

Think Tank – Teacher Education Odisha

Traversing the Road Untraversed

(A Collaborative Initiative of the Department of School and Mass Education,
DTE and SCERT and Unicef Odisha)



School and Mass Education Department
Government of Odisha



**DIRECTORATE OF TE & SCERT
ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR**

unicef 
for every child



Teacher repertoires have been shaped by the crucible of experience and the culture of teaching. Policymakers need to understand that altering pedagogy requires a change in what teachers believe. Getting professionals to unlearn in order to learn, while certainly not impossible, is closer in magnitude of difficulty to performing a double bypass heart operation than to hammering a nail.



- Larry Cuban (1986)

1.1 Context

Reform of school education depends, first and foremost, on restructuring teacher education, its foundation. With concern for and commitment to quality education for all children at the centre stage, the heart of the matter is to create a teaching workforce adequately and appropriately trained to meet the challenges of an ever diversifying classrooms. Every child has an inalienable right to be taught by qualified, competent, caring and committed teachers. No more can we put up with incompetence in classrooms. Therefore, the teacher education system is expected to turn out teachers with required professional competence, commitment and attitude to learn, unlearn and relearn in order to stay relevant in the midst of rapidly changing contexts. However, teacher education as a subsector of education has a tendency to remain remarkably stable, resisting pervading changes. The school education system is in need of an army of teachers who resolutely believe in lifelong learning. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 appropriately states: “Learning to learn and willingness to unlearn and

relearn are important as means of responding to new situations in a flexible and creative manner.” Teacher Education programme, with its inseparably linked pre-service and in-service components, provides the foundation for quality school education. The teacher education system is, therefore, in need of irrepressible reform and restructuring.

2.1 Genesis of Think Tank– Teacher Education

The factors which led to the constitution of the Think Tank-Teacher Education by the Department of School and Mass Education, with support from Unicef, Odisha, notably include:

- Declining levels of learner achievement at the school education stage, more particularly at the elementary stage, largely attributed to ineffective classroom processes, the teacher being the frontline provider of instruction.

- Critical mass of dissatisfaction and discontent with the culture, content and processes of the teacher education programmes, responsible for teacher preparation and teacher development as professionals.
- Mismatch between the knowledge, skills and competencies learners require and those of the teacher education institutions (TEIs) equip their students with, leading to incompetence in the classroom.
- The disturbing observation of the MHRD, Government of India-appointed Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education (2013) to “constitute an Expert Committee” for planned and coordinated development of Teacher Education system of the state which, in fact, had its ‘Tipping Point’ effect.

Realising the cutting edge role of Teacher Education in improving the quality of School Education, and the urgent need for something must be done, Government of Odisha (Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT and the Department of School and Mass Education) with enabling support of Unicef, Odisha constituted a Think Tank–Teacher Education in October 2013. The Think Tank–Teacher Education has its continued existence till December 31, 2017.

3.1 Constitution of Think Tank-Teacher Education

In conformity with the Terms and Conditions of the Government Resolution, the Think Tank-Teacher Education members were drawn from a pool of distinguished experts in Teacher Education and School Education. At present, it consists of 28 members, who include Vice Chancellors (present and past), Directors / Chairpersons of institutions of national importance and members with authentic relationship with the state's system of education. They represent

specialisation in various domain areas of Teacher Education (list attached).

4.1 Think Tank-Teacher Education: Its Tasks

The four-fold tasks are :

- 4.1.1 Identifying critical issues and concerns of the state's Teacher Education system for reform and restructuring.
- 4.1.2 Analysing gaps: where the system is at present and where the system is expected to be in future.
- 4.1.3 Articulating a vision for the Teacher Education system–planning for immediate-term, short-term and medium-term restructuring of the system.
- 4.1.4 Providing support to the Department of School and Mass Education, including Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT, for policy framing in Teacher Education and School Education.

5.1 Core Areas of Concern for Restructuring

Five core areas for restructuring of teacher education identified through an intense process of reflective churning. This aside, other reports on the state of school education and teacher education provided insights into the content and process of restructuring. Initial five core areas identified for policy imperatives and implementation notwithstanding, the restructuring process has always been open to emerging concerns and issues as and when deemed necessary. The initial five core areas are :

- Governance of Teacher Education
- Teacher Preparation and Teacher Development
- Continuing Professional Development of Teacher Educators
- Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Linkages in Teacher Education

- Teacher Education—Research, Innovation, and Information and Communication Technologies

5.1.1 Revisiting the State of Teacher Education in Odisha : Sharing of JRM-TE (2013) Findings and Recommendations

The JRM-TE, comprising Experts in Education and Teacher Education, visited the state from March 10-16, 2013 with a view to assessing the state of teacher education in Odisha. Based on desk analysis, field visit, reflective conversation with officials and others associated with state's teacher education programme and interaction with student teachers, the Mission identified a wide range of issues and concerns that besiege the system and made several recommendations for its strengthening. In fact, the JRM-TE turned to be the Turning Point for restructuring of teacher education system in the state. The Sharing Workshop was attended by the top level MHRD, Government of India officials and state level decision-makers whose presence matter most: Additional Secretary, School Education and Literacy, MHRD, the JRM-TE Mission Leader, Hon'ble Minister S & ME Government of Odisha, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha and others.

The presentation covered :

Critical Issues and Concerns that affects the functioning of the teacher education system of the state.

- Findings and observations of the JRM-TE, Odisha
- Key recommendations for reforming the system

All these, triggered discussion in length and breadth for planning.

5.1.2 Visioning the Content and Strategic Directions for Restructuring Teacher Education

This workshop marked another milestone in developing the roadmap for restructuring teacher education system of the State. This workshop was organized by Unicef India and Unicef Odisha, involving selected representatives from different constituencies – faculty of TEIs, Officials associated with school education, state level policy-makers and faculty of SCERT as the key agents of restructuring. This workshop covered a wide spectrum of issues and concerns, such as :

- Factors making schools more effective and more efficient.
- Teachers as the frontline providers of quality education.
- Links between schools and TEIs, bringing concerns for school education the centre stage of teacher education.
- Root and branch transformation of the system for reform.
- Vision and mission of SCERT, TEIs-DIETs, CTEs and IASEs.

The discussion created a plethora of ideas for consideration for their incorporation in the envisioning process.

5.1.3 Presentation of Theme-based Papers on Five Core Areas

Think Tank – TE members have had detailed discussion on the structure of theme-based papers. The structure included: current issues and concerns, what must be done to address the issues, strategies and policy imperatives aligned to the specific issues and concerns. The presentations were immediately followed by critical observations, perspectives and counter perspectives, leading to consensus building and emergence of an eclectic perspective. Based on a thorough review of revised papers, a Roadmap for

Reform of the Teacher Education System of the state was developed. The document entitled: Envisioning Teacher Education in Odisha : A Roadmap for Reform comprised two Parts :

- Part I: Issues and Concerns accompanied by corresponding policy imperatives for implementation.
- Part II: Plan of Action indicating –(i) Core areas for reform; (ii) Issues and concerns; (iii) Task specifications; (iv) Timeframe; and (v) Agencies responsible for implementation.

This document formed the bedrock of restructuring teacher education in the State.

5.1.4 Theme-based Consultations for Restructuring

Till date, the following state level Consultations have been organised for threadbare discourse on various dimensions of the specific themes:

- Vision Building for Teacher Education
- Quality Education in the context of Teacher Education
- NCTE Regulation 2014 and its Implications for Planning for Teacher Education
- Leveraging ICT Potential for Teacher Education
- Restructuring of DTE and SCERT
- Development of Cadre Rules for Teacher Education – Elementary Teacher Education and Secondary Teacher Education
- Strengthening Capabilities of Teacher Education Institutions – DIETs, CTEs and IASEs
- State Policy on Continuing Professional Development of Education Functionaries

Strengthening Institutional Capabilities of DIETs through Adoption

6.1 Some Highlights of Achievements

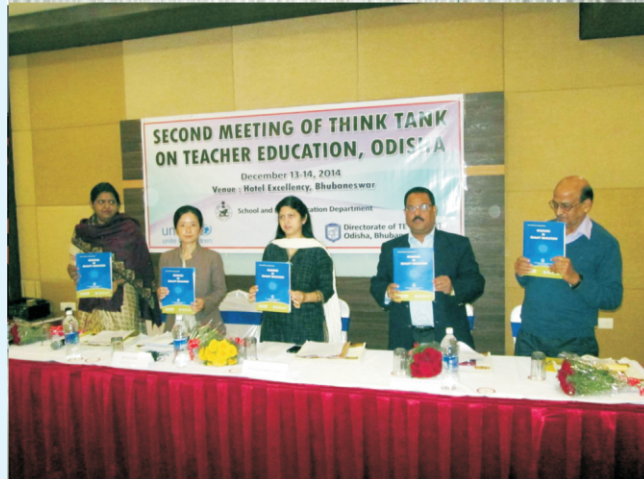
Based on the document: Envisioning Teacher Education in Odisha : A Roadmap for Reform and deliberations in different State level Consultations, the following outcomes have been achieved :

- Development of immediate term, short term and medium term plans, broken into year-wise segments, for restructuring of Teacher Education system of the state.
- In the area of Governance of Teacher Education system, some modest achievements include:
 - o Ensuring a single line of management of TEIs, bringing ETEIs from the control of Director, Secondary Education to the control of Director, TE and SCERT.
 - o Placing Practicing Schools with the TEIs as designated institutions for trying out experimentations and innovations – nurturing them as model schools with credible demonstration effect.
 - o Restructuring of the Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT, Odisha into a robust state level resource institution.
 - o Framing of Cadre Rules- hitherto nonexistent – for Teacher Education to enhance professionalism: Cadre Rules for Elementary Teacher Education and Cadre Rules for Secondary Teacher Education.
 - o Integration of ICT in Teacher Education – Capacity building of Teacher Educators, Plan of Action and Revision of Pre-Service Teacher Education Syllabus.
 - o Development of Manpower Planning (Teacher demand – supply matching for the state)

- o Survey of Functioning of DIETs in the State
- o Action Taken Report on JRM-TE, 2013
- o Action Taken Report on the Justice Verma Commission Report 2012
- o Reorganisation of Academic Branches of DIETs.
- Publication of:
 - o “Envisioning Teacher Education in Odisha : A Roadmap for Reform” (A Blueprint of Planning for Teacher Education)
 - o “Readings in Quality Education”.
 - o Video programme on No Detention Policy at the Elementary Level (Section 16 of RTE, 2009)
- Development of Monitoring Schedules for TEIs – DIETs, CTEs and IASEs (Centrally Sponsored TEIs), and ETEIs, and Training Colleges (State-managed TEIs).
- Framing of Syllabus for two-year B.Ed. and two-year M.Ed. programme as per NCTE Curriculum Guidelines 2015.
- Development of Unified Training Calendar for all training providing organisations under the Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha (SCERT, OPEPA, OMSM, ELTI etc.).
- Development of State Policy on Continuing Professional Development of Education Functionaries.
- Launching SCERT's Quarterly Newsletter “The Splash”.
- Revival of SCERT's Education Journal “Shikshalok”
- CD's on Capacity Building of Teacher Educators and Principals

7.1 Postscript

The success of such a programme depends, almost entirely, on the continuing support of the Department of School and Mass Education, Unicef, SCERT and the member institutions of the Teacher Education constituency. A few of the unfinished agenda and some emerging ideas for restructuring the system have been planned to be taken up, contingent upon the continuance of the Think Tank-TE Odisha. For any programme to take roots and remain sustainable requires more time. What is important is continuous monitoring of reform programmes put in place. More importantly, what is needed is a firm conviction: “we can do better, we shall do better and we must do better”. Together We Can.



Members of Think Tank-Teacher Education

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