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Statement of the Problem: An Evaluation of INSET Programmes Organized by DIETs and Corporate Sector: A Comparative Study

Abstract

In order to keep teachers' academic and professional interest alive, they need to be provided continuous and rigorous training. As John Dewey said, "If we teach today, what we taught yesterday, we will rob our children of their tomorrow", a teacher should keep on refreshing and updating his knowledge. In-service Teacher Training is shouldering the responsibility of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and "Teacher quality is the most critical factor in improving educational outcomes" (McKinsey, 2007), but continuous professional development of teachers should be planned in order to obtain the desired success. When professional development is planned and focussed upon teachers' needs, it is likely to be more effective (Eraut, 1995; Harland & Kinder, 1997; National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, 1999; Duncombe & Armour, 2004).

Researcher carried out this study with an objective to evaluate and compare INSET programmes offered by two different providers Viz. DIETs and Corporate Sector keeping in mind parameters and recommendations of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) – 2005 and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – 2008; researcher studied various aspects of the INSET programmes such as Planning and Organisation, Process of Training Need Assessment, Course Design of the Programmes, Content Covered and Transactional Strategies used during the Programmes, Availability of Study Material, Profiles of Stakeholders and Perception of the Participant Teachers towards INSET Programmes. The findings of the study are given below:

SSA guidelines recommends to organize a 10 day INSET programme that should be based on the 'split up' model; it was found that neither DIETs nor corporate sector adopted this recommendation.

SSA insists on the assessment of training needs; its guidelines suggest that the entire INSET programme should be based on the needs of the participant teachers; it has come to notice that most of the DIETs did not assess the training needs of the participant teachers of the

ongoing programmes; instead DIETs considered the needs of the previous year participants to select the content for the future programmes. On the other hand corporate sector followed the SSA guidelines and conducted a comprehensive training need assessment process. They contacted participant teachers, principals and administrators of the schools well in advance to assess the training needs and used questionnaires, interviews and group discussions for the same.

Another SSA recommendation was the contextual relevance of the course design and content to be covered. It has been observed that topics selected by DIETs as well as corporate sector had contextual relevance; both the INSET providers selected topics like Right to Education (RTE), Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), Motivation, Communication Skills, Life skills etc.;

However, it was found that DIETs and corporate sector follow different styles to deliver the content; it was observed that most of the resource persons roped in by the DIETs used lecture method to deliver the content; some of them used activities and technological resources for the same. Contrary to this almost all the facilitators roped in by the corporate sector used activities, discussions, ICT resources and project methods to deliver the content.

In NCF-2005, constructivist approach has been highlighted in the education system; SSA too recommended the use of constructivist approach in the INSET programmes, SSA guidelines also recommended to enhance the reflective thinking of the participant teachers. It was found that DIETs have partially implemented constructivist approach in some sessions, participants were not provided opportunities to take part actively as they were passive listeners most of the times; in contrast, corporate sector used constructivist approach by providing ample opportunities to participant teachers to actively participate and formulate their opinions, acquire & refresh knowledge and reflect on their practices at work places. It has also come to notice that the study material related to the content was distributed to the participants at very few centres of INSET programmes organized by DIETs; on the contrary, corporate sector provided study material to the participant teachers in each session as per the requirement of the topics.

Significantly, the present study revealed that INSET programmes by DIETs were not well planned and andragogical principles were missing in the planning, execution and even at the post INSET processes; most of the programmes were organised in a haphazard manner. On the other hand, corporate groups planned their programmes systematically and used very innovative transactional strategies to deliver the content.