

Enhancing Teaching competencies at Elementary Level: A study on the Role of DIET

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ABSTRACT

In the present context of competency-based education and the implementation of reforms such as the National Education Policy (2020), the role of **District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)** has become increasingly significant. DIET acts as the key academic and resource support institution at the district level for strengthening elementary education. With the shift from rote learning to skill development, critical thinking, and holistic growth of learners, teachers are required to continuously upgrade their pedagogical practices. DIET facilitates this transformation by organizing pre-service and in-service training programmes that equip teachers with modern, learner-centred methodologies. It promotes activity-based learning, experiential approaches, inclusive classroom practices, and continuous comprehensive evaluation aligned with contemporary educational goals. Furthermore, DIET plays an important role in curriculum adaptation, development of teaching-learning materials, and integration of educational technology. By encouraging the use of digital tools, smart classrooms, and innovative assessment techniques, it helps teachers respond effectively to the changing demands of 21st-century education. DIET also conducts action research, monitors classroom practices, and provides academic guidance to ensure quality improvement at the grassroots level. Its support extends to addressing local educational needs, reducing dropout rates, and promoting equity and access in schooling. Thus, DIET serves as a cornerstone institution for capacity building and professional development of elementary school teachers. By strengthening teacher competence, fostering innovation, and ensuring continuous academic support, it contributes directly to improved student learning outcomes and the overall enhancement of educational quality. In this way, DIET plays a transformative role in realizing the broader vision of educational reforms and sustainable development of the education system.

Keywords: DIET, Teacher Education, Elementary teachers, NEP.

INTRODUCTION:

The quality of elementary education largely depends upon the competencies of teachers. Competent teachers possess adequate subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management abilities, and a positive attitude towards learners. In order to strengthen elementary education in India, the Government established the District Institute of Education and Training

(DIET) in 1987 under the National Policy on Education. DIET functions as a nodal agency at the district level for pre-service and in-service teacher education. The primary objective of DIET is to improve the quality of elementary education by developing professional competencies among teachers. It provides academic support, training programmes, workshops, action research guidance, and resource materials to elementary school teachers. Through these initiatives, DIET enhances teachers' pedagogical skills, subject mastery, use of teaching-learning materials (TLMs), assessment practices, and understanding of inclusive education. DIET plays a vital role in improving the professional skills of teachers, promoting child-centered education, supporting inclusive practices, and ensuring quality learning outcomes in elementary schools. It bridges the gap between educational policies and classroom practices at the district level.

District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)

The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) is a district-level educational institution established by the Government of India in 1987 following the recommendations of the National Policy on Education 1986. Its main objective is to strengthen elementary education by improving the quality of teacher education and providing academic support at the grassroots level.

DIET acts as a nodal agency for:

- Pre-service teacher education (such as Diploma in Elementary Education D.El.Ed.)
- In-service training programmes for elementary teachers
- Academic guidance and supervision of primary and upper primary schools
- Development of teaching-learning materials (TLMs)
- Conducting action research and educational research
- Implementation of government educational schemes

Major Functions of DIET

- 1. Training and Capacity Building** - Organizes regular training, workshops, and seminars to enhance teachers' competencies.
- 2. Curriculum Support** - Assists in curriculum development and implementation at the elementary level.
- 3. Resource Support** - Acts as a resource center for schools in the district.
- 4. Research and Innovation** – Conducts action research to solve classroom problems.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation – Supports academic supervision and evaluation of educational programmes.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gupta (2008) analysed the effectiveness of DIET in providing pre-service and in-service teacher education. The research found that DIET training significantly enhanced teachers' pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills. However, it noted that practical classroom exposure during training was limited in certain districts.

Rao and Singh (2012) investigated academic support functions, the study reported that DIETs effectively conducted workshops and cluster meetings, helping teachers adopt learner-centered approaches. It also highlighted irregular follow-up support as a major challenge.

Kumar (2015) focused on the role of DIET in the preparation and distribution of Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs). The study concluded that teachers who received support from DIET in TLM design were more confident in using activity-based teaching strategies.

Sharma (2017) examined the implementation of action research programmes by DIET. The findings revealed that while DIET encourages teachers to engage in action research, only a limited number of teachers completed research projects due to time constraints and lack of institutional incentives.

Patel & Mehta (2019) assessed DIET's role in continuous professional development. It documented improvements in classroom assessment practices and subject mastery among teachers who participated in DIET's in-service programmes. It also recommended more frequent refresher courses.

Joshi (2021) Focused on DIET's role in implementing educational reforms, this study found that DIETs played an important role in orienting teachers towards competency-based education and integration of ICT in teaching, especially after the introduction of the National Education Policy 2020.

Reddy & Kumar (2022) explored challenges faced by DIETs in fulfilling their functions. Findings showed that inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained faculty, and limited financial support hampered effective functioning in some districts.

Drawing upon a comprehensive review of literature that underscores the significance and impact of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), the present study seeks to critically examine the role of DIET in strengthening the professional competencies of elementary school teachers in Odisha. The study aims to analyze how DIET contributes to

capacity building, pedagogical improvement, and overall enhancement of the quality of elementary education at the district level.

The study employed a descriptive survey method and covered four DIETs from selected districts of Odisha. The sample comprised 200 student teachers, 20 teacher educators, 160 elementary school teachers, and 40 community members. The findings indicate that the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) plays a significant role in strengthening the professional competencies and capacity of elementary school teachers.

However, the study also brought to light several systemic challenges, including shortage of qualified staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and insufficient residential accommodations. Furthermore, DIETs situated in tribal districts were found to face comparatively greater deficiencies than those located in non-tribal districts, thereby affecting their overall functional efficiency.

Table-1 Analysis of elementary teacher’s view on Functioning of the DIETs.

Sl. No.	Statements	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		F	%	F	%
1	Well planned for conducting In-service teacher trainings are made by DIETs	96	60.00	64	40.00
2	Circulation of information in advance to the Teachers regarding organization of trainings	120	75.00	40	25.00
3	Well-trained Resource persons of DIET give trainings	88	55.00	72	45.00
4	The trainings are coordinated with BRCs, CRCs and NGOs at different level by DIET	104	65.00	56	35.00
5	DIETs provide ICT trainings for CALC schools	136	85.00	24	15.00
6	Different educational activities conducted by DIET for Teachers	96	60.00	64	40.00
7	Need based training given by the DIETs	104	65.00	56	35.00

8	DIETs organize training programmes for development of professional commitment among teachers	88	55.00	72	45.00
9	Before and after conducting any training, pretest and post test are conducted by the DIETs	112	70.00	48	30.00
10	Value oriented and subject oriented trainings for teachers are given by the DIETs	96	60.00	64	40.00
11	DIET gives Content based trainings to subject teachers	144	90.00	16	10.00
12	DIET provides training of schools heads, leadership, capacity building trainings	96	60.00	64	40.00
13	Science exhibitions, seminars are conducted by DIET	128	80.00	32	20.00
14	Every Training of DIETs is accompanied with related literature	88	55.00	72	45.00
15	DIET conducts trainings of SSA and RMSA	104	65.00	56	35.00

The majority of Non-Tribal elementary teachers expressed a higher perception of the DIETs programs' role performance in areas like in-service teacher training, organizing training programs, coordinating with CRC, BRC and NGOs, conducting educational activities for Teacher Educators, and fostering professional responsibility and value-oriented and subject-oriented training.

Some elementary level teachers specifically noted the DIETs effectiveness in coordinating training with BRCs-CRCs and NGOs, developing teachers' professional commitment, providing value-oriented and subject-oriented training, CBT and STF trainings. The data reveals that the perception of Non-Tribal Teachers surpasses that of Tribal Teachers.

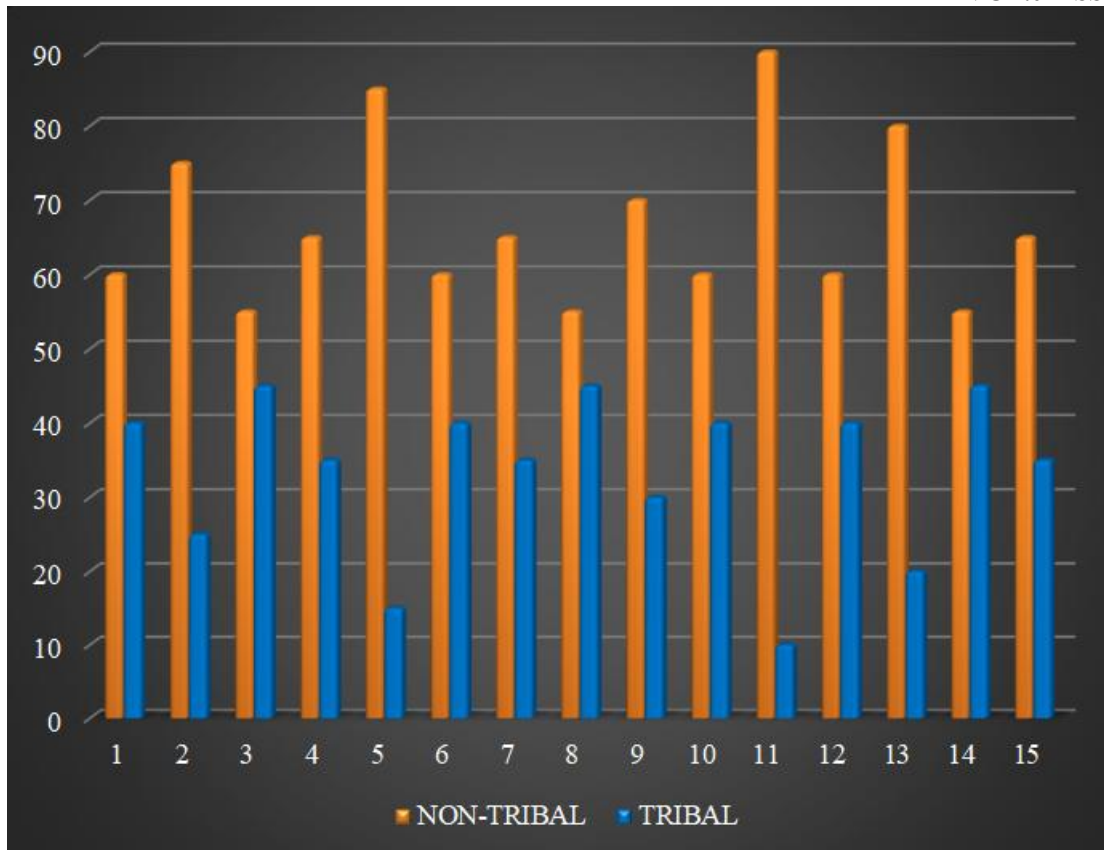


Figure-1 Graph showing Analysis of elementary teacher's view on Functioning of the DIETs

Sl. No.	Statements	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		F	%	F	%
1	With regards to my classroom teaching the training offered by DIETs were beneficial	100	62.50	60	37.50
2	Through the trainings received from DIETs teaching skills got improved	120	75.00	40	25.00
3	Through the efficient training by DIETs, there is a professional development	110	68.75	50	31.25
4	Through training classroom conversation got fluent	140	87.50	20	12.50
5	Training programmes conducted by DIETs helped me to improve own teaching material	90	56.25	70	43.75

6	Trainings on counseling and guidance are beneficial in solving children's issue	110	68.75	50	31.25
7	Through CCE and SSA trainings by DIETs classroom transactions are more efficient	115	71.88	45	28.13
8	In-service Training of DIETs improvement in planning and organisational skills	125	78.13	35	21.88
9	For the effective teaching Edu-sat training programmes were heavenly beneficial	95	59.38	65	40.63
10	Through need based trainings organized in DIETs beneficial results are in annual plan of action in teaching	127	79.38	33	20.63
11	Improved and Modified training programmes framed by DIETs for professional commitment	123	76.88	37	23.13
12	Improvement in life skills because of the trainings of the DIETs	105	65.63	55	34.38
13	Pretest and posttest are illustrated inefficiently in classroom due of the trainings offered by the DIETs	118	73.75	42	26.25
14	Reasoning and critical thinking skills were finely and efficiently improved	112	70.00	48	30.00

The majority of elementary level non-tribal teachers observed a superior training effectiveness in DIETs programs, particularly in utilizing training in classroom learning, enhancing classroom management skills, fostering professional development, nurturing professional commitment and promoting the improvement of life skills.

Additionally, some non-tribal teachers specifically noted the heightened training effectiveness of DIETs in areas such as using training in classroom learning, refining classroom management skills, advancing professional development, facilitating meaningful classroom interactions, implementing trainings, emphasizing life skills, conducting pre-test and post-test assessments, and providing training for creative thinking skills.

Table-3 Strength of DIET functioning with regard to Development of Elementary Education

Sl. No.	Strength Area	Non-Tribal no of respondents said yes (out of 212)	Tribal no of respondents said yes(outof 212)
1	Capacity Building programmes for pre-service conduct by DIET	171	140
2	Development of local, FLN, Toy and content based materials	193	145
3	Development of e-content and Digital materials for students teachers etc.	170	142
4	Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for in-service teachers	174	150
5	Monitoring and academic support system	165	140
6	Collaborative and action research activities	170	143
7	ICT Lab facility and its use	165	141
8	Activities on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy	172	145
9	Pedagogy and curriculum	170	142
10	Linkage with District, block level individual and institution	177	150
	Mean Value	172.7	143.8

The analysis of table reveals the mean of respondents of non-tribal district is 172.7 and the mean of respondents of tribal district is 143.8. It gives information for effective working of DIET for development of capacity building of teachers, local, FLN and toy-based materials, e-content, continuous professional development, monitoring and academic support, ICT interaction,

content enrichment programs and maintaining linkage with other institutions. Hence the strength areas of non-tribal were more than the DIETs of tribal district with regard to Development of quality elementary education.

Major Findings of the Study

- ❖ The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) play a significant role in enhancing the professional competence and capacity building of elementary school teachers.
- ❖ Student teachers reported that academic support, internship supervision, and training programmes conducted by DIETs positively influenced their pedagogical skills.
- ❖ Teacher educators emphasized that DIETs contribute to improving classroom practices through in-service training, workshops, and community engagement activities.
- ❖ The study identified major challenges such as shortage of qualified staff, inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching-learning resources, and insufficient residential facilities.
- ❖ DIETs located in tribal districts were found to have more pronounced deficiencies in comparison to those in non-tribal districts, particularly in terms of infrastructure and staffing patterns.
- ❖ Community members acknowledged the supportive role of DIETs in strengthening elementary education, though they suggested the need for greater outreach and collaboration.
- ❖ Overall, while DIETs significantly contribute to the development of elementary education, systemic improvements are required to enhance their effectiveness and outreach.

CONCLUSION

DIETs play a vital role in strengthening elementary education through pre-service and in-service teacher training, academic support, and community engagement. They significantly contribute to enhancing teachers' professional competence and improving classroom practices. However, their effectiveness is hindered by challenges such as staff shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources, particularly in tribal districts. Addressing these gaps through proper staffing, improved facilities, and stronger administrative support is essential. Strengthening DIETs will enhance their overall functioning and contribute to improving the quality and equity of elementary education.

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