two training planned for the following year, which the research team also followed.

Through DIETs, teachers had received Special Orientation to Primary Teaching, and training in competencies and assessment. The Government of Gujarat felt that among primary teachers, as a result of their training, there is now a general acceptance of the appropriateness of an activity-based approach to primary education, and awareness of the concept of competencies. However, teachers still have practical and conceptual difficulties which include: a certain lack of clarity about competencies (particularly relating to assessment); difficulties in relating TLM to subject content, as well as in making and using TLM; and difficulties in classroom management, particularly in multi-grade situations. The new textbooks were designed as the base for helping teachers to implement the new approach to teaching and learning. The programme would help teachers work with confidence with the new books, since they would become familiar with the contents and intentions.

The cascade model was selected to cover the numerical demands of orientating thousands of teachers to the new textbooks before those books were introduced to schools. The staffing of the cascade tiers is explained in Figure 9.1.

9.2 The new textbooks and the training programme

9.2.1 The textbooks

In 2000, Gujarat introduced two new Year One textbooks: one in Mathematics and the second in Language combined with Environmental Science (EVS). The new textbooks support the competency-based curriculum that has been introduced across the State, and present the competencies involved in each lesson and activities to help children attain them. The decision to combine environmental science with language was made because EVS is heavily dependent on language skills, and those skills in turn could be developed through a focus on EVS content. Year Two books were introduced in 2001.

The creation of these textbooks departed significantly from previous practice, in which the writing of books was entrusted to specialists selected by the State

Textbook Board. This time, about one hundred people, many of them primary teachers, worked with the State Resource Group, to provide inputs, suggestions and comments on drafts of the book. The materials contained in the mathematics book were generated entirely by primary teachers. Books for the teacher and for the children are separate: the teacher's book contains a background introduction to each lesson and suggestions for lesson delivery, examples of types of questions, activities, games and songs. The resulting books were piloted in two stages in one block of each the three DPEP Districts and then introduced across the State in 2000.

9.2.2 **Aim and mode of the training programme**

The detailed objectives of the training programme, methods and expected results were explained in the training module: overall, 'this module has been prepared to make teachers understand the approach of both the textbooks, build necessary skills, and to make teachers understand their role vis-à-vis the new textbooks' (page 2). The same training module was used at all levels of the cascade, and its aims show that the training programme is simultaneously trying to:

1. Train resource persons at all levels of the cascade to make them effective trainers
2. Make trainers aware of the approach and content of the textbook, related activities, use of teaching-learning aids and so forth

GoG was aware of issues raised earlier in this report about teachers' lack of confidence in implementing activity-based approaches, and believed that this was partly because their practical knowledge of how actually to carry out these activities in their own classrooms, with reference to curricular materials, has not yet developed sufficiently. The training aimed to help teachers become confident and develop their abilities to promote student learning by correlating activities, appropriate TLA and the new textbooks. To help promote teacher confidence, this training programme was based on practical demonstrations and activities, and as far as possible, it was intended that lecturing be avoided.

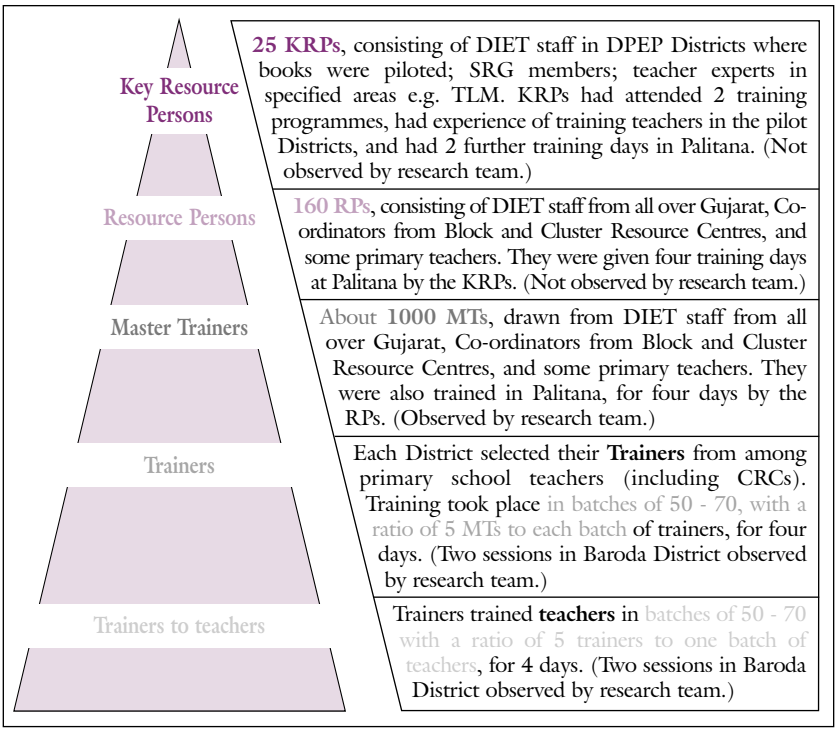
Previous experience in the State had also given rise to concerns over transmission loss in the cascade mode. Designers of the current programme wanted to make sure that as far as possible, the messages of training should not be lost on the way, and it was decided to make extensive use of the same videos at all levels.

9.3 The cascade training

9.3.1 **Cascade organisation**

The cascade was organised in five tiers, shown in Fig. 9.1.

Figure 9.1: **The cascade tiers, Std. 1 training**



A vibrant, enthusiastic and motivating atmosphere was created from the inauguration of the programme where seniormost officials, the Education Minister herself, teachers' union leaders, NGOs, textbook writers, and many others were present. Many of them were present throughout the Palitana training days, and this facilitated interactions between primary school teachers and persons of high authority and others involved in bringing about improvements in primary education. It reflects a positive general trend in relations between officers of the GoG and primary school teachers:

> Till now, no officer used to go to teachers. They used to have a negative approach to teachers. Now they have accepted the existence of teachers, and of children too. That is why this work will be done very nicely. They just used to see what time a teacher would come, that was all our duty was, but now, officers praise teachers for whatever good work a teacher is doing. That encourages us and because of that whatever work is going on is done nicely (RP, female primary school teacher, Amreli District).

The continuous presence of the subject expert members of the textbook writing team allowed Resource Persons' and Master Trainers' questions about the content

and intentions of the textbooks to be answered at first hand. This was also much appreciated.

The recognition of the unique value of primary school teachers as experts and their involvement as Resource Persons is a positive trend, and the positive attitude of the current team of key State-level officials is also noted with appreciation by teachers:

> In the past in training programmes when the officer used to come he would come in the middle of the training. Once he comes, even if a lecture is going on, he will stop it and sit down. What used to happen? Get water, tea, Thums-up. He will also give a speech on administrative points or on training and go away. The way ministers used to come. Now what is happening? They take interest in this. They ask if you have any problem what is it? […] So he is a person who gives inspiration… he will ask, as if we were family. So we feel he is really a big officer yet he still asks us, whatever we teachers do he respects us so we also have to respect him…we got that inspiration (KRP, member of SRG, male school principal).

9.3.2 Training processes

The programme's objectives envisaged two strands of activity: aspects of content about the textbook; and aspects of training to equip each tier of trainers to train the next level of the cascade.

Textbook content

In the first year, four textbook lessons were selected for presentation: two Gujarati/EVS and two maths. The training approach was to develop models of how the books should be used on the basis of planning, presenting and evaluating two sample lessons from each textbook. One Gujarati/EVS lesson was dropped because of time constraints.

After orientation from the Resource Persons, the Master Trainers planned and presented their lesson in groups. During the presentation, some were asked to pretend they are children while others were asked to evaluate the lesson. The 'children' were provocative and this stimulated awareness of potential issues in classrooms although naturally, since the Master Trainers are not children, the issues that were raised related to teachers' concerns. Master Trainers came up with teaching learning materials which they would be able to use, and engaged at first hand with the textbook content and possible ways of delivering it. The lessons focused on delivering the textbook content in appropriate ways, thus satisfying a major part of the training intention relating to making trainees familiar with the new textbook and its approach.

This level of the cascade did not however focus closely on the relationship between content, activities and what children are intended to learn from each lesson (learning outcomes). It also passed over assessment and evaluation, which are essential components of the competency-based approach. As a result, the Master Trainers training did not deal with how various aspects of the lesson were to be evaluated, in relation to learning outcomes. Activities were focused on helping the teacher develop skills in delivering the textbook content but lacked sufficient stress on aspects of promoting and evaluating children's learning.

Pedagogical aspects

In the cascade tiers, there were two aspects of pedagogy to be considered. The first was the pedagogy of training; the second the pedagogy of primary teaching. As far as the pedagogy of training is concerned, there was very limited attention to the skills trainees would need to facilitate learning by others. The aspect of trainer capacity that received least attention was how to carry out training activities back at the District level. Master Trainers did receive orientation from RPs on how they would manage training programmes, timetabling of activities, the relationship between activities and time available. However, when they undertook training at the District level, they did not know where the teaching learning materials would come from. They also did not know how they would work together as a group of trainers, since the groups at Palitana consisted of random individuals who did not necessarily come from the same District.

Figure 9.2: **New textbook training at the Master Trainer level of the cascade**

As far as the pedagogy of classroom teaching is concerned, again the focus on content meant that less attention was given to developing teaching methods. While teachers learned about the textbook, some of their pressing questions about how things would work in their classrooms, and why things should be done in this way rather than the 'old' way remained unanswered.

As a pedagogical tool, the video innovation yielded mixed results. In contrast with direct demonstrations given by experts in the past, one Key Resource Person commented:

> The difference by giving training through video was there were children in the front. How teacher takes them into [the lesson], how he makes them aware of the subject, how he makes them understand, how a child grasps this new activity - we saw all that with our own eyes…If an expert was demonstrating we were becoming children. But of course we are adults so whenever he asked us questions we gave direct answers. In the video there was a child, wasn't there? To get an answer from a child, how many different methods one has to use? Because a child may give a right answer to 2-3 questions out of ten. The school they had chosen was also not very higher or lower but medium type... So in that if there are say 50 children, 10 may be very clever, 50% will be around 30-35% type and remaining 10% are medium around 50%. Considering all those children the way lessons were demonstrated was very good.

However, trainers were new to using video, and the training did not fully develop their competence in using it: and the sound quality of the video was poor. The trainees' viewing experience was largely unstructured; the film was over 30 minutes long and was all shown at once.

9.4 From Palitana to the Districts

Broadly, by the time the Master Trainers left Palitana to return to their Districts, training had promoted:

- Familiarity with the textbook content and a small repertoire of activities, songs, poems etc appropriate to the content and new approach; ability to model these to the next tier with reasonable expectations of success;
- Some understandings about the relationships between textbooks, MLL competencies and the concepts of the new approach. However relatively less attention to developing conceptual understandings meant that Master Trainers' ability to explain these to the next tier would depend heavily on a Master Trainer's individual and previous understandings, since these were not systematically strengthened in the training by Resource Persons;

- Inadequate competencies in the managerial aspects necessary for smooth running of consequent training programmes.

9.4.1 Master Trainers to trainers

Training at this level in Baroda District was less effective for reasons which related to a) organisational arrangements; and b) the quality of the Master Trainers.

Organisational arrangements

The training programme in Baroda was suddenly brought forward: Master Trainers only learned on Saturday that they were to begin training on Monday. This afforded no opportunity for pre-planning, either individually or in a group; the group that had worked together in Palitana could not come together again here as participants were not from the same place. Time on the first training day had to be devoted to planning and co-coordinating activities instead of beginning training. Some handicaps the programme experienced were:

- The absence of the language/EVS textbook which did not become available until the third day: the mathematics book was available throughout.
- No teaching learning materials were available.

The absence of the new textbooks for the trainees attending a programme designed to introduce them to those textbooks was viewed by the Government as so serious and unnecessary that prompt action was taken against the DIET Principal who organised the training.

The research team observed two sets of training. At one (session A), the first three days were devoted to mathematics since no other books were present. At the other (session B) the Master Trainers had five books between them and divided trainers into five groups, each with one textbook. Unfortunately these arrangements contributed to a view held by some teachers - that training is a formality where not much new would be learned.

Quality of Master Trainers

Master Trainers had been highly motivated by the Palitana sessions, but when it came to training others, the vibrant atmosphere evident there was not replicated. The main emphasis they gave was on the content of textbook. Also, out of five Master Trainers, three were from Hindi medium and could not communicate comfortably in Gujarati; three of the Master Trainers had no, or no recent, experience of primary teaching / teaching Std. One. Three DIET staff members who had not taken any training were adopting trainer roles in this programme, although they were not familiar with the textbook or the approach. Their inputs were highly didactic and ran counter to the intention of the programme designers,

and they were particularly weak at the points where explanations were needed on linking textbook contents / activities with learning competencies.

In contrast with the higher levels in the cascade, the interactive and questioning approach was less in evidence. One area where most Master Trainers' limitations emerged was in their relatively limited ability to explain to trainers the concepts behind the activities although stories and songs were told and sung and trainers' repertoires of such activities did increase as a result of training. The outcome of such training is that teachers learn how to replicate what has been directly modelled or experienced. This may a useful strategy for the short term as it may bring about some change in teachers' behaviour, but in the long term, it does not develop strategies and skills to allow flexibility in various learning situations. A consistent concern that emerged from trainers was a lack of clarity about how this textbook, these teaching learning materials and the suggested activities would be practically possible in classrooms particularly where there is a high student to teacher ratio.

At the same time, there was an example of good practice in video technique during one class at the DIET. One trainer (a school teacher) did not make teachers watch video in the unstructured fashion observed elsewhere. He gave the background, used short clips to illustrate particular points, and held discussions afterwards, so teacher attention was focussed and they could also ask questions. If all trainers were given training in how to use video as a training tool, the State's intentions in using video could be achieved in future training programmes (see Box 9.1).

Box 9.1: **Good practices in training with video**

- For a training video, viewers need to be orientated to what to look for, to focus on necessary detail and leave aside unnecessary detail. Short clips to illustrate particular points may be more effective than longer sequences.
- Orientation of the viewer before watching can be done by discussion to focus on the main reasons for looking at the video.
- Before viewing, the trainer distributes a pre-designed task sheet. This task sheet relates to the desired training inputs.
- During viewing, teachers fill in this sheet. They may do this while the video is in progress, or after each clip. There may be a final overall task to consolidate the various points raised in the video.
- After viewing trainees' remarks may be discussed in small groups and / or a plenary session. During the plenary session the trainer's aim is to focus and consolidate the training points and help trainees relate them to their previous experiences.

9.4.2 **Trainers to teachers**

The focus of all previous tiers of cascade training is to bring about changes in teacher behaviour. At this point, the effectiveness of the full cascade is tested. Here also, the research team observed two sets of training, where there were 4 trainers per trainee batch. Because of what had happened in the previous cascade tier, Trainers did not feel properly prepared to carry out the training and requested Master Trainers to come and support them, so one Master Trainer would work with three Trainers. In both cases, the Master Trainer took over and the Trainers did not give any inputs, which meant that there was no effective return to the training effort in the previous tier.

Figure 9.3: **Training by video**

Between the two Master Trainers who led the sessions, there was a marked contrast in quality. One (session A) was led by a Resource Person / Master Trainer (a primary teacher and Cluster Resource Centre leader observed in the previous tier) who showed excellent practice and high levels of commitment; the other (session B) led by a Resource Person, lacked these characteristics. The approach under Session A illustrates 'good practices' and shows the differences between a competent trainer and a less competent trainer (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: **Effective and ineffective training practices**

Training inputs	**Session A** **Good practices**	**Session B** **Ineffective practices**
Introduction and background to development of new textbooks	Done with practical examples drawing on classroom experience; positive attitude developed in teachers; reason for 2 instead of 3 textbooks clarified; benefit to children constantly stressed and clarified	None of these
Use of video as a training tool	Video content discussed and training inputs consolidated	No consolidation
Correction of T demo lessons	Patient correction; Ts asked to try again; constructively critical climate	Errors not much commented on; absence of meaningful/constructive criticism
Pre-planning by trainer	Evident	Absent
Teacher confidence in trainer	Evident	Absent
Capacity to explain concepts	Evident: focus on helping teachers understand the reasons for doing things	Limited: focus on telling teachers 'just do it like this'
Questions asked by teachers	Yes, trainer usually able to explain with illustrations from practical experience and conceptual clarity (can explain 'why')	Not encouraged, trainer usually not able to answer practical questions or explain 'why'
Teacher attitude towards training	Overall positive, teachers generally active	Overall indifferent; teacher needs largely unanswered; 'just another training programme'
Teacher attitude to new textbooks	Generally positive	Generally positive

9.5 Year Two textbook training

The process of Year Two textbook preparation followed the same model as the Year One books. Again, participants were pleased to find the textbook writers present throughout the Palitana training for personal interactions.

9.5.1 Amendments to the training programme format

In line with the government's informal feedback and the research team's findings, it was decided to omit the Trainer level from the cascade to reduce the number of

cascade tiers. The previous year's training approach comprised detailed planning of only a few lessons. As a result, Master Trainers and Trainers had tended to demonstrate only those lessons, leaving large parts of the book untouched. In the Std. 2 training, planning of all the lessons was to be covered in the groups of RPs, with demonstrations of a few. This year, no module was provided on the grounds that a module was not necessary as everything is detailed in the textbook.

As the quality of the video in the preceding year was not satisfactory, and trainers' capacities to use video were not fully developed, the Government of Gujarat opted not to use videos this year in the training programme. This was regretted by some trainers. The research team suggested that the question of training by video might be re-visited and the possibilities of using much shorter video excerpts to demonstrate training points be considered along the lines of good practices discussed above.

This time, personnel including DPEOs, inspectors, presidents of teachers' associations etc. were also invited for the training programme to ensure that they were familiar with the training intentions and new textbooks.

In the cascade tiers, 52 Resource Persons were trained by the textbook writers at state level, and from those 52, two groups of 26 Resource Persons each were formed. One was trained for mathematics and the other for language/EVS. From both the groups, pairs were formed and each pair in turn trained groups of Master Trainers. The training of the Resource Persons continued for four days by the respective textbook writers (the research team observed one and a half days of training).

The newly-trained Resource Persons gave training to around 1200 Master Trainers from all over the state, and this continued for five days in the groups of 45-50 divided district wise. Unlike the Resource Persons who took one of the two subjects, each Master Trainer was trained in both subjects. Master Trainers who had been to the previous year's programme found there was repetition of the activities and were less enthusiastic this time. Some said 'now we are not learning anything new. It is just an understanding of textbook and nothing new beyond that':

> Last year's training programme was an initiation. It was necessary for teachers to open up and to participate in activities without any hesitation because they had never done such a thing before. But now you can see that they have accepted the change and practising it. So now we have to move a step further. Now we don't need to repeat the same things again and again (KRP).

These remarks indicate the need to consider how to structure the development of teacher trainers, so that they continue to grow professionally.

9.5.3 Surat tiers

The training to the teachers was organised by DIETs and given to all the Year Two teachers at District level by Master Trainers trained at Palitana. This time, the research team observed in Surat District - one class of Surat Corporation teachers and another of District Panchayat teachers. This training was conducted at Cluster Resource Centres.

Training was given by two Master Trainers to a group of 40 – 50 teachers. The pattern of training was through demonstration lessons, as modelled in Palitana. While one class stuck closely to the Palitana approach, in another, the trainer demonstrated possibilities for more effective future training throughout the cascade (Box 9.2). Instead of using only a demonstration method, the training took place through exchange of ideas about the activities, teaching-learning materials and how to teach the lesson focusing mainly on the competencies to be achieved. The Master Trainers (teachers and Cluster Resource Centre leaders) set the tone by raising thought-provoking questions and expecting the same from teachers. In this way, they stimulated teachers to engage with the training messages and how they relate to their own classrooms. Rather than simply apply a lesson that has been demonstrated elsewhere, these teachers would be able to develop their own approaches based on an understanding of basic principles rather than repetition. This training practice encourages teacher development and increases teachers' ability to apply first principles in their own contexts, which may be very different from the assumptions of the demonstration context.

Another important outcome of this questioning is that teachers themselves reflect on the matter of questioning, and develop an understanding of the importance of asking children thought-provoking questions, rather than the rhetorical or recall questions that currently tend to dominate.

A third important aspect of this training approach is that training becomes two-way, with give and take from trainer to trainee. This is the approach that underlies the new textbook – a more interactive relationship between teacher and children and it is highly appropriate to model this interactive approach with teachers during training sessions.

Box 9.2: **Good practices by MTs in Surat**

- MTs themselves were clear about concepts, the content and what they should focus on at what point.
- MTs had a vision of the questions likely to be raised and answered satisfactorily. The MTs involved teachers in questioning and reflecting back to the classroom situation and encouraged teachers to think of likely problems that could be faced in reality. This gave teachers a more flexible approach than simply modelling an 'ideal' textbook lesson that might not work in practice.
- Explanations of the textbooks were given with relevant examples in form of stories, quotes, statements etc. This made training interesting and lively. We noticed that if a concept was made clear to the trainees, for example through a value-based story, it seemed to be more easily acceptable; trainees also showed better concentration when such instances were narrated.
- Extra materials were used, and MTs shared new and interesting things which they might have read, or obtained from discussions with others. This made the training more comprehensive and rounded than merely concentrating on a narrow range of given materials.
- Trainers stressed children's achievement of competencies, and how to develop and extend children's thinking processes.
- MTs made an effort to find out about trainees' existing understandings, and then to extend them. For example, if a teacher asked a question, the MT would invite other teachers to answer, to see what they would do in such a situation. From their responses he could see what they thought and what understanding they had, and then he could supplement their answers with further explanations or suggestions. This helped to build on what teachers already knew, to develop them in less familiar areas, and boost confidence and motivation.
- Administrative arrangements for the programme were well organised and so time was not wasted.
- MTs were well prepared for all their sessions, and began each one knowing what they would try to cover that day, how much they could manage, and how they were going to take the sessions. As one MT said:

  Every day we have to come with prior preparation. Only then can we conduct the training in the desired way. After each day's training programme I need to go through what happened today, what questions were raised and based on that I have to prepare for the next day's training programme. I sit till one in the night, go through the lessons and mark the important points, which competencies are to be focused. Then I give thought to how these competencies could be achieved with what activities. (MT, Surat)

In these classes, the major emphases were competencies, skills development and thinking processes, and it was stressed that the textbooks are not an end in themselves, but the means of achieving these aims. This is the key message of the whole training programme. While this was perhaps less prominently put forth in the Palitana tiers, Master Trainers observed here were able to augment the 'model lesson' approach by working to improve teachers' grasp of concepts and offering them different activities, strategies and ideas of what to do in their classrooms. While at higher levels there had been slippage, with the pedagogical aspects being subsumed by content concerns, this was arrested at this tier and a more appropriate balance between the two was reached. This demonstrates that the quality of the training does not necessarily reflect the hierarchy assumed in the cascade model.

Another noteworthy aspect in Surat was that teachers had high expectations of the training: while elsewhere in-service teachers express negative sentiments about in-service training ('just another training'), here they were saying 'through this training we will definitely learn something new'. In this District, the DIET has a good reputation and its work for quality in the District is known.

9.6 Improving cascade effectiveness

9.6.1 Learning needs in the cascade tiers

In the cascade model, the information flow goes from the top downwards, because greatest expertise is believed to be concentrated at the top of the pyramid. The model does not differentiate between the types of expertise that exist at different points in the cascade. It is not good at encouraging an upwards flow of information from school teachers (who have practical classroom experience and theories about the ways things work – which training may need to try and change) to persons at the top (who may have greater technical or subject expertise and usually also a broader horizon but typically little practical classroom experience). Typically also, the cascade model is not very sensitive to variations in local context (at the school level, or among teachers) which may influence whether teachers perceive its training messages to be relevant.

The effectiveness of the cascade could be improved by more accurate, tier-wise specification of trainer's learning needs. The pedagogical focus is in general overshadowed by the content focus. The most neglected aspect of all is developing trainers' knowledge, skills and understandings of how best to teach adults.

One way of finding out more about learning needs in the cascade tiers is for the trainers to get a sense of how those whom they trained managed when they went to train others. If a Key Resource Person observes training given by the Resource

Person s/he initially trained, s/he can assess the strengths and weakness of the initial training and consider how further support may be given, or initial approaches adapted. Similarly, a Resource Person who trains a Master Trainer would go and watch some Master Trainers give their training to find out how well they do it, and in so doing, improve his or her knowledge about future inputs to the Master Trainer training.

9.6.2 **Evaluations**

At present there is no systematic evaluation of training inputs. A feedback loop such as that suggested above, or of any kind that helps evaluation of the effectiveness of training inputs, would help to boost quality. At present this is done informally to some extent, and needs to become more systematic. The training programme itself is also not externally evaluated informal evaluation of each programme takes place but a more comprehensive evaluation would help shape future training programmes by more accurately identifying aspects of success and areas that require attention.

9.6.3 **Reference material rather than a training module**

The initial training module attempted to identify the expected outcomes of this training. This was important as it gave clarity and direction to the training programme. However, it resulted in a list with many aspects for the training programme to cover, using the same module throughout – and 'outcomes' were in fact programme aims. No module was used in the second year, and this allowed more flexibility and focus on the textbooks and processes.

While a module is not required for future training, there is a need to define, and differentiate between, *both* the aims of the programme, *and* the intended outcomes for the learners. Closer definition of expected outcomes would aid more detailed planning and guide evaluation.

There is also an argument for follow-up material, rather than a module for the training, for teachers to refer to later on. This would be reference material for teachers to take away, and would inform discussions at Cluster Resource Centres in the following months. It would also have the advantage of ensuring that all teachers have clear and common information, rather than at present where they are dependent on the capacity of individual trainers to answer their questions.

9.7 Sustaining inputs from cascade training: the role of Cluster Resource Centres

The cascade training by its very nature is an intensive, once-off experience. Typically, time is too short, and there is no or very limited opportunity to practise

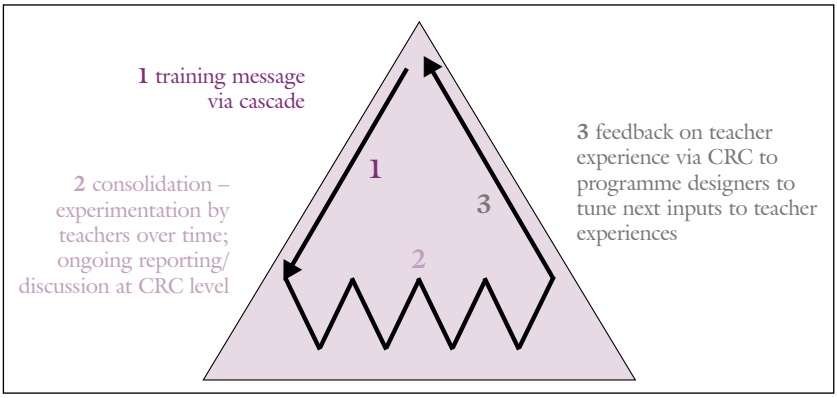
new skills. It can set things in motion, but as it offers teachers no chance to practice and return with their questions, it will remain inefficient unless it is consolidated. Cluster Resource Centres provide the platform for continuous reflection and discussion of training inputs and training needs, and reporting back at Cluster Resource Centre meetings.

The expectation that training would be consolidated at the Cluster Resource Centres was implicit. In future cascades, the planning of the cascade model could usefully include the follow-up after the cascade within the conceptualisation of the cascade itself. This structuring of the training experience beyond the short-term intensive input phase into a longer, experimental and reflective phase can help ensure that the impetus given by the cascade is immediately followed up once teachers return to schools (see Fig 9.4).

9.8 Development of trainers

The State is gradually building up a resource of teacher trainers who are called on to act at various points in the cascade model. The area that requires further strengthening is that of developing trainers' skills as trainers, and in particular to distinguish between teaching adults (which they are doing as trainers) and teaching children (which is what the training programme is about).

Figure 9.4: **Enriching the cascade by consolidation by Cluster Resource Centres**



Any cascade faces tensions between meeting the numerical demands of such a vast teacher constituency and the numbers of good quality trainers available. Some of the trainers observed are less effective than others, but there is at present no evaluation of their performance. Any future movement towards quality assurance depends on such evaluation.

The Resource Person tier of the cascade was most criticised. Teachers are still not fully satisfied with Resource Persons' ability to address all the queries they raise, and have questions about their competence and confidence. Master Trainers discussed with the research team the question of whether all the Resource Persons have sufficient knowledge as well as the ability to deliver. Since smaller numbers of Resource Persons are required, and many of them are regular DIET staff, this is part of the continuing debate about the quality of those who are appointed teacher educators. The cascade experience provides further evidence that a comprehensive professional development strategy for DIET staff needs to be put in place.

Box 9.3: **Trainer evaluation: some preliminary steps**
Does this trainer have:

- Clear ability to identify through discussions with teachers their training needs?
- Clear knowledge and understanding of the necessary concepts, relevant teaching approaches, and classroom management strategies?
- Good communication skills and the ability to address an audience of teachers who may be at different stages of competence themselves?
- Excellent content knowledge?
- Knowledge of the current situation in primary schools, gained from recent visits and discussions with teachers?
- The ability and skills to demonstrate effective teaching approaches in different contexts, and also to explain choices made?
- The ability and skills to differentiate between teaching adults, and teaching children?
- …

Box 9.3 contains some aspects that have emerged as relevant during this research. A checklist along these lines may be more useful in developing a pool of top quality Resource Persons, and also Master Trainers, than going by the degree qualifications or certificates held by an individual, or the number of training programmes s/he has conducted. It is not appropriate for teachers to be trained by a trainer (in this case a Cluster Resource Centre leader) who herself does not understand the relationship between what she does and children's learning:

K Those few who are left behind in the end make mistakes like that…
S1 Then how do they improve?
K No… but then later they know.
S1 Later they know - how does that happen?
K Is it because of their age that their understanding also develops or what even I don't know. Because I do not do any miracle nor do I give them any kind of special treatment but I don't know whether next year their

understanding increases or age increases or else due to repetition anything may be or else due to being in touch more compared to last year, whatever be the reason in the next year this child becomes better than the other.

9.8 Teacher motivation

Key government personnel in Gujarat see the question of motivation as the most pressing challenge in teacher development. They are deliberately adopting a training strategy, much in evidence at Palitana, of validating teachers to boost teacher motivation by:

- Making conscious efforts to reduce hierarchies and to appreciate teachers' work and efforts. Many teachers were pleased and encouraged at this recognition of their work.
- Adopting an increasingly participatory approach, in this case in the development of textbooks, and involving and consulting teachers about change.
- The establishment of a lively State Resource Group, with competitive entry to ensure standards, with many teacher members.
- Ensuring that even the senior most officers sing and dance on the stage, to encourage a new teacher identity that associates teachers with activities and education with fun.

9.9 Policy implications

The achievements of this programme were considerable, and each year many people benefited from this exposure to the new textbooks. This meant that teachers were oriented to them in advance of being asked to use them – which has not always been the case in the past (Dyer 2000). There were also several examples of good training practice which have been highlighted here, and those were drawn to the government's attention for further dissemination. In relation to this particular training programme, the team noted that:

- As the cascade progressed, the balance between content and pedagogy tended to move further towards content and away from pedagogy. It dealt reasonably clearly with the *what* and to some extent with *how* and *when*. Effective trainers took this forward to why particular activities should be carried out. If this aspect is neglected, teachers may teach model lessons without understanding and this is inherently self-limiting.
- In the new combined Language and Environmental Science textbook, the focus on language was subsumed throughout by the focus on the content matter of Environmental Science. This was noted during observations and addressed in Palitana, but remains a matter of concern given the dominant focus among teachers on content.

Aspects for future policy attention in relation to development of its teacher educator resource discussed with the Government included:

- Training quality is not currently monitored. Seen against the large numbers of teachers who need training, generating a pool of high quality trainers remains very difficult, but not all Resource Persons and Master Trainers have the requisite experience or competencies to conduct the training activities up to the expected level. The state is becoming ready to move towards consolidating the quality of the educator resource by monitoring the effectiveness of trainers and improving it where indicated.
- DIET staff are permanent teacher educators and their competencies require further strengthening. DIET staff should be outstanding teacher educators but many of them fail to match the skills, understanding and expertise shown by trainers drawn from other contexts. This remains a matter of serious concern.
- Some trainers have excellent skills as teacher educators, and this led to two issues for consideration:
  can their good practices be analysed and widely disseminated to help other teacher educators develop?;
  how can people with such high levels of skills but not the requisite paper qualifications be integrated into the DIET?

The team made three further suggestions:

- The need for consolidation via Cluster Resource Centres so that the impetus of the training is not lost, but rather extended so that teachers practise and reflect jointly on their new experiences. The cascade model of training cannot work well if it is not supplemented and supported by further long-term work locally.
- The need for closing of feedback loops wherever possible, so that training impact is evaluated and this information is used to inform future programme design.
- The possibility of enlarging the pool of 'critical friends' such as the research team to assist in evaluation and information generation to enrich training programmes.

Chapter 10 Summary of Main Findings and Policy Implications

10.1 Introduction

The discussion in the chapters of this report on teacher education through DIETs reveals a number of issues that have constrained the DIETs' functioning and effectiveness in relation to their objectives. DIETs are set to play a key role within the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and, if trends across the project sites are reflected more widely, there are many indications of a need for readjustment and focused development of DIETs if they are to be effective in systemic support to reach the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan objectives.

This chapter begins with a summary of the main findings of this study and the policy issues that emerged in each chapter. It concludes with a brief discussion of the key implications of this study for teacher development in a context of decentralisation, and for the institutional renewal of DIETs.

10.2 Summary of main findings

10.2.1 Towards quality improvements for teacher education: decentralising the system

Chapter One identified as the major teacher development challenge the introduction of a competency-based approach to teaching and learning. It noted that a national apex organisation for teacher education has stated that graduating teachers are not necessarily professionally competent and committed to the teaching profession as they begin their careers. It cites also official commentaries' serious concerns about serving teachers' motivation and competence. Findings such as these provided a rationale for overhauling teacher education, and in the wider context of decentralisation, this led to the establishment of DIETs in the mainstream, and sub-District Resource Centres in selected Districts of the DPEP. DIETs are intended to be catalysts for more effective development by identifying and responding to teachers' developmental needs at a local level. Official commentaries reveal disappointment at the quality of the DIETs and concern at the low return to investment from in-service teacher education programmes that have limited impact in classrooms.

Policy issue in the establishment of DIETs

- DIETs were conceived as a third tier of a teacher development system whose qualitative weaknesses warranted a centrally-sponsored scheme for improvement of its key institutions at the State level. The scheme that established DIETs simultaneously demanded the overhaul of the institute that the DIET was modelled upon (SCERT), would report to, and whose role, as the parent institution, would be to provide the DIETs with resource and other support. The

question of where these fledgling Institutes might turn for the resource support they would need was left unresolved through this policy anomaly.

10.2.2 Teachers and teaching

Chapter Two presented two school case studies, to provide detailed, ethnographically informed discussions of classroom processes. With a focus on literacy in the Year One classroom, these case studies demonstrated that these teachers had a limited repertoire of teaching techniques that focused heavily on repetition and memorising, and decoding and encoding written symbols without meaning. The way these teachers related to children was at significant variance with the policy ideal of valuing each learner equally that underpins the competency-based approach. Observations and interviews with teachers across all sites were then drawn on to discuss in more detail how teachers relate to children: teachers often had low expectations of children and other aspects of their working contexts led many of them to a 'deficit' view of their situations that resulted in an unwillingness to engage with training messages. Interviews with highly motivated teachers revealed that such teachers are often guided by strong religious or Gandhian principles. Their accounts foreground children's learning, and are situated within an 'enabling' discourse about teaching and learning.

Policy issues for the DIET in relation to school processes

- School observations revealed little impact of recent training initiatives, or awareness of the role of the DIET. Teachers had yet to develop the skills to ensure that children with differing learning needs, speeds and styles are accommodated. Case study teachers believed that not all children can even be expected to achieve the prescribed competencies, and so accepted it when some did not. Among these teachers and many others, reasons for low achievements are externalised to community, management or literacy factors. While several policy inconsistencies place pressures on teachers, there is an evident need to work with teachers on their attitudes and expectations of children from the lowest social classes and castes who attend these schools.
- The example set by excellent teachers underlines the need for training programmes to work with teachers on developing a perspective that is primarily concerned with the learning that results from teaching, rather than teaching with little regard for resulting learning. There is a need to focus teacher education away from the 'deficit' discourse that dominates, and towards an 'enabling' discourse.

10.2.3 Infrastructure, staffing, institutional aims and leadership

Chapter Three reviewed the impact of external interventions on DIETs, and then discussed infrastructure, staffing, institutional aims and leadership in the six sample

DIETs. The physical infrastructure in the specially commissioned DIET buildings of Masuda and Santrampur was highly conducive to the expected activities of the institute, but was less than adequate in the remaining four sites, particularly in Dhar DIET, which was occupying borrowed and unsuitable premises.

Recruitment to these DIETs followed national recruitment norms, but although most staff had the stipulated double Masters' degrees, very few had elementary teaching experience. In the Lok Jumbish DIET, special screening procedures and an enhanced salary package had ensured the employment of motivated staff. In other DIETs, a low proportion of staff had deliberately opted into a DIET posting with vocational intent; many more had been transferred from posts in the secondary sector. The Government of Gujarat has created its own DIET cadre to ensure dedicated staff, leading to stability that was absent in the other two States although recruitment of senior staff remains problematic there also.

In all three States, induction training was inadequate or non-existent. Ongoing professional development opportunities were also very limited and usually appropriated by a handful of staff members. In Udaipur, Dhar and Indore DIETs staff lacked clarity about the functions of their own branch of the DIET, or the institute as a whole, and were unfamiliar with the relevant national policy. In the three other DIETs, clarity was ensured either through the input of an external intervention (Lok Jumbish in Masuda DIET, DPEP in Santrampur DIET) or because the Principal had orientated his staff personally (Surat DIET).

DIET leadership was compromised by recruiting norms that made it very difficult to appoint regular Principals. Only Surat and Masuda DIETs had regular Principals. In the other DIETs the Principal was 'acting' or 'in-charge'. Such postings create DIET dependency on the Education Office and this undermines the institute, in addition to depriving DIETs of the leadership that staff members unanimously saw as crucial.

Policy issues in relation to DIET recruitment, staffing, institutional aims and leadership

- A reconsideration of recruitment policy for DIETs is urgently indicated, in order that practitioners with relevant expertise and experience of elementary education are employed in DIETs.
- Induction procedures for new DIET staff which have hitherto occurred too late, or not at all, are not serving the required purpose. The content of induction might be worked up in consultation with existing staff to identify the aspects which they consider to be important at the beginning of a DIET posting; a strong practical element is highly desirable, but this should be carefully

structured. Induction should be seen as the initial step of a continuous teacher educator development strategy.

- A move to a DIET is a major change of career direction serving school teachers, particularly where they are former secondary school teachers. Their existing skills, knowledge and understanding are unlikely to be adequate for their new role. Initial and ongoing facilitation of development of new skills, knowledge and understanding by the apex body is a requirement for DIETs to fulfil their potential, and needs to become embedded within a continuous teacher educator development strategy that is currently absent in all three States.

10.2.4 Pre-service education

Chapter Four reviewed pre-service education in the DIETs and found that the majority of lecturers adhered to the lecture mode of transmitting content, and emphasised delivering an 'ideal' lesson through a set series of steps. The course is dominated by scoring points and focuses heavily on content transmission rather than development of pedagogical skills. The practice teaching element is allocated few points, and bears little relation to real school life. The training experience fails to provide meaningful professional experiences and preparation for student teachers. Those student teachers have weak belief in the efficacy of their training, as do DIET staff themselves, yet staff do not feel they have the autonomy to address this concern locally. Student teachers do not expect to use even the limited repertoire of skills beyond lecturing that they learn at college once they work in schools.

Surat DIET had innovated to make practice teaching more relevant for its students, within the existing point-orientated framework, demonstrating that such initiative is possible in existing circumstances and illustrating good practices within the existing model. This DIET has also made a significant effort to break the separation observed elsewhere between the pre- and in-service activities of the DIET. Surat and Indore DIETs had both instigated research activities to introduce their student teachers to the importance of evaluating and reflecting on student achievements.

Policy issues in pre-service education

- Curricular innovations at the school level should impact immediately on teacher training. While this is the case for in-service programme design, the pre-set curriculum lags behind initiatives to improve school processes, and is out of step with contemporary classroom demands. This lag can be avoided through close interaction between pre-service and teacher education curriculum developers, so that if there is a change at the school level, the implications for changes to the teacher education curriculum are recognised and immediately

incorporated. Where this does not happen, the burden later falls on in-service training to bring even newly graduated teachers up to date.

- The majority of pre-service trainers treat training teachers as if it were secondary schooling, with a strong focus on content and a weak focus on pedagogical and community-related issues. DIET staff show different levels of skills and competence in modelling the approaches they discuss in the course. There is a need for all DIET staff to receive differentiated training and support to upgrade their skills as pre-service educators who are able to work convincingly and effectively with children and convey to student teachers how they do so.
- The model of pre-service training assumes rests on the idea that teachers are technicians who implement the ideas of others and do not have knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of their own. This model of training is not preparing teachers to engage with children's learning and their own roles as active and reflective facilitators of that learning in heterogeneous contexts.

10.2.5 In-service education for teachers

Chapter Five found that in-service programmes tend to be designed and funded from the State or national level. They are not preceded by needs analysis, and so do not base further training on where teachers are now or knowledge of teachers' needs or aspirations. In contrast to policy expectations of them, DIETs function as sites of delivery of pre-packaged programmes whose relevance to local teachers' needs is not assured. Staff are aware of this but may not have the technical expertise, insight about teachers' needs, or perception of their own autonomy to make the necessary adaptations. DIETs had a heavy training load which led to a sense of 'busyness' in delivery that often precluded monitoring and evaluation of impact at the school level. Training outcomes tend to be defined by the timetable, rather for a programme; where they are found, they are generally teaching rather than learning aims. Without this framework, there is nothing against which achievement of outcomes can be evaluated. Weak evaluative practices across DIETs meant that the feedback loop between DIET and teachers – essential for formative feedback to promote quality improvement - remained incomplete, except in Surat and Masuda where it was developing. Surat had also undertaken its own study of achievements against which teachers' developmental needs could be reviewed.

Two main approaches to pedagogical processes were observed: a 'traditional' lecture approach and a participatory approach. Some DIET lecturers dictate materials contained in a book teachers will later receive. In the more participatory / activity-based approaches to training, efforts were made to involve teachers actively in problem-solving and to some extent in critical reflection. This movement towards generating a professional discourse with teachers is highly positive, but to be sustained it requires that teacher educators refine their skills in

facilitation, since critical reflection at present is governed by a code of expected teacher behaviour that restricts the proffering of genuine feedback by disallowing any comment on 'negative' aspects.

Training programmes tend to see teachers as the recipients of other people's knowledge, rather than building on, and extending, what teachers already know and are doing. There was some evidence of efforts to change towards a more participatory approach from the Lok Jumbish District in Rajasthan, and more widely in Gujarat, where the beginnings of the emergence of a training model that attempts to generate discourse around professional issues was observed.

Policy issues in in-service education

- In-service training is carried out according to a skills-and-content model, but the content aspect is dominant and skills development is limited by the short duration of the course, number of participants, and often low capacities of trainers to build skills. While these issues could be addressed to increase the quality of training within this model, the model itself has limitations. It provides inputs that are not sensitive to context, and does not engage with the issue of teachers' *will* to adopt training messages, which emerges from data and indeed official reports as a critical factor in bringing about change. Alternative models that are capable to dealing with both content, skills and attitudes – such as the action-reflection approach adopted by the project team – may prove to be more effective catalysts of change.
- Teachers have a right to expect that trainers are themselves competent in the content and pedagogy of new approaches to teaching and learning. Training by persons who are not fully competent was observed across the DIETs. This undermines the training experience, and often manifests itself in strict adherence to module content, rather than making local adjustments to provide contextual relevance. Other trainers however are moving towards a participatory training approach that actively involves teachers and is beginning to generate a professional discourse. Development for such trainers would support them in developing the necessary professional knowledge and skills to facilitate discussions that focus on conceptual aspects – so for instance moving conversations on from content detail to discussions of the curriculum in relation to student learning.
- There is a delicate balance between providing frameworks and prescribing but at present the claim by module writers to be doing the former is interpreted by DIET staff as the latter. This is an indicator of a need to involve practitioners in DIETs and schools in module preparation and to use this as a means of developing local capacity in identifying and responding to teacher development needs.

- None of the training programmes observed had a strong focus on children's learning and children's achievements: they were geared towards providing teachers with information, knowledge, and activities. The end is, in this way, subsumed by the means. Aspects of learning, and promoting learning, could be stressed in programme formulation, for example by providing learning objectives for training sessions that are shared with trainees and form a framework for evaluation. This would model for teachers ways of doing the same things with children.

10.2.6 The DIET and decentralisation

Chapter Six found that funding issues were a source of tension with the State level, placing obstacles in the way of a DIET, such as Surat in the sample, that is moving towards the exercise of institutional agency and autonomy. Differing perceptions about autonomy were another key aspect of DIET-State tensions, with the DIET staff claiming a lack of freedom that State officials claim they have. DIETs are found to be at different stages in their capacity and will to accept the accountability and responsibility that decentralisation demands, and this points towards a need not only for support, but also for differentiated support, to help them develop in this direction.

At the District level, DIETs are not able to take administrative sanctions over teachers, and have an advisory status only. They depend on the District Education Office to second teachers for training. Current procedures lead to duplication and wastage of training places, unless – or sometimes even when – a DIET deliberately cultivates good working relations, as in Surat and Indore Districts. This contributes to DIET inefficiency and is costly in terms of negative impact on DIET morale and public image. Proaction by Surat and Indore DIETs greatly assisted in ensuring that Education Department officers were aware of the DIET's role and of their own office in supporting it. Institutional reform in Madhya Pradesh is likely to improve these aspects of internal efficiency significantly.

Cluster Resource Centres experienced similar tensions to DIETs in respect of having only an advisory role. Focus group discussions with Resource Centre staff in Santrampur District revealed a matrix of concerns clustered around structural constraints, impressions of teachers' pedagogical shortcomings; sense of their own pedagogical challenges; issues relating to community interactions. These Resource Centres are the 'outreach' faculty of the DIET, but only in Surat, Indore and Masuda DIETs did the staff see it as part of their mandate to support the development of these personnel's skills. In the DPEP Districts, a 'parallel' structure which tended to bypass the DIET created a separation between the DIET and the resources it needs to reach out effectively.

Policy issues for the DIET in a context of decentralisation

- DIETs and their apex body have yet to develop the sense of partnership implied in decentralisation, rather than the hierarchical relationship of a centralised system. If decentralisation is to gather pace, State officials need to adjust their role away from supervision and towards one of consciously nurturing and supporting DIETs to assist them in growing into their role. Perceptual barriers to operating in a decentralised way are constraints as real as operational obstacles and need to be consciously worked through in partnership.
- An aspect of innovation and change management that emerges from this study is that when a new structure is introduced, or an old structure takes on a new role, *all* officials need a full induction to the innovation itself, and their own direct or indirect roles in supporting it.
- As Cluster Resource Centres are rolled out, further resolution is required of how they and DIETs should articulate with one another to achieve meaningful integration and create feedback loops. The trends reported here reveal differing levels of integration and understanding of the need for that integration, indicating a need for some DIETs to receive more concentrated support than others to achieve integration with the Cluster Resource Centres.
- The impact on DIETs of an external initiative that almost usurped their functions has been recorded here, and noted by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Madhya Pradesh has been a pace-setter in achieving convergence through major institutional reform and there may be a need for Gujarat and Rajasthan State Governments also to consider where duplication and overlap are creating role conflicts and reducing efficiency.

10.2.7 Professional development through collaborative action research with DIETs

Chapter Seven showed that research was a neglected area of DIET functioning, and had hitherto been used to meet the information needs of the State rather than as a means of helping DIETs immerse themselves in understanding local teachers' concerns and how the DIET might respond to them. Collaborative action research emerged as a tool for professional development with DIET staff in the three sites that opted into this project strand. DIET staff initially focused on concerns they could do little to address and made assumptions about teachers that were challenged by the project team, leading to investigation via action research. Five topics emerged from the DIETs: a) on teachers' attitudes to change; b) transmission loss in the cascade model; c) time management in the DIET; d) teacher motivation; and e) language teaching. Project a) generated a wealth of detail that provided the DIET with clear indicators of teacher expectations about their role, understandings of policy messages, and current concerns. Project b) prompted reflection on the relevance of training and on trainers' own training needs, and revealed a strong

preoccupation with content to the extent that process and learner perspectives were largely neglected. Project c) assisted Masuda DIET in resolving workload issues and instigated staff meetings to aid transparency. Project d) investigated the motivation of para teachers who attended the DIET for on-the-job training and was carried out entirely by the DIET staff. Project e) was initiated by Indore DIET but was subsumed by institutional reform that led to demands on the research project leaders instead to help them manage making their first District plan.

In addition to generating useful data, this approach to professional development helped the DIET staff gain clarity about the role of the DIET and their place within it, where these were absent. It helped reshape internal collaboration patterns, and provided development opportunities to anyone in the DIET who wished, rather than a selected few. It contributed to the beginning of a more reflexive culture within the DIET that did not externalise all accountability; and it helped DIET staff understand teachers' constraints more accurately, and so develop a more positive attitude towards them. Tensions for professional development through action-reflection were found in the wider systemic changes that created instability for DIET staff; nature of leadership in the DIET; and DIET staff's perceptions of their own autonomy and professional agency – both of which are an essential aspect of the action component of action research.

Policy issues in professional development through collaborative action research

- The collaborative action research approach to professional development has an inherent methodological stress on the development of autonomy and critical reflexivity. This approach offers practitioners the opportunity to *engage* with their practices in a way that the top-down, input led approach to professional development does not necessarily do. Such engagement engenders a sense of institutional accountability to teachers and children, rather than management systems, that is a pre-requisite for real change, and for decentralisation.
- Professional development activities in this case took place within a wider context that was not supportive to high levels of engagement. Development of professional agency, and of institutional autonomy, is constrained where decentralisation itself is contested by reluctance of centralised authorities to relinquish power and control.
- Not all DIETs were ready to take on major decentralised responsibilities; they were at different stages not only of competence and understanding, but also commitment, to the DIET idea. These findings points to a need for the apex organisation to provide responsive support to DIETs, in recognition that institutions at different stages of development may require differential treatment.

10.2.8 Action research with teachers

Chapter Eight reported on action research with 25 teachers in a Municipal Corporation school in Gujarat. These first time action researchers were working with the project team on an investigation of first year literacy teaching and learning, by writing diaries and reflecting in groups during workshop sessions, with inputs from observations by the project team in their schools. Major constraints on teaching were identified as the many days of teaching lost to other duties; very high student: teacher ratios; and low expectations of urban children. Even in these circumstances, some teachers were able to initiate activity based learning and group work. Five approaches to literacy were identified, but none of them was based in language work or paid much attention to listening and speaking activities, since teachers believed that these can be done at home, unlike reading and writing which can only be done at school. This meant that literacy was reduced to decoding symbols without meaning. Peer reflection began to develop in this project, but peer learning had reached limitations from within the existing models of literacy teaching. The project established an urgent need to work with teachers on developing a pedagogy of language that could cope with these classroom contexts.

Policy issues in relation to action research with teachers

- This project illustrated the importance of doing research with teachers before designing programmatic inputs, to identify with precision the aspects of professional development that training is addressing. Teachers were already doing activities and using aids – yet formal training continues to target this as though they are not.
- The areas where teachers immediately needed more support were in developing strategies to cope in very large classes with the varying speeds of learners; more technical understandings of literacy acquisition to guide practice; and guidance on how to introduce language work to make literacy acquisition more meaningful.
- The approach to teacher development undertaken here reflects the idea of peer-learning underpinning the Cluster Resource Centre concept. The implications are that for a peer learning platform to be effective, teachers need to be able to describe, reflect and comment supportively and critically on their own and others' teaching. This does not happen easily or automatically. Teachers do not find it easy to turn the focus away from more usual issues, many of which are indeed pressing, such as class sizes, attitudes of parents and administrators, onto their own teaching practices. They need encouragement to become reflective practitioners, and support in developing the necessary skills to focus with peers on practical problem-solving in existing realities, instead of an expectation of how things should be according to a notion of ideal circumstances.

Participatory approaches to training need teachers to have those skills, and this emerged as the crux of the difference between the reflection into action approach to teacher development, and the dominant 'input given by expert' approach that appears legitimate without ever really engaging with classroom realities.

10.2.9 Research into action: the new textbook training programmes in Gujarat

Chapter Nine reported on research directly commissioned by the Government of Gujarat into the efficacy of its cascade model of training for the introduction of new language/ environmental science and mathematics textbooks in Years One and Two. Training provided teachers with access to textbook writers, modelling of new lessons, and opportunities to prepare their own lessons and teaching learning materials. The quality of the teacher educator resource was found to be variable, but some very good trainers were observed. As the cascade training progressed, pedagogical aspects received decreasing attention, and the stress on content became increasingly dominant. At the final cascade tier where teachers were being taught, good practices were identified and shared with the Government of Gujarat for wider dissemination. The cascade model did not have any feedback loops; and suggestions were also made for consolidating the training at the Cluster level, so that the impetus of the once-off cascade is not lost.

Policy issues in relation to the cascade model of training

- DIET staff are permanent teacher educators and this study showed that their competencies require further strengthening. DIET staff's expertise does not always match the skills, understanding and expertise shown by trainers drawn from other contexts. Conversely, there are non-DIET trainers who, despite their lack of graduate qualifications, would clearly make high quality DIET staff, raising the question of how people with such high levels of skills can be integrated into the DIET.
- The cascade model of training is a means of familiarising large numbers of teachers at one time with training messages, and despite 'transmission loss' this approach to training is likely to remain dominant. While it may help teachers with information requirements, this once-off input is more likely to catalyse change if a more holistic approach to training is adopted, by planning how the cascade inputs should dovetail with follow-up and extension activities at Cluster Resource Centres. Planning for follow up needs to become an integral component of cascade training wherever the cascade continues to be used. This is also important because the cascade model does not differentiate between learners' needs: while some teachers may need encouragement to follow model lessons based in activity-approaches, others may be ready to extend their conceptual understandings and

learn about strategies that allow a more diversified approach to teaching groups of heterogeneous learners. These diverse learning needs can be addressed in Cluster level follow up and extension activities.

10.3 Ways forward

10.3.1 Professional development of teacher educators

The introduction of a competency-based approach to learning in elementary schools brings with it major challenges for teacher education to support teachers in moving towards adopting a radically different approach to teaching and learning than that which had gone before. All teachers, whether practising or emerging, are making changes within a well-established bureaucratic and hierarchical culture of teaching; and within a management of education that has not undergone decentralisation except in selected project Districts of the District Primary Education Programme.

Key elements of the new approach require the emphasis to be placed on learning, and achievement of competencies by each learner in a process facilitated by activities, teaching learning materials, group work, and so on. It was established that across the sites, in both pre- and in-service training, *many DIET staff were not able to model key elements of these approaches*, relying instead on lecturing or, at best, demonstration of 'model' lessons that may not be transferable to 'non-ideal' school contexts.

This study also found that significant numbers of teachers educators tend to have negative attitudes to children of communities who use government schools. Some of them also see elementary teachers in a negative light. There were, however, some teacher educators in the sample who, although they had not been elementary school teachers themselves, saw elementary teaching as the challenging profession that it is.

There are occasional development opportunities for DIET staff, but these are not linked into a comprehensive strategy for professional development. The findings of this study indicate a strong need for DIET staff to receive further support and strengthening of their technical skills in relation to a) teaching elementary children, and so being able to model and explain their methods to trainees; and b) methodologies of training adults. However, improvement of technical skilling on its own is not sufficient where teacher educators themselves have negative attitudes towards elementary teachers, and are not fully behind the idea that each individual has a right to good quality education, or that every teacher has something to offer.

10.3.2 Towards a strategy for teacher educator development

A key message emerging from this study is *the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for the professional growth of teacher educators*.

This study indicates that a first requirement is the need to reconsider recruitment policy. The double Master's degree criterion for DIET staff is not found to be a safeguard of quality; rather, it attracts staff with experience in the secondary sector. Indeed, the high qualifications of some staff were leading to disengagement as they felt their talents were wasted, with little call on this level of qualification. The special screening procedures adopted by Lok Jumbish for their DIETs were successful in recruiting staff who had an enthusiasm for elementary education; this enthusiasm was also visible among staff members in Madhya Pradesh who had been 'head hunted' into DIETs. The contrast between these staff and others who were simply transferred into the DIET as part of routine posting procedures was manifest. However, these staff tended to use a training model that was heavily dependent on transmission of prescribed content because they did not have practical experience to draw upon. The more effective trainers observed tended to be experienced elementary teachers working at the Cluster level. They were more effective in that they were able to engage teachers during training, providing nuanced explanations based on practical experience, etc. – an approach of structured sharing with peers that provided a training experience that teachers appreciated.

While the question of appropriate educational qualifications remains debatable, a complementary recruitment strategy that forms the basis not only of recruitment, but also professional development, is the adoption of a 'competency wheel' (see Fig. 10.1). The same tool can be used to consider professional development requirements of staff at any level in the system, whether at the State or sub-District levels, as well as in the DIETs. Concerns over maintaining standards and public accountability can be assuaged by publication of these criteria.

The first step in construction of this tool is to consider which tasks and activities are appropriate to a particular post. In the DIET context, this would help to shape a more holistic approach that integrates in-service training, needs assessment, evaluation of processes in schools, management of links with Cluster Resource Centres, and so on. This exercise gives a clear understanding of the job that is to be filled.

The second step is to identify the competencies that the future incumbent of that job requires. This allows more flexibility than educational qualifications: it could for example include the competency of good communication skills that is clearly important for a post in the DIET. This study has shown that the institutional design of the DIET has contributed to compartmentalisation. Aspects of teacher development such as curriculum and materials development, planning and management cut across subject areas and need to be closely related to pedagogical processes. Rather than delimit them to specific branches, there is an argument for all staff to have capacities in these generic areas, alongside subject / content

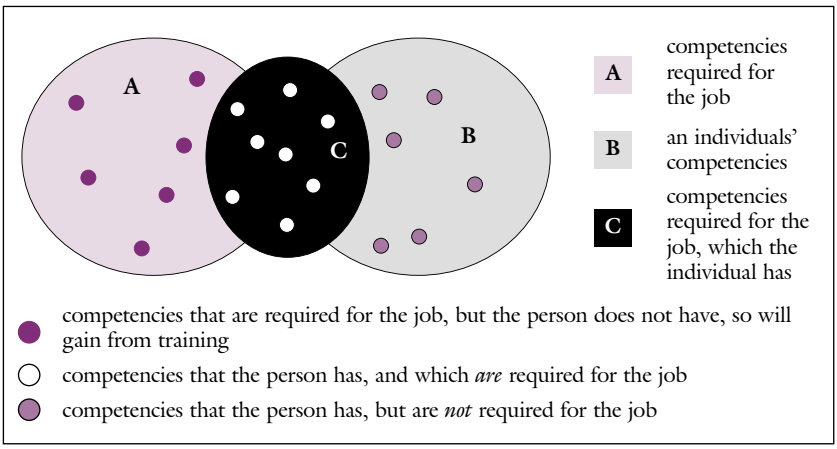
competence; this can be ensured through designating these as job competencies, which can be assessed at the time of interview and provided for later, if necessary, through training.

The identification of the competencies in relation to the post provides a framework against which to recruit and identify the suitability of applicants for the post (Circle A in Fig. 10.1). It can, with existing staff, also frame upgrading and capacity development of existing staff. As each applicant, who brings his/her own particular competencies to the interview (Circle B) is appraised against the job requirement, the extent to which that individual's capacities meet the job requirements can be seen. Circle C in the Figure represents the fit between the applicant and the job description: the more closely circles A and B overlap to create circle C, the closer the fit between the job requirements (circle A) and the abilities of the person appointed to the job to do it well (circle B). If there is a 100% match, the two circles completely overlap.

A tool such as the competency wheel would begin to answer several of the concerns raised by the findings of this study:

- The need for a sharper conceptualisation of institutional purpose and the roles of DIET branches and DIET staff in relation to that institutional purpose
- The need for a holistic rather than compartmentalised approach to teacher development through DIETs
- The need to recognise the specialised nature of elementary teacher education and to recruit staff accordingly
- The need to provide for continuing professional growth of teacher educators to extend their understanding of, and engagement with, the field

Figure 10.1: **matching people to posts: an application of the competency wheel**



10.3.3 Models of pre- and in-service teacher education

This study found that pre-service training was lagging behind contemporary classroom challenges, rather than preparing teachers to engage effectively with them. Emerging teachers do not, for example, have sufficient technical competence in the theory and practice of literacy acquisition within which to frame textbook content. *Sample DIETs were graduating teachers who were technically not fully competent to teach the current school curriculum*. If pre-service education through DIETs is to play its expected part in leading educational change, there is a need for a comprehensive overhaul that places it firmly on a competency footing, and integrates content and pedagogy.

Similarly, in-service education adheres to a 'skills and knowledge' model that is weakened in practice by its emphasis on content at the cost of supporting teachers in the development of skills. Because they are not preceded by needs analyses, these programmes often appear irrelevant to teachers; and this is reinforced by the once-off nature of training programmes and lack of provision for their reinforcement at school. This has led to widespread disaffection among teachers about training, and the notion of training itself is further devalued by inadequate seconding arrangements between the DIET and Education Department.

However, skills alone are not enough. The technological approach of the training model adopted does not allow it to embrace a key challenge of contemporary teacher development: the need to *engage with teachers' values and attitudes, which shape their will to adopt training messages*. It is not therefore capable of engaging effectively with what most available research evidence, to which this study contributes, identifies as one of the most important issues in relation to promoting elementary education of quality: low teacher will and motivation. Underlying this approach to training is a view of the teacher as a technician, implementing the ideas of others – a view of teachers that denies the existence of practitioner knowledge and theories of practice that provide the rationales for teachers' actions. The findings of this study strongly indicate that *the dominant training model pursued by DIETs is in itself inappropriate to meet contemporary challenges*.

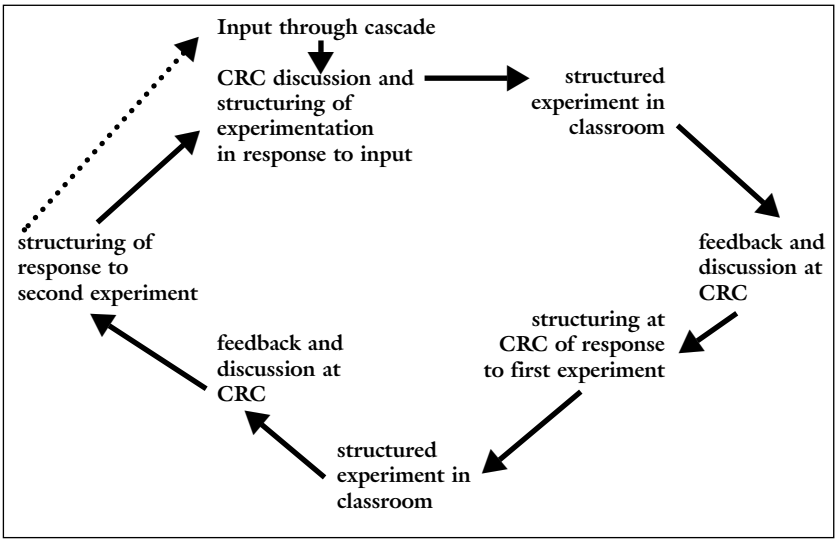
Changes within the dominant model

The training model currently pursued is compromised by recruitment procedures. All too often, these are not ensuring that technically competent and motivated people are becoming DIET staff. The preceding section provides suggestions as to how this might be addressed. This study was able also to identify good practices by some trainers (not necessarily DIET staff) within the dominant model (see chapters 5 and 9) which provide indications of more effective uses of time during training. Even when the training experience had in itself been stimulating,

however, many teachers leaving the training programme had reservations about how they might actually do the things they had heard about, or even modelled, in their own classrooms. In terms of the skills component of the skills and knowledge model, such training is not providing teachers with sufficient opportunities to develop new skills to a level where they feel confident to try them out once they return to school. The 'ideal lesson' model that dominates training programmes may not translate well into heterogeneous school contexts; and in pursuit of the 'activity-based approach', much training time is devoted to making teaching-learning materials and learning songs and poems which have become elevated to an end in themselves, rather than as means to the end of learning.

A significant means of strengthening this model of training is to address its 'once-off' nature by planning for consolidation and extension at the Cluster Resource Centres later, as noted in chapter 9, and so supporting teachers through the process of trying out new things. This requires training itself to be seen as a process, rather than as an input, and could be visualised as cyclical (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2: **A model for training consolidation at Cluster Resource Level**



As we have established in this study, such work at the Cluster level depends on teachers sharing description and analysis of practice. At present, some Cluster leaders see their role as providers of input, and regard their own lack of opportunity to exercise coercive power as problematic. The very significant demands on Cluster leaders of facilitating sharing discussions, when teacher training culture is dominated by an input orientated teacher development model, deserves stronger recognition. The ability to facilitate discussions well is central

not only to their own professional development in leadership roles, but also to the emergence of Cluster Resource Centres as fora for teacher development based on a model of peer learning, and reflection-in-action. As Box 6.1 illustrated, however, Cluster staff have received a series of individual, content orientated training programmes – a further illustration of the need to consider alternative modes of professional development for teacher educators as well as teachers themselves.

An alternative model

In a context of decentralisation, bringing with it demands of knowing and responding to local contexts, the centralised and 'expert'-designed, input led approach to teacher development struggles with relevance. The research project identified low levels of professional agency and responsibility as hurdles to teacher and teacher educator development that are perpetuated by the dominant training model. Seeking a more relevant way forward, the project initiated activities within the 'teacher as researcher' approach to professional development, through collaborative action research with teachers and their educators. This approach sees teachers and their educators not as 'technicians' implementing the ideas of others, but as practitioners who, through reflection on practice, can improve that practice to a significant extent without recourse to external expertise.

This approach to professional development encouraged practitioners to *engage* with their practices and to develop responsibility for their outcomes, rather than deflecting such responsibility towards management, communities or children, as is commonly the case. Development of technical skills was part of this process, but it was demand led, as practitioners identified for themselves, or with the process supporters' help, the skills they needed, and also the help they needed with learning to reflect. The project illustrated that teachers and teacher educators can begin to become critical and reflexive practitioners if the opportunity is made available, and this leads to increased motivation and more enabling attitudes.

This process needs both mentoring and support to provide a 'scaffolding' for practitioners. In this case, such scaffolding was provided by the project team, and what is entailed in such scaffolding for the process helpers is detailed in chapter 7. This approach to practitioner development is challenging, for reasons we have set out in this report, but offers promise. It is particularly relevant to try and find ways of working through this approach with Cluster Resource Centre staff, Master Trainers and Resource Persons, since the Resource Centre concept rests on the idea of peer approaches to development through joint discussion and reflection. Exploration of partnerships between government, non-government organisations and universities may identify further possibilities for the application of this approach to practitioner development.

10.3.4 **Decentralisation and the management of teacher development**

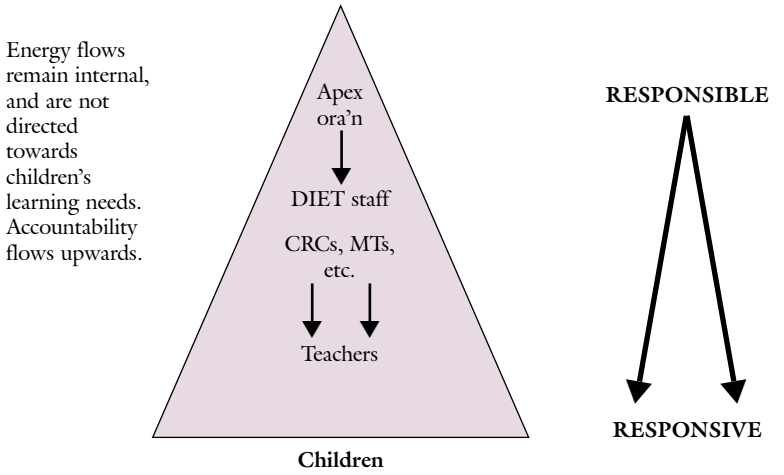
Decentralisation of teacher education, and the translation of the DIET idea into successful practice, are considerably constrained by current recruitment norms, and the limited opportunities for professional development of staff, as we have discussed above.

These issues aside, it was also demonstrated in the sample that in respect of DIETs, decentralisation is contested, both in practical arrangements, and in the perceptions of practitioners at State and District levels. The study found that the relationship between DIETs and their apex organisation is dominated by centralised inputs and direction setting. In this context, DIETs in the sample demonstrated different levels of institutional agency, responsibility or accountability in respect of promoting children's learning. Where these levels were low, as in Udaipur or Dhar, there was a strong tendency to look upwards to the SCERT/equivalent for orders - even while the need to do so was contested at both DIET and State level. Where these levels was high, as in Surat, the DIET had created and occupied its own recognised educational niche in the District. However, its capacity to move further in fulfilling its decentralised mandate was constrained by funding arrangements that were limiting the possibilities for this DIET to respond to its own research-based assessment of its teachers' developmental needs.

The various case study sites illustrate that while institutional structures are now largely in place, those structures themselves show different levels of capacity to support teacher development, and there often remains a lack of integration between them. Integration in the DPEP Districts between DIET and the DPEP sub-Cluster Resource Centres was found to be lacking in both Santrampur and Dhar, in contrast with the other externally-supported intervention site in the study, Masuda, where integration through Lok Jumbish was higher. Across all the sites, however, the highest level of integration was found in Surat District, where there was evidence of consistent partner relationships between the DIET and its apex body, and its Cluster Resource Centres. These converged around a joint vision and strong leadership: the common thread running through accounts by staff across the District and up to the apex body was an understanding of the need to align the institution's purpose with supporting teachers, sustained by an awareness of different, but complementary, strengths. Although progress was acknowledged to be as yet incomplete, and uneven, a direction had been set for future, and sustainable, development. This was different from the Lok Jumbish scenario, where there was temporary convergence of institutions around their roles in realising the Lok Jumbish vision rather than sustained teacher development.

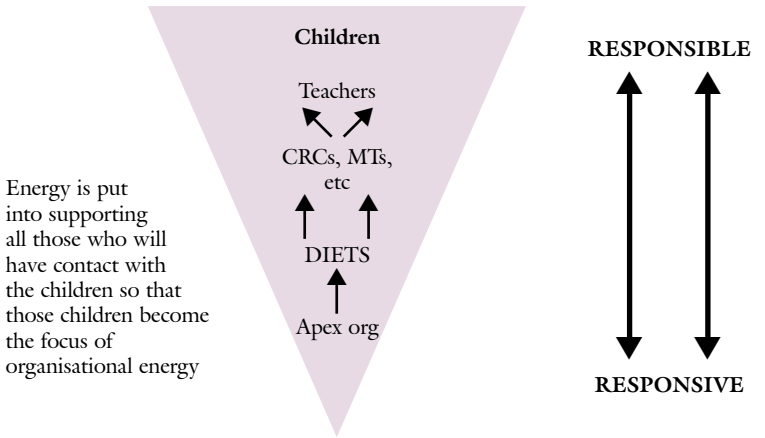
Some of the lessons from Surat can be drawn out and presented in diagrammatic form. Figure 10.3 illustrates the conventional management pyramid in teacher development that was found in Rajasthan, and in Madhya Pradesh before institutional reform. In this model, accountability flows upwards. The apex body retains overall responsibility and expects responsiveness to children to begin further down the pyramid.

Figure 10.3: **A centralised model of management**



The management pyramid found to be emerging in Gujarat, between Surat DIET and the apex body, had moved towards a reversal of some key aspects of the conventional pyramid shown in Fig 10.3. In this management model, responsiveness permeates the entire pyramid, from top to bottom; and responsibility is also shared. This is illustrated in Fig. 10.4:

Figure 10.4: **A 'responsive' model of management**

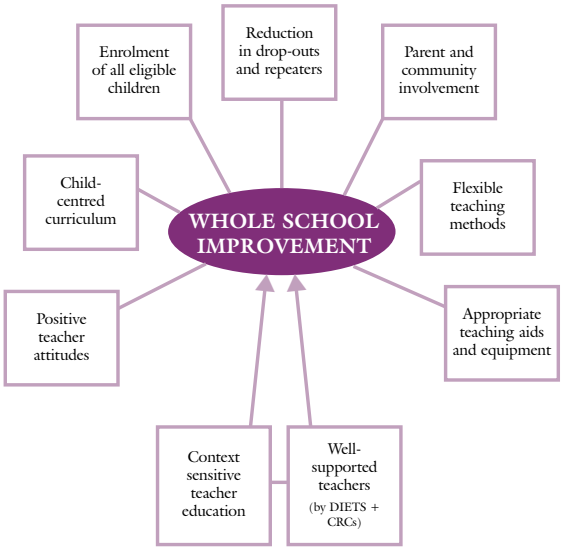


Progress towards adoption of the second model paves the way for further refinement of the focus of teacher development activities across the system. This study has provided evidence that the key to this may lie in a change of emphasis. At present, DIETs are pursuing a model of input-led programmes for improving the skills and knowledge of teachers. Teachers – both pre- and in-service – tend to have a weak belief in the efficacy of such training and take-up of training messages is low. This training isolates individual teachers from school contexts, does not acknowledge their value frameworks and practitioner understandings, and holds them responsible for not 'implementing training'. This model struggles further to find relevance in a decentralising context because it is unable to engage teachers in developing a sense of professional agency and accountability towards the learning of all children.

10.3.5 Nurturing professional accountability

The findings of this study indicate the need for exploration of the relative merits of rooting teacher development through DIETs and their associated Resource Centres in a *school* improvement approach, rather than in teacher improvement as it is at present. This would provide a meaningful focus for teacher development as one of many activities converging at the school around improving the quality of children's learning (see Fig. 10.5). This study found a focus on children's learning to be largely missing in teacher development through DIETs, whether during pre- or in-service training. The evidence presented here indicates a need for much greater systemic awareness of the need to nurture professional accountability for children's learning.

Figure 10.5: **DIET support for Whole School improvement**



Source: adapted from Whole School improvement, eenet newsletter no. 7, 2003 [eenet.org.uk]

DIETs are a crucial strategic vehicle for making this happen. However, for them to play the roles envisaged for them under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, they themselves require nurturing, a clear sense of direction, and a heightened sense of professional accountability towards teachers and children.

This report has provided analytical descriptions of current training processes and a critique of both the dominant model of teacher education and the view of teachers that it reflects. While it may be possible to improve the quality of the current 'skills and knowledge' approach to teacher development, the report has argued that there is a strong need to reflect on the evident struggle of this approach to find relevance. The research team investigated an alternative: the adoption of an approach that begins where practitioners are, and encourages reflection and action. This allows the investigation of practitioners' values and will, both of which are neglected at present but are vitally implicated in change efforts focusing on providing good quality education for all children. The report has demonstrated that when this opportunity is offered, practitioners can engage with their practices in ways that generate excitement, interest, and optimism for the future. We hope that in these ways, this report has illuminated possibilities for the institutional renewal of DIETs and that, through its suggestions for improving the ecological validity of teacher development, it will contribute towards improving the quality of children's learning.

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Annex 1 Expansion and new directions in elementary education

Provision of schools and teachers

Despite a policy discourse stressing the importance of elementary education, and the constitutional commitment to achieving it, the elementary sector has suffered from inadequate funding allocations. About 95% of the available budget has been absorbed by teacher salaries, leaving very little over for even modest 'quality' aspects (buildings, playground, teaching aids and books) (Varghese and Tilak 1991). By 1997-98, 3.6% of GNP was invested in education – a significant increase compared with the 1.2% of GNP in 1960-51, but still well short of the Education Commission's (1964-66) recommendation of 6% (GoI 2000).

By the mid 1980s the targeted expansion of the school network to ensure universal access (i.e. a school within 1 km of place of habitation) was nearing completion. Operation Blackboard (MHRD 1987) attempted, with varying success (Dyer 2000) to lay down a norm of at least two room, two teacher schools. However, in rural areas, where there are frequently two teachers to five classes, multigrade teaching is common, and staff-student ratios continue to exceed the policy norm of 1: 40 (6AIES 1996). Further scrutiny of the access scenario in the mid 1990s revealed that this norm was not adequate to ensure all children could reach a school; this prompted the Education Guarantee Scheme / Alternative Schooling system pioneered in Madhya Pradesh, which obliges the state government to respond to a community's request for a school if one is not available. Alternative Schools are generally staffed by a para-teacher.

Box A1: **Para-teachers**

By the late 1990s, teacher shortages, fiscal crises, the continuing problem of teacher absenteeism, particularly in rural areas, prompted a search for alternatives to formal teachers.

Following initiatives from the Shiksha Karmi programme in Rajasthan and the Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh, para-teachers appeared to offer a reasonable alternative to expensive, certificated teachers. The para teacher should be a Std. 10 pass where possible, Std. 8 if female and be local, which should obviate problems of dialect and lack of interest or sense of participation in the local community.

Unlike the two year, content intensive pre-service preparation of regular teachers, with a very limited teaching practice component, para teachers work in schools with occasional intensive periods of 'on the job' training.

Box A1: **Para-teachers** *continued*

Para teachers are employed on a contractual basis and do not have permanency, which is seen to make them more concerned than teachers who are employed on permanent contracts to demonstrate their effectiveness and commitment. The salary for para-teachers is about one third of that of regular teachers and while this is a short-term advantage forcash-strapped State governments, plans to regularise these teachers over time raise questions as to their future remuneration.

The national move towards using para-teachers was not based on a thorough evaluation of the comparative pedagogical competence of trained and para-teachers which would provide a clear educational rationale for this new direction. Indeed, a DPEP-commissioned study (EdCil 1999) found very little difference in styles between the two categories of teacher. Anecdotal evidence that they are not worse than regular teachers, coupled with the financial attractiveness of lower salaries, has meant that para teachers have rapidly become a significant feature of the elementary education system. It is also unclear how the appointment of para-teachers with even lower educational qualifications than regular teachers will address one of the main issues in elementary teacher education – teachers' own inadequate levels of basic subject competencies (Jangira, 1994).

The second major post Independence target has been to ensure that all teachers working in the system are appropriately qualified. No States in this study sample had achieved this goal, although as the following Table shows, by 1996 Gujarat was very close to the target of having all its teachers trained. In Madhya Pradesh over a third of elementary teachers were untrained, and in Rajasthan just over one tenth were untrained. The percentages of untrained teachers were also consistently higher in the elementary than in the upper elementary stage.

Table A1: **Numbers of untrained teachers in lower and upper elementary sections, 1996**

State	Rural/ urban/ total	Numbers of lower Elementary Teachers and proportion of untrained teachers (in percent)		Numbers of upper Elementary Teachers and proportion of untrained teachers (in percent)	
		Total	Untr (%*)	Total	Untr (%*)
India	R	1501857	200043 (13.32)	705664	96118 (13.62)
	U	511668	99356 (19.42)	330462	39563 (11.97)
	T	*2013525*	*299399 (14.87)*	*103612*	*135681 (13.09)*
Gujarat	R	64767	1235 (1.9)	52546	681 (1.29)
	U	31609	3385 (10.7)	25171	1703 (6.76)
	T	*96376*	*4620 (4.8)*	*77717*	*2384 (3.06)*
MP	R	139340	48156 (34.6)	52121	15551 (29.83)
	U	61907	28201 (45.56)	36147	12892 (35.66)
	T	*201247*	*76357 (37.9)*	*88268*	*28443 (32.22)*
Rajasthan	R	76119	4805 (6.31)	54976	1626 (2.95)
	U	32539	8006 (24.6)	26444	4276 (16.17
	T	108658	12811 (11.8)	81420	5902 (7.24)

Source: 6th AIE Survey 1996 (%* = our calculations of percentage values)

During the 1990s, a shortage of fiscal resources led to a slowing, and in some States, freezing of the recruitment of regular teachers, which meant that the number of sanctioned posts was greater than the number of teachers employed. Table A2 illustrates the position of teacher qualifications and deployment against sanctioned posts in the States in our sample, as against the national average:

Table A2: **Teachers against sanctioned posts in elementary schools, 1996**

	Area	Elementary		Upper elementary	
		Sanctioned	In post	In post	Sanctioned
India	R	1374764	1275218	790271	848944
	U	355402	348161	339476	346796
	T	1730166	1623379	1129747	1195740
Gujarat	R	23595	21678	95405	102559
	U	8417	8107	47543	49265
	T	32012	29785	142948	151824
MP	R	150603	131846	53259	61505
	U	46324	46833	37327	36885
	T	196927	178679	90586	98390
Raj	R	70584	67404	53424	55510
	U	21291	20770	29218	29642
	T	91875	88174	82642	85152

Source: 6th AIE Survey 1998

The deployment of para teachers can assist in filling gaps such as these, although it raises issues of equal pay for equal work in the short term. States intend to regularise para teachers through on the job training and accumulation of job experience in the longer term. In Gujarat, all para teachers are formally trained teachers who could not otherwise have been appointed.

Internal efficiency

Systematic investigations revealed serious problems with the internal efficiency of the elementary schooling system during the 1990s. Although 68.4% of children (61.3% girls) were participating in education, according to official statistics, a third of them were dropping again (39% girls and 35% boys) (World Bank 1996). Children's attainment levels were found to be disturbingly low (World Bank 1996): Govinda and Varghese (1993) for example found that students studying Hindi and mathematics in Std. 5 in Madhya Pradesh had not achieved Std. 2 competency levels. Other studies, such as those by Shukla (1994) and Prakash and Panda (1996, cit World Bank 1996) and the Baseline Assessment Surveys undertaken for DPEP[16] confirm similar levels of learning achievement.

[16] The reliability of the achievement tests has, however, been consistently questioned by Joint Review Missions of the DPEP.

Annex 2 Reform of pre-service training in Gujarat

Box A2.1 shows Gujarat State's revised recruitment criteria.

Box A2.1: Gujarat DIET requirements, state notice

Payscale: Rs 5500-174-9000

No	Dept.	Qualifications and subjects	Necessary experience (years)
1	PSTE	Postgraduate in any subject, M. Education Department or graduate in phychology and B.Ed	3
		Post graduate in language and B.Ed	3
		M.Sc [maths] and B.Ed	3
		M.A [social science] B.Ed	3
		B.A. [fine] with PTC or B.Ed.	5
		B.Ed in any subject and degree in PE	5
2	IFIC	Post graduate in any subject and M.Ed with inservice training or continuous education	3
3	DRU	Post graduate with B.Ed	5 practical experience in adult education and NFE
4	PM	Post graduate in statistics, administration, economics with M.Ed in planning, management and administration	3
5	ET	Post graduate in any subject ET in M.Ed or diploma with certificate of ET	3
6	WE	Post graduate in science, social work, child phychology, agriculture, homescience, economics and B.Ed	5 work experience, experience of vocational education, secondary education, teacher training and 'balbhavan'.
7	CMDE	PG in languages, social sciences, science and maths with M.Ed in curriculum and evaluation	3

The new competency-based course for PTC in Gujarat consists of the following competency areas:

Situation analysis

Conceptual clarity

Gujarati

Maths

Environment Year 1 Social science Year 2

Hindi

Teaching methods

Other educational activities

Education technology

Assessment
Administration and management
Relationship with parents
Relationship with other institutes

As an example, the competencies for Year One are detailed below:

Year 1 Situation analysis

1.1.1 Compared to other profession understands the importance of teaching profession
1.1.2 Understands the role of teacher as social reformer
1.1.3 Understands teacher's role in situations like social, cultural, geographical and economical.
1.1.4 Understands the provision of UPE in present situation
1.1.5 Knows nos. of teachers, students and schools in Gujarat state.
1.1.6 Knows proportion of education budget compare to total budget.
1.1.7 Knows nos. of teachers, students and schools in India.
1.1.8 Knows proportion of education budget compare to total budget of India.
1.1.9 Can compare state literacy with national literacy.
1.1.10 Knows type of problems for achieving TL.
1.1.11 Understands the importance of multigrade and single teacher school in present situation.
1.1.12 Knows about total literacy programmes.
1.1.13 Knows about importance and contribution of residential schools

Year 1 Competencies for Conceptual Clarity

2.1.1 Understands meaning and types of education
2.1.2 Understands components of education like initiation, process and result.
2.1.3 Understands education is a tool for social change and foundation for human development.
2.1.4 Knows aim of education and its effects on social, economical and cultural phenomena.
2.1.5 Understands and clarifies formal and non formal education.
2.1.6 Apart from the role as effective teacher in the school, has sympathy towards non enrolled children, drop out children and illiterate adults and understands the importance of non- formal education for them.
2.1.7 Understands different educational and emotional requirements of a child and a teen age.
2.1.8 Understands the role of environment, maturity, encouragement and heredity for overall development of child.
2.1.9 Understands the importance of physiology and its importance in education.

2.1.10 Understands the importance of education in the context of child's physical, mental, social and overall development.
2.1.11 Understands child's different environmental needs.
2.1.12 Provides education depending on child's environmental needs.
2.1.13 Knows different teaching needs and how to apply them.
2.1.14 Understands the concept of education, its relationship to process of learning and competency achievement.
2.1.15 Understands the importance of educational achievement rather than process of education.
2.1.16 Through case studies, understands the different qualities and problems of children and understands the importance of doing it.
2.1.17 Understands MLL is the programme to provide equality through competency based education.

Subject and methods based competencies

Year 1 Gujarati

3.1.1 Understands facts, concepts and laws of the language for Std. 1-4
3.1.2 Can analyse facts and concepts of 1-4 textbook.
3.1.3 Studies components of competency based textbooks.
3.1.4 Makes a list of same areas for competency development at different level
3.1.5 Analyses competencies and language of competencies
3.1.6 Prepares revision charts of std. 1-4 competencies
3.1.7 Develops 90-100% mastery on std. 1-4 competencies
3.1.8 Apart from Std 1-4 competencies, masters 75% of developing competencies of Stds 1 - 7.
3.1.9 Understands the importance and difference of competency based textbooks
3.1.10 Knows importance and different methods of developing listening skills
3.1.11 Knows importance and different methods of developing reading skills
3.1.12 Knows importance and different methods of developing speaking skills
3.1.13 Uses different methods for reading skills (sentence, word and letter methods).
3.1.14 Uses different methods for clear reading and writing.
3.1.15 Uses different methods for developing different writing skills
3.1.16 Knows rules for checking writing skills
3.1.17 Understands all the points of rules of grammar for std. 1-4
3.1.18 Can bring out all the characteristic coming out from text books of std. 1-4 (regularity, honesty, truthfulness, cleanliness, simplicity, helping others).
3.1.19 Gives importance to above characteristics during teaching.

Year 1 Maths

Competencies 3.1.1 to 3.1.9 same as above

3.1.10 Knows methods of solving problems of maths
3.1.11 Understands the importance of oral work, reinforcement and self study

3.1.12 Uses teaching methods for teaching maths
3.1.13 Creates different fun games and uses them in teaching maths
3.1.14 Develops mastery over basic maths process (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division).
3.1.15 Develops mastery over 11 x 11 to 20 x 20

Year 1 Environment

Competencies 3.1.1 to 3.1.9 same as above
3.1.10 Observes and carry out all the experiments of std. 1-4 textbook
3.1.11 Uses following teaching methods to teach environment
Observation, visits, experiments and story telling
3.1.12 Understands the importance of audio- visual TLA like charts, pictures, maps, models and uses them

Year 1 Hindi

3.1.7 Understands the importance and difference of competency based textbooks
3.1.8 Knows all points of practical grammar for std. 5-7
3.1.9 Knows importance and different methods of developing listening skills
3.1.10 Knows importance and different methods of developing reading skills
3.1.11 Knows importance and different methods of developing speaking skills
3.1.12 Uses different methods for clear reading and writing.
3.1.13 Can translate from Hindi to mother tongue and vis-a vis.
3.1.14 Uses different methods for developing different writing skills
3.1.15 Can bring out all the characteristic coming out from text books of std. 1-4 (regularity, honesty, truthfulness, cleanliness, simplicity, helping others).
3.1.16 Gives importance to above characteristics during teaching.

Year 1 Teaching Methods

4.1.1 Clarifies the meaning of teaching methods in curriculum
4.1.2 Monthly MLL based planning for environment, language and math.
4.1.3 Explains classroom planning
4.1.4 Can explain different teaching methods and use them:
Discussion method, demonstration, story telling, singing, drama and character play, puppetry, visits- tours to museum, exhibition, bank, PO, hospital, panchayat etc.
Playful learning through games (Gijubhai, Montessori)
Educational games, different collection, related activities.
4.1.5 Understands the importance of self earning and uses it for self learning
4.1.6 Develops subject entry competency
4.1.7 Develops questioning skills and depth
4.1.8 Develops admin. skills ?
4.1.9 Selects and uses locally available man made and natural materials for teaching

4.1.10 Understands education and uses them
From simple to complex, simple to hard, known to unknown, concrete to abstract, analyses to uniting, entry to exit, whole to parts.
4.1.11 Selects and uses charts, maps, pictures, drawings and models.
4.1.12 Plans competency based lessons: simple lesson, activity based lesson, multigrade lesson and Ghatak path
4.1.13 Gives different types of competency based lessons

Year 1 Other educational activities

5.1.1 Participates in planning educational activities
5.1.2 Participates in educational activities
5.1.3 Organises and administrates educational activities
5.1.4 Initiates and takes lead in educational activities
5.1.5 Behaves with discipline during educational activities
5.1.6 Expresses hidden creativity during activities
5.1.7 Develops hidden creativity
5.1.8 Develops character- love for nation, co- operation, sportsmanship, patience, social work, responsible citizen,
5.1.9 Uses local resources for activities
5.1.10 Above competencies should be developed through following activities:
Prayer hall, assembly, educational exhibition, celebration of national festivals, sports, educational tours- visits, cultural programmes, co-operative activities in schools and residential schools, social work and educational camps.

Year 1 Competencies for making TLA/ Educational technology

6.1.1 Understand the importance and uses of competency based TLA
6.1.2 Understands the effective role of competency based TLA in group teaching, whole classroom teaching, self learning
6.1.3 Understands the effective role of TLA in normal, one teacher and multi grade schools.
6.1.4 Understands specialities and particularities of competency based textbooks as teaching resource
6.1.5 Understands the limitation of textbook as only teaching resource
6.1.6 Knows the rules for making graphs, charts and pictures
6.1.7 Familiarity with following type of TLA and uses them when necessary: printed material, drawings, charts, models, tape-slide programme, cinema, T.V., video, computer based material
6.1.8 When necessary prepares list of local experts and local resources
6.1.9 Finds competency based local TLA
6.1.10 Makes TLA from local material
6.1.11 Makes no cost and low cost TLA
6.1.12 Maintains and repairs TLA

Year 1 Competencies for Assessment

7.1.1 Understands the concept of competency based assessment
7.1.2 Understands the importance of continuous and complete assessment
7.1.3 Defines the difference of non formal assessment
7.1.4 Clarifies the difference between written, oral and activity based assessment
7.1.5 Understands the difference in questions for written, oral and activity based assessment
7.1.6 Can create different types of competency based questions e.g. essay, short answer, objective
7.1.7 Based on std.1-4, can write different type of competency based questions
7.1.8 Can create oral questions for oral assessment for std. 1-4
7.1.9 Can create activity base questions for std. 1-4
7.1.10 Understands level of achievement and its vyap
7.1.11 Understands monthly achievement level
7.1.12 Uses assessments as diagnostic tool
7.1.13 Understands concept of achievement at the end of mastery Level
7.1.14 Understands 70/80 achievement level
7.1.15 Can specify different levels of achievement
7.1.16 Can analyse assessment record
7.1.17 Can fill in exam records in to assessment record
7.1.18 Can analyse and draw out meaning from assessment records
7.1.19 Find out individual's special requirement from assessment records
7.1.20 Find out whole class room requirement
7.1.21 Based on weekly assessment, plans educational activities for whole class and individual's special requirement.

Year 1 Competencies for Administration

8.1.1 Understands concepts of educational admin. and educational management
8.1.2 To create educational environment inside and out side the classroom provides educational experiences.
8.1.3 Becomes familiar with different methods of classroom leadership pratyayan Like: have good relationship with students, solve classroom problems, establish moral, personal and social values.
8.1.4 Create an education school environment, make classroom and school look beautiful, maintain school garden, planting trees...organise activities around these.
8.1.5 Activities around child's health and cleanliness, cleaning loo or drinking water areas. Organising and implementing activities around it.

Year 1 Developing relationship with parents

9.1.1 Understands the importance of parental relationship
9.1.2 Develops close relationship with school and parents

9.1.3 Develops methods for building relationship with parents
9.1.4 Develops different strategies for parents involvement for different activities
9.1.5 Develops discussion skills to talk about progress reports to bright and weak child's parents
9.1.6 Predicts and makes list of students who are about to leave the school
9.1.7 Contacts parents whose child is absent in the school for 8-10 days or is about to leave the school
9.1.8 Understands the importance of parents' organisation
9.1.9 Takes active part in parents' meetings

Year 1 Relationship with other institutes and society

10.1.1 Understands the importance of relationship between school and society
10.1.2 Develops skill for how to develop the relationship between school and society
10.1.3 By celebrating annual prog., national festivals and local festivals creates school as a central point for the society
10.1.4 Understands the importance of relationship between school and village education committee.
10.1.5 Understands the usefulness of other organisation's work in education and visits them (panchayat, co-operatives, women's organisation, other village organisations)
10.1.6 Becomes aware of school and children's problems
10.1.7 Becomes familiar with one student's development problems in practise school,visits student's home and gives necessary information
10.1.8 Develop the skill to celebrate local festivals in the village with villagers to get their social and economical support

Box A2.2: Gujarat's PTC past and present – views from the State

1. Entry level to PTC Course was after 10th std, which resulted in less mature students, hence low understanding of their role as teachers.

Entry level is now after 12th std. Relatively mature group of students who can understand their true role as teachers keeping in mind the new potential-based curriculum.

2. Optional stay in hostel leading to less interaction among students after college hoursand less opportunity for group work and group living. This also prevents students from mentally preparing themselves for future out-station job transfers.

Compulsory hostel stay provides more opportunity for after college interactions; gives students experience in group work and group living. The most important contribution will be mental preparation of the students for future out of station job transfers.

3. Curriculum was more subject related and more emphasis was on content rather than methods of teaching. Students use to see the course as a training where they have to master subjects from 1st to 7th std. rather then to master the various skills and methods of teaching.

New potential based curriculum based on 10 potential areas, 5 skill areas and 5 competency areas demands more from teacher educators and students, to go beyond the subject content and make teaching learning process more interactive and child centred and to have awareness, understanding and master skills related to various methods and techniques of child centred teaching - learning process.

4. English as optional subject was not included in the first year. The majority of students coming from rural Gujarati medium educational background have low knowledge of English. Not including English in the first year of the PTC course gave them even less opportunity to improve on it and this affected their performance on the job.

English as optional subject is included in the first year.

5. Hindi was not included in the first year curriculum. Hindi language also suffers the same way as English because both these languages are not taught in schools. Not including it in first year resulted in even less scope for students to improve upon it. All this leads to poor conceptual clarity of the language.

Hindi is included in the first year of the curriculum.

6. Cottage industries related skills were treated as work education, where very minor were carried out. These activities are not very useful for the students if they have to impart them in future. Also there is limited scope for self employment or working in some small scale cottage industries using these skills, if students don't get job as teachers.

   There is great emphasis on occupational skills along with academic education in the NPE and if they are not properly treated it is difficult to fulfil the basic aim behind including it in the curriculum.

At present the old activities are carried out under work education because course contenthas yet to be devleoped; and PTC colleges are not equipped to provide any relevant work education, to meet the changing demands.

7. Important skill based subjects. Physical exercise, drawing and music are the only, and limited, aspects covered under this subject. Neither teacher educators posses attitude, nor basic knowledge to impart these skills to the students.

Continue these aspects from the old course until the new one is prepared.

8. Distribution of periods, 50 periods per week including 6 periods of important skill based subjects. 6 periods in a week shows low importance given to of important skill based subjects and the treatment these subjects get is already discussed in point 7.

6 periods per week related to important skill based subjects to be conducted after college hours. This may result in either no such classes or even if they are carried out then not properly; it is observed that PTC teachers are not very positive about any extra work load. If they conduct such classes as an order then they will perform this as a ritual.

Box A2.3: Gujarat PTC past and present: examination planning

1. Even if the compulsory attendance days and the work allocated are not met satisfactorily for the first year, a student can sit for examination of first year with condition of completing it in the second year

If first year attendance and the allocated work is not satisfactorily completed by the student then s/he can't sit the first year examination. If treated properly way it will ensure that students take the first year's training seriously.

2. A failed student used to get relief from those subjects in which he had scored 50% or more marks until s/he passed the examination. Giving relief in subjects results in a pattern in which a student makes little effort to work hard and pass the examination at one go.

Out of prescribed attendance for each year, student can have relief of 15 days if the reasons for absenteeism are considered valid by the principal of the institute. If a student is not able to complete the prescribed attendance and allocated work for second year, then s/he can't sit the second year examination. In such a case a student in any coming academic year can sit for examination in the same PTC only after completing work as per prescribed syllabus and after attending the college to complete the prescribed dates of attendance. This will help in preventing any kind of malpractices by any head of the institution, which was possible in the past provision. This will also help students to take their failure seriously and work sincerely to complete the prescribed syllabus and attendance to successfully complete the training.

3. First and second years yearly examinations are conducted by state examination board. A student clearing the second year examination gets basic (primary) teaching qualification certificate. The result of first years final examination is not included in this. Not including first year marks in the final assessment results in an attitude where very little importance and attention are paid to these exams.

The average of the marks scored in examination of first and second year part-1 and part-2 will be considered for giving final certificate. A student scoring 50% marks in the written examination can get 1 concession mark. This will be limited to 15 marks and a maximum of 2 subjects.

4. A student scoring less then 50% marks gets a third division and this results in students passing out with less effort and no proper learning from the training, which is also reflected in their job performance.

To pass one has to secure 50% marks in written, practical and internal assessment related subjects. Raising the pass percentage from 40% to 50% will definitely increase the standard of the pass out students. A failed student will now get relief from only those papers of the written examination in which he has scored passing marks. This will be valid till s/he passes the examination.

5. Examination of second years optional English subject was conducted by any external institute, with no fixed criteria specified for the assessment.

Examination of second years optional English subject will now be conducted by state examination board. English is now included as optional subject in first year curriculum. [This] will help student to clear their basics in this subject which they are not able to do during their studies.

6. The ratio of subject content and methodology in the question paper was 60: 40.
There is more emphasis on the mastering of subject content rather then methodology which is clearly reflected in the weightage given to them.

Ratio of area 3 i.e. subject content and methodology in the question paper now will be 50: 50. Giving equal weightage to subject content and methodology shows the acceptance of the new curriculum for assessment purposes.

The examination paper for first and second year for Hindi, English and work education is now of 50 marks, remaining all the papers will be of 100 marks. For Gujarati language in potential area 3- only one paper for 100 marks is included. For the first year written examination there are 10 papers and for the second year there are 11 papers, excluding an optional English paper.

Annex 3 Institutional Reform in Madhya Pradesh

The initiating document noted that under existing institutional arrangements, in primary education and literacy three different agencies at the State level worked through the same agencies at the District and sub-district levels; so 'their control by multiple agencies often leads to a conflict of priorities and tasks adversely affecting the achievement of objectives….and a tension of perceptions' (RGSM 1999: 10). Thus, 'there is an urgent need for structural convergence of multiple functions so that they become reciprocal and complementary and strengthen each other' (ibid). This would be a single District Education Centre (Zilla Shiksha Kendra).

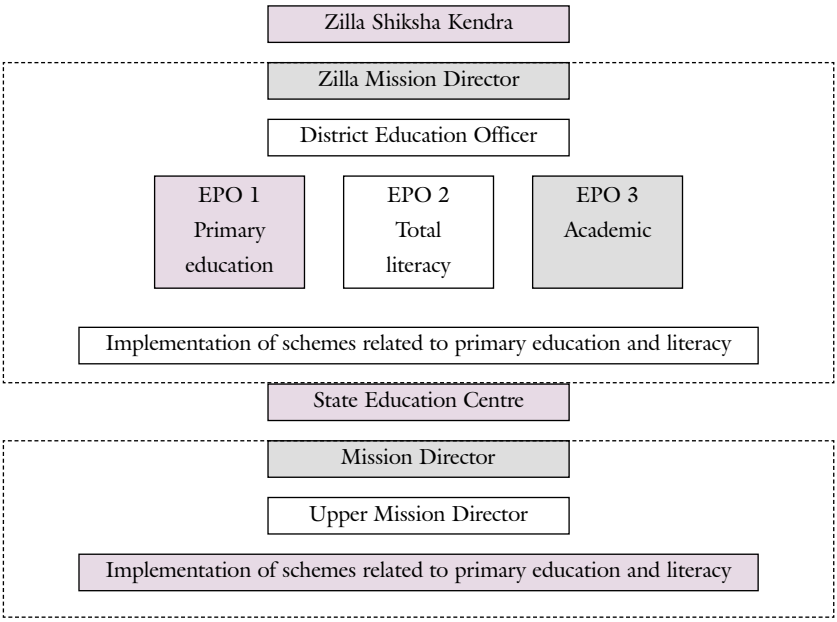
Sharp criticism is directed towards the academic support system of SCERT and DIETs:

> The content and form of learning and the process of developing it cannot be imprisoned in an ivory tower. It is this kind of historical enclaving of academic issues which has beenthe single most detrimental factor for the insenstive perpetuation of much that isuniversally indicted by the layman and the expert alike as irrelevant curricula,unimaginative and passive teaching and monotonous memorization. In brief, the qualityof academic processes leave much to be desired and a constant and disturbing indicator ofit are the low levels of scholastic achievements. The fact that children are not learning enough makes a mockery of the vast paraphernalia designated an an 'education system' making everyone adept at passing the buck down and then finally out (pp. 10-11).

The current arrangements stem from the perception of the school as an appendage of a government hierarchy where the teacher is the government representative accountable to his official superiors and the learners belong to a community outside the school and the wisdom that has to be imparted in the school belongs to a small elite remote from the school (p. 11).

The goal of institutional reform was therefore to facilitate the community taking charge of primary education and literacy, supported by government officials. To support this, the various organisations that were operating piecemeal before have been amalgamated into new structures at the District and State level (Figure A3.1). The DIET is now attached firmly alongside EPO3, one the three key integrated structural entities at the District level. Activities of the Education Department are jointly planned by and with the DIET, and teacher education has been integrated into the District Five Year Plan which these agencies have jointly written and are now implementing.

Figure A3.1: Reformed structures for the District Education Centre



To improve co-ordination in the reform, and hasten UEE, SCERT drew up an 'activity diary' for 2000-2001 outlining for the entire restructured system the activities to be undertaken, who is responsible for each activity, and a time line. On the back of each planning sheet there is a format for evaluating each step, where problems encountered and solutions developed should be entered. There are special prompts on each page reminding the planner of formerly neglected areas for consideration (such as disabled children, the girl child, etc.) and special charts for those. Budgetary management and functions of the Education Management Information System are also outlined, as are the broad areas of academic activity, such as curriculum development. This overall diary is to be supplemented by each individual's own job chart, completed according to a blank format entitled 'my job chart', to map future tasks to time within the overall responsibilities. This generic format indicated roles and responsibilities for the entire system, and each District would prepare its own District Plan to contextualise, within this overall framework, its own situation and strategies for identifying its own priorities and realising UEE goals.