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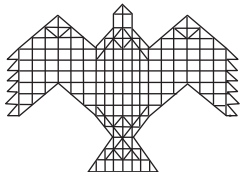
**The District Quality Education Project
In collaboration with
Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi**

DIETs: Potential and Possibilities

**Discussions and suggestions for policy and practice
emerging from a two day consultation
held on 4th and 5th October 2007 at NIAS, Bangalore.**

2007

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FOREWORD

This document shares key ideas, concepts, concerns and recommendations that arose from a two day Consultation, *DIETs: Potential and Possibilities* held by the District Quality Education Project (DQEP) of the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

Starting in December 2002, the DQEP was involved with several initiatives to strengthen quality of elementary schooling in Chamarajanagar District, in particular, direct intervention in 28 schools, curriculum development for Kannada and art, and capacity building and improving teacher training quality by working with the Cluster Resource Persons and Block Resource Centres. In 2005, in the context of a new DIET being established in the District (Chamarajanagar being a district carved out of Mysore in 1997 did not have its own DIET), the DQEP proposed to the DSERT, Karnataka, a collaboration to strengthen the upcoming DIET in Chamarajanagar for the period December 2005 to November 2007. During the entire project period, the DQEP worked closely with the state education department at the state and district levels.

We take this opportunity to place on record our sincere gratitude to all the officials and functionaries at various levels of the government schooling system. Our appreciation of the support from the education department extends to both the incumbents and those who have since retired or moved to other places and departments at the state level and in the district.

The DQEP sought to build synergy in its work through meaningful collaborations with different institutions and individuals. Such support has taken various forms: consultancy on pedagogic issues, presence as key resource persons, support on documentation (print and visual), etc. We thank all institutions and individuals thus associated with our work for the last five years.

We also acknowledge our colleagues in the DQEP team and Dr. Seshadri as a reviewer for SRTT, all of whom have been inextricably linked in various capacities with the project's reflective and critical engagement with the DIET.

These two years of work in the DIET and with other institutions within the ambit of which the DIET's everyday work is generally carried out, gave us several occasions to think about the (un)utilized potential of these important district institutions and also alerted us to the importance of reviving and converging the interests and concerns in renewing these institutions. We thank Dr. Govinda, NUEPA and Ms. Anita Kaul, MHRD, for readily agreeing to work closely with us to conceptualise and organize the two day consultation. We thank Mr. Champak Chatterjee, Secretary Education, MHRD for accepting our proposal to collaboratively host this consultation, and also extending support for travel of participants. We thank the participants for accepting our invitation and contributing richly to the deliberations of the two days. The coordination and logistics were ably managed by Ms. Jayanthi Sachitanand and Ms. Sumana Srikanth, and we are grateful to them, and the staff at NIAS who ensured the programme ran smoothly.

Our work in the DIET Chamarajanagar, including this consultation, has been primarily supported by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai. Asha for Education, Boston Chapter provided additional support for our work in the Block Resource Centres and the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Karnataka supported the development of the Training Management System.

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November 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District Institutes of Education and Training are positioned to play a key role in universalizing quality education. This document provides a set of ideas and discussions with which future policies and work pertaining to DIETs may engage. The discussions provided are not meant to be read as prescriptive, but as suggestive and indicative of courses of actions, decisions and policy-thrusts. There are alternatives possible in many aspects of the DIET itself, and its relationship with other state institutions. Careful consideration of the implications of various choices is required in virtually every detail and dimension.

The most fundamental concern for the DIETs is that of a clear institutional identity in which teachers are brought centre stage. There are two distinct possibilities: (1) DIETs as engaged in the task of school improvement, or (2) DIETs as engaged in the role of teacher development. While the former implies a more direct field engagement mode, the latter is more oriented to work with teacher education and teacher-support, rather than direct engagement with schools. Both these positions are valid and the choice will need to be made based on the requirements of each state and its overall educational reform vision. The same could be said of whether this institution should remain focused on elementary education alone, or it should extend its interests to secondary education also.

A second issue that has direct bearing on the above is the DIET-BRC-CRC linkage. The choice of institutional identity would provide the framework for connecting the DIET to the sub-district structures such as the BRC-CRC. Either these latter structures could be an extension of the DIET itself, or be monitored and mentored by the DIET without its direct physical presence within these structures.

A core requirement, which emerges as an essential and non negotiable, is for the DIET to emerge as an autonomous institution at the district level with flexibility to function and be structured to meet district-specific needs. Hence variation among DIETs would be desirable. Both MHRD norms and SCERT relationship to the DIET will need to support such an institutional change. There are several gaps in the approach of the Centre vis-à-vis the states to various DIET related matters and these need to be addressed.

The DIET's isolation at the district level is again a matter of concern and there is need for a comprehensive district level education plan that can provide a framework for overall coordination and convergence across institutions and lines of reporting. This would strengthen the EMIS system at the district level and also feed into bottom up planning and overall departmental planning and budgeting.

The primary activity of the DIETs-teacher training-and capacity building of resource persons to conduct decentralized training and adapt training designs to meet district needs, require investment in new ideas and resources. 'In-service training' itself must be opened up to include more diverse activities and avenues for professional development, including seminars, debates, cross-institutional deployment of teachers, and teacher-fellowships.

Personnel recruitment requires state-level policy interventions which are consistent with the role that the DIET is expected to play. Opening up recruitment to allow more faculty renewal through cross-deployment across universities/NGOs/research institutions, and

personnel movement across DIETs based on professional merit (rather than transfers) are two important possibilities worth considering. Policies on the role, recruitment, tenure, and autonomy for DIET principals are also key in realizing a functional institution with a distinct identity.

Institutional revitalization can be facilitated through different collaborative arrangements between the government, the private sector, and civil society organizations, with DIETs and also between DIETs as well as with other institutions at the sub-district level. There is also need for such collaborations to be mainstreamed into the working of the education system and therefore need for a policy framework that could both underwrite such collaborations and could enable the systemic integration of positive experiences from such partnerships.

I. INTRODUCTION

The District Institutes of Education and Training (henceforth DIET) were created by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in the early 1990s to strengthen elementary education and support the decentralization of education to the district level. They were created through a centrally supported scheme and following the guidelines suggested in the 'pink book' (Government of India,1989). The common experience has been that although these institutions seem to have potential and are located in a meaningful place within the education system, i.e. at the district level and with a focus on academic quality issues, they have not been able to integrate into the existing structures or contribute meaningfully. There have been a few efforts to study DIETs as well as to work with them. The recent 11th plan exercise has proposed important rethinking and focus on DIETs along with continued central support.

A consultation was organized on the 4th and 5th of October 2007, to consider in detail the question of how DIETs can be reinvigorated and to consider ideas and models that could be the bases of reform of these institutions. Some of the concerns that were raised and debated included:

- what aspects of education academic functioning can be decentralized?
- what relationship does this institution need to have with other institutions at the state level and the district level?
- what are the implications of 'district' location for orientation and activities?
- what are the concerns of school quality which DIETs can address?
- what organizational structure and functioning will best support the institution's aims?
- what recruitment and personnel policies would best support DIETs and what kind of capacity building may be required?
- how can DIETs mesh with various central and state education projects and missions?
- what kinds of collaboration and involvements of academic and non-government agencies can be forged?
- what are the issues with the form and structure of Central and State support for these institutions?

The consultation brought together researchers, practitioners and administrators from government (including the DIETs) and non government institutions. It focused closely on addressing the questions of how these institutions can be made effective, within the systems in which they are located. Keeping the discourse on dysfunctionality and references to the 'Pink Book' in the back ground, the discussions aimed at examining experiences, models, proposals and solutions to some of the basic issues confronting these institutions. These discussions were based on: what has been tried or understood from detailed study, from the point of view of governments which are now beginning to focus on these institutions; and from perspectives of other agencies interested in or able to play a role in or influence the process of revitalization of DIETs.

The discussions of the consultation were organized around six thematic areas.

Theme 1: Academic Role and Functions of DIETs

Theme 2: Central and State frameworks

Theme 3: DIETs in relation to State structures and requirements

Theme 4: Teacher Professional Development

Theme 5: Institutional Development

Theme 6: Partnerships

In this document we bring together the key ideas that emerged from the consultation enhanced with ideas and information from secondary literature on DIETs, especially those that suggest key ways in which these institutions can be made more effective, and those that have been tried out and found to be useful. This may contribute to policy initiatives directed towards enhancing the functionality and effectiveness of these institutions.

Even today, if we want to evolve a systemic approach to ensure universal education of a quality that is reflected in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, the idea of the DIET continues to be central – now DIET, taken along with the BRC and CRC structure. Academic reform of school education, academic support to teachers and schools, all these require strong academic capability and leadership in areas of training, planning, research and monitoring/supervision at more localized levels, the district being the first key decentralized level of this work. The idea that an institution like the DIET, with an academic rather than administrative focus, is needed at the district level to strengthen school education is still convincing.

Box 1.1

Some of the key reasons for overall 'dysfunctionality'

1. *Lack of alignment of DIET vision and DIET wings with State education policy thrusts, and State institutional structures.*
2. *Lack of focus in its basic institutional objective and constituency.*
3. *Non-availability of faculty with adequate training in elementary education: general lack of expertise even in areas such as teacher education, elementary education or research.*
4. *Lack of strong leadership in DIETs.*
5. *Overall low desire for the posting (being academic rather than administrative) and frequent transfers out of DIETs resulting in high turn-over and vacant posts.*
6. *Overall systemic weakness in administration also affects the DIET.*
7. *Although central funding for DIETs has continued in the Xth plan period and is now being considered in the XI plan also, there has always been indecision regarding the continuation of central support*

II. INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND LOCATION

2.1 AUTONOMY: THE FUNDAMENTAL BUILDING BLOCK

Each DIET must acquire independent 'institutional' identity and character with a focus on academic excellence. Each DIET must be treated as a unique, independent institution, and not as one among many implementing arms of the State at the district level. This could be done

- (i) By evolving clarity on the role that DIET is expected to play within the larger State Education Machinery.
- (ii) By providing adequate foundation for the development of an Institution including:
 - provision of infrastructure suitable to the scope of the institution as a District Training and Resource Institution.
 - appointment of principal through selection with adequate tenure and autonomy to develop the institution.
 - provision of dedicated faculty of requisite/desired numbers.
 - provision of field support faculty and administrative staff of requisite/desired numbers.
- (iii) By enabling each DIET to develop its own character and focus areas through support for an environment of autonomy in academic areas, financial areas, and personnel policy
- (iv) By permitting and even encouraging institutional variation among DIETs and with only a few large-scale centrally designed programmes to be monitored.

2.2 NEED FOR INSTITUTIONAL FOCUS: TWO PROPOSALS

The prevailing DIET design visualises multiple tasks with different foci, and draws the DIET in different directions – in effect producing divergent institutional goals. Instead, the DIET requires an overall focus area which would form its '*raison d'etre*' based on which its larger role in the landscape of educational practice can take shape. This would also enable the DIET to converge its various activities or plans, design its own annual work plan, and build necessary linkages with other organizations in collaborative modes. *The focus must be to bring teachers back to the centre stage of education.* A core area of strength of the DIET is teacher professional development, particularly the pre-service and in-service training work. Renewal of elementary schools is a larger focus area of state concern, action and innovation. Either of these could form the basis of the institution's focus:

In favour of a focus on Teacher Professional Development

The area of teacher professional development is a core area of strength of the DIET where most DIETs have a reasonable track record. Thus, this is the area that should be further strengthened and developed. DIETs must therefore develop into institutions of excellence for teacher education at the District level, for both in-service and for pre-service. For a high quality teacher education programme, engagement with schools and the concern for school improvement is necessary. Keeping a focus on teacher professional development will provide the institution with the necessary focus. By allowing it to perform in an area where it can show success and results, much needed positive sense of achievement will also be gained that would directly enhance the overall institutional development.

If school improvement is made the primary focus area, it would stretch the DIET beyond its current expertise and capacity and will require it to enter into an 'implementationist' mode, aligning it closer to government work and administration.

In favour of a focus on School Improvement.

School improvement as an area of primary engagement will provide much needed overall institutional focus and direction. It can provide the context and measure for the development of many kinds of institutional activities; in-service teacher education, children assessment, material development, innovation and intervention and research will all receive focused attention. This will make sure that the institution does not become isolated from and irrelevant to the larger life of educational practice and schools. Teacher education will and should be an important facet of school improvement, but it needs to seek its design and justification in relation to the larger agenda of school improvement. Indeed if teacher education in the form of trainings is not felt to be necessary, and instead a school based mentoring and a teacher professional network is felt to be more relevant, then there should be no necessity to continue the in-service teacher education programmes.

Institutions where teacher education is the primary activity tend to become isolated from the larger scheme of educational activity and sink into routinised theoretical activity without the reality checks of life in school.

Box 2.1

Delhi DIETs experience of UEE as Institutional Focus

The SCERT along with all the DIETs in Delhi, organized a three day intensive reflection exercise to evolve a mandate that would provide DIETs with a focus. All the faculty including principals, were involved in this exercise, and each participant was provided a copy of the 1989 DIET guidelines for reflection. Consensus emerged around the need to focus on Universalising Elementary Education (UEE) and the activities of the DIET then drew from this agreed upon mandate, providing both focus and also providing a basis to negotiate between complementing roles of different institutions, including requirements from the administrative structure of the Department of Education of Delhi State, and relationship to the schools, and also the relationship between each other and to the SCERT. As the DIETs aligned their activities with the larger State efforts towards UEE, they were able to identify their own specific contribution areas. Later, on account of the spurt in enrollments, there was a requirement for extra teachers. At this point the DIETs' pre-service teacher education programmes were able to contribute, by placing their trainee teachers as interns (additional teachers) in the schools, .

Having a focus and a mandate, which has been evolved through widespread participation of all faculty, can provide direction and alignment of activities towards larger educational policy objectives and in relation to other educational institutions, as well as the administration.

2.3 INSTITUTIONAL SCOPE: ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY?

Currently the DIET's focus is elementary education. The Colleges of Teacher Education and 'IASEs' were supposed to address the needs of secondary school teacher professional development and curriculum work. 'Whether DIETs should retain their focus on elementary schools or they should extend their scope to secondary school also' is a question that would influence the institutional focus and scope.

In favour of retaining focus on Elementary Education

DIETs can support the much needed professionalisation of elementary education through pre-service and in-service work as well as research and innovation in areas of relevance to elementary education.

If secondary education entered into the DIETs it would:

- assume more importance and relegate elementary education again to a marginal status (or else push it down to the block level).
- make new demands on expertise and capabilities, especially in relation to the academic disciplines, which cannot be found in DIETs.

DIETs should retain and strengthen their elementary education focus and not be distracted by secondary education training etc. which has in any case received substantial attention. The CTEs, IASEs, and University Departments are better positioned to do this.

In favour of extending the institution's mandate to include Secondary Education

As a government institution at the district level, this institute should parallel the structure of school education and extend its mandate to all levels, from pre-primary to secondary education. This would provide the institutional arrangement for the systematic academic support, monitoring and review for quality required at all the levels of schooling. The absence of district specific institutions to academically complement the district education administration and the elected representatives in the district, who are concerned with all levels of schooling, creates structural problems. The DIET could continue to retain its special mandate for elementary education, and ensure that the necessary professionalisation of this stage of schooling remains high on its agenda through appropriate funding support and special academic activities in this area. But, in addition, it could take on planning, review, monitoring and research activities in relation to secondary school education.

A strong case can also be made for the need to **include pre-school education also within DIET**, and with it to bring in issues of professional development of the balwadis or anganwadis, as well as monitoring the curricula and activities of these centres.

2.4 FLEXIBILITY IN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Rather than having the institutional structure being adjusted to the work of DIETs, the necessary structure of the Institution needs to flow out of the Institution's vision, mandate and its relationship to other institutions. Thus, the 'wings' or 'units' of the DIET need to be flexible arrangements that can be changed depending on the activities on hand and therefore effect an organizational structure that would most suit a particular DIET.

Many states have not made alterations in the DIET structure on the grounds that this is (a) not permissible by the MHRD, or (b) it would not work as the financial norms and guidelines are based on the 'pink book' recommendations. Both these points of view need to change. The pink book is only a manual of guidelines and *each state is free to rethink and propose models that would suit its state specificities or requirements*. Wings could be merged or even removed if they are not found to be useful. People and activities within the DIET may also be organized on different principles. Effective DIET principals have changed the internal organization of the DIET to suit work on hand, rather than defining work based on the 'wing names'.

Some states have opted to work within the 'pink book' format for the structure of wings and wing-wise distribution of faculty, by allocating responsibilities as per requirements and continuing with the 'official' wing name. There has not even been a reallocation of number of faculty in each wing based on actual activities, or any variation attempted in the personnel strength of DIET based on considerations of size of the district, etc. On the whole there seems to be a strong inertia on the part of the states towards flexibility.

Flexibility of the Institutional structure would be necessary so that the internal organization of the DIET could follow from the concerns of both personnel and their qualifications/areas of expertise, and the activities that derive from the specific DIET's mandate as an autonomous institutional body. Focus on district specific needs and issues would also be possible with such flexibility. E.g. a Wing to focus on education of children whose parents migrate seasonally, or a wing to focus on concerns of educating children from tribal communities.

The Centre can be approached with such alternative plans supported by a rationale and the same be accepted and form the basis of the central grant for support of individual DIETs.

2.5 CENTRAL SCHEMES THRUSTS AND STATE OWNERSHIP

The DIET scheme is a central scheme, with budget provisioning from the Central plan and with the expectation that States will 'own', realize and implement the vision. The 'dysfunctionality' of DIETs in most states suggests that there may be problems with this approach.

Box 2.2

Flexibility in Institutional Structures

In Andhra Pradesh the DIET personnel are selected and organized according to the key subject areas of the school language, mathematics, science, social studies, art, theatre etc. All of them contribute to the different activities of the DIET: pre-service teacher education, in-service training programmes, curriculum material development, assessment, etc.

In Maharashtra, DIETs have only four wings: Pre-service and In-service Teacher Education, Curriculum Material Development and Evaluation, Education Technology, and Planning Management and Administration.

In Madhya Pradesh, the DIET wings include: In-service and Field Interaction; District Resource Unit; P & M; Innovation co-ordination; Mass Media and Education Technology; Work Experience; Curriculum and Learning Material Development; Methods and Evaluation; Education for Quality; Academic Consultancy and Guidance; Physical Education; Art and Aesthetic Experience Education.

In the Bikaner DIET, during Lok Jumbish, the Principal found that a 'wing wise' approach to teacher training led to the absence of an overall convergence of approach and training goals as well as problems in simpler matters such as managing training. Training quality improved when the 'wing identities' of people and 'wing-based goals' were suspended and the entire faculty focused together at the institutional level on conceptualising and implementing training.

In Karnataka, the District Resource Unit has been merged with the District Literacy Samithi and the 'Work Experience' unit has been replaced by 'Quality Cell', to work closely with the State's Quality Assessment systems. As a part of the NIAS-DSERT collaboration, the DIET Chamarajanagar introduced a 'Tribal Children's Education Wing' as a District specific need, and a 'Resource Centre' under the District Resource Unit.

Although DIETs have consistently been supported through central plan budgets for almost 17 years now, the Centre's involvement has been restricted to providing the fund, leaving implementation entirely to the states, with no central monitoring or auditing of effectiveness of this grant. Virtually no variation in the proposed structure of the 'pink book' is seen from any state. About Rupees 18 lakhs per DIET is available as central grant towards supporting activities, and this is generally disbursed on a pro-rata basis to DIET, without reflecting District specific budget requirements. Reading of the 'pink book' as a document of fixed norms seems to have led to a situation of stereotyped DIETs and stereotyped plans. So far there has been no demand from any state for flexibility. There seems to be different perspectives of the Centre and the State vis a vis the scheme, and neither seems to fully 'own' the DIET scheme.

<i>Centre's point of view</i>	<i>State's point of view</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Centrally sponsored schemes are frequently not owned by the states; In the case of DIETs, with few exceptions, states have not taken much responsibility for DIETs nor integrated them into their education systems. ➤ The states tend to maintain the overall accountability of DIET towards the Centre rather than towards itself, and farther this is further oriented towards financial accountability only. ➤ States have used a mechanical 'pro-rata' basis of disbursing fund to all DIETs (maximum of 18 lakhs per DIET), regardless of whether the district is large or small. ➤ The Centre, although it has provided the funding, does not monitor or audit the effectiveness of these institutions. It has urged states to create a cadre of professionals for the DIET, but the funding is not tied to meeting such requirements. The only accountability to the Centre is for the funds that it provides. ➤ States do not enhance the central DIET budget allocation with any funds of their own. ➤ Earlier NCERT and NIEPA ran courses for capacity building of DIET faculty, but these have been discontinued based on the realization that the faculty of DIETs are not stable and are frequently transferred out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Although DIET support has been extended for 3 plan periods, states are not assured of continuation of funds for DIETs. Given the fiscal situation of most states and uncertainty, it is difficult to plan assuming that these institutions are permanent. ➤ States experience irregular flow of funds (delays) and also sporadic utilisation and management of funds at the District level. ➤ Deviation from the 'pink book' norms creates problems and delays in getting accounts passed; hence the preference to work within the prescribed norms and structures. ➤ The only relationship between the centre and the state, regarding the DIET, is for the purposes of budgets and accounting. The Centre has promoted the scheme but has not taken any interest in ensuring that this institution plays a significant role in achieving UEE. ➤ The Central allocations are not sufficient to build up the infrastructure that such an institution requires.

The Centre can support and facilitate states in thinking about state specificity in DIET plans and structures. such mechanism could be requiring states to develop a Memorandum of Understanding indicating how they wish to vision this institution in relation to the rest of their structures and the role they want this institution to play, to enable more focus on institutional functions and staffing.

In the context of continued support for DIETs in the 11th plan, it is imperative that the Centre adopt a more pro-active role towards this institution.

In the area of Teacher Education, the 11th plan proposes a centrally constituted *academic advisory group to support teacher education and to focus on the development of elementary education*. This is to:

- Strengthen the quality of pre-service training, respond to the crisis of para-teachers , and develop a cadre of local teachers for SC, ST, and minority communities through block level teacher education institutes.
- Strengthen the quality of in-service programmes through the design of a larger number and variety of in-service courses and enable teachers to choose (the cafeteria model), and also through appropriate use of ICT.
- Support the professional development of teacher educators through refresher courses for faculty and also fellowships.
- Strengthen institutional capacity to engage with locally relevant materials. Involve both Universities and NGOs, particularly in the area of developing relevant TLM design and teacher training activities.

Box 2.4

Some of the key issues to which the 11th Plan has tried to respond

- * *There has been no proper arrangement for recruiting faculty trained in Elementary Education.*
- * *Most DIET faculty positions are filled by personnel on deputation creating a handicap for continued professional learning by the teacher educators;*
- * *Expansion of the elementary education system has resulted in arbitrary increase in intake for the pre-service courses; the intake in many DIETs has been doubled in many states;*
- * *The problem has been compounded by the mass-scale recruitment of para-teachers in several states; consequently, pre-service training in several states has been suspended in order to accommodate para teachers' training. The XI Plan seeks to correct this imbalance through a time-bound package directed at specific states.*
- * *There has been a massive increase in the number of private teacher training institutions, creating an imbalance in favour of urban areas in the spread of teacher training facilities; in particular, this has affected access of persons from marginalized groups in the relatively more rural and remote areas to teacher education.*
- * *DIETS have remained isolated from current research and the academic community due to the absence of linkages with institutes of higher education.*

There is urgent need for all states to:

- (1) *Enrich and sustain existing state supported institutions for Teacher Education and increase the number of such institutions in remote and backward localities, in order to meet the expanding need for trained teachers and for making the system more equitable.*
- (2) *Upgrade in a phased manner elementary teacher education programme by enhancing its status in the academic hierarchy and creating appropriate linkages with the higher education system.*

III. SYSTEMIC LOCATION AND RELATION TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

*The overall Institutional focus of DIETs needs to be located within, and complement the focus and function of other institutions of the state education system. At the district level it needs to work with the other district institutions within the framework of a **District Education Plan** and a district wide data-base (Education Management Information System) on education.*

3.1 NON-HIERARCHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SCERT

DIETs are directly administered by the SCERTs. Currently most of the work of DIETs flows out of the SCERT.

- In order to promote institutional autonomy at the level of the DIET itself, the SCERTs will need to move away from a hierarchical relationship to DIETs and play a supportive and facilitative role to nurture and promote autonomy and individuality of DIETs.
- The SCERT could provide a professional forum for the community to come together to review the status of quality of schools and various intervention programmes, for DIET principals regarding institutional development, and in DIET faculty to interact with each other, share knowledge, and experience.
- The SCERTs could focus on providing expert guidance and support to the various academic activities of the DIET; in particular relating to research, designing special intervention programmes, developing locally relevant materials, and designing reflexive in-service teacher professional development programmes. It could also focus on overall institutional development and meeting the various professional development needs of faculty themselves.
- There will need to be fewer SCERT driven programmes or training designs/modules provided to the DIETs and more space and scope for DIET defined activities.
- DIETs could have a similar relationship to SIEMATs also.

3.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER DISTRICT INSTITUTIONS AND FORA

DIETs have tended to remain insular and insulated from key sites of education decision-making and activity at the district level. Partly, this is a problem of all teacher education institutions where the entry-point degrees themselves create isolation from larger academia. But this is also on account of the perception of 'dysfunctionality' of the DIET and its peripheral location within the Education system.

It is necessary for DIETs to break this insularity and enter into active relationships with other district level institutions and fora that are contributing to and shaping elementary education and children's all round development.

In Kerala, the district education wing of the Zilla Parishad (ZP) calls upon the DIETs. This involvement of the ZP in matters relating especially to elementary education is likely to grow in all states and the DIETs need to begin to interact formally with ZP, particularly on matters pertaining to education quality.

Many issues of elementary education quality also require an inter-departmental approach. Particularly the Departments of Social Welfare, Tribal Welfare, Minority Education, Women and Child, Health, Sports and Youth are relevant Government Departments with whom DIET interaction is possible and necessary. This would bring about synergies and better-coordinated contributions to schools and children.

Given its focus on teacher and teacher development, formal linkages with district teacher associations, centers for teacher development such as B.Ed and D.Ed colleges, and University Department of Education, would also be necessary for DIETs.

Box 3.1

District Resources and Networking

In Gujarat, each DIET was encouraged to undertake a case study of itself, and in this study to involve faculty from local education colleges and departments. This has led to increased interactions between these two institutional structures and opened up the possibility of more interactions for a variety of academic activities, from research to innovative intervention programmes.

In Andhra Pradesh DIETs, the fora for Child Rights at the District level was seen to be a space where a great deal of innovative and creative thinking and work was going on which is of direct relevance to improving elementary education. By formally involving in these fora, DIET faculty benefited and were also able to contribute.

Several other National and sometimes also International agencies, and Non Government Organisations working on issues such as 'Child Labour', 'Children's rights', disabilities, etc., also increasingly have a District presence and the formal interaction of these institutions and agencies at the district level would mutually benefit these organizations and their work, and also avoid unnecessary duplication or working at cross purposes.

Coming into active collaborative linkages with district institutions of higher education would also enhance the academic aspects of DIET work.

3.3 LINKAGE TO BRCs AND CRCs

There are differing views regarding the extent to which DIETs should become linked to Block Resource Center (BRC) and Cluster Resource Center (CRC) structures.

In favour of a direct strong linkage:

The linkage is necessary and it should also be direct and strong; i.e. through administrative linkage so that salaries related to BRCs and CRCs is controlled by DIETs and they in turn report to the DIET. This is necessary to bring about alignment of academic institutions and to ensure that overall plans for school quality improvement are conceptualized and implemented by the DIETs through the BRCs and CRCs. The academic work of the BRCs and CRCs, which today is mainly training, teacher meetings and school-based support through visits, thus needs to be planned for by, and also monitored and reviewed by the DIETs.

In favour of a professional mentor linkage:

DIETs should take responsibility for the academic capacity building of faculty of BRCs and CRCs to enable them to play this role. This capacity building is needed in areas such as:

- Awareness of approaches on teacher professional development and school improvement.
- Skills related to training design, training implementation, and awareness of 'training efficacy', including managing information relating to training, etc.
- Knowledge and awareness of mentoring.

The DIET may also provide a professional forum for meeting and discussing academic issues and concerns of the BRCs and CRCs and in addition also assist in reviewing plans etc. But the BRCs and CRCs will not be an extension of the DIET into the Blocks and Clusters.

In favour of no formal linkage:

The DIET need not be directly concerned with, or involved with the BRCs and CRCs. They are institutions created for a different purpose. The issues and problems of these institutions are separate and need not be added to the burden of the DIET's own institutional problems. The DIET is currently also not capable of working with such institutions, so adding them to the DIET as responsibilities and appendages would burden the DIET and distract it from the core function of teacher education, which it can execute meaningfully. It must therefore focus on teacher education and not be burdened with work or responsibilities relating to the BRCs and CRCs.

Box 3.2

Will financial control of BRCs, CRCs pave the way for more institutional alignment?

Currently, there is a move to route SSA funding for training to the BRCs and CRCs, through the DIET. There is also a demand that reporting structures of the BRCs and CRCs should be aligned with the DIET, primarily by routing the salaries of these personnel through the DIET. Such financial arrangements will not have any impact on academic integration, and may only increase the administrative burden on the institution. Institutional vision and leadership may be more important.

3.4 RELATION TO OTHER CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES:

By and large, with the exception of Andhra Pradesh, DIETs were not integrated into the activities of the District Primary Education Project (DPEP). Academic focus in primary education with district specificity was thus not systemically integrated into state structures at the district level. Considerable learning and faculty development, as well as institutional focus could have been achieved through systemic integration.

Currently, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) provides scope for focusing on academic quality issues. In many states, SSA provides a space where there is innovation and possibility to design new programmes, and evolve active engagement with the field for quality improvement. At the district level SSA requires annual work plans to be produced. DIETs and teacher and teacher education are now more systematically included into the SSA approach. This integration tends to be mechanical (e.g. making DIETs the funding route for block level trainings, etc.) On the whole, the overall thrust on teacher education (except for large scale training) as key in quality needs to be made more central in the SSA approach and for this DIETs need to be more systematically integrated into and also made an object and instrument of quality improvement. For the institution, this would provide a much needed opportunity to become 'relevant' and to find focus in its activities. For SSA, DIET needs to be viewed as a key institution to be developed towards ensuring long-term sustainability and systemic integration of its key efforts.

IV. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

4.1 URGENT NEED FOR OVERALL PROVISIONING

DIETs require much higher investments in their infrastructure and facilities for faculty and students in order to emerge as strong centers for teacher professional development and school improvement. Currently, they are poorly equipped for this role. The lack of even minimum facilities, dilapidated buildings and inadequate space is demoralizing and conveys the lack of worth and neglect to faculty and students. Expecting the institution to deliver urgently requires not only ensuring these minimum needs are met, but also improvement of the ambience and facilities of this institution through much higher investment in infrastructure. Towards this the limited Central funding for this institution needs to be enhanced and states also need to begin to invest. Rather than be seen as excessive spending on assets and capital expenditure, this needs to be understood as a much-needed investment for a more long-term institutional development.

- Adequate provisioning of space, including building additional classrooms, training and meeting rooms, faculty rooms, and play facilities.
- Library needs to be enhanced in order to function as a resource centre for the District.
- Faculty and students also require access to computers and internet.
- Hostel facilities are required for students of the pre-service training programmes.

4.2 FINANCIAL PLANNING, AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

There are currently mainly three sources of funds for DIETs:

1. MHRD grant.
2. Fee from students.
3. SSA related activities.

The DIETs' **Annual Work Plan (AWP)** process currently does not take an integrated whole institution approach to planning, where funds can be seen as different sources of support towards activities that are decided upon and prioritized at the institutional level. Instead, separate plans are produced depending on the budget source, clearly indicating how the financial autonomy does not lie within the institution, and accountability is for specific grants coming from outside. This sets the culture of fragmented planning of the institution and the 'fund-spending approach' to selection and execution of activities. The system is set up to be monitored by financial norms set up at State office or Central accounts offices, leading to an inflexibility and inability to reflect the requirements of specific activities. This, and the poor and untimely flow of funds, are key reasons for underutilization of funds at the DIET level.

Institutional autonomy and growth requires the support of financial autonomy. Principals need to have freedom to evolve and work towards an institutional plan, and to make financial decisions that will support the institutional objectives. They need to be able to make decisions at their own level instead of (a) referring matters to the DSERT (b) being constrained by inflexible norms. Devolving financial autonomy to DIET principals is necessary. Norm-driven and centrally controlled financial systems may be easier to manage, but these inflexibilities lead to inefficiencies in the design and implementation of activities.

4.3 FISCAL GOVERNANCE

Timely flow of funds is crucial to restoring a basic functionality to the DIETs. This would support DIETs in discharging their routine activities in a reasonable fashion rather than resorting to inefficient overwork in efforts to 'complete budgets' before the March accounting year deadline. Yet, in most parts of the country this has been a major reason why DIETs have not been able to do even the little that they can do, which is within their own hands to achieve. Even currently, given the delay in the central approval for the 11th plan budget, salaries of DIET personnel have been delayed for over six months. As the funding is central and linked to the plan, it is necessary for states to evolve ways of facilitating smooth flow of funds to DIETs and also evolve appropriate financial department structures so that this flow of funds is not impeded. The timely discharge of activities, and ultimately their quality, depends crucially upon this.

An overall state structure for fiscal governance is required to ensure timely release of funds through disaggregated tranches. Structures created for projects such as SSA do not facilitate the over-hauling of the larger system, but create a small niche for different practice. Post project, the system may become less vibrant as these systems created for the project close with it.

V. PEOPLE MATTER

5.1 FINDING AND KEEPING FACULTY

Finding people with expertise in and experience of elementary education is also a problem for the DIETs, given the current routes to becoming faculty.

Box 5.1

Currently the main routes to become DIET faculty:

- (1) *High school teaching/head mastership, (BA/BSc + B. Ed) + High School teaching*
- (2) *Education administration cadres ' (BA/BSc + B Ed) + officer experience*
- (3) *Direct recruitment (in a few states) BA/BSc + M Ed degrees (school teaching experience, if any, is likely to be high school)*

Currently, knowledge of elementary education either via DEd Certification or primary school teaching experience is not available within the DIET. Further the recruitment policies do not reflect any clarity on the roles that faculty are expected to play. If they are to be 'experts' then it is necessary that they are qualified with appropriate expertise in subject areas, or in the areas of education itself (research and practice). It is crucial therefore to have clarity on whether *we visualize DIET faculty DOING academic work themselves or being administrators of academic work?* The design and approach to capacity building also requires this basic clarity of faculty roles vis-à-vis academic work.

Opening up new routes for people to join DIETs, including *direct recruitment and visiting positions* in DIETs could be considered. These routes would enable BRPs, CRPs and Teachers to come to DIET for periods of time. Visiting positions where university persons can spend time in DIETs, as faculty would be useful. It would also break the isolation of universities from the larger governmental schooling system. Similarly, DIETs could also host artists or theatre people or University people from other disciplines who could come to spend around six months working with teachers and children. When new kinds of people come in, it would contribute to the institution's character and also the scope of its activities in the area of professional development for teachers.

Box 5.2

Problems from understaffing

DIETS also have an additional problem of being chronically understaffed. In most DIETs about 50% of the posts are often unfilled. Added to this is the problem that existing faculty are frequently drawn upon by the State institutions for their own training, textbook writing and coordination requirements. As a result there is frequently not enough human power to accomplish the DIETs own work.

A basic institutional instability is created by the fact that people constantly move in and out of DIET. This is a situation to be found in almost every state, where people move between administrative and academic positions with the former being more attractive (powerful and lucrative) as compared to the latter. Can encadrement be a solution to the problem of not having dedicated personnel for DIETs?

In favour of encadrement

A group of people dedicated to services in the DIET needs to be created and thus DIET would have access to a pool with relevant qualifications and expertise, based on entrance and selection to the cadre. As they are in this cadre, they would not seek postings out, to other non-academic posts, as is currently the practice. Capacity building of people within the cadre would be able to contribute directly to the work related to the DIETs, as these enhanced capacities would continue to be available to the DIET.

Against encadrement

Cadres create unnecessary boundaries and closed membership groups. It would seal access to new people with professional expertise. Cadre would strengthen the 'cadre identity' and would not contribute directly to 'institutional identity' growth. The problems created by transfer would continue, as people would be shifted from DIET to DIET. It would be difficult to monitor the faculty profile of DIETs to ensure that all areas of relevant expertise are available. One should continue to vest institutional control and character with central authorities responsible for posting and transfer.

Alternative to 'cadre' and transfer: Open advertisement and direct selection

What is preferable is a system of direct selection for each post. All interested, with relevant academic and experience profiles, could apply for a vacant post and be selected for this through open competition. This would be the way through which a faculty from DIET 'A' could seek a new posting in DIET 'B', or professionally move upward from post of lecturer to senior lecturer or vice principal, etc. This would ensure that people apply for, and are chosen for specific job descriptions in DIET. This system could be 'closed' to only government employees who are already within the system, or be kept 'semi-open' permitting a mix of government and open selection candidates, or be made 'open' for all. A 'semi-open' or 'open' recruitment system would make possible entry of persons from University or other organizations for a limited period of time within the DIET, on lien arrangements. The organizational affinity, institutional and professional character of DIET faculty would be enhanced by such a system.

Box 5.3

Encadrement and Direct Recruitment in Gujrat and Tamil Nadu

Gujrat and Tamil Nadu are two states where there is a cadre for the DIET. In Gujrat there has been both direct recruitment to DIETs along with more autonomy being devolved to DIETs. This has led to more DIET-specific activity as well as stronger professional identity among DIET faculty. However, in Gujrat there is still a continued problem of frequent and erratic transfers within the cadre and institutions. DIETs have also been facilitated to undertake self-assessment studies and for this to involve local university education departments and personnel.

5.2 LEADERSHIP

In each case where DIETs have been known to be more functional and even relevant, the role of the principal, quality of academic leadership, vision and organisational management have been crucial. Leadership has been able to work by:

- Linking DIET to larger educational concerns, community and educational activities at the district level and state level, thus addressing the problem of insularity.
- Focussing DIET faculty and DIET activities around meaningful and achievable goals.
- Acting in more autonomous ways by taking advantage of opportunities at the state level and also locally.
- Motivating staff to maximize individual initiative as well as to work in teams.

- Organising people and taking initiative, even with respect to financial allocations, to enable staff to undertake their activities.
- Enabling institution and faculty to relate to each other through non-hierarchical ways.
- Providing regular monitoring and supervision of various delegated tasks.
- Sharing credit and sense of achievement with all faculties.

Box 5.4

Leadership in DIET-Gaya, Bihar and DIET-Karvetinagar, Andhra Pradesh

The Principal of DIET-Gaya was able to make his DIET functional and relevant through his personal initiatives: he used his network of connections to ensure that the faculty had opportunities to visit external training sites and undergo training even though there was no systematic training available in the state.

The Principal of DIET-Karvetinagar was able to initiate a number of activities, which did not require budget allocations or for which he was able to mobilize local contributions, to enable the DIET to take up innovative programmes.

The need for selection as a principle for recruitment of the academic leader of the DIET is crucial. She/He must be provided with adequate tenure to articulate and realise an institutional vision. She/He must also be provided with adequate freedom and support in the selection of faculty as well as in the organisation of the institution, setting its goals and formulating its activities.

5.3 APPROACH TO CAPACITY BUILDING OF FACULTY

Capacity building is a process of helping an individual or group to identify and address issues as well as to gain the insights, knowledge and experience required to solve problems and implement change. It is recognized widely that

by-and-large DIET faculty do not have the requisite knowledge and expertise for the roles that they are expected to play. Capacity building can address this specific 'deficit' as well as the need for an overall 'professional development'. There is need to move away from a 'training for the job' or a 'deficit' approach to capacity building, which seems to arise from a misplaced notion that a generalist can be turned into a teacher educator through some training module meant for this purpose. Such an approach of 'fitting' people for their job by putting them through training goes against the professionalisation that one wants to achieve in this field.

- Capacity building of DIET faculty, like any professionally conceptualized programme for personal development, needs to be built essentially on the

Box 5.5

Programmes for Capacity Building of DIETs

- *NCERT and NIEPA ran courses for DIET capacity building. However these were discontinued when it was found faculty were frequently transferred out of this job after receiving these trainings.*
- *In Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, DFID funded a project of capacity building of DIET faculty through undertaking collaborative action research projects with DIET faculty.*
- *In Karnataka, several lecturers from DIETs came together to design for their colleagues a short induction training to introduce and orient them to the DIET, its vision and its functions.*

- imagination of those working in the field, nurturing autonomy and search for betterment and growth.
- Capacity building must therefore focus on providing various relevant opportunities for development. This could include support to study in courses offered in institutions of higher education.
- A general orientation to DIET as an institution can be carried out for new entrants, to nurture the development of the institutional identity and focus of work.
- Inter DIET collaborations and study tours could also provide opportunities for capacity building.

- The Lab- Area of DIET can potentially be a space for direct field interaction to understand and develop capacities through direct engagement. There is no substitute for this kind of experiential learning.
- Other capacity building ideally should take place through more open-ended personal initiatives.

5.4 NURTURING A PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

The Institutional work culture needs to nurture creative professional practices. **Standards** for work need to be arrived at consensually. Rather than being driven by external monitoring, self-assessment, performance appraisals and peer reviews would be able to nurture the professional culture. The only 'incentive' to innovate in this system can be recognition of work, not monetary benefits; hence the importance of a supportive and encouraging environment.

Both empowerment and a need for mobility are consequences of professional development and capacity building. Currently the institutional culture is negatively affected by a hierarchical modus of operation, which stifles agency. **Empowerment** leads to a situation where these hierarchical modes of functioning are called into question and opportunities to innovate and take initiative are sought by faculty.

- If any layer of the hierarchy becomes empowered, then it would also become more capacitated than the higher layer, then there is bound to be a situation of conflict. Rather than avoid or merely survive conflict, it is possible to view conflict as a positive outcome and learn to handle it so that the fallout is not harmful.
- If through empowerment, people begin to act in more autonomous ways and make decisions, then it is necessary that the 'work-site' supports this and not 'works against' those who are taking initiative and exercising freedom.

The need for **movement and mobility**, and the problems arising from this for personnel of the DIET, can be approached and managed either administratively or academically. An administrative solution would manage this by setting norms on transfers, with requirements such as minimum two years service prior to transfer, etc. But these administrative measures are prone to political interference and misuse. Academic solutions include providing teacher fellowships, faculty exchange, and attachments with other institutions within or outside the District; these provide a way of bringing in movement of people and ideas. There is immense possibility for DIETs to form such linkages with other institutions. Permanent moves could be through selection for posts in other institutions (see 5.1 'Alternative to cadre and transfer').

Box 5.6

Opportunities for Higher Studies in Elementary Education

The MA Education (Elementary) offered by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai has been designed collaboratively with NIAS, Bangalore, HBCSE, Mumbai, Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, Eklavya, Bhopal, and Digantar, Jaipur. It is an effort to develop professionals in the field of elementary education through systematic and rigorous study of elementary education, to bring theory and field practice in interaction with each other and generate a discourse and professional perspectives and practice relevant to the Indian context. The programme is conducted in the dual mode to enable working people to participate and upgrade their professional skills and to enable expert faculty from different parts of the country to contribute to teaching in the programme. The distance/self study part of the programme is supported through an internet based learning management system. The eligibility is any under-graduate degree. The programme was launched in 2006.

Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi and Regional Institute of Education, Mysore offer full time one-year M Ed programmes. Students completing B. Ed., B. El. Ed. and B.Sc.Ed. are eligible to apply in these programmes.

VI. DIET FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

6.1 PROFESSIONAL FORA AND RESOURCE CENTERS

At every level in the system, from schoolteachers to DIET faculty, the education community requires a *motivational environment for interaction with people and ideas, through which one can inspire and sustain initiatives*. In other words opportunities for exposure to learning and discussion of different perspectives, experiences and experiments of teaching-learning processes, material development, and training.

Professional fora are key spaces for the strengthening of reflective practice throughout the education system. These include monthly meetings for teachers at the cluster level, meetings of head masters, planning and review meetings of CRPs and BRPs, and review meetings of academic progress by diavid administrative and academic personnel together. Such fora, if they are to be more than routinised administrative meetings, need to be sustained by clarity of vision and goals, strong leadership to conduct these meetings, and a culture of regularity, openness, and reflective review.

- The DIET can itself be such a forum for the District School Academic Planning and Review, and Master for Resource Persons (District Resource Group), CRPs, and BRPs.
- The DIET can support fora at the block and cluster levels, for the Block resource groups, and head masters and teachers.

The **Resource Center** is an enhanced library created specifically to make available to teachers, teacher educators and district education planners, the range of materials and resources they require in relation to their professional practice. Although the DIET, BRCs and CRCs have been called resource centers, and were conceptualized to cater to the academic requirements of teaching and resource communities, yet this important conceptual aspect of these institutions is not yet realized in spite of existence for many years. As a result they work simply as training sites for teachers and as data submission and transfer points for BRPs and CRPs.

A resource centre would include:

- A functioning resource library of reference books, children's books teaching learning materials, textbooks, maps and other resource materials, including access to Internet and computer enabled resources.
- Local materials of relevance to education (teaching and planning) such as studies of education in the district and education statistics, a collection of local experiments and innovative efforts related to education, etc.

Box 6.1

Six Key Roles to be played by Teacher Support Institutions according to ADEPTs: An MHRD-UNICEF Initiative

1. *Generate effective relationships and motivate performance*
2. *Establish vision of improved performance and set goals*
3. *Build capacity through planned measures*
4. *Assess and monitor performance*
5. *Respond to emerging situations*
6. *Generate further human resource towards sustained improvement*

- Tools and materials for replication of teaching aids, etc.
- Sets of materials that teachers can borrow and take into the classroom for direct use (not only for demonstration but multiple kits to organize activities for whole class also).
- Updated database on: resource persons / groups, resource organizations/agencies, and research institutes working on elementary education, to make it available at district to use for academic purposes.

The resource center works to nurture a professional community of users by:

- Promoting an interest in and a culture of using the library as a support for teaching and training, for ideas and for materials.
- Developing a culture of sharing ideas and experiences by contributing materials developed by teachers, etc. to the resource center.
- Networking the district, block, cluster and school resource centers for effective exchange of ideas, information and resources.
- To provide academic help and support to resource groups working at different levels (district, block and cluster levels) in the district.
- To facilitate teachers in developing and using educational resources that is low cost/locally available.
- To provide a forum for interactions with educationists, intellectuals, artists, creative teachers, resource persons and resource group to the district functionaries, including CRPs, BRPs, DIET faculty, D.Ed and B.Ed students.

6.2 PRE-SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITY OF DIETS

Pre-service training of teachers is the most crucial phase of teacher development and determines the core identity of teachers. The qualitative improvement of elementary education will become possible only with very robust programmes for pre-service training.

- To support quality elementary education, which is universal, teacher preparation has to undergo radical reform. Current pre-service teacher education programmes, their syllabi, methodologies, and overall approach to teacher education, need to be reviewed and renewed.
- The current curriculum and methodologies do not address the requirements of elementary school teachers working in a UEE situation and fail to provide the trainee with understanding and attitudes needed to work with children from a variety of childhoods and social milieu, or with the knowledge and skills required to teach reading, early literacy and numeracy. Their approach to planning of teaching also is centered on B.Ed type lesson planning from textbooks. The culture of these Institutes is hierarchical and paternal, treating the teacher trainees like children and a work routine to instill in them norms of obedience, learning by rote, teaching to the textbook and

Box 6.2

The District Education Resource Center at DIET and Education Resource Centers at five Block Resource Centers of Chamarajanagar

The DERC at Chamarajanagar was established in May 2007 with the active involvement of the DIET and NIAS collaboration. This center has about 4000 books in Kannada and English, audio-video materials, a variety of TLMs, Internet and computer access. It is managed by a Resource Center in-charge. Smaller collections of books and TLMs have also been provided at the blocks. Trainers use these actively during trainings, teachers, D.Ed students and Resource Persons are among the main users of the Resource Center, in addition to the children of local schools.

An attractive display board is changed once a week. Teachers of the local school have actively taken up organizing this display board. They have also now activated their own school library. The Resource Center in-charge ensures that each teacher who visits the center interacts with at least one or more item than she/he came in looking for. The user utilization is carefully maintained and monitored.

Principals of the DIETs from all districts of Karnataka appreciated that this is a space that can be easily created within the DIET and which can positively contribute to strengthening the academic culture and identity of the Institute.

(The DVD included in this document provides a short film explicating this concept in practice at Chamarajanagar District, Karnataka.)

being in uniform, rather than encouraging healthy debate and developing individual identities as teachers.

- For a qualitative review of teacher education programmes, we need to return to the core questions of 'what should teacher education seek to do?' and how can the curriculum of teacher education programmes be designed to enable teachers to become 'change agents'.

DIETs are potential sites for implementing high quality pre-service training programmes. In many states DIETs have been established in colleges which were already carrying out training. DIETs understand and are most effective in the area of pre-service teacher education as compared to any of their other assigned activities. The general experience however has been that with 'up-gradation' into DIET, this core activity has suffered on account of (a) change in personnel policy and hence inability to have good teacher educators (b) overall loss of focus and 'departmentalisation' of the Institute, and (c) in some cases additional administrative responsibilities such as monitoring the local private D.Ed colleges. Currently, the pre-service programmes of DIETs are no different from what is offered in any other college.

1. Pre-service Elementary Teacher Education must on the whole be reinvigorated and the DIET is an important site for this agenda.
 - (i) DIETs must be supported with finances, personnel and autonomy needed to innovate and provide high quality elementary teacher pre-service education programmes.
 - (ii) They must also be enabled to innovate in areas of curriculum, syllabus and pedagogy of the D.Ed programmes.

Box 6.3

BEEd: An innovative teacher education programme offered by the University of Delhi.

The BEEd is a four-year integrated teacher education programme to prepare elementary school teachers. Entry is after +2, and it leads to a degree that is equivalent to a BEd. The programme combines a progressive engagement with children, from carrying out craft work with them to teaching over the four-years, along with rigorous courses of study in the foundations of education, to understand Indian social reality, childhoods, child development and learning, basic courses in the subjects of school to 'relearn' school knowledge and then develop pedagogical understanding. The programme also provides an opportunity for the study of a liberal discipline for two years. The final year includes extensive internship in schools along with study of optional pedagogies for middle school. By undergoing several courses in theatre, art, and self-development, and by maintaining journals for reflection, students also engage reflectively with themselves and their growth as teachers. The programme is currently offered in several undergraduate colleges of the University of Delhi.

- (iii) For more academic focus there must be closer linkages with Universities and NGOs working in elementary education.
- (iv) The Pre-service Teacher Education Programmes and their syllabi and teaching methods need to be reviewed and renewed.
- (v) The pressing need in many states to attend to the training of para-teachers has led to a situation where the regular pre-service teacher training has been completely neglected.

2. A key area of reform in pre-service teacher education is engagement with basic content areas. This is not a plea to add more papers on content into the D.Ed curriculum, but to find creative solutions within existing requirements such as pedagogy, or internship, which will simultaneously permit the student-teacher to engage with some part of content in an in-depth manner.

- Another key area for attention is the development of good reading materials for our teacher trainees and teacher educators.

6.3 IN-SERVICE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Box 6.4

Teacher professional development is a more robust idea than 'in-service teacher training', which often tends to be functional and instrumental in its character. Just as professionals seek out the development which they need, a similar process should be engendered for teachers. *For this, first and foremost DIET needs to be oriented to provide a professional forum. Secondly, all programmes must find acceptance with the teacher groups concerned, regarding the aims and why they may want to attend. The principle of choice based on some valid assessment of personal needs would provide a sound basis for selection.*

Reforming DEd Syllabi

The faculty of the Delhi DIETs and the SCERT have begun a process of reviewing and reconstructing their D Ed Curriculum, and have sought a linkage with the Universities in this exercise. The USRN is able to provide a platform for these three groups to meet on equal and participatory terms.

Education faculty need to be invigorated with a great deal of outside involvement of those from the University system. Reform processes need to engender ownership of the teacher. But ownership also requires agency.

Training is one way of addressing continued professional development of teachers. Other significant ways include:

- Short and long term courses of study and Higher studies in education or other disciplines.
- Participation in textbook and material development related work.
- Participation and membership in teacher networks such as BGVS and TNSF.
- Attending workshops and seminars organized by both government and non-government agencies.
- Contributing to teacher education programmes as trainers and resource persons.
- Innovations and research in the classrooms.

The IFIC wing, which is meant to be involved with the practice of teachers, could have more people who think about and respond to teacher professional needs.

Education and Training curricula need to vary in length (i.e. time span). Year long curricula too could be considered, especially if the objective is to reflect and mentor so that learning from the training site is expected to transfer into the classroom. Otherwise the assessment is very premature. Particularly when we are talking about areas such as attitude or motivation, we cannot take a very functional approach to the training. There also needs to be some validity in the content and topics from the point of view of the region or the district, and in a direct sense relevant to teachers.

- Trainings must be designed and delivered locally* to the extent possible, rather than routinised implementation of trainings received from above in the cascade system. The *Master Resource Persons'* involvement in training objectives, leading to training design, would lead to better quality trainings for teachers – 'live' and non-routine.
- Cascade training* models need to be used for specific skill and information related areas where there is less likelihood of dilution across levels. Cascade designs could also have elements for local alteration.

Box 6.5

Teacher design their own professional development programmes

In Jangirh District, Chhatisgarh, teachers themselves got together to solve all the mathematics problems in the textbooks of classes I to VIII, and in the process not only found out about their own weaknesses, but also assisted each other to learn.

- (3) Trainings must be carried out based on the *cluster person's assessment of needs of teachers in their clusters and linked to a process of school follow-up and mentoring in which the CRPs participate*. For this, trainings need to be carried out at the cluster level. CRPs need to have information regarding who needs what training, based on which teachers should be called for training. After training of the teachers, there should be debriefing of CRPs in terms of how to carry out school based support.
- (4) For training to be more effective, *trainers need to meet with the same group of teachers again*, after they have had some opportunity to practice, so that they can discuss what worked, what did not and also address the issues that teacher's experience. For this, a 'split model' is better than trainings. In such a model, sessions would be of say on two days followed by a month or two of practice followed by again meeting (of the same group with the same trainers) for two or three days to reflect and to learn, etc.
- (5) Small groups for training (i.e. about 25 to 30) and trainings enriched with resource and ideas would lead to more impact and make trainings more interesting and relevant for teachers.
- (6) Teacher trainings, if it is viewed holistically within the perspective of the whole school's institutional development including its ethos and support for teacher's practice, is more likely to cumulatively result in practical changes that can have a curriculum impact.
- (7) The development of attitudes of teachers seems to be a major concern today. This is often approached as a problem of developing the affect. However, attitudes involve

Box 6.6

Importance of field interaction

It is only by entering into a vibrant and meaningful relationship with the field, and in particular schools, teachers and children, that DIETs will find their 'raison d'etre'. Ultimately any activity of the DIET requires this relationship which can creatively define and review its role in the light of the significance it has in the lives of schools and teachers. The IFIC wing of the DIET was expected to have such a vibrant relationship with the field. However its main focus has been reduced to training.

Frequently these days one hears demands that DIET faculty should visit schools. Unfocussed visits without any sense of how this is expected to contribute to the academic development of schools is arbitrary activity, and apart from educating the DIET faculty can contribute very little to academic needs of schools themselves. When carried out as one-off visits, they only serve as 'inspection visits'. However, if carried out with a plan and scope for subsequent regular visits these interactions can lead to teacher mentoring.

Many DIETs, in order to promote field interaction, have encouraged faculty to adopt mandals and work in them regularly. Such arrangements need to be supported with adequate TA for faculty, and also mechanisms through which such school visits can feed into a regularly maintained data base reflecting various aspects of the academic quality of school activities.

the intellect and our perspective on things. In the context of UEE, teachers need better perspective and understanding of the issues concerning children of the poor, children of 'low' castes, girls, and children with learning and various other kinds of disabilities. Through understanding and developing perspective the development of empathetic attitudes and motivation to work with underprivileged groups can be nurtured.

The concept of IFIC, in which in-service training was located within a larger framework of field interaction and innovation coordination, places in perspective in-service training in relation to a number of other activities that contribute to teacher professional development. Yet, the model has emphasised training over the field interaction component. Providing mass teacher training and providing institution-specific training are two different models.

6.4 MRP DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Given the block-cluster structure, DIETs can strengthen the quality of teacher training and school based support by *focusing on the development of Master Resource Persons at the District and Block levels.*

The MRP paradigm visualizes the creation of 'master resource persons' at the block level who can understand the nature of teachers' needs and design or creatively adapt an existing training to meet these needs locally. This is in contrast to the cascade approach where the module is a standard one, created at the state level, and resource persons are trained in limited ways to conduct this training repeatedly for various groups of teachers.

A Master Resource Person would:

- Have in-depth subject knowledge and related pedagogic knowledge and experience.
- Have knowledge of children's learning and also of teaching learning materials.
- Be able to understand teachers' needs and adapt or design workshops/training modules to address their professional development.
- Be able to communicate effectively and convincingly.
- Be able to visualize the nature of school support and mentoring required by teachers.
- Be able to respect teachers as adult professionals and thus create within the training process the space for their reflection and contribution.

Box 6.7

The 'Integrated Block and Cluster Development' (IBCD) Model for strengthening training at the Block/Cluster level

Focus areas:

1. *Develop BRC into a training facility.*
2. *Develop local subject resource pools (around 15 persons for each subject area) who can design and conduct teacher training.*
3. *Plan and implement workshops for teachers to include plan for follow up by CRPs.*
4. *Use school and cluster level data for planning and management of workshops and monitoring school quality.*

Processes:

1. *MRPs for each subject area selected by BRC team including BRPs, CRPs and Teachers based on basic knowledge of subject area and reputation as teachers.*
2. *Capacity building: residential training included subject knowledge, pedagogic related and education related knowledge, use of TLMs and Training of trainers related skills, Design of training modules. Followed by implementation of training along with feedback on training aspects. Self evaluation, peer evaluation and expert evaluation and feedback.*
3. *CRP led school follow-up planned post training.*

Features of teacher training designs:

1. *School follow-up was visualized as a part of training process itself (workshop + School Follow-up).*
2. *The split design provided spaces for teachers to reflect on the classroom practices.*
3. *The CRPs, BRPs were oriented on the importance of school followup and its linkages with planning.*

Some positive consequences:

1. *Small groups and pre-planning ensured high quality interactions with teachers. This was widely appreciated.*
2. *Where CRPs did visit schools, their school visit was focused vis a vis the training received by the teacher.*
3. *Several CRPs were proactive about conducting followup meetings at their cluster, and teacher reflection at this meeting was meaningful. Teachers found the 'split model' useful.*

Some Issues:

1. *Decentralized trainings at Block to Cluster do not easily find acceptance in the absence of a state policy on this matter.*
2. *Current conduct of trainings tend to disrespect the teacher as a professional. Frequently training related communications are not sent to teachers in advance.*
3. *The prevalent financial norms become viable only when the number of trainees is large (about 40-50) and this tends to make training less effective and routinised. The financial norms also do not support planning meetings required, or advance purchase of materials etc.*
4. *School follow-up is difficult to realize as there are several programmes to which the BRC needs to respond and which assume priority over school followup plans. BEOs also do not provide firm administrative back-up for school follow-up.*

The availability of pools of master resource persons in all the curriculum areas (academic subjects as well as music, theatre, art and craft) would directly contribute to enriching the quality of teacher interactions in monthly meetings, and during trainings, workshops, and school based mentoring. The development of MRPs requires higher levels of investment (higher unit costs) in training, as well as support from well-equipped resource centers.

6.5. LOCAL MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Locally relevant materials are important especially in elementary schools, where relevance enhances meaningfulness of the learning experience. DIETS, because of their district location, can ideally focus on the development of context specific materials that can be used by children in the district. Children's own drawing and artwork are a rich resource that can be creatively used in such local materials. In addition, with the advancement of technology, digital photographs and desk top publishing can lead to the production of attractive locally produced materials. Over time, faculty, local resource persons and experts, teachers and even children themselves can produce and publish materials not only for their own use but also for exchanging with other schools.

Box 6.8

Hunar Khoj of Delhi DIETs

The DIETs of Delhi undertook an extensive documentation of local resources. Through this activity, each DIET attempted to actively engage with and understand some facet of its local resource base and conceptualise ways in which this could be drawn upon to enrich ongoing activities of the DIET. Areas of focus included documenting local flora and fauna of the area, identifying local crafts people and what they could contribute to schools, mapping water bodies and water related concerns.

In some DIETs the DIET faculty undertook the surveys. In others students worked along with the faculty.

Local materials can be produced on a variety of themes:

- Local historical monuments
- Flora and fauna
- 'Problems' of the district
- Distinctive festivals and cultural events
- Songs, poems, and riddles
- Folk tales
- Tracing historical events of significance in the area
- Stories of people in the district
- The material life of people
- The crafts traditions of the area

6.6 MONITORING, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Being located at the district level, DIETs potentially could undertake **monitoring and review of the academic activities and academic standards** of the schools, by evolving effective ways of **handling data** pertaining to various aspects of academic achievement and provisioning and also relating to teachers and their practice. Currently DIETs do not have systems or approaches to handling data, yet this could potentially be a valuable activity of the DIET. Such capacity however requires familiarity and capability with basic research and documentation methods to handle and process data to produce simple reports.

- Potentially DIETs could regularly conduct and produce **district level reports on various quality parameters pertaining to the schools.**
- In the area of teacher training also, DIETs could serve to **consolidate and keep track of the trainings** being received by teachers through a training management system. This coordinating role would not only make the current arrangements of teacher training more efficient, but would significantly contribute to a more rational and transparent system of training.

What is key is not only to enable DIETs to produce such reports, but more importantly, to use these reports for the purposes of review and planning at their own level and also at the levels below them: block and cluster.

Box 6.9

Tools for monitoring Quality

The NCERT has produced a set of quality monitoring tools that can be used at the school, cluster, block and district levels, both as observational and data gathering tools as well as to produce meaningful reports at each level.

The UNICEF's Toolkit 'Towards Quality in Primary Schools' provides a set of instruments that can be used to monitor various aspects of quality relating to the schools as well as other institutions.

The **Annual Work Plan (AWP)** of the DIET needs to emerge as an activity signifying the autonomous character of the institution and also providing it with focus for the year. In most states, the AWP is a routinised activity based on mechanical allocation of equal amounts to all wings, which are then allocated to various teacher-training programmes. Instead the AWP could serve to integrate and focus the DIET on district requirements and reflect its own special role and how it visualizes making a

difference to schools, teachers and children. Further the AWP needs to reflect how the DIET utilizes multiple sources of funding to achieve its institutional objectives. For this the AWP process needs to:

- Involve all District and sub district institutions concerned with education, in particular the BRCs and CRCs, and within the framework of an educational plan for the district.
- Be participatory in its approach, involving all DIET faculties.
- Be based on review of the previous year AWP and reflection on achievements in relation to that.
- Take on board and plan in advance for various state programmes impacting on DIET faculty time and resources.
- Take into active consideration the parallel efforts of other agencies at the district level, including Non Government Organisations and other departments.
- Focus on and reflect district needs and district specific concerns, setting realistic goals.
- Visualize relationship of DIET activities with schools, BRCs, CRCs and other District institutions.
- Have a mix of both training and capacity building related workshops and activities as well as research, studies and material development.
- Include the faculties' own capacity building and reflective review, planning and meeting requirements.

A good AWP exercise would enable DIETs to prioritise and to revisit and reprioritise activities and requirements, based on the overall sense of significance of various activities in relation to each other and the desired outcomes.

It would provide focus and directly lead to the definition of roles as well as inter institutional relationships.

It would serve as the basis for the institution's own reflective audit.

Box 6.10

*Teacher Training Management System:
E-Governance Unit of DPI, Karnataka and NIAS*

The training management system builds upon the information available in the EMIS to address planning issues pertaining to in-service teacher training. This system manages and tracks the trainings for which teachers are deputed, i.e. the management of a training delivery system to ensure that there is a rational, efficient way to allocate/call the right teachers for the right training and to track the trainings received.

Trainings are provided to teachers by various agencies and aim at different aspects of their practice, ranging from personality development to specific grade and subject related inputs. Currently, the information on training are kept in hard copy form and capture data relating more to financial accounting rather than training management. The TMS can operate at the block level and assist in aspects relating to planning, review and reporting of trainings. Using information from the EMIS pertaining to teachers and their school location, the TMS captures additional information using two masters. The training master captures training description, including main features of training design, content, and agency. Training delivery master captures details of the delivery of a particular training, teacher names, training dates, attendance, etc.

The system permits various querying: "How many days of training did teachers undergo between two specified dates?" "To what extent have teachers of English been covered by english training?" "Who are the teacher who have had about 50 days of maths related training who can now be considered for MRP selection" etc.

VII. COLLABORATIONS: WHY AND HOW

It is increasingly becoming imperative that institutions within the formal government mechanism establish linkages with different non-government institutions and structures:

- To emerge out of their insularity
- To supplement existing funding requirements
- To access and leverage expertise and programme-personnel support
- To generate synergies for programmatic and institutional renewal

Such institutions could be multilateral funding agencies (UNICEF, DFID, EC, WB, etc.), civil society structures (PTAs, SDMCs, VECs, Youth groups, SHGs, etc.), decentralised elected bodies (PRIs and Standing committees of these structures), Non-government organizations, Universities, Research institutes, Institutes of higher education and Philanthropic (including corporate) organizations.

Frequently non-government and philanthropic efforts want to address the crisis of education, but their conception does not include the DIET in it. It is usually about teachers not performing well, or children out of school, which are worthy concepts, but they are not systemic conceptions.

In the case of schools there is almost two decades of experience based on which we are able to build a slightly deeper understanding of what it entails to work with these institutions to make them more functional. But we are only beginning to acquire such understanding in the context of other educational institutions, particularly those that are at the district or sub-district levels.

Partnerships increase synergies, but at the same time they frequently lack clarity on objectives of partnership and roles of different partners. Hierarchies/power asymmetries are not spelt out upfront and plague many partnerships.

7.1 MODELS FOR COLLABORATION

Collaboration is usually to build a model which

- (a) Is sustainable in the sense that when the 'intervention' has come to an end, and the extra resources allocated for that period are withdrawn, still the changes should continue in existence.
- (b) Can be mainstreamed.

The range of possible collaborators include:

- (1) Academic institutions or independent research groups
- (2) NGOs working in education
- (3) Funding agencies

Other relatively un-noticed groups, but also with immense potential for renewal through collaborative synergies include:

- (4) DIETs within the same State
- (5) DIETs across different States.

Forms of work:

- (b) **Direct work.** A small group of resource persons spend dedicated permanent time with the institution, building relationships that would form the basis of evolving working arrangements and also enable tiding over changes in bureaucracy, which are inevitable.
- (c) **Collaboration through research.** Here the aim is to facilitate and also study, understand and document organizational change. This effort could lead to an understanding of how change is taking place and these learnings could be taken to a different site or shared with a wider fraternity, including those wishing to collaborate with DIETs or with state and National level government. Such research effort would involve detailed observations of processes and areas such as people's attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of what they are supposed to do, their own expertise, and understanding of planning and management processes.
- (d) A third area could be to **support DIETs to develop their infrastructure.** Rather than concentrating on teachers themselves, or areas such as curriculum, textbooks and teacher training, which are more in the direct realm of state action, funds could be used and directed at areas such as infrastructure development and attend to the details that will ensure that the institution is not beleaguered by these matters. This includes not only the state of their buildings, but also matters such as provision of labs, IT and other facilities. E.g. In the case of Bara DIET in Rajasthan an amount of 4-5 lakhs have been invested to ensure proper electricity supply.

7.2 POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations require a policy framework that would address some issues such as:

a. What are the roles expected of different stakeholders of such collaborative efforts?

Box 7.1

Collaboration route to DIET renewal in Rajasthan

Lok Jumbish deliberately brought two DIETs Masooda, and Dungarpur into formal relationship with outside non-government people with the idea that this interaction would infuse new energy into the institutions and provide them with capacity building. Each worked out in a different way. Masooda, in interaction with Alaripu did creative work in the area of art and drama. Dungarpur, working with Vidya Bhawan Society was more geared towards the Lok Jumbish functions. These collaborations were energizing as long as there was an active and interested principal and collapsed in their absence. These collaborations did lead to innovation and the possibilities of out-of-the-way innovation with scope for transformation, but sustaining and maintaining them is a challenge

Digantar and Vidya Bhawan Society effort in Bara Rajasthan Spang several levels of the educational hierarchy: CRCs, BRCs and DIET, with five persons permanently at the DIETs, and other staff at the BRCs, CRCs as well as 21 government schools, to try to envisage what the DIET, BRCs and CRCs are actually supposed to do and then work towards how it can actually start doing these things. This effort has been planned as a 3-5 year project.

- b. What are the key areas, which should form the exclusive purview of the government (and its institutional setup)?
- c. What are the different collaborative involvements (related to funding, expertise, personnel, programmes, etc.) that are needed for DIETs and which are the institutions best suited for such involvements?
- d. What should be the accountability mechanisms for such collaborative efforts and how should policy guide such mechanisms (case-to-case or broad pre-formulated framework?; which institutions to oversee collaboration?)

The DIET Strengthening Project of National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore

The proposal of the District Quality Education Project, National Institute of Advanced Studies to collaborate with the Government of Karnataka for DIET Chamarajanagar was focused on strengthening the DIET as an institution oriented to school improvement in the District and to work more effectively for this by:

- (a) better linkage and interaction with BRC-CRC for school followup and teacher support.*
- (b) improving quality of inservice training and teacher professional development through (i) better MRP pool with local specific training designs and (ii) better planning and management of trainings using teacher data base (iii) availability of a resource centre to support training.*
- (c) closer orientation to the district specific schooling needs and issues such as education of tribal children in Chamarajanagar District through the AWP processes.*

The proposal sought to address four dimensions of the Institution:

- I. Faculty: (i) adding externally four qualified persons to DIET faculty in the IFIC, DRU, P&M and 'District Specific Wing', and including 3 teachers from BRPs and CRPs who would come to the DIET for a period of three years, as well as teacher fellowships. (ii) Faculty selection to systematically reflect school academic areas including art, theatre and physical education. (iii) Faculty capacity building through induction training, study tours, academic grant, and direct interaction with schools in lab area.*
- II. Structure: Reorganisation of units to exclude wings such as WE and DRU and bring in district needs based wings such as Tribal Education, and enhance the strength and focus of the IFIC wing.*
- III. Resource Centre.*
- IV. DIET activities: (i) A coherent annual work plan which is more than a list of trainings, and instead aim at a larger institutional purpose, with more district specificity. (ii) Shift away from large scale teacher education to more MRP development, (iii) Stronger linkages with BRC-CRC especially for academic planning of their activities and school follow-up, (iv) Research, evaluation and monitoring.*

Some Key Experiences:

The terms of engagement which were accepted at the state level were renegotiated at the district level. They were most effective during the term of a dynamic and proactive principal, and following considerable involvement of NIAS-loan faculty in the day-to-day activities of the DIET demonstrating willingness to participate in routine work of the institution also help to meet deadlines, design the web site, and produce good quality source materials/training modules as per the DSERT directives to all DIETs etc. Collaboration required both state level and district level efforts of the partner. The 'core areas' of policy which involved structural decisions or policy decisions did not lend themselves to alteration. Recruitment could not be carried out as planned, as differences could not be made for one single DIET. Some ideas, such as having a teacher fellowship were accepted when first proposed, but never implemented as later it was pointed out that it was not practicable. Induction training was planned at state level, but not carried out. NIAS team members were eventually accepted as 'loan faculty' with faculty status, rather than core faculty or consultants. The structure of wings and re-allocation of personnel was also not effected, although the DIET itself later took initiative to begin a Tribal Children's Education Wing. Participatory preparation of Annual Work Plan with more focus on MRP training, interactions with BRCs and research studies found acceptance.

The Resource Centre took off well. Being tangible and concrete, yet non-threatening, it provided a space to bring in elements of the needed institutional academic focus, and suggested a potential space for collaborators.

- A collaboration can be viewed as a new kind of institution and institution development concepts would also apply to such an institution as well, such as:
 - a. Purpose/Goal
 - b. Underlying norms/principles/values
 - c. Planning
 - d. Structures
 - e. Roles of different groups
 - f. Staffing
 - g. Funding
 - h. Assessment of work done

7.3 OPERATIONALISING 'PARTNERSHIP' ON EQUAL TERMS

- An approach of '**equality**' in partnerships is critical. When either partner views the other as encroaching the 'field' of one's work, it can be problematic. There is a need of empathy and persistence to make any headway. Openness, humility, willingness to engage are critical requirements. Also, between different 'cultures' (such as GO-NGO), we need sometime to build a relationship, which can be a basis for work to be done.
- There are many **stakeholders** in the institution; both internal and external. There needs to be clarity regarding the relationships between these stakeholders as well as **processes** that would underlie these relations.
- The ability to engage with and to make a dent in the system is connected to the degree to which we are not just able to tolerate but actually **able to 'celebrate' working with the system**. *Positions, on the one hand that 'NGOs are smarter, work harder, are more honest than government', or on the other hand that 'NGOs are tenants in Government spaces and must therefore not be critical', are not tenable, and have to be given up.*
- Partnerships are difficult as **the structures and frameworks of Government and Non Government institutions are very different**. The notion of '**quality**' of academic institutions is often too esoteric and time consuming for Governmental agencies who define 'quality' from the point of view of public consensus and acceptability and implementability. Given the time bound and imperative nature of demands made from any government institution and the DIETs' chronic problems of staffing and funds, institutional priorities can shift and be redefined at short notice and there is little surplus energy. 'Partners' also have differential access to power and to higher echelons of the educational hierarchy.

Acknowledging up-front some of these structural differences could assist in negotiating the absence of operational equality. Redefining priorities by the outside collaborating partner, also, sometimes becomes imperative.

Box 7.3

Structural Dissonance

In the case of the University School Research Network-DIET Motibagh collaboration, the DIET principal is supportive and interested, but there are pressing institutional requirements in terms of having only six faculty members and 200 students to be trained. This is the immediate requirement that needs to be dealt with. Research capacity or material development assistance are good and desirable, but they are not immediate and pressing requirements. There is thus a structural positioning on the short term 'objectives' of the institution which stands in contradiction with the collaboration.

- **Collaborators who bring in specific areas of expertise** can contribute directly to DIET requirements. If one has many general skills then this tends to

get utilized in more routinised ways, which do not contribute to specific impact. Collaborating partners also need to be prepared to demonstrate their expertise and capabilities.

- **Time is required to build trust, to gain confidence, and to learn about the Institution.** This is a pre-requisite in any collaboration. The participatory approach of arriving at common agendas is also time consuming but again is necessary if one wants to function in an institutional manner through the collaboration. Hence the collaborating partner would **need to be prepared to renegotiate and even shelve priorities.** People involved in the collaboration often experience frustration while arriving at the working relationships. The essence of working is to create synergies of mutual benefit. The process is marked by negotiations with personal discomforts, conflict, contradictions and tensions in day-to-day work. Thus, **managing this complexity** is essential for effectiveness of working relationship.
- It is important to **work at what is feasible and important from the Institution's own point of view.** Areas such as institutional building and changing the character of the institution are desirable, but are more difficult to engage with and require more time and ownership of ideas.
- The possibility of **leveraging more of the district level officials** to support collaborative efforts need to be worked upon and made integral to the district level collaboration. Decisions taken at the state can easily be re-prioritised and given lower importance within the processes of the district, and state authorities have limited control and influence at the district level.
- **Institutional leadership** is key in making the collaboration work. It is also key in the overall functionality and motivation of the Institution itself.

Box 7.4

Paradoxes in Partnership

Relationships which are called 'partnerships' are frequently, in reality, an intervention with a university or NGO conceptualizing what they believe the DIET requires, rather than the DIET playing an equal role in trying to define the terms of engagement. There could be a problem of approaching an institution with such an implicit deficit model.

At the same time, when the DIET itself is dysfunctional and there aren't enough faculty, when there are constant changes in leadership and constant turnover of faculty also, the reception on the ground is unsteady and there is no real government partner to work with. This leads to a situation of either working with one-sided definitions and doing something meaningful, or not working at all.

ABBREVIATIONS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
B El Ed	Bachelor of Elementary Education
B Sc	Bachelor of Science
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEO	Block Education Officer
BGVS	Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi
BRC/P	Block Resource Center/ Person
CMDE	Curriculum, Material Development and Evaluation (a wing of the DIET)
CRC/P	Cluster Resource Center/ Person
CTE	Colleges of Teacher Education
D Ed	Diploma in Education
DERC	District Education Resource Center
DFID	Department For International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DQEP	District Quality Education Project (a project of NIAS in Chamarajanagar District, Karnataka)
DRU	District Resource Unit (a wing of the DIET)
HBCSE	Homi Bhabha Center for Science Education
IASE	Institute of Advance Studies In Education
IBCD	Integrated Block and Cluster Development (a subprogramme of DQEP)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFIC	In-Service Programmes, Field Interaction and Innovation Coordination (a wing of the DIET)
M Ed	Master of Education
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRP	Master Resource Person
NCERT	National Council of Education Research and Training
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NIAS	National Institute of Advanced Studies
NIEPA / NUEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration / National University of Educational Planning and Administration
P & M	Planning and Management (a wing of the DIET)
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PSTE	Pre Service Teacher Education (a wing of the DIET)
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SCERT / DSERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training / Department of State Educational Research and Training
SDMC	School Development and Monitoring Committee
SHG	Self Help Group
SIEMAT	State Institute of Educational Management and Training
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyana
TA	Travel Allowance
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
TMS	Training Management System
TNSF	Tamil Nadu Science Forum
UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USRN	University School Resource Network
VEC	Village Education Committee
WE	Work Experience (a wing of the DIET)
ZP	Zilla Parishad / Zilla Panchayat

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PROGRAMME

DIETs: Potential and Possibilities

A consultation organized by
The District Quality Education Project, NIAS, Bangalore
in collaboration with
The Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi
On October 4-5, 2007 at NIAS Bangalore

As this is a consultation, the sessions have been planned with the idea that *all the invited participants will share experiences and ideas*. The purpose of having two or three named presentations in each session is primarily to stimulate and guide the discussion and highlight some specificities.

Day 1 4.10.07	
Session 1 10am - 11am	Introduction to the consultation: Setting the context and posing the over arching concerns Ms. Anita Kaul, Dr. R.Govinda, Dr. Padma M. Sarangapani
Session 2 11.15am - 1:00pm	Theme 1: Academic Role and Functions of DIETs. This session will involve articulations and deliberations on meaningful academic objectives that DIETs could be aligned to. It would include aspects of School quality which would be of concern to DIETs, the meaning of the District location both with respect to how district focus could inform DIET objectives and decentralized location in the context of academic work. This exploration of institutional objectives would be necessary to feed into subsequent deliberations. Mr. Rohit Dhankar (also to chair), Dr. AR Vasavi, Mr. Razzak
Session 3 2.00pm - 3.45pm.	Theme 2: Central and State frameworks 11 th plan: the Central and State perspectives and concerns. Financing and structure, scope for flexibilities (across and within states) DIETs in relation to central and state project based interventions including SSA etc. Ms. Anita Kaul (also to chair), Dr. Pranati Panda,
Session 4 4.00pm - 5.45pm.	Theme 3: DIETs in relation to State structures and requirements Relationship and alignment with BRCs, CRCs, SCERT; Roles and objectives differentiation; DIET structures in relation to Elementary vs. Secondary Education, Adult education, Pre Service Teacher Education. Scope for Financial and Academic autonomy. District/State specific internal structures. Dr. Janaki Rajan (also to chair), Mr. Upendar Reddy, Dr. Pratibha Sharma
Day 2 5.10.07	
Session 5 9.30am- 11.15am	Theme 4: Institutional Development Personel policy, institutional culture, Capacity building, Resource Centres. Mr. Vinoba Gautham (also to chair), Dr. Manjulika Vaz (RC Film introduced by Prakash Kamath)
Session 6 11.30am 1.15pm	Theme 5: Teacher Professional Development Current conceptions of teacher development. DIET involvement in PSTE. DIET involvement and role in inservice training and relationship with BRCs-CRCs. Cascade vs. local training design approaches. Dr. Poonam Batra (also to chair), Mr. Subir Shukla, Ramkumar and Rahul (NIAS-DIET team)
Session 7 2.15pm- 4.00pm	Theme 6: Partnerships Collaborations, partnerships and interactions between institutions for DIET strengthening. Amrita Patwardhan (also to chair) Mr. Sunil Kumar, Shivakumar (NIAS-DIET)
Session 8 4.15pm 5.00pm	Open deliberation and Conclusion Dr. R. Govinda,, Dr. Padma M. Sarangapani