

THINK TANK-TEACHER EDUCATION ODISHA

Scripting a Success Story

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School and Mass Education Department
Government of Odisha



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

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Part One

Think Tank-TE: A Right Venture at Right Time



In the absence of other influences, a teacher tries to teach in the way in which he himself was taught by his favourite teachers and this tends to perpetuate the traditional methods of teaching. In a situation like the present when new and dynamic methods of instruction are needed, such an attitude becomes an obstacle to progress. It can be modified only by effective professional education which will initiate the teachers to the needed revolution in teaching and lay the foundations for their future professional growth. First-rate teacher training institutions can thus play a crucial role in the development of education.



Kothari Commission 1966

1.1 The Context

Despite the acknowledged importance of teacher education, the sub-sector did not receive the priority it deserved. Unfortunately, the professional education of teachers has been comparatively neglected in the post-independence period (Education Commission 1966). However, the National Policy on Education 1986 / 1992 brought the teacher education system to the center stage, with Central Government playing a significant role. Taking note of an extended period of neglect and indifference for reorienting the teacher education system in needed directions, the NPE (1986) observed, in no uncertain terms, that- “As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled.” It marked the beginning of an unprecedented accelerated spate of reforms. With overriding emphasis laid on quality school education, teacher education became the epicenter of a tsunami of reforms in its structure, substance and process.

In late 1980s, a set of new generation teacher education institutions (TEIs) started to be established in states under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education. Named as District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs), these institutions, driven by new vision and mission, were expected to

revolutionize the teacher education system. Established in different spells, Odisha now has 30 DIETs, 10 CTEs and two IASEs. Besides these Centrally Sponsored TEIs, there are 35 Elementary Teacher Education Institutions and two Training Colleges entirely funded by the State Government. All these TEIs function under the academic and administrative control of the Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT.

SCERT is the highest academic body in the State for qualitative improvement of school education and teacher education. It has come to play a much greater role due primarily to a series of developments in education. It has been designated as the State Academic Authority under the Right to Education Act 2009. Besides its role for quality improvement, SCERT is expected to function as the advisory body for policy formulation for the School and Mass Education Department.

Several laudable recommendations of various Commissions and Committees, such as the University Education Commission (1948), the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyaya Committee (1985), the Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990), and the Yashpal Committee (1993) for improving the teacher education system have remained unimplemented. Even evaluation studies by NCERT, NUEPA and other national level institutions have been critical about the functioning of the new generation

TEIs. This critical mass of dissatisfaction found its disheartening expression in the Reports of the Joint Review Missions, a system newly introduced for the Teacher Education sector during the Twelfth Five Year Plan.

The Joint Review Mission visited the State during March 13-16, 2013 and made a comprehensive and incisive review of the functioning of TEIs. It made a critical gap analysis of the existing teacher education programmes in the State and made a series of recommendations – short-term, medium-term and long-term – for putting the teacher education system in a reform agenda. Institution of a Think Tank- Teacher Education, in collaboration with Unicef, Odisha, is a direct outcome of one of the compelling recommendations of the Joint Review Mission – Teacher Education.

Recognizing the changing role of SCERT / DTE from policy implementer / service provider to policy formulator / direction provider, with regard to school and teacher education, there is an immediate need for developing a State Perspective Plan on Teacher Education with clearly defined vision and mission of SCERT / DTE. The State Government may constitute an expert group to help in vision-building exercise of SCERT as well as extend support for institutional building.

1.2 Teacher Education in the State: A Gap Analysis

Despite nearly three decades of implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education in the State, the teacher education system has remained remarkably unchanged. This is almost a common scenario across Indian states. Certain improvements have, however, taken place. But compared to the scale of investment of resources and human efforts, improvements have been marginal and miniscule. The issues and concerns, flagged by the JRM-TE, Odisha, to include a few notable ones, are:

- The teacher education system of the State has not been critically responsive to the changing times and mandates, leading to a serious

mismatch between expectations and responses.

- The up-gradation of the State managed teacher education institutions (TEIs) to Centrally sponsored institutions- with renewed emphasis on research and being resource centers- has not been fully perceived. In the absence of role clarity and understanding of their extended responsibilities, TEIs tend to function in their conventional mode.
- With the up-gradation of SCERT to a Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT in 1990 with an expressed intention for greater internal efficiency and effectiveness, SCERT's image and credibility as an academic institution has been greatly eroded. It is, almost exclusively, preoccupied with administrative and governance related matters with scant concern for academics and research. There is an urgent need to transform SCERT's administrative culture to research culture.
- There is a perceptible absence of research culture and professional fora for reflective discourses across all TEIs – starting from DTE and SCERT to its field level institutions.
- The DTE and SCERT, IASEs, CTEs and DIETs are found to function at a suboptimal level due primarily to factors such as dearth of human resources, absence of role clarity, non-placement of institution heads with vision and leadership qualities, lack of professional competence and commitment among faculty, absence of decentralization devolving power and authority for decision-making at the institutional level, and more importantly, absence of meaningful linkages with schools, peer institutions, community and institutions of higher learning.
- In the face of significant developments in school education, paradigm shifts in pedagogy and expanded roles of SCERT, the existing departmental structures have been rendered irrelevant and in-fructuous, calling for reorganization and concerted efforts to create institutional identity.

- As the apex academic institution of the School and Mass Education Department, SCERT needs to be manned by a select group of highly qualified, professionally competent and committed faculty, which is invariably an exception. Indiscriminate placement of faculty, disregard of proven academic excellence, has always affected the functioning of SCERT.
- Absence of a distinct cadre, with a reasonable opportunities for career progression, for teacher educators – one for Elementary Teacher Education and another for Secondary Teacher Education, inclusive of DTE and SCERT, tends to de-motivate the existing faculty, and hold little attraction for aspiring teacher educators.
- Research and innovation has remained the weakest area of endeavour in SCERT. Sporadic research studies conducted by SCERT are invariably entirely project-driven and never need-driven. Relevance, quality, methodological rigour and utility of research studies are very often contestable. Research studies informing policy making and practices are non-existent.
- TEIs, without exception, are found to be always “reactive”, never “proactive”. For even day-to-day management matters, they tend to turn to DTE and SCERT for instruction and guidance. This mindset is largely due to absence of decentralized decision-making, and more eminently due to their inability to scan the horizon for opportunity and plot a course to take advantage of it.
- SCERT and its network of TEIs tend to work in isolation and insularity. Many TEIs do not understand the importance, purpose and means of institutional linkages with centres of higher learning, schools and peer institutions. Absence of institutional linkages limits their perspectives and makes them to see themselves as mere providers of pre-service programmes.
- There is no, whether internal or external, holistic review, feedback and mentoring opportunities available to TEIs. While some review by SCERT happens, it tends to gravitate around financial and infrastructure issues, with scant attention to building the quality of academic and management functions of TEIs. Performance appraisal of TEIs is a rare phenomenon.
- Though TEIs are required to develop and submit their institutional Work Plan every year for Central and State support, planning is a rarely collaborative and shared exercise. Remotely rooted in ground realities, the Work Plan is bereft of real needs. This apart, the Work Plan does not reflect eclectic perspectives.
- Despite being established as new generation TEIs with an enormously expanded operational wavelength, the teaching-learning processes therein neither accommodate the emerging ideas in context and pedagogy nor critically engage the student-teachers with reflective learning tasks. Classroom practices are still the legacy of the yester years.
- There is total absence of a training management system in TEIs. Neither are pre-service and in-service components interlinked. Without planning, in-service training programmes are ineffective and simply wastage of scarce resources.

1.3 Institutional Mechanism for Making the System Work

SCERT was unable to meet the over-pouring challenges of burden of expectations. On several fronts, the mismatch between expectations and actual achievement was really disquieting. The JRM-TE has rightly recommended strengthening the teacher education system in the State through a Core Team. As an interim measure, a Thin Tank on Teacher Education was constituted by the School and Mass Education Department in collaboration with Unicef, Odisha for making the teacher education system work. The concept of Think Tank-TE was constructed, after a careful and comprehensive discussion, by Unicef, Odisha, Directorate of TE and SCERT and School and

Mass Education Department. The Concept Note, prepared by Unicef, was approved by Government in the School and Mass Education Department. With the Department's approval, the Think Tank-TE was instituted in the Directorate of TE and SCERT with a mandate to bring in reforms in teacher education system of the State.

1.3.1 Constitution of Think Tank-TE

The Think Tank-TE consisted of very distinguished specialists, from within the State and outside the State, in teacher education with specialization in different dimensions such as:

- Teacher Education: curriculum, content and inclusive strategies
- ICT in Teacher Education
- Administration and Education Management
- Performance Tracking and Grievance Redressal
- Institutional Planning and Convergence

One of the members of the Think Tank-TE is to be designated as Lead Co-ordinator to coordinate and lead the Think Tank-TE at the State level. The members shall be drawn from prestigious national level institutions and recognized academics from the State.

National Level Members:

1. Prof. Shyam B. Menon, Vice Chancellor, Ambedkar University, New Delhi
2. Prof. M.A. Khader, Formerly Head, Curriculum Division, NCERT, New Delhi
3. Prof. Santosh Panda, Chairperson, NCTE, New Delhi
4. Prof. R.S. Khan, Formerly Vice-Chairperson, NCTE, New Delhi
5. Prof. (Ms.) Janaki Rajan, Jamia Milia, New Delhi
6. Prof. Rajaram Shrama, Joint Director, CIET, NCERT, New Delhi
7. Prof. (Ms.) Padma Saranga Pani, Indian Institute of Economic and Social Change, Bangalore
8. Prof. Shasi Nair, Policy Planning Unit, Ajim Premji Foundation, Bangalore
9. Prof. (Ms.) Vimla Ramchandran, Director,

Education Resource Unit, New Delhi

10. Prof. (Ms.) Sharada Jain, Director, Sandhan, Jeypore
11. Dr. (Ms.) Latika Gupta, Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi.
12. Prof. Sitanshu S.Jena, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi
13. Prof. Thomas Vadeya, Formerly Professor, Faculty of Psychology and Education, MS University of Baroda

State Level Members:

14. Prof. P.C. Mohapatra, Chairperson, ERC NCTE, Bhubaneswar
15. Prof. S.L. Jena, Formerly Director, TE and SCERT, Odisha
16. Prof. B.N. Panda, Prof. and Dean, RIE, Bhubaneswar
17. Dr. M.M. Mohanty, Formerly Director, SIEMAT, Odisha
18. Dr. D.C. Rana, Formerly Reader in Education
19. Dr. M.K. Pathy, Formerly Principal, Dr. PMIASE, Sambalpur
20. Ms. Lalita Pattnaik, Education Specialist, Unicef

1.4 Objectives:

- To make a comprehensive and an in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing teacher education system of the State.
- To make the DTE and SCERT and its network of teacher education institutions to work effectively.
- To accelerate smooth implementation of planned programmes of DTE and SCERT.
- To help establish and strengthen the link between TEIs and institutions of higher learning and research at one end and between TEIs and schools at the other end.
- To strengthen the research and innovation component in teacher education.
- To aid and advise DTE and SCERT and School

and Mass Education Department in matters of policy formulation in education and education related issues.

To consolidate e-governance initiatives of the S & ME Department for strengthening Teacher Education and quality schooling.

1.5 Expected Key Outputs:

1.5.1 Institution Strengthening:

- Engage with a situational analysis of existing TEIs, including DTE and SCERT, DIETs etc.- a critical gap-analysis.
- Develop vision and mission for TEIs through reflective dialogue and discourse with a wide-range of stakeholders with varied perspectives.
- Offer advice in matters of policy formulation on teacher requirement, teacher recruitment, deployment and service conditions, including space for promotion and career advancement of teachers and teacher educators.
- Estimate teacher requirement and teacher preparation to align the demand and supply of trained teachers for school education and teacher educators for the teacher education system of the State.
- Make TEIs resource centres to serve as a source of reference by teachers, teacher educators and educational professionals.
- Create positive institutional culture with distributed leadership, shared decision making, working together, rich social capital, unified eclectic perspectives etc.
- Bring TEIs closer to institutions of higher learning and schools to leverage mutual dividends.
- Develop the professional capacities of teachers and teacher educators through planned continuous professional development programmes.

1.5.2 Curriculum Renewal:

- Review and revise school and teacher education curriculum, from time to time, remaining sensitive to emerging developments in order to ensure curriculum relevance and quality.
- Engage with developing policy briefs, strategies and interventions for quality education, including tools for learning assessment.
- Help converge with special programmes like SSA, RMSA, etc. for greater synergy and effectiveness.
- Guide development of teaching learning materials of highest standards.
- Engage with textbook analysis, from time to time, from multiple perspectives, such as gender neutrality, environmental awareness, social inclusiveness and Constitutional values.

1.5.3 Strengthening Planning, Management and Linkages:

- Plan developing core competencies in participatory planning— perspective and annual plan – in teacher educators of TEIs and faculty of DTE and SCERT
- Advise the Department to conceptualise the synergy within the institutional structures at different levels – NCTE at national level, SCERT and State Boards of Education at State level, DIETs and CTEs at the district level
- Facilitate establishment and strengthening of linkage between TEIs and institutions of higher learning and research
- Lead documentation of best / positive practices and lessons learnt from CCE, SCERT-DIET-CRC-School linkage
- Advise the Department for framing appropriate policies and programmes for making the governance system more effective
- Render advice on effective utilization of information gathered through e-governance system to strengthen teacher education data

base, redressal mechanism, performance tracking and helpline

- Lead studies / evaluation research / action research related to strengthening teacher education

1.6 Think Tank-TE: Mechanics of Functioning

This expert body works under the School and Mass Education Department with the Commissioner-cum-Secretary as the Chairperson. The Chairperson approves plans with priorities, takes periodic review of progress, interacts with members, and seeks policy advice. As per the provisions of the Concept Note, approved by Government, Unicef, Odisha shall provide technical backstopping and financial resources. The Directorate of TE and SCERT shall provide space and logistics for functioning of Think Tank-TE.

The members of the Think Tank-TE shall meet at regular intervals to discuss different issues, suggest interventions and strategies and draw up action plans for strengthening the teacher education system of the State.

1.7 Expected Deliverables:

- Quarterly plans / progress-cum-analytical reports
- Perspective plan for teacher education
- Policy briefs / documents
- Situation analysis and capacity building plan and reports
- Improved institutional linkages : State-district-sub-district
- Creation of a data-base on teacher education
- Documentation of best / positive practices and development of research proposals
- Framing curriculum for school education and teacher education

Part Two

Think Tank-TE: Making Improvements Happen



There are three types of executives in the world. There are those who can get short-term results and haven't a clue where they're going to take the company in the future. Conversely, there are those who have a great ten-year plan but are going to be out of business in ten months. And then there are those who can get short-term results in conjunction with a vision for the future. These are the good ones. But they are in unbelievably short supply.



- Al Dunlap, former Chairman and CEO of Scott Paper Company

In the first phase of its functioning, Think Tank-Teacher Education worked effectively from the third quarter of October 2014 to March 2015. During this period, its primary concern was two-fold: improving what exists; and creating what does not exist. In other words, it tried to strike a balance between continuity and innovation. The compelling existential reason is: we can't have one without the other, both are essential. The teacher education system of the State was riddled with series of deficits – from institutional dysfunctionality to systemic

burden of inertia. The Think Tank-TE endeavoured to make things happen for the better being informed by the maxims – 'small is beautiful', 'first things first' and 'doing the right things right'.

2.1 Focused Areas of Action:

- Building a holistic vision of teacher education system in the State through a live dialogue with an extended range of stakeholders having differing views and perspectives, resulting in an eclectic mix of individual perspectives

- Envisioning a realistic and achievable roadmap for development of teacher education – an outcome of a series of reflective engagements with experts and practitioners
- Bringing in structural changes in governance system of teacher education institutions in response to a spate of recent developments in education
- Developing policy frames for management of the teacher education system - a number of churning sessions with the top level decision and policy makers regarding control and authority, duration of teacher education programmes, restructuring of SCERT, creation of teacher education cadres, alternative modes of teacher education etc.
- Preparation of Action Taken Reports – actions taken on the recommendations of the Justice Verma Commission Report 2012 and of JRM-TE, Odisha 2013
- Taking up curriculum designing for the two-year B.Ed. and the two-year M.Ed. programmes to be introduced from the next academic session: 2015-16
- Developing Annual Work Plan (2015-16) for SCERT for submission to MHRD, Government of India to access Central funds – the planning process is marked by participatory vision and voices, shared reflections and consensus convergence
- Building professional capacity of teacher educators of DIETs, CTEs, IASEs and SCERT – in collaboration with national level expert
- Advocacy for policy decision for acceptance of NCTE (Recognition, Norms and Procedures) Regulation 2014 – submission of structured frameworks containing several aspects of the new Regulation to facilitate decision-making at the Government level.
- Strengthening Pre-service and In-service components of teacher development programme – critical situation analysis followed by corresponding action strategies
- Creating research and innovation culture in TEIs, including DTE and SCERT – building competence of faculty, regulating the quality of M.Ed. and M. Phil level dissertations, facilitating taking up individual and institutional research studies, publication of evidence-based research papers etc.
- Documenting positive practices and success stories in varied areas of school and teacher education

2.2 Mode of Functioning

- Intense in-house churning of ideas and insights among in-state members with space for differing perspectives
- Widest possible consultations with appropriate stakeholders– listening to and respecting views and voices of others
- Effecting further fine-tuning of ideas and outcomes.
- Seeking expert views of national level members on various issues and concerns in teacher education
- Critical engagement of teacher educators and practitioners in the entire process of material development
- Culture of working together with commonness of purpose
- Assigning specific task to members with domain specialization
- Openness to ideas, opinions, viewpoints even when they are different

2.3 Significant Achievements

Right from the inception of the Think Tank-TE, a series of initiatives have been taken in different areas of teacher education to make the system work more effectively and more efficient. A brief account of some notable achievements has been presented in the following subsections.

2.3.1 System Governance

- **Restructuring of SCERT:** With DTE and SCERT coming into existence in 1990, SCERT is an academic body has increasingly been pushed to the margins. In view of this, SCERT has been restructured as a standalone institution with overriding focus on quality. The restructuring proposal, designed by a team of in-State members, was critically examined in one of the Think Tank-TE meetings. Now, it has been approved by the Finance Department and the Planning and Coordination Department of Government of Odisha. This is likely to refurbish the functioning of SCERT as an academic center of excellence.
- **Creation of Teacher Education Cadre:** The State did not have a separate cadre for Teacher Educators. They were subsumed into the existing cadre of either secondary education or that of higher education. The absence of separate cadre limited the space for career progression and stifled the professional motivation of Teacher Educators. With the initiatives of Think Tank-TE, two separate cadres for Teacher Educators – one for Elementary Teacher Education and the other for Secondary Teacher Education – have been framed. The draft Cadre Rules were subjected to incisive scrutiny in the Think Tank-TE meeting. The creation of Cadre Rules is a significant development in teacher education.
- **Change in the Nomenclature of Government Secondary Training Schools:** Government Secondary Training Schools were functioning as State-managed pre-service TEIs offering the two-year D.El.Ed. programmes. However, the name itself was misleading. It was proposed by the Think Tank-TE to change the nomenclature to Elementary Teacher Education Institutions. With Government Notification No. _____ Dt. _____, 33 such TEIs have been renamed, and have come under purview of Cadre Rules for Elementary Teacher Education.

- **Ending duality of Management of Elementary Teacher Education Institutions:** The Elementary Teacher Education Institutions, formerly known as Government Secondary Training Schools, are currently under dual management and control – while teachers and other support staff of these institutions are under the administrative control of the Directorate of Secondary Education, their academic control is vested with the Directorate of TE and SCERT. This duality in control and management creates a number of problems for their effective governance. With the initiatives of Think Tank-TE, these institutions are on the verge of coming under the control of the DTE and SCERT. This will facilitate the process of cadre creation.
- **Placing the Practicing Schools back with CTEs and IASEs:** Historically, Practicing Schools (PSs) were attached to TEIs, which worked as labs for trying out experimentation and innovations. However, PSs were withdrawn from the control of TEIs on the ground that the TEIs did almost nothing for these institutions; rather they meddled with their management. With the initiatives of Think Tank-TE, backed up by the recommendation of the Justice Verma Commission 2012, the PSs have been placed back with the CTEs and IASEs vide Government Notification No. _____ Dt. _____.

Think Tank-TE is currently engaged with the framing of roles and responsibilities of TEIs towards PSs. With this, the linkage between the two shall be further strengthened.

2.3.2 Policy Enabling Initiatives

One of the disconcerting observations of the JRM-TE was that SCERT had consistently been playing the role of a policy implementer rather than role of a policy advisor. That has led primarily to an identity crisis – SCERT losing the sheen of a state level centre of excellence in education. In order to help SCERT regain its role as policy advisor, Think Tank-TE has taken the following measures:

- **Policy of having TEIs under Government Sector:** There has been a consistent pressure for allowing private players to establish and administer TEIs. With increased wave of privatization in teacher education sweeping the Indian states, the pressure to open teacher education to private sector in the State has become stronger and more compelling. Despite the mounting pressure, the School and Mass Education Department has strongly contested the move on the grounds of: (i) State's bitter experience of having TEIs in private sector in 1980s; (ii) not so alarming demand-supply mismatch of trained teachers in the State; (iii) apprehension of commercialization and profit-driven design; and (iv) danger of declining standards. The decision to this effect has been taken at the highest level of governance.
- **Enhanced duration of the B.Ed. and the M.Ed. Courses:** Even before the NCTE came out with its Regulation 2014 stipulating the two-year B.Ed. and the two-year M.Ed. courses, the School and Mass Education Department moved the appropriate authorities of Government for enhanced duration of these two teacher education courses. The Department made informed and convincing arguments, supported by inputs from Think Tank-TE, in support of enhancing the duration of these courses for infusing greater rigour and professionalism. Now, the State Government has taken a decision for the introduction of two-year B.Ed. and two-year M.Ed. courses.
- **Implementation of Justice Verma Commissions Recommendations:** The Justice Verma Commission (2012) had made several recommendations for strengthening teacher education system of the country. With the succinct endorsement of the apex court of the country, the recommendations have become mandatory for implementation by the Centre and the States. The Think Tank-TE, mostly the in-State members, critically examined the recommendations

and helped the State to implement them. Many of the recommendations had policy implications.

- **Implementation of JRM-TE Recommendations:** The Think Tank-TE attempted a meticulous analysis of the all range of recommendations of JRM-TE 2013. In order to implement those recommendations in short-term, medium-term and long-term frames, the Think Tank-TE developed a Plan of Action with a definite timeframe, which has been reflected in the document entitled “Envisioning Teacher Education in Odisha : A Roadmap for Reform (2014)”.
- **Curriculum Development for the new Teacher Education Programmes:** The State has decided to switch over to the two-year B.Ed. and the two-year M.Ed. programme from existing one-year programme. This decision mandates preparation of curriculum for these courses in the light of NCTE Curriculum Framework 2014. The task of framing the curriculum has been vested with SCERT. However, Think Tank-TE spearheads the process of curriculum renewal. The process is actively under way to complete the task by mid-June 2015 so that the new courses start from the next academic session (2015-16).
- **Recruitment Policies:** With NCTE Regulation 2014 in force since December 2014, the existing recruitment policies for appointment of Teacher Educators to TEIs are no longer valid and relevant. Think Tank-TE has been providing inputs with regard to recruitment policies in the light of NCTE Regulation 2014.



CORE GROUP MEMBERS MEETING



