

## **Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the National Resource Group for SSA**

The Eighth meeting of the National Resource Group (NRG) for SSA was held on January 22, 2013 in Room No. 202, Chacha Nehru Bhawan, NCERT. The meeting was chaired by Shri R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy (DSE&L), Government of India. In the inaugural session, Prof. Kiran Devendra, Head, Department of Elementary Education and Member Secretary, NRG welcomed the Secretary Shri Bhattacharya and Ms. Vrinda Sarup, Additional Secretary, School Education and Literacy, MHRD, Prof. Parvin Sinclair, Director and Prof. B.K. Tripathi, Joint Director NCERT and all the NRG members.

2. Prof. Kiran Devendra gave the background of the NRG meeting and highlighted the need to provide a platform to large number of functionaries working in the areas of SSA and RTE in States and UTs. She informed that Department of Elementary Education (DEE) is involved in quality improvement at elementary stage from the beginning of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and provided input to major interventions such as Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), monitoring quality dimensions of elementary education, development of materials related to early literacy and provided necessary support to States and UTs in implementing these and other interventions under SSA. She informed that NRG meeting could not be held last year due to the delay in constituting the new NRG.

3. Prof. Parvin Sinclair, Director, NCERT in her opening remarks said that the newly constituted NRG needs to brainstorm on the academic aspects of the SSA and RTE implementation. She briefly referred to the work NCERT is doing in this regard. The implementation of quality monitoring formats, CCE package, material developed under 'early literacy' and 'group arithmetic' in States and UTs were highlighted by her. She apprised the group about the work done by NCERT in these areas.

4. Shri Bhattacharya, Secretary, School Education and Literacy in his inaugural address expressed his happiness to have this opportunity to share ideas with the NRG members from different States and institutions. He emphasized that a lot of importance is attached to the NRG and its deliberations, from planning to follow up actions. He appreciated the work done in the implementation of SSA and addressing the concerns of quality elementary education by

the Department of Elementary Education, NCERT since the inception of SSA. The basic need to have NRG deliberations was expressed by the Secretary, in the following way:

- To oversee the aspects of policy, planning and monitoring of all aspects of quality related intervention under SSA.
- To consider the need to define learning outcomes for quality improvement.
- To provide advice and guidance to NCERT, towards supporting quality improvement at elementary level.

5. Referring to the Annual Status of Education Report 2012 (ASER) of Pratham, an NGO, about the learning outcomes of children, he suggested that there is need for measurement of outcomes of learning and also the need to improve the timeline of learning achievement surveys of NCERT from the existing timeline to 3 years' cycle, to make it more useful. Referring to the implementation of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and recent deliberation in the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) on education in this regard, he spoke of the need to streamline the implementation of the CCE. He informed that 28 states and UTs have developed some mechanism for CCE implementation. The document on CCE being developed by NCERT will provide a benchmark to States/UTs and benefit them in implementing the CCE scheme effectively. Referring to studies in the area of programme evaluation, he expressed the need to plan some studies for the next year. Regarding the revised Quality Monitoring Tools (QMTs) he expressed the need to further improve them and make them more effective and user friendly.

6. After this, Ms Vrinda Sarup, Additional Secretary, was requested to make a presentation on the RTE, which is appended. She particularly focused on the responsibilities of central, State and local governments in implementing the Act.

7. In this context she reminded the group about the duties and responsibilities of teachers that are laid down in the Act. One of the major duties of teachers is to complete the curriculum and track learning achievement. Teachers' qualification and teacher eligibility test at State level have been provided for. CBSE at central level and state governments at state level are conducting the eligibility tests. She also emphasized on the role of SMCs and relationship between teachers and SMCs for quality improvement.

8. Referring to the schedule appended to the RTE Act she reminded about the standards laid down for a school in terms of pupil teacher ratio in order to help the teacher discharge duties

better. She also emphasized about the need for the rationalization and deployment of teachers. Referring to North Eastern States, she indicated the challenges faced in appointment of qualified teachers. In states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, thousands of teachers were recruited in one go. With reference to professional training of teachers she informed that large numbers of teachers are untrained in many states. The training is being provided through Indira Gandhi National Open University and Nation Institute of Open Schooling, but there are still issues of teachers in North Eastern States. NCTE is providing a facilitative role in this regard, she mentioned. Referring to multi-grade multilingual situation in schools she highlighted the need to improve quality of learning achievement of children. She hoped that age appropriate learning package, CCE package, Early Reading material and Mathematics Kit developed by NCERT would help to enhance the learning outcomes.

9. Finally, referring to the PM's speech to improve the learning outcomes, she advised that it is important to develop classwise learning outcomes and teacher performance indicators as suggested by the Secretary Education. However, she remarked that learning outcomes should not be looked at as the MLLs, developed by NCERT in the past. The learning indicators developed by NCERT few years back may be useful in this regard. The Director, NCERT thanked Ms Vrinda Sarup for her elaborate and focused presentation.

10. Following this, Prof. Kiran Devendra took up the agenda items one by one, for deliberation. The first agenda item was the confirmation of the minutes of the Seventh NRG meeting. The minutes of the Seventh meeting of the NRG were confirmed unanimously by the house. Prof. Devendra presented the 'Action Taken Report' on the minutes of the Seventh NRG meeting.

11. The next item was a presentation on the CCE package created by NCERT, by Prof. Manju Jain. She focused on the conceptual understanding of CCE among various stakeholders and guidelines to practitioners for implementation. She also suggested how teachers can use CCE as an integral component of the teaching-learning process. The process of developing the package on CCE was shared in detail and the purpose of assessment and evaluation was clarified. The process and procedure related to data recording was shared in order to help teachers to systematically record the information. During discussion, Prof. Rama Mathew from Delhi University felt that teachers will not be able to handle too much theory and had doubts about relevance of the package. Prof. Kiran Devendra responded to her question suggesting that the existing material had been reviewed and package has been developed on

the basis of suggestions received in the meetings and workshops organised in the States. Mr. Rajagopalan suggested that more exemplars and concrete examples should be given to teachers. Prof. Manju Jain responded that various examples have been given in the module for teachers and a video film has also been included.

12. Prof. Yogesh Kumar made a presentation on revised Quality Monitoring Formats (QMTs) in the context of implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009. The revision was made based on i) the model rules developed under RTE Act pertaining to duties of teachers, roles and responsibilities of academic authority, provisions under Section 29 of the RTE Act and ii) the feedback received from States and UTs. The presentation specially focused on the classroom observation schedule which is of central value in the overall implementation of QMTs. After presentation one significant suggestion received from the members was that these tools may be uploaded on the website of the NCERT. Next presentation was made by Dr. A.K. Wazalwar on Mathematics Kit developed by the 'Group Arithmetic' to help children learn Mathematics better and develop liking and understanding of mathematics during early primary grades. The kit is to be finalized after its trial in the field.

13. Prof. Sridhar Srivastava, Head, Educational Survey Division, NCERT made a presentation on National Achievement Survey. He informed the group that the third cycle of National Achievement Survey (NAS) of Class V was conducted during the year 2010-11 and the report is available with the department for reference. He stated that the class V NAS was significantly updated in line with international best practices in student assessment and it has been tested on one lakh students in language, Mathematics and Environment Studies. Questionnaires were used to collect background information on schools, teachers and students. Findings of the survey were shared with the group. During his presentation Prof. Srivastava shared the findings and stated that in U.P. the performance in Mathematics was found to be good. On this Shri Rajagopalan said that Pratham's report ASER had revealed that the performance of 48% of children in U.P in Mathematics was not satisfactory. He asked for Prof. Srivastava's opinion in that regard. Prof. Srivastava said that, as such, the purpose of NAS was not to make comparison with other studies as the objective and methodology could be different. NAS was conducted on competency basis, whereas, the study conducted by Pratham was on graded basis, Prof. Sridhar said.

14. Prof. Manjula Mathur made presentation on Baseline Assessment of Early Reading Programme conducted in the year 2008. She explained the objectives and background of the study in detail. She mentioned that the objective of the study was to assess the prevailing status of reading and literacy environment in schools and to use the findings of the baseline study as guidelines to design the interventions for the Mathura Pilot Project. She also mentioned about the tool development process in detail. Dr. Manjula Mathur shared the material developed for children under the 'Barkha' series and 'Firkee' a news letter developed under the project. She explained in detail the graded learning material, posters and implementation aspects of early literacy programme during her presentation. Ms. Tanya Suri presented the findings of the in-line assessment conducted in Project Schools of Mathura. During discussion Shri Rajagolpalan enquired about the time gap between the baseline and in-line assessment project activities. Prof. Mathur responded to this query and informed that the time gap between two assessment survey was of four years.

15. In the last session Prof. Kiran Devendra, Head, DEE presented the status of Programme Evaluation Studies undertaken during 2010-11 in detail. She mentioned that capacity building for all the team members in the area of Programme Evaluation was done through National and International workshops. The reports are available, she mentioned. Prof. Devendra mentioned that the whole process was a team effort and all team members have learnt from each other. In continuation, she mentioned about the studies which have been undertaken during the year 2012-13. Two of them, e.g., Teacher Training in English in Karnataka and Professional Development Programme for Teachers in the states of Chhattisgarh and Andaman & Nicobar have been completed and draft reports have been shared with the state stakeholders. The other two studies are in progress, she informed.

16. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Prof. K.M. Gupta. He expressed his gratitude to the Secretary, Sri R. Bhattacharya, Additional Secretary, Ms Vrinda Sarup, Department of School Education and Literacy, Govt. of India, Prof. Parvin Sinclair, Director and Prof. B.K. Tripathi, Joint Director, NCERT and all the distinguished members of the NRG, for their participation and active interest in the deliberations of the meeting. He also thanked Prof. Kiran Devendra, Head, DEE and the faculty and the support staff for their cooperation and help in making the meeting successful.

## **Eighth Meeting of the National Resource Group (NRG) for SSA**

**Venue: Room No. 202, CIET, NCERT, New Delhi**

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