

# **In-service teacher education and training**

Perspective study of teachers on the effectiveness of their in-service teacher education and training for their classroom practices and its policy implication for their continuing professional development in Uttrakhand, India.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to know the perspective of Indian elementary school teachers on the effectiveness of their in-service education training courses for their classroom practices and what can be the policy implication of this findings for the continuing professional development of teachers in Uttarakhand state in India. In-service teacher education and training is a regular phenomenon of teacher development program under the education for all in India (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan). Despite the focus on the professional development of teachers through in-service teacher education, the perspective of teachers is a missing link in the formulation of in-service teacher education policy. Analysis of 8 elementary school teachers in-depth interview and a focus group discussion indicated that the involvement of teachers in designing their in-service teacher training programs is a missing link in the entire hypothesis of in-service teacher education and training. Teachers find a limited relevance of these programs for their classroom teaching and learning practices. Based on this research, I propose a shift in in-service teacher education and training towards collaborative inquiry about teaching and learning with in school and strengthening of teacher support system.

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## List of Abbreviations

BEO	:	Block Education Officer
BRC	:	Block Resource Centre
CPD	:	Continuing Professional Development
CRC	:	Cluster Resource Centre
DIET	:	District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	:	District Primary Education Program
EFA	:	Education for All
INSET	:	In-service education and training
NCF	:	National Curriculum Framework
NPE	:	National Policy of Education
NCTE	:	National Council for Teacher Education
OB	:	Operation Blackboard0
RTE	:	Right to Education
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

## **Acknowledgement**

Over the course of the last 12 years of my professional work, I have worked towards as a teacher and teacher support system in India. This paper in a sense captures the teacher perspective on their in-service teacher education and training as a professional development activity. In attempting to do this, I have done a small qualitative research to capture the perspective of eight elementary school teachers of the district Uttarakashi in Uttarakhand state in India. In this process I have conducted semi-structured interviews along with one focus group discussion to capture the perspective of teachers. I have also used some research studies, reports, data and other relevant primary secondary sources to show that the perspective of teachers is an important need to be incorporated in the professional development activities of teachers.

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people for their advice and encouragement that they have shown me throughout my Masters and in particular in the production of this work. Most especially, I would like to thank Ford Foundation International fellowships program which gave me this golden opportunity of my life to enhance my skills and career through higher education.

To my supervisor, Dr. John Pryor, who provided an invaluable amount of advice regarding the direction and approach that this research project should take, and was frequently available to provide support and guidance. To course conveners: Dr Alison Croft and one another tutor Dr. Jo Westbrook at the department of education, who provided an invaluable amount of academic support and has shown me a great deal of kindness throughout the year.

For help with the data, I would like to thank all those eight elementary school teachers who were my respondents in this research. I am also grateful to District Project Office of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (EFA) in the district Uttarakashi. I would also like to acknowledge the support of all my colleagues in Azim Premji Foundation. Finally, I would like to thank my all friends of MAIED, University of Sussex and my all fellow friends from Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program for their care and support throughout this academic year.

## 1. Introduction

The quality of education in any society depends on the quality of the teachers it produces. How children learn and what the role of the teacher is, is a central question for all teacher development programmes from pre-service to in-service education (Guskey, 2010). Furthermore, the success of schools in depends upon the adaptability of its teachers to the new and changing demands generated on them by the advancement in science and technology and accordingly the social and economic needs of the society (Hegarty, 2000). According to Schwille and Dembele (2007, p.12) teachers should be the central focus of all measures of quality enhancement in education and no attempt can be effective without the active support of teachers. The authors further argue that

The teacher act as a mediator and effectiveness of innovation very much depends on the teacher making proper use of them. The teacher is at the epicentre of the learning process and learning therefore depends first and foremost on the quality of teacher

Since the 1990's lots of effort has been made in India to enhance the capabilities of teachers through in-service teacher education with international support. In-service teacher education and training is one of many initiatives which has been adopted to impact classroom teaching and learning practices by increasing teachers professional knowledge. But, researches across the world raise questions on the effectiveness of in-service teacher training with respect to its implications for classroom teaching and learning practices (Nicolaidis and Matheoudakis, 2008; Hayes, 1995; NCTE, 2009). In-service teacher education is inadequate because of the mismatch between the content the teachers learn in their in-service teacher education and training and real classroom situations at school (Ramchandran et al. 2009). Further, the top-down approach of in-service teacher education leaves very little scope for teachers to raise their genuine issues related to teaching-learning processes in any teacher development programme. What they learn in professional development programmes is of little relevance for their classroom practices. According to Dyer et al (2004, p. 42) these new structures 'often struggle to transform an 'on paper' policy idea into a 'real life' identity and purpose.'

According to Dyer et al. (2004) teacher development in India is a complex area and needs the sound mechanism of taking teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching-learning into account. The learning context of teachers shapes their attitudes and beliefs, so the active involvement of teachers in Professional Development Plans should be the core agenda of teacher education reform.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent the elementary school teachers in Uttarakhand, India have responded to in-service teacher education and training as an important part of their continuing professional development and their perspective about the effectiveness of current In-service teacher education and training courses for their classroom practices. Uttarakhand is a small hill state situated in northern part of India. This is a qualitative study which is based on the in-depth interview of eight elementary school teachers working in government schools in district *Uttarkashi* of Uttarakhand state.

This study takes into account the direct experiences of teachers and draws some broad patterns from these experiences regarding their perspective on their INSET. In this sense this is phenomenological study. According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 22) phenomenology is a theoretical stand, which considers the experience of people as reality and draws some broad conclusions from what people say about their life. As a researcher my position was an insider. I worked in the district of *Uttarkashi* with the District Project office (DPO) of *Serva Shiksha Abhiyan* (EFA) as an academic support fellow between 2008 to mid of 2011.

This study is divided into five sections. The first section deals with the rationale of this study. It focuses on the need to understand the perspective of teachers in their professional development programs. The second section explores the perspective of In-service teacher education and training in light of international literature. This section highlights the relevance of In-service teacher education and training and critiques of INSET. It also throws light on the continuing professional development of teachers and its linkages with INSET activities. The third section deals with the effectiveness of INSET in the context of India and explores policy recommendations related to the professional development of teachers. The fourth section deals with the methodology of this study. This qualitative study uses semi-structured in-depth interviews of eight elementary school teachers as a major tool of data collection.

The analysis part of this study presents the findings and analyse the perspective of teacher on their INSET programs. Finally this study concludes that teacher self-efficacy plays an important role in their professional development. In-service teacher education and trainings in the district *Uttarkashi* are not different from what international literature reveals. But, teachers have valued the importance of school based support to enable change at school level. This study was limited to only eight teachers so any generalization is not possible but it may be concluded that generally the INSET courses offered are not good for a number of reasons

and there is a need to strengthen the teacher support units which are present at the ground level in form of teacher learning centres (Block and Cluster resource centres).

### **1.1. Rationale**

With the advancement in science and technology the face of the world is changing rapidly. The exchange of knowledge and ideas has increased in this shrinking world. Quite evidently, it has also made an impact on the ways education is conceived and practiced across the world. Not only has it forced educators to reconsider the content of curriculum but it has also made an impact on the teaching methods and role of a teacher (Welmond, 2002). The teacher is an integral part of the school and one of the key factors making an impact on the children's learning. The success of schools in the changing scenario depends upon the adaptability of its teachers to the new demands made on them by the advancement in science and technology and accordingly the social economic needs of society (Hegarty, 2000). Considering the teaching profession as an important aspect of quality education, much attention has been given to teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers in the Western world.

It is important to understand teachers' perspectives and their sense of purpose in their profession. The conviction of teachers about the importance and effectiveness of certain practices drive their daily routine. We need to understand the source of this conviction their perspective and sense of purpose, in order to help them in their professional development. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) teacher development requires teachers to reflect on their sense of purpose and basic assumptions behind their convictions but in actual practice this remains a neglected area.

Teacher development then, must actively listen to and sponsor the teacher's voice; establish opportunities for teachers to confront the assumption and beliefs underlying their practices; avoid faddism and blanket implementation of favoured new instructional strategies; and create a community of teachers who discuss and develop their purposes together, over time' (Fullan and Hargreaves,(1992, p {5})).

How far is it important to understand the perspective of teachers on the teaching and learning practices they use in their classroom? Teachers may have strong convictions about how children learn and what the role of the teacher is in the process of teaching



and learning. The professional world outside the school may also have convictions about the learning based on theoretical understandings and some-times these may not match with the opinions of teachers who are the real practitioners. In this respect the thought of Sankey as cited in Schwille and Deméblé (2007, p.{30}) give substance to this argument:.

Though there may be very good reasons for in-service course that have the basic skills and deepen awareness of theoretical underpinning of educational practice. But, that would come after the teacher has experienced the demands, frustration and opportunities of real practice, not before.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent elementary school teachers have responded to in-service teacher training as an important part of their continuing professional development and their perception about in-service training sessions. In-service teachers training is an important policy drive to achieve the goal of quality education in India. This study will investigate the in-service training of a group of teachers and discuss the implications of findings for educational policy.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Perspective of teacher development**

The international attention towards the universalization of elementary education has opened the doors of schools for those sections of society who were out of the schools because of economic and social reasons. In addition, with economic growth, population is becoming concentrated in small pockets of urban areas. Economic disparity has also increased which has diversified the classrooms. In this new scenario it is important for teachers' not only to understand this diversity but also to prepare themselves to address the needs of those children who are vulnerable. Florian (2011) directed our attention towards the lack of teacher preparation for multiple and varied demands of children attending schools in diverse settings. Hence, the quality of schools' education has a positive correlation with the quality of teachers who teach in the schools.

The fundamental question in this regard is what teachers need to know and be able to do to address the diverse needs of children coming from different lingual, economic and social backgrounds. Another question is what clues we can draw for the teacher education. For preparing good quality teachers, teacher education programs are just a beginning, as one need to be realistic about what can be reasonably addressed through such programs (Loughran, 2007). What and how teachers teach depends on the skills, knowledge and commitment they bring to their teaching and very importantly, opportunities they have, to continue learning in and from their practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

How do adults learn? What motivates teachers to adopt or bring changes in their teaching learning practices? When does a teacher adopt changes proposed in the reforms adopted by state governments? These are some questions that need answers. Any change in the pedagogical practices of teachers requires a change in the belief system of the teachers about their teaching and learning methods and their perception about learners and learning (Guskey, 2002). This learning has to be self-initiated, self-regulated, active learning to be effective (Nicolaidis and Mattheoudakis, 2008). It has been indicated that any change prescribed by system from the top without taking the perspective and context of teachers into account is bound to be ineffective (NCTE, 2009). In fact, it has been emphasised that, teacher education must be based on

recognition of the prior and current experiences of teachers and must encourage respect for teacher knowledge and understanding (Northfield and Gunstone, 1997). It may be possible that the idea of change may reach the ground as an ‘imposed’ change (Sikes, 2002), through top down model of teacher education but its implementation at classroom level is dependent upon the willingness and readiness of teachers to engage with the idea at the level of reflection and understanding the philosophy and actual spirit behind the suggested change (Hayes, 1995). This hypothesis gains strength from Loughran (2006), who says,

There is also a realization that there is no educational change without teacher change and by focusing on personal practice and experience, teachers may undertake genuine enquiry that can lead to a better understanding of the complexities of teaching and learning.

It must be noted that this is especially relevant in an era of change. Fullan and Hargreaves (2002) researched teacher development since 1975, analysing the relationship between teacher development and successful implementation of innovation, and called it the ‘innovation-focused period’.

In this regard, Evans (2002) points out that in-service teacher education and training (INSET) is a part of teacher development which is an emerging topic in the field of teacher education, and teacher development is difficult to address because of the uncertainty of factors responsible for what makes a good teacher.

## **2.2. Defining in-service teacher education and training (INSET)**

Education is a social endeavour and society plays an important role in deciding the broader aims and objective of school education. An effective education system is required to be able to achieve these. The success of any education system depends in turn, upon the various variables rooted in its basic design. The teacher is an integral part of the education system and effective education requires a sound mechanism of teacher education. The basic characteristics of teacher education in any society depend upon the educational philosophy of that society. In-service teacher education and training is a systematic effort to provide help to teachers to bring some changes in their knowledge domain related to teaching profession (Henderson, 1978). The major indicator of quality of training is its relevance to the needs of teachers. However, most training programmes are not organised according to the needs of the teacher. In-service

programmes have drawn their substance from the emerging needs and concerns of education as faced from time to time; as a result these have at best been awareness programmes of reforms, improvements and changes (Dyer et al, 2002; Sikes, 2002) requiring teachers to acknowledge their 'inadequacies' (Sikes, 2002).

In-service teacher education and training in a traditional sense is a staff development activity consisting of workshops and some short courses specially designed to provide some new information to teachers related to their work (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Feimann-Nemser, 2001). In-service teacher education and training incorporate all those activities which include short term courses on subject knowledge and pedagogical understanding, collaborative work with peers and educationists from university departments, participation in formal and informal teachers' gatherings for experience sharing and attending educational seminars and workshops (Craft, 2000).

Henderson (1997) describes INSET as a second stage of teacher development after pre-service training and in its most general sense it integrates everything that happens to the teacher from the day s/he enters the teaching profession to the day s/he retires which contribute directly or indirectly to the way in which teachers execute their professional duties. Furthermore, Burgess et al, (1996) argue that fundamental to all in-service education and training is the notion that in-service training would lead to the improvement of pupil learning based upon improvements in school and teacher performance. Guskey (1986) points out that the motive of in-service education is to bring a change in the teaching practices of teachers along with their belief systems and attitude towards the learner and finally to improve the learning level of children in both the affective and cognitive domain.

The context of in-service education and training even in the western world is a recent phenomenon. In the mid 1980's a systematic mechanism was developed to provide in-service education for the professional development of teachers and give legitimacy to the education agenda framed by the state in the national interest. This was a step in the direction of 'effective management of the teaching force' (Galloway et al. 1998).

One of the reasons behind teachers' level of motivation INSET is their aspiration to become a better teacher so that they could contribute to the learning achievement of

their children. In the usual school set up it becomes difficult for teachers to break the isolation and monotony of their work so in-service training is considered an important activity.

Lewin and Stuart (2003) note that pre-service teacher education has not been effective in bringing a change in the belief system of newly qualified teachers. In the context of developing countries, there is a lack of practical experience of learning in the classroom situation. Pre-service education programs rarely help the trainees to relate the theoretical aspect of their teacher training curriculum to real classroom situations. Hence, they point towards a gap between theory and practice. Clarke (2003) and Rammurti educational review committee (1990) argue that even teachers with good intentions are constrained by the culture of their education system/institution and that teachers reported feeling less and less autonomous. Both the texts also stress that the teachers had been disappointed by previous teacher training courses during which they had been lectured about ill-defined theories and imported ideas; often they did not understand how to translate those theories and ideas into their classroom practice.

Lewin and Stuart (2003) further stress that the curriculum of pre-service teacher education does not take the prior experience of student teachers into account while training. The teacher student enters the training college with a set of beliefs and perspectives about good teaching. The source of it may be their experience as a student in school while observing their teachers and how they teach and behave with their students. Their belief about learning may be based on the assumption that education is an endeavour to acquire knowledge and the teacher is an agent to help the children in this direction. Unfortunately again, the same rationale can be applied to the in-service teacher education and training programs. The modules and agendas of in-service teacher training usually inspired by the reform agenda of government looks forward to training teachers in new curriculum and contemporary pedagogical practices which are considered to be effective to attain the goal of education (Onderi and Croll, 2008). Here also teachers stand on the receiving end and often may not relate to the demand (Ramchandran et al. 2009a). However, it has been said that teachers are simultaneously both the subject and agent of change (Dale, 1988, p.36). But, practically it seems to be missing link at ground level.

### 2.3. Efficacy of in-service Trainings

However, recognising the need for in-service training, how can an assessment be made as to whether the identified needs or expectations were met? Guskey (1984) explored the history of in-service teacher education in the context of USA and found it full of conflict and dilemmas. According to him it proved ineffective to meet the growing demand of continuing professional development.

One of the major reasons of this ineffectiveness was that ‘they do not take into account two critical factors: what motivates teachers to engage in staff development, and the process by which change in teachers typically takes place.’ (Guskey 1986, p.6) In the same context Galloway et al. (1998 ) argues that the centrally designed approach of need analysis leaves very little scope for the schools and teachers to focus on their individual needs. Day and Sachs (2004) also provided a critique of in-service teacher education and training. They claimed that it is based on a deficit model, largely under-resourced, politically motivated and lacking in the involvement of beneficiaries and seems to be organised in ‘compliance and conformity to specified reform agenda’ (p.12). Day (1997, p.41) further points out that the conceptualization of professional development of teachers is a ‘linear continuum, though superficially attractive and plausible are both, over simplistic and impractical since they are not based on a teacher as person perspective but on a system managerial perspective of teacher as employee. An adherence to them might tend to oversimplify or skew in-service provisions towards meeting the needs of the system while ignoring , at their peril ,the needs of the teachers with in it’.

Other reasons also impact the effectiveness of training. It has been indicated that, with growing age, teachers tend to lose interest in their profession and stop focusing on assisting the children in their learning. However, an opposite trend has also been seen if they started work in their twenties and been successful over the years (Sikes, 2002, p.44). So the professional development programs must take into account where teachers are in their lives and career and accordingly there is a need for some specific teacher development programs which may help teachers to find the answers to those issues which concern their professional requirement.

The above argument gets further substantiated in the research study of Jongmans (1998) in context of Netherlands. The researchers draw some conclusions from their study on the effectiveness of in-service teacher education and training for secondary teachers of agriculture education. According to them, in those trainings which proved more effective the participation of teachers was involved right from the beginning of policy making through to the execution of teacher training. However, they highlighted the need to enhance the capability of schools and teachers to form an in-service teacher education policy. For that, they may also need enough chances and freedom to learn from their experiences and expert support should play a role of facilitation instead of prescriptive authority.

On the other hand, there are examples of good models of training too. The in-service designs of Japan and New Zealand are considered to be some of the best models of teacher education and training. In both the countries the school based training opportunities provide scope to teachers to define their learning needs and learn from their peer group and senior teachers through discussion, lesson observation and reflection on their pedagogical practices (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

To summarise this section, we can see that there is variation in the design and execution of in-service education and training. Research across the world provides a strong criticism of the top-down mechanism of in-service training and considers it ineffective for the classroom teaching and learning practices. It is important to listen to the voice of teachers themselves and provide support according to their needs. Also, it has been realised that just training are not enough.

#### **2.4. Continuing Professional Development: How far it differs from the traditional model of staff development?**

CPD is a new approach of professional development which revolves around the life experiences of teachers. The credit for coining the term CPD goes to Richard Gardner who was in charge of the professional development of professionals in York University in the mid-1970's. CPD embraces the idea that 'individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially acquired to carry out the job' (Gray, 2005, p.5).

Friedman and Phillips (2004) observe that CPD is an ambiguous term, and remark that various professionals and thinkers interpret it differently as per their need and convenience. They further suggest that CPD can be better characterised as a support for improvement in professional practice. However, the suggestion does not echo the series of in-service teacher education and training organised to upgrade the knowledge of professionals in any field. Rather, it is a continuous process of learning through reflection and self-analysis. In the view of Craft (2000, pp. 9-10), the term CPD is interchangeably used with in-service teacher-education and training, but in a wider connotation. Schwilee and Dembele (2007) argue that INSET has limited significance in terms of continuing professional development of teachers, because INSET focuses on short term training designed and executed by trainers.

These trainings seem to miss the perspective of teachers and more specifically the life experiences of teachers about their classroom practices. In this way the lifelong learning needs of teachers and their context remain lopsided in this entire process of the professional development of teachers. Whereas Craft (2000) interprets CPD as a continuous process of professional enhancement of teacher's capabilities through various types of activities such as participation in in-service training and workshops, peer-group discussion and dialogue of teachers in formal and informal settings of school, reflective practices of teachers, action research and onsite academic support to teachers in their on-going work of teaching in real classroom situations. Hence CPD is a broader term with INSET as a part of it.

Based on the literature survey of Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) on new approaches of staff development Schwille and Demblee (2007) point out the characteristics of effective professional development. These characteristics include school based teacher education with the active participation of teachers in module design and its implementation. In this new design out-siders play a role of continuing support to school and teachers in implementation of any new program or idea.

The professional development of teachers is a long term process which provides systematic provision of learning opportunities to teachers to enhance their capabilities. According to Clark (1992) a large number of scholars support the idea of teacher



thinking and teachers' complete onus in their professional development strategies. Actually teachers know what is best for them and what type of professional activities can be suitable to support them in their teaching and learning processes.

## **2.5. Settings that can be Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development**

School teaching as a profession is dependent upon certain types of learning practices in the socio-politico-cultural context of a country. School is a microcosm of this context and apart from being a point infrastructure; it is also a lively institution that promotes interaction among an array of societal actors. The socio-politico-cultural context varies significantly across the world and in general between developed and developing nations. Teaching practices rely on the learning drawn from school and classroom ambience where children of different age-groups come together to construct and acquire knowledge with the help of teachers, their peers and specially designed learning materials to enhance their learning.

According to some scholars, school is not only an institution of learning for children but for those engaged in teaching as well. Teachers absorb the perspective of children and understand how children actually learn, and thus come up with designing good practices for effective teaching (Schwille and Dembele, 2007). In their teaching-learning process, the teachers can quiz themselves on the objective, processes and outcomes of schooling, and their role in influencing the generation of knowledge among children. In this way, continuing professional development is an on-going process to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, their outlook and opinions, and in the learning outcomes of the children (Guskey, 2002, p.381).

According to Fiemen- Nemisar (2001, p. 1042) traditional teacher development activities revolve around the outside experts while teacher spend their time in passive listening; whereas in the new approach teachers do most of the talking and thinking. Hence, teachers share their experiences in their peer group and critically examine their teaching approaches and practices.

Another and one of the best opportunities is collaborative learning. Although they may require support from researchers and academicians working in their field, collaborative learning must come in the form of collaborative planning, support and action instead of prescription and imposed strategies (Clark, 1992).

According to Little (1993) Collaborative learning gives an opportunity to teachers to reflect on their learning and learn from others' experiences. This creates an environment where teachers participate in decision making and construction of knowledge regarding the practices they are expected to perform in order to enhance the achievement level of children in school. Furthermore she stresses that new curriculum reforms aspire to a change in traditional teaching and learning practices and expect teachers to adopt integrated methods of learning by taking individual experiences of children into account. This requires a teacher to reflect on their existing beliefs and practices because the experiences and learning of teachers are usually mismatched with the innovative practices suggested by the reforms. (p,130.)

Day's (1999, p.4) interpretation of CPD aptly sums up the above discussion and seems to incorporate all the practices of teacher development including in-service teacher education and training in a holistic way.

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change-agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.

### **3. In-service teacher education in context of India**

#### **3.1. General context**

India is the second most populous country of the world and it has registered a rapid increase in enrolment since independence and more specifically in the last two decades. According to the Ministry of Human Resource and Development's (MHRD) school based information, the total number of enrolments in elementary schools has increased from 22.27 million in 1950-51 to 182.0 million in 2004-05. This growth seems to be remarkable but research studies indicate that a large number of children leave schools without gaining the basic competency of reading, writing and numeracy skills (Probe report, 1999; ASER, 2011). According to Venkatanarayana (2008) in 2004-2005 the success rate of completion of elementary schooling was 50%.

The focus of the country has been on Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and several strategies have been adopted for this, such as, Total Literacy Campaign, DPEP, the National Teacher Education program etc. Due to the massive expansion of the system, several issues affecting quality of education arose. Of these, one key issue was having enough number of teachers. Recruitment was such a major issue that even untrained teachers were appointed. Then, realising that training is important some efforts began in this area.

Operation Blackboard in 1990 was the major policy drive to provide at least two primary teachers to each primary school to improve the teaching and learning quality at school level. After 1990 a new approach to teacher appointment was introduced to address the issue of the shortage of teachers in remote areas. The District Primary Education Program launched in 1994 was first major centrally funded program with international support advocated the appointment of contract teachers or Para Teachers (PT) to address the issue of shortage of teachers. The state governments across the country adopted the policy of Para teachers in the name of decentralization of education and to involve the local governance in the selection and monitoring of these teachers (Govinda and Josephine, 2005). It is interesting to note that this was the time when a major report named the Probe Report related to the health of elementary education in Central India was published. The Probe Report (1999) highlighted the poor condition of

schools education in India and teachers came out as a major scapegoat of this entire scenario.

The lack of responsibility on the part of teachers was considered to be the cause of the poor learning level of children in government schools. Again this was the time when a new layer of private schools began to develop both in small and large cities. On the line of central and state governments these private schools also appointed untrained teachers at low salaries and hardly made any provision of their in-service education and training. First time, under the Lok Jumbish program in 1990's, which had international funding appointed local youths as a teacher in the remote tribal areas of Rajasthan and made some provision of their in-service training to address the question of quality teaching. Acharya Rammurti Committee Report (1990) argues that in most parts of the world in-service preparation is too short, unrelated to the needs of teachers and too ineffective to upgrade teacher knowledge. A survey of 700 teachers in India is cited wherein 86% of respondents received their professional training in a teacher education institute. The author claims that the quality of teacher education received was not up to par and that in-service training and ongoing professional development was minimal.

Furthermore, first under the DPEP and later on under SSA in 2001 with the backing of foreign financial and academic support a new pedagogical practice named as child centred pedagogy was adopted as an official pedagogy and a huge amount of money was allocated to train teachers in new approaches. It can be easily presumed that the context and voice of teachers was hardly taken into account in this entire policy drive. Here the deficit model of knowledge was followed and teachers were perceived as lacking the knowledge and skills to meet the demand of changing times. Simultaneously this approach laid down the idea that teachers can be oriented easily in new approaches of teaching and learning through providing some sort of in-service teacher training.

### **3.2. Change in the approach to learning and teacher education**

Since the 1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All, the issue of universalization of education and the norm of quality education is in the forefront of all educational dialogue in India. The Dakar framework specially focused on quality and

Goal 2 binds nations to render basic education of good quality (UNESCO, 2005, p. 5). Considering the classroom teaching and learning processes as an important parameter of quality education some innovative models of teaching and learning were introduced through a systematic program. The Yashpal Committee Report (1990) on Learning without Burden talked about the constructive approach to learning and laid emphasis on making learning a meaningful activity for children. Furthermore, it highlighted the inadequacy of teacher education and recommended the adoption of training programs which enable the teacher to acquire the ability of self-learning and independent thinking.

Similarly, in 1994 District Primary Education Program was designed by the Indian government with the academic and financial support of an International donor organisation. This program was launched as a pilot program in more than 150 districts of India. These districts were selected on the basis of their backwardness in terms of literacy rate and other indicators of human development Index. The DPEP program focused on the systematic in-service training of teachers in child centred or learner centred methods of learning. This indicates a shift from the rote method of teaching and learning to understanding based teaching in which needs of learners or children are given top priority. This is reflected in in-service training where two of the 'vital' values intended to be imparted in the trainings are 'student-centered learning' and 'teacher-as-facilitator'. Teacher educators handling the sessions believe that this can best be achieved by rewarding the teachers who participate most in in-service training with higher grades.

In this continuity the India National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF-2005) was developed to reform the status of elementary education in India. The NCF- 2005 repeatedly focuses on the constructivist approach to learning and considers children as active learners who construct knowledge for themselves through an active involvement with their environment. Furthermore it advocates 'connecting knowledge to life outside the school and enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond the text books' (NCF' 2005). It proposes all types of strategies which can be considered child centred in various perspectives. For example, the loose structure of the curriculum in which the teacher has the independence to incorporate the local context of children in their learning. Furthermore, it suggests loose framing of teaching and learning as per the

need of children and changes in the methods of assessment to promote higher level thinking abilities such as reasoning, critical thinking and decision making among children.

Hence, we can see that this has brought about a great shift in our understanding about education and how learning takes place. NCF (2005) argues that teachers turn to rigid text-book, rote learning and passive student roles as they are unaware of alternatives and that is how they themselves were taught. This makes it essential to ensure that these new ways of thinking are incorporated in teacher education programs so that teachers too understand them well.

### **3.3. Structure of teacher education and training and policy discourse**

Teacher education has always remained at the top of the policy agenda for education in India after independence. Most commissions have acknowledged the inadequacies of in-service training. In the same context the Education Commission (1964-66) strongly recommended that:

1. Large scale programmes of in-service education of teachers should be organised by Universities and Teacher organisations at all levels to enable every teacher to receive at least 2-3 months of training every 5 years of service
2. Continuing in-service training education should be based on educational research inputs
3. Training institutes should work on a 12 month basis and organise in-service training programmes, such as refreshers courses, seminars, workshops and summer institutes

Though being talked about previously too, teacher-education more specifically gained a new momentum in the decade of the 1980's and 1990's in India. NPE (1986, p.32) highlighted that 'teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled. The new program of teacher education will emphasise continuing education and the need for teacher'. Operation Blackboard (OB), started in 1993, was a policy endeavour to bring about a change in the teaching-learning processes inside

classrooms. OB recommended child-friendly education to link the experiences of the child with textbook knowledge. At the same time, the policy of decentralisation was sought to involve the school-community in the dialogue of school-education and decision-making. On the recommendation of the National Policy of Education 1986 (NPE 86) new structures of teachers education were created to improve the quality of elementary education.

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) replaced the normal schools to address local needs. (Normal schools were in-service teacher-training institutions for primary teachers in India before the 1990's). This was an attempt to revise the entire teacher- education program with a new perspective. The provisions of in-service teacher-education were given a priority for the first time (Seshadri, 2002). It was expected that:

In the direction of improving the quality of education, the DIET would understand the professional development requirements of its teachers and respond with locally sensitive and in-service teacher-education programs' (Dyer et al, 2004 p.41).

Before this, in-service teachers had very little opportunity of professional enhancement and were working in total isolation (Dyer et al. 2004). At the same time, new structures were envisaged at sub-district level to provide continuous onsite support to working teachers under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

Block Resource Centres (BRC's) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRC's) were created to decentralise the dialogue of quality-education at the local level. BRC's and CRC's are decentralised support-institutions which provide onsite support to teachers in terms of school visits, demonstrations, feedback, teacher training, materials preparation, and discussion of special problems at monthly meetings. DPEP was an attempt to improve the quality of education with international support in more than 200 districts of India that were identified as the most deprived in education. This structure was later extended to all the districts of India under the Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a major programme of the Government of India initiated in 2002 in order to ensure quality elementary education to all its children.

The experience though was not always a happy one. Although a support system was created under the DIET and SSA, this never realized its basic objectives. In the absence of any sound mechanism of implementation, it was reduced to something akin to an administrative unit. According to Dyer et al (2004 p, 42), these new structures ‘often struggle to transform an ‘on paper’ policy idea into a ‘real life’ identity and purpose’. Not just this, Ramchandran and Bhattacharya (2009a) argue that these new structures are actively blocking the innovative practices of some teachers who try to explore new methods to make the curriculum or teaching methods more relevant to the needs of their students. During their school visits, coordinators and mentors behave like authorities and start evaluating children on the basis of their memory. Instead of engaging in any constructive discourse with teachers on teaching and learning processes they behave like school inspectors and demotivate teachers from adopting new methods.

The old practices of in-service teacher-education revolve around the once-in-a-while workshop mode in which teachers are exposed to some educational issues such as new pedagogical practices, broader issues of educational quality like equity, and some administrative skills necessary for classroom and school management. In developing countries like India this training is designed and implemented in a cascade model. In this model the training module is designed at the central level by some experts in education and delivered to teachers through trainers that are picked from the group of teachers and exposed to the training module through a workshop prior to teacher training sessions. This provides very little help to teachers to contextualize the new knowledge within their given context and finally turns into a complete wastage of human and financial resources in resource-crunch situations.

On the other hand, there is the existing belief-system of teachers. According to Elmore cited in Schwille and Dembele (2007 p. 104), experienced teachers know very well about the learning abilities of their children. They also believe that they have a good enough understanding of the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices. This belief-system of theirs emerges from their lifelong experience first as learner in the school, then as an adult and finally from their experience of pre-service teacher-training and the classroom teaching-learning practices. It is really difficult to change these strong belief-systems of teachers just through the isolated once-in-a-while



teachers training sessions in the midst of a scenario in which more than 50% of primary school teachers face multi-grade multi-level situations and face difficulties in teaching two and three grades at the same time (Ramchandran et al. 2009b). Moreover, many children in the rural areas come from poor families and lack parental support in education because of the inability of parents to support the children in reading and writing. However, these issues hardly find a space in the formal teacher-training modules. However, the Yashpal committee report 'Learning without Burden' (1993) laid emphasis on enabling trainee teachers to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking.

Furthermore, the Report of the National Commission on Teachers highlights the absence of clear-cut policies and priorities for in-service education and the lack of systematic identification of needs. It recommended 'planning ahead of time' and 'closer scrutiny of methods'. It also stated that the most effective among them [in-service programmes] are the services organised through the school complex. The idea of the school complex put forward by the Khotari Commission (1966-68) intends to link primary and secondary schools with a view to pooling resources and integrating the educational process.”

The Commission also put forward the idea of Teacher Centres that would act as a meeting place for teachers located in a school that has resources that it would like to share with others. What teachers need most is an atmosphere conducive to educational research and enquiry. Teachers could be given study leave and sent to advanced centres of learning for furthering their professional competence through visiting scholarships. Unfortunately, through a study about the functioning of these centres, it was found that these moderate participants express their views and contribute to class proceedings but simultaneously leave room for others to participate as opposed to those who are hyper-participative who are disposed to monopolise discussion. There is a danger then that teacher-training is reinforcing and encouraging negative behaviour. An alternative interpretation of the findings could be that this over-performance is an opportunistic gaming of the system due to the uncomfortable individual adjustments to a change brought about from without.

Ramchandran and Bhattacharjea (2009b) point out that primary teacher training programs are not based on the requirements of government primary schools located in Indian villages. Most of the primary schools are one or two teacher schools, usually practice multi grade teaching in midst of very limited resources. Whereas pre service teachers trainings provides trainings usually suitable for mono grades and assume that teachers will have a homogeneous community of learner.

I end this chapter by asserting that in-service training is important beyond bringing under-trained teachers up to scratch but is also a useful tool for responding to the professional development needs of teachers.

### **3.4. Efficacy of in-service trainings in India**

Ramchnadran and Bhattacharyaji (2009b) point out that the provisions of in-service teacher training is highly ineffective and rarely takes the say of teachers into account while preparing modules for in service teacher education. Teachers consider these courses as a formality to be completed instead of an opportunity to enhance their professional competence. These training sessions are not based on the real life experiences of teachers nor are they linked to student learning. Furthermore, in-service teacher-training in India is designed to accomplish the reform agenda of the government which revolves around the issue of accessibility and retention, and usually does not take the real issues of classroom problems into account. The participation of teachers in designing the in-service modules is minimal. Most of the in-service training programs are designed by the experts sitting at the top of the educational hierarchy who lack hands-on experience of elementary school-teaching. Armour and Yelling (2004, p. 100) argue that the traditional form of in-service teacher-education tends to take place at specific times and is usually undertaken off-site with minimal follow-up. Any attempt to improve the system must recognise the central agency the teacher. Yet teacher training programmes continue to train teachers to adjust to a system which views education as the transmission of information reproduced from textbooks.

#### 4. Methodology

To understand what teachers think about the effectiveness of in-service teacher education and training for their classroom practice, this study employed a qualitative research design. In qualitative research we assume that universal laws and rules can be uncovered under patterns and behaviour could be predicted. In domain of qualitative research knowledge is considered provisional and new data is expected to refute existing hypothesis. According to Atkinson et al. (2001) qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. Furthermore, qualitative research offers a process through which the individual perspectives of people's social realities and world can be studied and account of this given. Cohen et al. (2000, p. 19) argues 'social world can only be understood from the stand point of the individuals'. This study has followed the interpretive and inductive approach of research under which individual perspective of teachers about the effectiveness of their INSET has taken into account to construct knowledge about what teachers actually think about the applicability of current INSET approaches for their daily classroom practice and what can be its policy implication for teachers INSET activities and more specifically for their continuing professional development.

This study has followed constructionist approach of knowledge creation. The ontological position of this study has faith in multiple realities. Social realities of people can be better understood by considering the perspective of individuals about their realities in their particular contexts. There are multiple aspects like the social and cultural background of teachers, the institutional set up in which they work and the popular discourse in realm of their profession, which make an impact on the perceptions and thinking of teachers and can only be understood in light of the experiences that teachers have. Henceforth, this study will take a stance parallel to the words of Bryan (2004) 'the social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied'.

This study took in to account the direct experiences of teachers and draw some broad pattern from these experiences regarding their perspective on their INSET. In this sense this is phenomenological study. According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 22) Phenomenology is a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at the face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomenon of experience rather than by

external objective and physically described reality'. Furthermore it is important to understand the context of teachers, because they draw their perception with in their social and cultural context. Although, it is difficult to draw any exact meaning from what people experience and here the researcher point of view and reflective approach of looking at the things become important. From researcher point of view, this can be said that these findings are only one aspect of reality and further can be understood what other researches on this aspect reveals in their findings as elaborated in literature review. According to Bogden and Biklen (1998) researchers in qualitative research make an attempt to interpret the reality that is useful in understanding human condition.

For this study, I used a combination of data collection methods. This includes semi structured interviews; focus group discussion and observation of teacher training. Interviews were used as a primary source of data collection. Interview is a method which gives access to 'thoughts, feelings and intentions' of the interviewee (Patton, 1990, p.278). Before entering in in-depth interview with the participants a focus group discussion was conducted. According to Bryman (2004, p.346).

The focus group method is a form of group interview in which: there are several participants, there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning'.

The primary objective of the focus group discussion was to orient the group with the objective of the study and to get a collective feeling and difference of opinion of the group on the topic. Furthermore, it helped in reframing the questionnaire for in-depth interviews.

For this study I have also observed the training of master trainers for two days for a period of one and half hour on each day. Bogden and Biklen (1998) argues that a researcher should not spend a longer time in observation and must consider the limitation of his memory and time h/she has for the field work. The purpose of this observation was to understand the content of the training module and the participation level of the participants.

Semi structured in-depth interviews of 8 elementary school teachers was the main tool of data collection in order to understand the perspective of teachers on their in-service teacher education and training. The semi structured interviews used a general list of questions which

can vary and change as per the demand of the context of the interview process. It is a flexible process used to understand the perspective of interviewee and it allows the interviewer to get into the detail of those issues that emerge in the course of interview (Bryman, 2004, pp. 320-321).

#### **4.1. Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to understand the perspective of teachers on their in-service teacher education and training so that this can be taken into account while making any policy or designing the program of teacher education and training in district *Uttarkashi* in Uttarakhand.

#### **4.2. Research Questions**

1. How do teachers in Uttarakhand in India view their in- service teacher education?
  - a. What is the nature of in-service teacher education and training?
  - b. What is its relevance for classroom teaching and learning?
  - c. How do they relate to key ideas such as child centred education?
  - d. How does the in-service program relate to the needs of teachers and their context?
2. To what extent does in-service teacher education contribute to teachers' continuing professional development and enable them to improve their classroom practice and address the issue of quality education?
  - a. How does in-service training help these teacher to improve their professional practice
  - b. How can INSET be made more effective to meet the professional demand of teachers at local level?

#### **4.3. Approach**

The field work was mainly conducted in July, 2012. Originally there was a plan to conduct it in month of June, but unlike previous years the education department in the district decided to conduct the training in month of July after the summer vacation of teachers. For focus group discussion and in-depth interviews I choose a group of eight teachers. I had worked with these teachers as a member of informal teacher discussion group whiles my tenure in the district *Uttarkashi* as academic

support fellow in year 2008-2011. I was working in the district in Azim Premji Foundation which is a non-profit organisation. The nature of my job was to provide academic support to the Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres. This informal group was formed with some motivated teachers and it is operational till today. This group sit twice in a month on two Sunday to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Though there are six sub-districts in the district *Uttarkashi* but this study focused on one of the sub-district which was close to district headquarters. Before conducting focus group discussion and in-depth interview an oral consent was taken from all participants and the researcher informed the district education office regarding the objective and nature of this study. The focus group discussion was conducted at the office of Azim Premji Foundation in district *Uttarkashi*. This followed the in-depth interviews and the researcher visited the homes of interviewee as per their proposal. Before conducting in-depth interview the questioner was tested on two teachers and some changes were made along with sequence of questioning. The focus group discussion and the individual interviews were conducted in Hindi and were translated into English. Out of eight interviews five were recorded and were transcribed in Hindi. The transcriptions were given to the participants for their inputs. In this study I took the help of my ex-colleagues from Azim Premji foundation. Two of them helped me in making transcription and they provided me space for conducting focus group discussion.

#### **4.4. Limitations and strengths**

A limitation of this study was that it only considered the perspective of teachers on their in-service teacher education and training. An extensive study including the views of policy makers and the teacher educator would have given a comprehensive picture. Furthermore, the observation of classroom practices of participants teachers might have substantiated what teachers says and what they do at classroom level. Secondly this study has taken the perspective of eight teachers which is a very small sample and it is difficult to build any generalization on the basis of data generated. Furthermore, this group of teacher was an active learner group with whom I had worked with while my tenure in district *Uttarkashi*, so it was always a challenge to

remove the personal biases. Though I tried my best to stick to the story they told and the account that emerged is my own interpretation of what they said.

A major strength of this work, however, is that it undertook the in-depth study of the teacher's perspective on their In-service education and training and it will help me in future to establish dialogue with the teachers on their professional needs. Simultaneously the findings could also help the educational functionaries to design such programs which keep the perspective of teachers in centre while designing In-service teacher education and training activities.

#### **4.5. Ethical Consideration**

The main ethical consideration of this study was the anonymity of participant. This study carefully took the assent of the participants and objective of the study was cleared to them. For instance, instead of using the name of participants a code number was given to each participant. Furthermore, voluntary participation of the participants was respected at all the stages of this study.

#### **4.6. Learning:**

In this process I came to know about the importance of systematic interviews in understanding the perspective of any individual. At the same time this exposed me to the rigour of research process and hopefully in future I may go deeper to understand the realities of teachers through what they say or what they do in their context. Simultaneously it helped me to reflect on my personal beliefs and biases. Although, I tried to be objective in presenting my findings but still I think I have need to work more on this aspect.

## 5. Analysis of findings

The data was collected from eight elementary school teachers through semi structured interviews. Semi structured questionnaires were designed with the assumption that teachers can better understand their context and needs of their in-service teacher education. Furthermore, it assumes that the perspective of teachers needs to be considered when making any policy about their In-service teacher education and training. Hence the questionnaire addressed the different learning experiences of teachers during their in-service education and training programs. The focus was to identify patterns in teachers' perspectives on effectiveness of their in-service teacher education and training for their classroom practices. In addition, emphasis was placed on revisiting the learning which took place during training programs and how effectively they had taken the learning to their classrooms.

A total of eight elementary school teachers from the district of *Uttarkashi* in Uttarakhand state in India took part in this study. Regarding their teaching experiences, two teachers had been teaching for more than twenty years, three had 10 years' experience, While the remaining three were relatively new to the profession of teaching. Two of these teachers were currently working as a cluster resource centre co-ordinators. As far as the educational qualifications of the participants are concerned, seven teachers held the Diploma in Education and one was a Para teacher. Out of eight teachers, six were female participants and all they were teaching in primary schools. All of them were teaching in multi grade settings.

The analysis of data is presented in four broad categories. The first section deals with the perspectives of teachers on their self-efficacy in relation to their In-service teacher education and training. The second section explores their perspective on the effectiveness of teacher training modules for their classroom practices. The third section of this chapter deals with the role of the support structure in the continuing professional development of teachers and the final section incorporates the perspectives of teachers for wider policy implications of teachers' development.

### 5.1. Teacher self-efficacy and in-service teacher education and training:

Teacher self-efficacy or ability to bring changes proves an important parameter to understand the effectiveness of INSET for teacher's classroom practices from the perspective of teachers. Five out of eight teachers interviewed mentioned their concern for the children of poor and deprived communities as an important motivation to enhance their capabilities to teach the children of deprived



communities. They found their INSET effective in two ways. Firstly, it provides a platform which offers them new information regarding the innovative methods of learning. Secondly it also helps them to understand the relevance of their practices in the light of their experiences and particularly the challenges they face in their classroom. This reflects the elements of functional development (Evans, 2002) which motivates teachers to discover and adopt new ways of teaching and learning and how to apply new processes within ones practice. Actually, these teachers show a positive motivation for INSET because their self-efficacy is very high.

In the context of developing countries like India the access of teachers to new teaching and learning resources is limited. In-service teacher training is one major source for them to get exposed to new ideas and popular discourse in the realm of their profession. According to teacher 8

Initially I was unaware of how to start reading and writing with the new children coming to school. My methods of teaching were traditional and revolved around asking children to memorise the alphabet and writing those on the notebook straight forward. But, the results were very minimal because children hardly had any exposure to reading and writing and my methods were also not helping me to come out from this difficulty. In this context in-service teacher education and training helped me to share this difficulty with fellow teachers and I came to know about new methods and approaches of language teaching (Teacher, 8).

Elliot (2004) argues that ‘teaching as evidence- based profession’ provide the solid platform to teachers to bring some changes in their teaching and learning practices. An experience sharing with fellow teachers and observing some classroom processes in local context make an impression in the mind of some teachers that the theory taught in in-service education is applicable at the ground. In response to the question that what type of changes they have brought in their teaching practices teacher number eight described the process she followed in following words.

One such method was to the use of stories in developing the understanding of new words and new contexts. This helped me to interact with the children on their cultural, social and geographical context. The stories I chose were simple and related to the context of the child. At the same time I wrote the stories on the charts and placed them on the wall. In this process I realized that children were trying to read the text based on their memories and some older

children were helping the younger ones. Simultaneously I provided the opportunity to children to draw pictures on the ground and on the sand. It was a fun for the children but actually I was trying to prepare them for writing on one hand and opening another medium of expression for them. Furthermore, I used the traditional approach also and both these approaches helped us to address the needs of children. This change in approach reflected in the better coordination with the village community (Teacher, 8).

In this context one can understand that some teachers draw meaning full learning from their professional development activities like INSET and they incorporate those in their teaching and learning practices. But, all this depends upon the attitude and belief system of teachers and their willingness and capability to engage with the innovative ideas suggested by some in-service teacher education programs. Considering this as an important aspect of teacher education program Hayes (1997, p.83) argue that ‘the teacher’s own personal disposition towards change may be a key variable’. This argument can be further understood in words of teacher number 4

Some subjects like child psychology helped me to understand the childhood and characteristics of children. How do children learn? What can be the role of teacher in the entire process of teaching and learning were the few questions which attracted my attention towards this subject. This knowledge finally converted into my action while working with the children at school level. Initially it was tough to apply the theoretical knowledge into action. The socio cultural environment was new, most of the children were first generation learners, and the quality of textbook was poor and away from the social and cultural environment of child. But, continuous engagement with the ideas through formal and informal discussion through INSET helped me to reflect on my actions and change it as per the needs of children and as per their context (teacher, 4).

## **5.2. Effectiveness of in-service teacher training modules**

Since 1990 a lot of focus has been given to the child centred pedagogy. In-service teacher training modules revolves around the discovery method of learning and expect a lot of innovation from teachers. Secondly some issues like inclusive education and involvement of local communities in the school management and functioning gained popularity in last two decades. Sometimes innovative ideas come in form of programs. These programs are designed and fabricated by some external agencies. With the participation of nongovernment organisation in the

field of education the frequency of such programs has increased rapidly. These programs expect the teacher to make changes in their practice. Some basic training is provided by external experts and a strategy of implementation is also suggested by them.

But, implementation of any program first needs conceptualization of the concept in the mind of the implementer. And, continuing support is essential to see the effectiveness of new ideas but this type of support is absent or in another sense the implementing agencies themselves lack a proper understanding of the concepts they do suggest to teachers. Sometimes instead of motivating and helping teachers, these innovative programs, increase the frustration and workload of teachers. Ramchandran (2009a) observes that teachers are by and large magnetised and regulated by orders and rules passed from the top by the school authorities. In this process the potential of teachers remains untapped and an environment of distrust and lack of faith spreads in the functioning and behaviour of teachers. At the bottom, this sense of inability and frustration is reflected in the behaviour of teachers, community and authorities, and situations remain much the same as before.

According to teacher number 1

Teaching in primary school is totally different than what is taught in the in-service teacher training. Primary teacher needs to be familiar with the basic concepts of all subjects but my schooling and initial trainings had not prepared me in understanding these concepts. This creates a problem for me. Sometimes I find myself seems to be lost in a desert. In these circumstances it is highly impractical to expect from me to help the children to learn the basic concepts of the subjects taught in primary schools. Secondly initial teacher trainings are based on the assumption that teaching in primary school is an easy task and same everywhere but actually situations are reverse. For example, most of the times initial posting are given in remote areas where children who come to school are first generation learners. The teacher is expected to teach two and three classes or sometimes five classes at a time without any academic support. In-service teacher training hardly prepare teacher for this type of setting. They usually prepare the teacher to teach in mono grade setting. On the other hand text books and curriculum also do not support the teacher to face this challenge because it seems to be far away from the context of children. Most of the children who come to government primary schools belong to deprived sections of the society. They need more time and attention to get familiar with the world of reading and writing. But, it is difficult for me because of my limited academic understanding or more specifically is under prepared for the situations (teacher, 1).

On the other hand another fact clearly emerged out from what respondents said was that the teacher training modules are inspired by the reform agenda of the government. Teachers are usually considered lacking in capabilities or knowledge to meet the changing requirements of education. Although new approaches talk about the innovative learner and friendly methods of learning, this knowledge is imparted to teachers in the old transmission mode. In these situations it is highly impractical to expect the teachers to bring changes to their teaching and learning practice. Secondly, training does not help the teachers to understand the essence of any concept concerned with bringing the changes to classroom practices. Although during the training sessions some concepts seem fascinating and teachers are motivated to make changes in their teaching approach. But, most of them get wiped out after the first few weeks of implementation in the class.

Teacher number 5 highlighted the essence of above fact in following words:

In teacher training I came to know about the discovery method of learning. It seems interesting to me but I do not know how to start it and what can be the relevant topic of discovery for children. Another question is of how to relate it with the syllabus. If we pursue this method in our classroom then I am sure that I will lag behind others in terms of syllabus completion and my students may not perform better because final examinations are based on the complete syllabus.

However, there are large number of researches which raise a question on the teacher efficacy and unwillingness of teachers to respond to more learner centred method of learning (Sriparkash, 2011; Clark, 2003). But, very little effort has been made to analyse the efficacy of support system specially created to support the school teachers. To make any teacher education program effective at school level, it is important to strengthen the support system. Considering the current status of DIET's and District project office of SSA, any teacher education programs does not seems to be effective. Most of the instructors appointed at DIET do not have any experience of teaching at primary level. Similarly the officials of SSA lack any concrete experience of implementing the elementary education program. Broadly it seems that resources are usually used to fulfil the budgetary requirement of the program instead of making any fundamental change at the school level.

On the other hand, teachers show a lot of creativity, awareness and knowledge at the individual level but feel paralysed to bring all these into their teaching-learning

process. Teachers realised that this may be because of lack of motivation and trust in both the self and in others. In schools all of this together affects the teaching-learning environment and pushes all the stake-holders into a blame game against one another. Children are the most vulnerable entity in this entire phase.

According to Guskey (2002) it is important to help teachers to implement any reform at classroom level to bring sustainable change in their belief systems and attitudes. In this study the teachers clearly indicate the above fact. All of the eight respondents in one way or another highlighted that the INSET has provided them with a variety of information regarding innovative methods of teaching and learning and simultaneously some motivational lectures around the child psychology. This has partially influenced their belief system but hardly any onsite support is provided to them to bring changes in their classroom processes. Their teaching and learning practices by and large revolve around their folk pedagogy which values transmission of knowledge from teachers to children.

According to teacher 4

In remote settings of hilly regions the socio economic environment of children is different from the context I am exposed to. It is a challenge to understand the context and I am alone in the school. My intention is to teach the basic concepts of reading, writings and mathematics as per the content prescribed in the text books. But, formal- informal interaction through in-service teacher training courses expect me to practice new ideas and new approaches of teaching and learning which focus on considering the context of child in mind while helping her to learn or create the knowledge prescribed in new curriculum or syllabus. But, actually it is difficult to understand that how single teachers can teach five classes at a same time and specially those children who have no parental support in their study at home.

Thus we can see that the training agenda is designed centrally and trainings are executed at mass scale. What best can be done is a major concern for the policy makers and reformers. The failure of traditional cascade model of training is quite evident as revealed by NCF (2005). Who the trainers are and what is the process of their selection. Mostly trainings are conducted at a central place which may be far away from the place of teachers. Furthermore, there is need to explore few other questions like how relevant the modules are. Many teachers are enthusiastic and

they want to learn but we may need a strong mechanism of sharing the live experiences. The context of teachers training must be based on these experiences. But, existing practices seems to be lacking to incorporate this vision.

Here we can conclude that Involvement of teachers in module development of teacher training and curriculum debate is important. Sometimes the rationale of curriculum change does not reach to the teachers. Similarly new text books demands new approaches of teaching and learning but this approach reaches to teachers in form of certain government orders. In-service teacher's trainings do not provide a platform where teachers could participate in the discourse around the objectives of curriculum and approaches behind the textbook writings. This leads to dissatisfaction among teachers and basic idea of change never reaches to the ground and this theory of change always remains rhetoric.

### **5.3. Role of support system in in-service teacher education and training**

The support system created to provide onsite practical support to the teachers is not functional. Block resource centres and cluster resource centres have turned into information dissemination centres. The resource persons of these centres are not competent enough to provide onsite academic support to teachers and schools. Their main responsibility is providing onsite academic support to the teachers of their clusters. These clusters are one sort of learning community and the major objective of these centres is purely academic. But, the resource persons of these centres are mostly engaged in data collection and dissemination of information. The entire education system is bureaucratic and based on a hierarchy in which the teacher stands on the bottom rung of the ladder. The attitude of the resource persons is mostly supervisory instead of providing any academic support. This can be better understood in the words of a teacher- 5

my school is located on the premises of Block Resource Centre and every day Block Resource Persons come to their office but I hardly remember the time when they entered my class room and interacted with children, leave aside the classroom observation or giving any tips regarding the teaching and learning processes. Other officers like Block Education Officer or the mentor from the District Institute of Education and Training comes to the school once in a while and creates some type of trauma for the teacher. They ask some irrelevant questions like how many states are there in our country or who is the chief minister of the state is? If children fail to answer the questions then they stare towards me and make the moment very embarrassing (Teacher, 5).

Although there are some positive aspects also which kindle a ray of hope but that again depends upon the self-efficacy of an individual. Individual belief systems and attitudes play an important role in what that individual decides to do (Schwille and Dembele , 2007 p. 104). There are few cluster resource persons who try to make changes in existing situations by their self-initiative. They try to address the academic needs of teachers through some systematic programs and by providing continuing support to teachers.

Along with the Block Resource Person of one block one Cluster Resource centre coordinator tried to address this issue by involving teachers, community and the authorities in a project with the participation of teachers and other stakeholders. By her individual initiative she involved 10 elementary school teachers to design a project, the purpose being to relate the syllabi-text books of science and social science in the vernacular language with the local environment of children. In this process teachers were participating in designing a curriculum as per the needs of children and their community. In this context teacher number 1 described this approach in following words.

Bal Shodh Mela (Children research project) was a new initiative taken in my cluster. It exposed me to the idea of integrating the experiences of children with the text book knowledge. In this process I learned that children learn better if they are asked to explore their surroundings and share it with their peers. Now it is easy for me to teach even without book and I am a little comfortable in designing some content for my teaching (teacher number, 1).

The entire hypothesis was based on two beliefs, that teachers can best understand the new approaches of teaching and learning prescribed in the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF- 2005) once they are involved in constructive dialogue on the teaching and learning practices and supported to act accordingly in their classrooms. Second, community is an important source of knowledge and can contribute actively in the learning process of children along with teachers.

According to teacher number 7 who is working as a Cluster Resource Person.

A collaborative plan of action was discussed with the teachers in monthly meetings and the group decided to understand the effectiveness of incorporating local knowledge in classroom teaching and learning processes in order to understand the concepts of environment study

which is a core subject at primary level along with Hindi and Mathematics.

In the project some topics such as village history, resources of the village, flora and fauna of the village, local medicines and their linkages with human life were selected and a research design was framed with the participation of upper-primary school-children. Teachers in all ten schools discussed the topics in detail with the children. In this process, the children of Upper Primary prepared their questionnaires in their peer-groups and discussed them with their teachers. The questions were simple - such as, how old the village is, who were the people that came to reside there initially, how the occupation of people has changed with the times, what the sources of the religious beliefs are that the community follows, and why some sections like Dalits have their houses on the outskirts of the village. The children then visited the village and posed these questions to their parents and other elders. The group of teachers involved in the process regularly assembled once in ten days to share their experiences and reflect on the process.

Teachers observed that the community (i.e. the villagers) came forward to help the children in conducting their studies. This process led to the parents coming to the school to know more about the task their children were undertaking and how relevant it was to their studies. This natural interaction gave an opportunity for the teachers to interact with the parents and members of the community on various curricular issues. This was an important time for both teachers and parents to realise and understand that the social environment can contribute more actively in the learning of children.

After an effort of two months, the cluster of all ten schools gathered at one place to share their researches. The financial resources were collected at the local level and later on support was given by the authorities. It was a totally new experience for all. The participation and enthusiasm of the children helped the teacher and others to understand that learning is possible outside the boundaries of school too, and that local knowledge plays a very important role in this process. According to the resource person or respondent 7



Through this process we learned that with the active participation and knowledge-sharing in small groups, a positive learning-environment is possible at school level.

This seems to be an example of the participatory approach of teacher training. Shaeffer (1990, p.96) argues that in participatory approach of teacher training ‘the teacher plays an active role in the training process and is therefore not a passive recipient of others’ accumulated knowledge about the method and content’. In the above project the teachers were learning new ways of teaching by actively taking part in the designing and executing the project that was seen as relevant, appropriate and exiting by them, the children and the wider community.

It has to be said, however, that a sustained effort is required for this - and that the possibilities of this happening are present on the ground in the form of Cluster Resource Centres and Block Resource Centres. The only thing required is participatory planning, execution, reflection and a sense of confidence that a difference can be made by collective efforts. In this context Guskey’s (2002, p.3) arguments should be taken into consideration. ‘Teachers tend to be quite pragmatic what they hope to gain through professional development are specific, concrete and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day operation of their classroom.’

The cluster resource centre coordinator used this learning to systematise the regular interaction among the teachers of her cluster. In this process she took the help of external resources. She used the expertise of various NGOS working in the field of education in the district and used their expertise to provide continuing support to the teachers of her cluster. In this process teachers of that specific cluster visited each other’s school in groups to observe the classroom practices of their fellow teachers and initiated discussion over some specific methods like how children can be involved in discovering the natural and social phenomena in their surroundings. This practice leads the teachers of the cluster to change their attitude and approaches of teaching and learning. Teacher number 3 substantiated the above argument in following words.

It was interesting for me to see that the children who were earlier not taking part in teaching learning practices started bringing some interesting facts in the classroom like there is a lot of difference in the teeth of a cow and a dog. This was even not a part of my thought and I got a lot of substance for thinking

after making a change in my approach of teaching and learning. I think it become possible only after once I saw one of my colleague in another school was using such type of methods.

This is quite relevant to the argument of some researchers. Sullivan (2006) draws attention towards the importance of classroom observation to understand the educational needs of teachers. Classroom observation gives the answer to what actually happens inside the classroom and why certain methods work or fail. Similarly Guskey (2002, p. 4) argues that ‘significant change in teachers’ attitude and belief occurs primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in students learning.’ This change basically occurs from the variations teacher have made in their teaching practices. For in-service teacher education this understanding is most vital to improve the teaching and learning environment. This ultimately brings teachers at the centre stage because teachers are the implementers of any reform and it must be in the capacity of teachers to implement the reform.

Although this entire episode looks like very interesting and workable but it has some limitations. First, this kind of approach demands a lot of time and labour. Secondly, it asks a lot of innovation on the part of teachers and resource persons. It may not be easy for an individual to sustain their motivation because government department of education and functionaries are ‘frequently rigid in their own right and constrained by serious structural and financial problems’ (Shaeffer, 1990, p. 111). This can be better understood in words of respondent seven (Teacher, 7 cluster resource person).

The various formal and informal interactions I had with the people working in field of education have helped me to enhance the understanding on education. On the other hand the bureaucratic mind set of her officials is a kind of demotivation for her. Sometime Block Education officers do not understand the essence of her endeavour and restrict her to do innovations. In this context if I plan to arrange the exposure visit of the teachers of my cluster in some school of the cluster where teachers are successfully able to use the teaching and learning material in classroom processes then she may not be allowed to do that.

However, a detailed study of the approach described by the teacher may need further research. But, on initial face value this seems to be an interesting practice of continuing professional development of teachers.

#### 5.4. Policy Implication of the findings

In-service teacher training and education is largely executed in cascade model. The discourse of education reaches teachers through master trainers. Teachers in their response to effectiveness of teacher training programs indicate that the nature of discussion in teacher training courses depends upon the ability and facilitation skills of master trainers. But, generally master trainers lack the basic skills and many times hardly make any impact on the perspective of the in-service trainee teachers. Secondly the follow up mechanism of in-service training is very poor. Once the trainings are over there is no one around to ask the relevance of modules or changes prescribed for the classroom teaching and learning processes. According to teacher number 4

Masters Trainers should be selected on the basis of their experience and enthusiasm for the process of change. One cannot expect a master trainer to imbibe the idea of change prescribed by the teacher training modules in a training course of few days. They must be selected well in advance. There should be a strong mechanism of their capacity enhancement regarding subject matter understanding and facilitation skills.

Here we can see that the selection criteria of master trainers are an area of concern and the mechanism of their preparation is also very faulty. First of all, effective and efficient teachers do not opt to become master trainers because they may need to travel and spend time outside their home. This is particularly relevant in the case of female teachers because they bear the responsibility of looking after their family along with their job. According to teacher number 3

I am very enthusiastic about learning and participating in different professional development workshops. But, the issues of security and family responsibilities restrict me to participate in out station workshops.

On the other hand the existing system does very little to enhance the capabilities of master trainers. Currently there seems to be no mechanism for the selection of master trainers. Most of time they are selected randomly without considering their strengths and weaknesses. Regarding this teacher no 4 expressed this aspect-

The trainers behave like an authority and they feel that transmission of the training module word by word is their main responsibility. This leaves very little scope for discussion and dialogue. The teacher training modules are very heavy and try to cover so many things in a small span of time. All this leads to a process of transfer of knowledge and has very little scope to be effective from point of view of the teacher.

In this context there should be a strong mechanism of selection for the selection of master trainers and their capacity enhancement so that transmission loss which is major criticism of trainings in cascade model could be minimised.

The research findings also indicate that the effectiveness of INSET by and large depends on the self- efficacy of Individual teachers. It is the intrinsic motivation of some teachers which guides them to reflect on their practice and keep on doing some innovative work based on their experiences. Guskey (2002, p.4) criticise the traditional model of teacher development which bangs on the idea that change in attitude and belief comes first before the implementation of new practices. The author suggest an alternative model and argues that ‘significant change in teachers’ attitude and beliefs occur primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning’. This finding can be substantiated by Ramchnadran et al’s. (2009, p.71) argument that ‘there are thousands of teachers across the country who despite all the odds continue to teach with great commitment.’ This is an area which needs to be considered in teachers professional development programs. The experiences of these teachers must be given a place at all level from teacher training module development to experience sharing opportunities in teacher training courses.

Simultaneously there is a need to strengthen the resource centres which were specifically created to provide the onsite academic support to the teachers. The existing selection criterion of resource persons needs to be given a fresh look. At present any one who qualify some objective based exams are appointed as a resource persons on deputation. These exams do not check the attitude and belief system of the individual. This can be understood from a response to the question how far teacher training and monthly meetings at CRC’s provide scope to share the classroom experiences with fellow teachers and learn from each- others experience. Teacher 7 stressed that

There is a need to free the academic resource centres from the administrative control. Simultaneously there should be strong mechanism to capacitate the resource persons so that they could be able to provide effective support to the teachers.

The relevance of this argument can be further understood in the context of what Sen (1999) emphasised in his scholarly work “Development as Freedom”. According to him the individual has a potential to bring changes in their life

conditions but they need support and assistance to develop their capabilities so that they can materialize all those things which they think are important for them.

Kennedy and Lee (2008) contest that in the context of educational reform, India needs to develop an in-service education program to help the teachers to adopt student centred learning and other new approaches to meet the demand of new reform agenda. There is a need to visualize teacher development in a holistic way. The development of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge is one part of teachers' developmental need. Understanding the perception of teachers about their pedagogical practices and overall working conditions of teachers needs to be given attention in developmental programs of teachers.

In this context some principle may be drawn from countries like China and Japan which have their indigenous mechanism of teacher development. In Japan newly appointed teachers get year round support from experienced teachers and senior teacher provide mentorship to junior teachers. This assistance comes in the form of classroom observation followed by collective lesson planning and discussion on pedagogical issues. This mechanism of collaborative learning provides an opportunity of exchange and experimental lessons to teachers in which peer teachers attend each other's lesson for exchange and experimentation and in this way enhance their learning (Schwille and Dembele, 2007).

Research studies also indicate that the voice and perspective of teachers usually remain missing. Hence, it is important to listen to teachers and organise contextual, need-based and relevant training.

## 6. Conclusion

Teacher needs an effective support in their teaching profession. The teacher training programs designed to enhance the professional knowledge needs to be analysed in context of India. This study indicates that the in-service teacher education program in Uttarakhand is derived by the reform agenda of the government and hardly pays attention towards what teachers need and think. This study argues that to understand teacher development and to tailor it accordingly, we need to know a great deal more about teachers' priorities. We need in short to know more about teachers' lives.

On the other hand the success of any teacher development program and more specifically INSET programs also depends upon the teacher self-efficacy. Teacher mode of thinking and how they interpret the situations experienced makes an impact on what they decide to do. This study reveals that intrinsic motivation of some teachers guide them to reflect on their practices and keep on doing some innovative work based on their experiences. Furthermore, the participatory approach of in-service teacher education or more specifically teacher professional development help the teachers to internalize the needs and essence of the change prescribed in the government education policies. Teacher learn more from their professional practices and their belief and attitude changes more rapidly once they see the effectiveness of new approaches resulting into the children achievement. One of the urgent needs is to strengthen the teacher support system so that teacher could get onsite support and have an opportunity to learn from their fellow teachers in real classroom settings.

Although this study is based on the perspective study of eight teachers on the effectiveness of their in-service teacher education and training for their classroom practices and any generalization is difficult to draw from what teacher says. But, one can understand the essence of teacher perspective for enhancement of quality education. The structures for CPD for teachers are in place in the form of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres (BRC's) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) – structures that decentralize teacher-education right at the district and sub-district level to address the diverse professional needs of teachers such as knowledge related to subject-matter, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge about the changing needs of society as per its cultural and geographical requirements.

However, though structures are in place, they have not succeeded in fulfilling the task assigned to them. But, if the structures which are designed to support the teachers in their work function properly, as this study revealed then the objectives of quality education can be addressed to some extent.

## Appendix 1 Transcript of an interview (Example)

Question: You are talking about in-service teacher's training...which you received how much is this influential in class room teaching?

Teacher: umm..in service..like we used to have training which were held separately.. some trainings were on subjects matter, some on our activities, some trainings....ummm.. whereas all the trainings were based on our teachings ..based on school.. but all were different..I do understand that in these trainings different teachers have different attitudes towards it, when I take part in those trainings I need to think in what form I am taking the training, some teacher can take the training as a game ..or they just enjoy in trainings or some may not listen also. For me whatever trainings I have taken till date I remember all of them .My first taining was at Barkot...at DIET..in the year 1996 on "PunarBodh", I still remember it. In that training..umm..I remember one point in that training..if the child in the class..(pause)..umm..if he sits silently or is quite or is not doing any activities or is not mischievous then that child is mentally not fit for some reason .When we say that some child is quite.. we like(pause) him and he is not a trouble creator for the teacher, but then there is some shortcomings with the child. A child is one who is mischievous and playful. This I remember from that training. I still see things in this angle that, it can be that the child is sick or have some problems .I don't remember what happened in that Barkot training but I remembered this point. I don't remember what happened in that training..introduction or conclusion .. I remember the year and this point only. I still go the class with this learning, I give attention to the child who is very quiet, lazy or calm. The same type of training was conducted in 2001..in fact it was conducted continuously from 2001, when the World Bank planning came.. .per year training was conducted, some trainings were conducted on our subject difficulties, some were conducted on activities, some were conducted on our syllabus, .ummm..umm..some on the maintenance of our school. ..like maintenance of register..so..many types of trainings were conducted..some were on school..umm..like our cultural activiites..which needs to done in school. So I learnt something new in each training. Others learnt or not I can't say..people say that it is not important..it is refresher.Training is refresher course.I may not know many things but I learnt them from trainings... about the child that this can be like this or like that. I saw every bit of the training on the perspective of the child . Every part of the trainings..not all..if some parts of the trainings are not useful I remove them. Whatever is useful I still see it in its form .if the training is activity based I do it. It is not that I do one activity for the



whole year..not limited to the current session..many time it happens .. teachers don't know how many trainings were held in the current academic year, what are those and is it limited to the current academic year or it will be done in the next coming year.Each training should be taken as a part. So many things were learnt.. one this time..another thing other time. I take along all things. I do activities so that the children do not get bored.

Qestion: Can you give me an example of any activity which you applied in class that has direct relation with the trainings?

Teacher: ( pause) Ok.... Through training..

Question: Actitvity related to training....that you have not tried earlier..and have done after the training

Teacher: The activity part..which I am telling.. we may not have done earlier ..we did only on class interval. We used to keep one class at the end for some activities ..but now whenever children gets bored we used to do activities. .clapping hands..activity with poem..anything..in between so that the children pick up their speed and don't get bored. This I do till now .Rest I do of my own.

Question: What do you think about the advantages of these activities? Any academic advantage?

Teacher: Yes academeic.. yes I agree...umm that suppose any poem is there.. I take it in that way that children learn something from the activity. I see that that the activities are related to the lessons..like, I have done the poem related activity...umm..what it was...pause (thinks...about the poem) its on colour..chidren does it..blue colour..yellow color..children does it..I have taught them at some point of time ..now children keeps on doing..does it on interval..small children also does it..blue color..yellow color. I have taught them two years back..I taught the elder children and smaller ones learnt from them. I forgot the activity..about two years back..I forgot it.. because I have some other works also..but they have not forgotten...umm if I do activity relating story..I will visualize story..if I am teaching Hindi activity it is related to it. Some new words come.. some new words come..some words are tough..how I see them..means what is my aim..I go with my aim.. I attach some story on it..children also likes it. I do it on my idea.I have written them in a diary..whatever I do now I write it down in a diary.

Question: Where do you get these ideas from?

Teacher: Some of the new ideas are of my own. Some ideas I have told Krishna Bhaiya also. The children in my school comes very less in school.. their attendance is very less.. now I am thinking.. Govt.is giving meal also.. trying to bring interest to the children..they have given small playing materials also to bring the children to the school.. they think that more and more children should come to the school but still the children do not come to the schools.. they stay at home, it's a great problem..may be some kind of fear is there.. if not fear of me.. but may be of some others. So I thought why not to build a homely atmosphere? Let me build a hut in the school.. children likes to play in huts. When my children were small they used to love playing in the huts. They used to hold the ends of the huts and play. They also kept some belongings inside the hut.. one would become a mother.. the other a father.I shared this idea with Krishna Bhaiya. My idea was that the children will think that they are coming to play..in the hut there will be pictures. A group of four children will sit inside the hut .They will beautify the hut daily.So like this type.I talked with Madam about my idea. Madam said that why to build the hut.. where to build the hut. By that time Bubhaneswari people adopted the school, lots of furnitures and materials came and the place was filled up.So it was not possible there. Now...ummm.uumm they are running..ummm... their method..multy class teaching method, so the hut idea was not possible.That was my idea.. I have not learned from any training, if I would havedone that more and more children would have come to school. I used to think at night , how to bring the children to the school, everything came ..food is also good but still children don't come to school..if one day they wiil come ..the next day they remain absent. She (may be Headmistress) told that the idea was good but she will not be able to tell anything until the idea becomes a success . Now I see it from a different angle..like how do I fix the pictures in the hut .. what will I do there.

Question:Why do you think that in spite of doing all the things the children still do not come to the school?

Teacher: Now it may happen that they like..me.. and may like the school but may not like others behavior. They may have fear. I can make the child understand..(pause) ..its easy to make a child understand but I cannot make the other person understand. Some reason may be there for the fear ..

Question: Its right ..its right..

Teacher : (continues) When I come ..the children greets me from the road.. saying that Junior Madam is coming so let's go and eat rice and by interval they will come. When they sees that..madam is there (she means Head Madam) they have fear of working. If they come five minutes late then... I have tried to make Madam understand (in a low voice).

Question: Ok let's leave this issue...it's a serious issue. I want to know if you can talk on some lesson plan that you have made five years ago. Any lesson plan.. .and after five years when you teach it now what differences do you think is there? Can you throw some light on such point?

Teacher: When we used to tech before training ..when we have not received training we just used to teach straightforward. Probably we don't apply the reason behind the lesson also. How to teach the lesson? The reason why I am teaching the lesson should be there. If I need to teach this lesson what should I teach..that idea should be there. Lesson plan. If we make a plan.. how to teach the lesson..we have to think of the time also. What are the types of children, what are their categories. That thing I have seen now. Previously we used to teach straightforward. There was no interesting aspect in teaching. Now I do some activities based on the lesson..some poems are also done based on the topic. Now we know that some other things can also be attached with the lesson. It is not necessary that we to go with the lesson. We can generate information from different sources. Lesson is just a ..umm..helping material.

Question: So how you used to teach previously? Now you are saying that there is a change and the change is due the trainings. You are saying that previously we used in different way now in a different way.You are teaching in a different way..are you saying it in this way?

Teacher: Yes

Question: So how you used to teach before and how you are teaching now?

Teacher: Previously when I used to teach poem I have not given importance to the gesture and posture for teaching poems. I took care of the rhythm of the poem to some extent ..I used to ask the children to recite but never taken care of the postures in reading a poem. Now I take care of all the activities to be done while teaching a poem.If a story has a fear element, I used to bring that thing also while teaching. Story to is to be taught as a story.. when the story will be intersecting the children will also get interested. This I learnt from trainings.

Question: Ok..so you have learnt this from the trainings.

Teacher: Yes from the trainings..some from the people who used to come to the trainings, the madam who used to sit in the LGP, I learnt from them how to tell a story. A poem cannot be taught without gestures. These things I felt very important.

Question: So you felt these things are important.

Teacher: Yes..the children enjoys the fun. It may or may not be for me but the children are interested.

Question: So we have these teachers training or such kinds of trainings.. which of these types of training do you feel most beneficial to you..which type of training was most beneficial to you. You have previously given an example that the first training that you have attended...

Teacher: Yes.. the training was on psychology..may be it was a refresher but the topic was on psychology. It was for one day.

Question: Can you tell me again about that training?

Teachers: Yes the training was for one day. In that training I learnt that if the child is not mischievous. .or very quiet ..child..the child which we think is very good for the teacher then the child has some problem. He might have some problem physically, maybe he has some mental problem. So I learnt these things which still I take care of even today.If some child is quite , I enquire about him..touch him to see if he has any fever. Or I will see if he is weak. Its not that children will have tension in them. The children will either be sick or have some mental weakness in them. He may not have enough food at home or something else. In most of the cases we see that children are sick and they are the victims of malnutrition. So this is important..if this type of training..the child psychology training is given again than I think it will be useful to understand the children to some extent.

Question: Can you tell how much the methods of training are useful in understanding the trainings?

Teacher: Methods of training..umm.. some trainings I liked very much.

Question: Can you give some example?

Teacher: Like...ummm. .. last year the training that took place..that of box file .Some came from NGOs like Choptaji, he kept all of us busy and made us to do some activity always

relating to education. He took care that we don't feel bored. The method was good. We have not felt that the training was heavy. We liked the method of teaching. With him there was another Sir..ummm.. he was also very active. Previous to this training, the training on difficulty level of math's which I attended was also very interesting. I liked his method of teaching.

Question: what was his method?

Teacher: His training was related to TLM..how TLM is useful in teaching Maths.

Question: I would like to ask one more question, that how much the trainings helped the school?

Teacher: Not much help..

Question: Then do you want to talk on some topics that you think important to talk about and till now no conversations have taken place on such topic?

Teacher: In trainings the authorities should take care that the trainings are related to the problems of children and teachers. Meeting can be of one or two days in which we can sit together formally and informally and talk about identifying our problems and its reasons. Let us think positive, think about children and be devoted to children.

Question: So what is your saying on the trainings ..how much it fulfills the need of such kind.

Teacher: May be trainings cannot fulfill any of the necessities. Today the need is to understand the teachers

Question: What to mean when you say that the need is to understand the teacher?

Teacher : Understanding teachers means understanding teachers and their problems by the authorities.

Question: One thing I like to ask that, in these two or three years how much help you received from CRCs?

Teacher: Every CRC has its different cluster, different working strategy but we have not received much help from our CRC. CRC never visited our school and not observed the system of our school and neither motivated us. When last year Matric Mela was organized, I myself went and invited officers and authorities.... our CRC never enquired about the system

and management and working style. The CRC who was present previous to this CRC was very good, and she motivated us also. She was regular in school visit. She helped us lot when we had a child fair . Every time she was asking if her help was required.

Question: Can I ask you a question.. if someone asks that do you have any suggestions or new ideas for in-service teacher training..then what suggestion would you give?

Teacher: Do you want the suggestion about the CRC level type of training?

Question: Yes. What do you think about making it more beneficial?

Teacher: If I have any new suggestions or ideas then I should also be called in the training. It is not necessary that MTs know everything. Whoever has new ideas they should be called in the trainings. Otherwise... the one who don't give training's becomes MT. The people who wants to become MT are not given the opportunity to become MT . The ones who can give trainings don't become MT. Only those, becomes MT who thinks that somehow their 10 days(of training) are passed. Those who are capable of becoming MT that don't want to be, because they think that in those 10 days they could teach something to the children in the schools.

Question: The private organizations who does something for you time and again.. how useful are those to you?

Teacher: All these have their importance in their areas. We get a lot of help from them. Like the Bhubeneswari Mahila Ashram gave us a lot of TLM ..we get a lot of help from them. We learnt from them that instead of class wise sitting arrangement the children should be made to sit according to their age group. We also learnt a lot from Azimji Premji Foundation (she calls APF as Azimji Premji Foundation) .. we learnt how to teach a story to a child or poem through play and games .I learnt the art of child observation from Azimji foundation trainings.

Question: What are its advantages?

Teacher: The child has learnt a lot of things from it..like new words, reading writing poems..stories. Their writing standards have increased. They are ready to write anything. Through this.. it will happen that..umm..by writing continuously they would be able to rectify their mistakes. Through these the children learn happily.. they don't feel burden to learn. For example I have asked children to do handwriting.. when they comes to me to show..I ask them to match from book. Then they match them from books and whenever there is a mistake

they put a round around it.. thus they learn from their mistakes. Such things we learnt from NGOs . We learnt things like.. Child friendly exam, assesement. This word came now only but we learnt it from NGOs much earlier.

Question: That means you are able to do all the things in your class room?

Teacher: Yes..when I go to school, instead of the practice of touching feet of their teachers I ask the children to do Namaste. The children breaks the queue to shake hands with me, but I tell them that I am all of your friend and I will come to you to shake your hands. I go to them to shake their hands and the children become very happy.

Question: How this change came to you?

Teacher: This change I learnt from NGO. When your LGP programme came , from that I learnt child friendly education..which I applied in my class room. I told the children that I am your friend. Now what will you do for me? The children tell lots of things which they can do.. and they have do also. For example.. fetching water.. playing together, writing stories. Not that Sometime the Bhojan Mata says that “ Madamji the children don’t fear you.. even I also don’t fear you, I don’t understand you”. So I told that the children should not have fear in their mind.

Question: So you need to ask Bhojan Mata whether she likes it or dislikes it?

Teacher: Children likes this..when they write in cards they say that we like Bari Madam. Oneday when Bhojam Mata ask them which Madam do you like then they told that they likes Choti Madam.So I asked that in cards you write that you like Bari Madam but when you say ..you say that you like Choti Madam. The children then said that if they don’t write Bari Madam’s name in their card then she becomes angry.

Question: So you think that trainings are helpful to you?

Teacher: Yes for me it is very beneficial. For others I cannot tell, but for me it is very beneficial.

Question: You can’t tell about others but still feel that trainings are beneficial..

Teacher: Yes. All trainings are a beneficial. Each has its own advantage. This also depends on the facilitator skills. From each of them I learned something .

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