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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental activity in the knowledge based society. It makes a significant role in bringing quality in one’s life. Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country’s economic growth. So the strength of any nation depends upon the quality and amount of education of its people. Nurturing of the nations’ human resources largely depends upon schools. School education thus has emerged as an important segment of the total education system as it contributes significantly to the individual as well as the national development. Hence these institutions should be very effective. The most vitally significant elements in the educational situation are the students and teachers. It is teachers who influence the thought and behaviour of children. It is they who develop and transact curriculum. The quality of teacher, therefore, is a matter of the deepest social concern. The quality of teachers, in turn, depends largely on pre-service education and in-service training they have been exposed to before and after joining the teaching profession.

Teacher education is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of a nation. A professionally trained teacher is expected to identify the strength and weakness of the education system in the state and after having gained insights into the status, problems and issues concerning education, develop a mind set to evaluate the system and utilizing the same for promoting excellence in education. A teacher in the classroom has to make adjustments in teaching strategy according to the
nature and scope of the curriculum and evaluate the success of teaching in terms of student’s growth. The quality, range and flexibility of teachers classroom work are closely linked with their professional growth and the way they develop as professional.

1.1 In-service Training for Teachers

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, teaching was a profession concerned with a minority of the population. Teacher was considered a mere dispenser of knowledge and an instructor for the transmission of cultural and social heritage and the students were passive receivers. Students were expected to memorize the knowledge provided by the teacher or presented in the textbooks and tested them at the end of the academic sessions. Examinations served as filters to eliminate the “unwanted”.

The educational practitioners acknowledge that memorization and recall of knowledge do not ensure that students have understood the concepts and will be able to use the knowledge in different life situations. Learners learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process and construct their own knowledge in a more meaningful manner. The role of teacher has changed from that of a mere transmitter of information to a facilitator who provides a variety of learning experience for the learners. The teacher has to facilitate critical thinking among the learners through democratic and collaborative classroom processes. The teachers should help the learners to integrate multiple sources of knowledge such as life experience of the children, local and traditional knowledge and the knowledge that can be constructed from media and other resources. Accordingly, the teacher has been assigned multifarious duties and
he is expected to perform numerous tasks in various capacities. They have to ensure that the child is engaged in learning actively. Moreover, they have to encourage learners to compare, debate, share and learn from each other. It is, therefore, necessary for a teacher to remain in touch with the latest developments in content, educational innovations, teaching-learning methodologies, evaluation, examination reform etc. through in-service education. In the domain of methodology of teaching, educational technology, management and planning etc. have undergone a sea change. The latest devices like computers, audio-visual cassettes, educational television, educational radio etc. can motivate students for learning. This calls for the continuous updating and enhancement of knowledge of teachers.

The place of pre-service education can hardly be underestimated. However the need of in-service training is indispensible. Pre-service education seeks to produce a person ready to launch on teaching career. It deals mainly with fundamentals and basic professional skills. It is, however, only the start of a long journey. The education of teachers does not end with graduation from teacher training institutions. Education is a continuous process. It is essential, therefore to find ways and means to provide facilities and an environment in which the teacher will find new significance and new understanding and wherein he will develop new insight into his work and programme. The creation of such an environment conducive to professional growth is in-service education at its best. In view of the above, in-service training becomes a necessity.
1.2 Professional Development of Primary School Teachers

Primary education plays a pivotal role in the lives of individuals, and so all awakened societies cherish the goal of basic education for all. Education has been included in the Child Rights under the Right for Development. Improving the quality of primary education is an essential requirement to achieve the goal of Education for ALL (EFA).

Need to improve the quality of education is necessary at every level, but it is much more necessary at the primary level because of the significant role it plays in national development. Primary education lays the foundation for secondary and higher education. The educational pyramid, therefore, has to make provisions for a strong base in primary education. Primary education and its quality play an important role in providing a strong base for the development of the individual. The quality of education at primary level depends on the quality of teaching-learning process. The role of teachers is very important in determining the effectiveness of teaching-learning process. Improving the professional competencies of primary teachers is essential to improve the learning of children and the quality of primary education.

It is a common knowledge that the children in the primary schools, being in the formative stage, should be handled by those who are capable of shaping their future in such a way as to be beneficial to themselves and the society at large. But generally the quality of primary education is a neglected area. The requisite educational qualification for an individual to get admission to the teacher training certificate course is a pass in the higher secondary. The
period in-service of a primary teacher is, on an average 30 years. During this considerably long period of his service, it is unreasonable to expect him to keep himself abreast of the vast changes in content areas, advances in the pedagogical science, cognitive psychology advancement in science and technology and consequent shift in the policies and priorities of a nation. In the circumstance it is the bounden duty of a nation to ensure that such a teacher is exposed to the day-to-day changes in the realm of knowledge. The only means to ensure the quality of education at primary stage therefore, is the provision of adequate in-service programme to the primary teachers. Any failure in this will be the entrustment of moulding of the posterity in its vital formative stage to a group of teachers who will eventually turn out to be not making but marring the invaluable asset of a nation. The provision of proper in-service training to the primary school teachers has, therefore become a crying need which in no way be dispensed with. As per the recommendations of National Policy on Education (1986) District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) are established in India particular to provide in-service programmes for primary school teachers.

The professional preparation of teachers has always been a great challenge to the nation. Though its importance has been recognized since the 1960s, the fact remains that teachers are yet to progress a long way forward in the path of professional development. The report of the Education Commission (1964-66) in India gives recognition to the important need in the following words: “In all professions, there is need to provide further training and special
courses of study, on a continuing basis, after initial professional preparation. The need is more urgent in the teaching profession because of the rapid advance in all fields of knowledge and continuing evolution of pedagogical theory and practice”.

The in-service programmes for primary school teachers requires to be given greater attention especially at this age, which is characterized by explosion of knowledge and rapid change, which naturally have its implications on the school curriculum. The acceptance of democratic principles has not only brought about an increase in pupil enrolment, but it has resulted in heterogeneous groups of students in the classroom and has put forth the ideas of democratic leadership and group dynamics. Hence the in-service teacher training is an integral component of the educational system. A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame.’(Tagore)

An understanding of the educational aims, the nature of knowledge, the learners and the nature of school as a social space could help us to arrive at principles to guide classroom practices. Thinkers across the world have acknowledged education as the process of bringing out the innate capacities of an individual. Every society strives to achieve this aim through formal educational institutions. Sri Aurobindo aspired for a National Education giving due weightage to truth and knowledge and at the same time with its base in the cultural heritage of the country. The education would result in creating a person with separate individuality at the same time making him an inseparable
member of the society. A century ago itself, Swami Vivekananda expressed the same view by suggesting that there should be a harmonious synthesis between the ancient and modern methods with creativity as the base, suiting to the person and the time.

Mahatma Gandhi had visualized education as a means of awakening the nation’s conscience to injustice, violence and inequality entrenched in the social order. Gandhiji recommended basic education for primary level. In basic education he stressed the use of the immediate environment, including the mother tongue and work, as a resource for socializing the child into a transformative vision of society. This essentially, is a continuous process characterized by conflicts between nations, within society and between humanity and nature. The post-independent education commissions reflected Mahatma Gandhi’s educational philosophy in the changed socio-political context with a focus on national development.

It is also necessary to understand how children learn at the primary level. Every child can learn if allowed to do so at her own pace and follow her own way of learning. Children at primary the primary stage learn better and more easily through experiences, play, exploration and actually doing different things. Their learning is promoted much more when the entire learning process is joyful and stimulating. Learning is a continuous process. Thus, children’s learning does not take place only in the school. Therefore classroom learning should be linked with what happens outside the classroom and at home. Children learn in a spiral and not a linear way. Thus revisiting concepts again
and again helps them to understand better. All these aspects point out that the role of teacher has changed from that of a mere transmitter of information to a facilitator who provides a variety of learning experience for the learners. A teacher has to continue his/her quest for new knowledge and apply it to bring qualitative improvement in children’s achievement. Therefore the in-service training programmes for primary school teachers are to be designed in tune with the aims and new trends in classroom process.

1.3 Initiatives for In-service Teacher Training in India

Prior to 1986, in-service training of teachers in India was a sporadic affair. The National Policy on Education (NPE-1986) laid a great deal of emphasis on in-service education of teachers on a continuing basis to improve the quality of school education and thereby to achieve Universal Elementary Education. In NPE 1986, country-wide efforts have been made to develop institutions like DIET, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) and Centre for Teacher Education (CTE) for providing in-service training to primary and secondary school teachers. There are 500 DIETs, 87 CTEs, 38 IASEs, and 30 State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) in the country. However, many of them have yet to function as resource centres. DIETs are established with the capability to organize pre-service and in-service courses for primary teachers. During the period of District Primary Education Project (DPEP) new structures were brought in such as the Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) for taking up in-service teacher education programmes for primary teachers. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) came into being in the year 2002 for bringing about both
quantitative and qualitative changes in primary school education across the country. The structures that were introduced during DPEP period were retained in SSA. All these structures served as agencies for designing initiatives for pedagogic renewal. There have been significant changes in the classroom profile in specific geographical areas of the country. At the same time the fact remains that by and large the in-service inputs have not had any noticeable impact on teacher practice.

A major challenge the country has to undertake in the context of in-service teacher training is related to quality parameters. It has been widely observed that unless the specific needs of the practicing teachers are addressed quality cannot be brought in. A major drawback is that the trainings are mainly lecture-oriented denying opportunities for the teachers to actively participate. The situation calls for activity-based, experiential and participatory training programmes. The multi-grade teaching, team teaching, cooperative and collaborative learning are propagated without realizing their classroom implications. To add to the challenges posed in this domain, proper follow-up does not take place to monitor whether the training inputs are realized in classroom practices. Since this is not taking place, as a chain of action, cluster level training programmes do not attain professionalism for the sheer fact that teachers are not able to share their classroom practices. NCF (2005) observes that ‘pre service teacher education as well as in-service training must build the necessary orientation and capacities in teachers so that they can appreciate, understand and meet the challenges of the curriculum framework.’
NCF (2005) has put forward several valuable suggestions for improving the quality of in-service teacher education. It asserts that ‘any curriculum renewal effort needs to be supported with a well thought-out and systematic programme of in-service education and school-based teacher support. In-service teacher education cannot be an event but rather is a process, which includes knowledge, development and changes in attitudes, skills, disposition and practice through interactions both in workshop settings and in the school. It does not consist only of receiving knowledge from experts.’ The suggestions in NCF (2005) can be consolidated as follows:

- Experiential learning, incorporating teachers as active learners is to be provided. Peer group-based review of practice can become a part of the overall strategy. Self-reflection needs to be acknowledged as a vital component of such programmes. A training policy needs to be worked out, defining parameters such as the periodicity, context and methodology of programmes. Interactions would require far more decentralized planning with clarity on goals and methods for training and transfer.
- Mass training using new technologies may be of use in some aspects of training. Training could comprise a variety of activities in addition to contact lectures and discussions in the teacher training institutions and include workshops in schools in the cluster, projects and other assignments for teachers in their classrooms. In-service training, in particular, must be situated within the context of the classroom experiences of teachers.
• DIETs, which have the responsibility of organizing such training, should do so in a manner in which both teachers and their schools benefit from such training. For instance, instead of the ad-hoc manner in which teachers are sent for in-service training by the educational administration, it would be better for a cluster of schools to be identified and a minimum number of trainees invited from each school to participate in an in-service training programme. DIETs, in coordination with BRCs, could identify the schools for this purpose. In order that teaching time is not unduly affected, and teacher trainees are able to make the link between theory and practice, the mandatory days for training could be split up over the course of the year to include on-site work in their own classrooms as well.

• To link pre-service and in-service training, the same schools can become sites for pre-service internship, and student teachers can be asked to observe classroom transaction in these schools. This could serve not only as feedback to teacher educators for strengthening the training programme but can also become the basis of critical reflection by teacher trainees during the latter part of the training programme. To take the process forward, there could be interactive sessions with headmasters from the concerned schools so that they can play the role of a facilitator in the changes in classroom practices that the teacher trainees like to make.

• Dissemination technologies can serve to build a positive ethos for curricular reforms if they are used as sites of discussion and debates in which teachers, training personnel and community members can participate.
1.4 Agencies for In-service Teacher Training

In the backdrop of the need, importance and various facets of in-service training, let us examine how this takes place in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the last few years many new programmes and ventures have been taken up by the government and other educational agencies for encouraging the qualitative aspects of in-service teacher education and development. There are many National and State level institutions which provide in-service training to the teachers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), Centre for Cultural Educational Research and Training (CCERT), Regional Institute of English, South India (RIESI), English and Foreign Language University (EFLU), Institute of Management in Government (IMG), the State Institute of Educational Management, Administration and Training (SIEMAT), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), and the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) major agencies of in-service training for preparing school teachers.

Out of these NCERT offers training to teachers in selected areas such as curriculum, assessment, population education, environmental education, education for girls etc. NUEPA focuses on administrative aspects of Education for the empowerment of the educational officers. CCERT is vested with the responsibility of imparting training on cultural aspects and craft works to the school teachers. EFLU is a national level institution that focuses on new pedagogy and methods of teaching in English. Subject based training are
organised by RIEs and SCERTs.

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Quality Improvement Programme (QIP), a body operating under the control of the Director of Public Instruction (DPI) in Kerala and the newly constituted IT@ school, IMG and SIEMAT are the institutions in Kerala which provide in-service training. These agencies provide training on general administration, planning and management. The training given by IT@ school, Kerala is exclusively on IT-enabled education for primary and secondary teachers.

In 1990, the Govt. of Tamil Nadu converted the SCERT into Directorate of Teacher Education, Research and Training (DTERT). The important functions of DTERT are to provide pre-service and in-service training programmes for school teachers, monitor, regulate and coordinate the functioning of the DIETs and serve as the executive agency to operationalise various education schemes like Operation Black Board (OBB), SSA, Activity Based Learning (ABL), Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) etc, sponsored by the central and State Governments.

However, teacher specific training programmes in both Kerala and Tamil Nadu are done by agencies like SCERT (Kerala), DTERT (Tamil Nadu), DIET and SSA. In Kerala SSA and DIET provide training to primary teachers and SCERT gives training to the State Resource Groups. Apart from these training for secondary level teachers is given by QIP, in Kerala. In Tamil Nadu, DTERT provides academic support to the training programmes for primary teachers and training to the secondary teachers. In addition to these agencies, the British Council and UNICEF are also providing training to teachers in specific areas like women empowerment, child rights, language teaching.
1.5 Role of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a novel programme designed by Central Government takes up initiatives to universalize and improve the Quality of Elementary Education in a mission mode through district based, decentralized, context specific planning and implementation strategy. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The programme calls for community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization.

One of the major interventions of SSA is to give training to the teachers at primary level (Class I - VIII). Presently every primary school teacher is being imparted in-service training for 20 days under SSA. SSA organizes the State Resource Group (SRG), District Resource Group (DRG) and the Block Resource Group (BRG) for preparing modules and for giving training. Training is done in a cascading model beginning from the SRG and reaching down the line to the BRG. Academic support of the DIETs is to be utilized in giving training to the state and district resource groups.

In order to attain the goal of quality education to all children of the 6-14 age groups, SSA has initiated a number of activities. Regarding quality of education, SSA lays a special thrust on making education at the elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum and introducing child centered activities and effective teaching learning strategies. SSA recognizes the critical and central role of teachers and advocates a focus
on their developmental needs. Initiatives such as setting up of Block Resource Centres, Cluster Resource Centres and Urban Resource Centres, recruitment of qualified teachers, providing various opportunities for teacher development are carried out by SSA. One of the ways of empowering teachers is to involve them in the preparation of curriculum. Teachers are also involved in the preparation of modules for teacher training at various levels and for various subjects. The training programmes focus on classroom processes. Exposure visits for teachers are designed to develop human resources among teachers. Thus teacher training has been identified as one of the thrust areas of intervention by SSA to ensure quality elementary education.

1.6 Need and Significance of the Study

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a national programme and there is a framework developed by Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) for implementing the interventions at different levels. However the strategy, content and interventions for the in-service training programmes are formulated for each state specifically. The investigator, who worked as State Programme Officer in SSA Kerala, felt that both Kerala and Tamil Nadu had gone a long way ahead in empowering elementary teachers under SSA in order to ensure quality of education. In Kerala revised textbooks are used in classes I to VIII that have been developed based on Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF-2007). New curriculum and new learning materials are introduced in the primary classes of Tamil Nadu. The present study is undertaken to critically examine the in-service training programmes carried out in Kerala and in Tamil
Nadu under SSA with a view to formulating suggestions towards achieving quality parameters of in-service teacher training programmes as envisaged in National Curriculum Frame Work (NCF-2005). The study is focused on the training profile, theoretical foundations of pedagogy, the nature, periodicity, organization, mode of delivery and periodic quality checks of the in-service teacher training programmes under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It is also expected that research-based data can be made available for planning the qualitative development of teacher training programmes at the elementary level all over the country.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

In-service teacher training is one of the major interventions of SSA to provide quality education to all children. Even though there is a national framework for the implementation of SSA programmes, the parameters of the training programmes are formulated differently in Kerala and in Tamil Nadu. The investigator studied the similarities and the differences in the parameters of different components of in-service training programmes in the two neighbouring states Kerala and Tamil Nadu which included the training profile, pedagogic considerations that have gone into the teacher training programmes, the mechanism for monitoring and follow up of in-service training, training modes followed, the initiatives undertaken for research climate in schools and the perceptions of teachers about the effectiveness of the training programmes. The parameters of different components of the in-service programmes of the two states were analysed and the study is intended for mutual sharing of the benefits to ensure quality education in both the
As such the present study is entitled: **IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN IN KERALA AND TAMIL NADU: A COMPARATIVE STUDY.**

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a major programme of Government of India towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. It has been envisaged as a community based strategy, coupled with a time-bound integrated approach in mission mode and in partnership with the States. SSA aims to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children of the 6-14 age groups.

1.8.2 **Teacher Training** - Training is the systematic practice in performance of skill. Teacher Training’ means the training provided to develop desired attitudes, skills and the necessary knowledge among teachers about different subjects. It includes pre-service and in-service training. Pre-service training serves to provide insight into the profession of teaching, including the basic principles concerning education, whereas in-service training will enable the practicing teacher to reinforce faith in the principles and practices.

1.8.3 **In-service Programmes** – In-service programme means all educational and training programmes provided to teachers in service aims for updating their knowledge and skills for better performance and quality improvement, and is a part of continuing teacher education.
1.9 **Objectives of the Study**

1. To critically analyze the training profile and theoretical foundations of pedagogy of in-service programmes organized under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

2. To compare the in-service teacher training programmes organized under SSA in Kerala and Tamil Nadu with respect to nature of training, mode of delivery and monitoring.

3. To examine the mechanism for the follow up of in-service teacher training programmes organized under SSA in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

4. To find out the perceptions of the teachers about the effectiveness of in-service programmes organized under SSA in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

5. To identify the initiatives undertaken by SSA to generate a climate of research in schools and among teachers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

1.10 **Scope and De-limitation of the Study**

The present study is expected to give guidelines for the improvement and implementation of the in-service teacher training programme all over the country. The study is confined only to two districts- Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu and Trivandrum District in Kerala. Among various quality interventions under SSA, the study is limited to in-service teacher training. Agencies like DIETs, SIEMATs are also conducting in-service programmes for primary school teachers and head masters. These programmes have not been
included in the present investigation which is solely confined to in-service programmes under SSA.
1.11 Organization of the Report

The thesis has been organized in six chapters. The background of the study, its context, objectives and scope is stated in chapter 1. The review of related studies is presented in chapter 2. Method and procedure followed in the study are explained in chapter 3. An overview of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched in India from 2002 especially in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu is attempted in Chapter 4. The analysis of data collected from the two districts Trivandrum in Kerala and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu has been given in chapter 5. The various aspects of SSA relating to in-service programmes for the primary school teachers have also been compared and the results have been interpreted in this chapter. The summary of the study, its major findings and suggestions are given in chapter 6. The bibliography and the tools for data collection are appended at the end of the thesis.