

Pre-service Teacher Education at DIET, Imranabad

Summary:

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) is the India's first and significant contributions in elementary teacher education. A case study on DIET in Imranabad district, a backward district of Maharashtra suggests that pre-service education in backward regions is more engaged and responsive to local education needs. The case study also indicates that the initiatives taken by the DIET to start Urdu section, seriousness of principal towards DIET's operation and quality of students confirm the potential of these institutions in rendering pre-service education at regional level and ensuring participation from motivated student teachers.

Objectives and Rationale:

DIETs have not only completed their growth, establishment, and institutional formation but also gained reputation of being 'dysfunctional.' However, the reasons for the same such as state's political will, its action, inaction, and negligence towards systems related to teacher education and hence, quality teachers, have not be researched thoroughly. DIET, Imranabad indicate that pre-service education through DIETs is a preferred option for local students, especially in the backward districts and there is a need to recommit to institutional strengthening of these basic institutions for teacher education, especially considering local context and needs.

Key Stakeholders:

The Principal, student-teacher and teacher educators are key stakeholders in DIET Imranabad looking after/delivery/participating in pre-service teacher education.

Implementation Strategy:

The pre-existing teacher education college in the Imranabad district was upgraded to a DIET in 1995 with four units, including pre-service teacher education Marathi medium. In the same year, DIET began a self-financing Urdu medium section in the same building with teachers employed on contractual basis. The initiative was undertaken by the then Principal considering that the programme was required since larger share of Imranabad population is Muslim and is appropriate looking at local needs.

The DIET offered Marathi and Urdu medium based D.Ed. programme, which was designed as a two-year programme plus six months internship was very popular among student-teachers from Imranabad and other neighbouring districts. The eligibility criteria followed by DIET include computer-based merit list of those who fulfilled the minimum eligibility of 45 per cent marks in class 12th examination or 40 per cent for SC, ST and OBCs, in case of reservation policy. DIET will admit 50 students per course annually, giving DIET Imranabad a total student strength of 200. The fees charged in 2009, for Marathi medium students was INR 2,026 for admission and INR 270 for a term and for Urdu medium students was INR 12,000 per year.

As part of implementation strategy, DIET Imranabad's Principal in-charge in 2009 ensured provision of morning assembly that was attended by all student teachers and DIET faculty. Because of such small initiatives and provision, student's attendance was regular. The

principal also visited Marathi and Urdu medium- for first and second year and took classes himself from time -to time.

Resource Utilization:

The Principal in charge of DIET in 2009 focused efforts on improving pre-service education courses, programme delivery and arranging required resources for delivery of both Marathi and Urdu Programme. DIET innovated the existing D.Ed. programme and introduced additional electives for both year programmes while providing exposure to students for both urban and rural schools. The classroom preparation involved teacher-educator demonstrated lessons, student -teacher involvement in making lesson plans and participation in discussions on teaching skills. Also, there were three preparatory days of school visits, in total ten day to two week's school exposure programmes in primary/ elementary schools in the district.

Impact:

The impact of Pre-service teacher education programme, DIET Imranabad has created positive impacts till 2009-10. The Urdu medium offering made by DIET Imranabad is a unique initiative and was self-financed. This was and continues to be the only Urdu medium teacher education programme in a DIET in the state of Maharashtra. It was an initiative started by the then Principal in 2009 considering local population needs and was successful even on self-finance mode. It was observed that students from neighboring districts would also come to Imranabad to study this programme because DIET Imranabad was not only reputed for success of its student -teachers in Maharashtra's common entrance test (CET), but the student-teachers also formed community to exchange useful tips for completing the two year programme successfully.

Replicability and Sustainability:

DIET, Imranbad as case study was an attempt to showcase the need and significance of DIETs in teacher education eco-system, especially in delivering of pre-service teacher education programmes. Also, DIETs can play a significant role in conceptualizing and contextualizing course curriculum, pedagogy and delivery considering local needs, both from student-teacher perspective and also school perspectives. The case study also indicates that self-finance model adopted for pre-service education is sustainable provided local needs are properly understood, identified and contextualized well both in terms of quality and delivery.