

## **STATE CONSULTATION ON STRENGTHENING TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ODISHA : A REPORT**

The fourth meeting of the Think Tank on Teacher Education was held on June 17, 2015 in Hotel Swosti Premium, Bhubaneswar. In continuation of the preceding meetings focusing on dominant themes, viz., envisioning the contours and directions of transformative change in teacher education in the State, and restructuring of DTE and SCERT along with creation of a separate cadre for Teacher Education, the fourth meeting zeroed on an important theme: Strengthening Institutional Capabilities in order to make the teacher education system work effectively and efficiently. The core theme for critical reflection and engagement was divided into five major sub-themes: (i) system governance and management with stress on decentralization, autonomy, accountability and capacity building; (ii) building managerial competencies and skills; (iii) expanding and deepening institutional linkages – both vertical and horizontal; (iv) putting in place a relevant, robust and consistent data / information-base through a well-designed monitoring mechanism and research; and (v) leveraging potential of information and communication technologies for instructional purposes.

Prof. R. Govinda, Vice-Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, Prof. Padma M. Sarangapani from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Prof. Rajaram S. Sharma, Joint Director, Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi and Dr. (Ms.) Latika Gupta, Asst. Professor, Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi participated in the Consultation as external experts. Almost all in-State members of the Think Tank-TE participated in this Consultation. Participants representing different constituencies included Principals and faculty members of different teacher education institutions – Government Elementary Teacher Education Institutions, DIETs, BIETs, CTEs, IASEs and DTE and SCERT. In addition to this, officers of the School and Mass Education Department, Directorates of Education, Odisha Primary Education Programme Authority and RastriyaMadhyamikShiksha Mission Authority took part in this Consultation.

**Inaugural Session:** Time-10.00 a.m.

Prof. R. Govinda, Vice-Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Ms. Usha Padhee, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School and Mass Education Department chaired the inaugural session. Ms. Yumi Bae, State Chief, Unicef, Odisha was the Guest of Honour. The inaugural session started with offering of bouquets to the guests on the dais and lighting the sacred lamp. The Chief Guest Prof. R. Govinda released an audio CD : "Principals as Transformative Leaders", covering the Capacity Building Programme for Principals of Teacher Education Institutions with Prof. Thomas Vadaya, a member of the Think Tank-TE, as the Resource Person.

Prof. A.B. Ota, IAS, Director, DTE and SCERT welcomed the guests and the participants, expecting a great deal of reflective churning on different dimensions of the selected themes. Prof. S.L. Jena, Lead Co-ordinator, Think Tank-TE gave a brief account of the context, contours and contents of the Consultation. Ms. Yumi Bae, State Chief, Unicef, Odisha in her address as Guest of Honour, said that Unicef, Odisha was committed to revitalize and restructure the teacher education system of

the State with Think Tank-TE as a bold collaborative initiative between Government of Odisha and Unicef. If the teacher education system continued unresponsive to the changing patterns and directions of change in the school education system, it would inevitably face its existential problem, she observed. She also underlined the missing forward and backward linkages of the teacher education system and stressed the importance of strengthening the bond. Teacher educators as professionals had to upgrade and update their knowledge-base in order to remain relevant to the changing school system, she said. Concluding her address, Ms. Bae flagged the dire necessity of effective monitoring for improving the system.

Prof. R. Govinda, the Chief Guest of the occasion appreciated the unique and bold initiative of the School and Mass Education Department to constitute a Think Tank-TE for reforming the teacher education system of the State. He underlined the need for acting on two fronts- improving the existing system and taking new and non-conventional steps for transformative change. As a note of caution, Prof. Govinda advised the members of the Think Tank-TE not to be swept away by their achievements, but to be self-critical, which was essential to scale near heights of excellence, he observed. He, however, advised the participants to look at the teacher education programme more fundamentally and take advantage of the opportunities to take the reform movement forward.

Ms. Usha Padhee, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School and Mass Education Department made the following presidential remarks:

- Think Tank-TE, an Advisory Body to Government in the School and Mass Education Department, has enabled the Department to initiate a series of reform measures for making the teacher education system to work.
- Two bold reform measures include: restructuring of SCERT to transform it into a centre of excellence; and creation of a distinct cadre for teacher education to infuse greater professionalism among teacher educators.
- Despite several inputs and interventions put into the school education system, classroom processes have remained, more or less, unchanged, which needs to be examined in depth.
- The recently constituted Task Force on School Education for revisiting 'Vision 2020 : An Agenda for School and Mass Education' would look to ensuring continuity and change.
- Existence of large number of vacancies in TEIs tends to cripple their functioning, resulting in poor quality pre-service and in-service training programmes.

The inaugural session was drawn to a close with Dr. (Ms.) Snigdha Mishra offering a vote of thanks to the Chairperson, Chief Guest, Guest of Honour and all those who were present.

### **Technical Session I :Teacher Education : Changing Perspectives and Policies**

Speaker: Dr. (Ms.) Latika Gupta, Asst. Professor, CIE, University of Delhi

Chairperson: Ms. Usha Padhee, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School and Mass Education Department

The speaker highlighted the following aspects of teacher education programme in the country:

- The teacher education sector continues to remain a relatively neglected sector despite various Commissions and Committees attaching great importance to it. Therefore, the sector lags behind other sectors of education in terms of reform initiatives and investment.
- In spite of several rounds of training programme for teachers