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# Status of District Institutes of Education and Training

*A Brief Report on the State of DIETs in India*



This paper examines the current dysfunctional status of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) across the country and proposes concrete actions for their improvement.

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## *A Brief Report on the State of DIET s in India*

*The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS), which were conceived as teacher training and curriculum development institutions, have failed to live up to their roles. This paper takes a look at the current status of DIETS across the country and proposes some actions for improvement.*

### INTRODUCTION

This note is based on various papers and evaluation study reports concerning DIETs by NEUPA, NCERT and other organisations as well as the experience of Azim Premji Foundation in the field over the last eight years.

The DIETs are envisioned as ‘Academic Lead Institutions’ to provide guidance to all academic functionaries in the district. The main *tasks and role expected* of DIETs are:

- Quality teacher training, leading to high learning levels among students
- Improving pedagogy and making classroom learning interesting
- Developing Curriculum and Academic Material such as child-friendly textbooks
- Planning and Management of primary, adult education and non-formal education of the district
- Conducting Research, developing low & no-cost gadgets, supporting innovation

- Evaluating students, Teachers, Programs and Institutions
- Using technology in education

However, the DIETs do not quite perform these tasks today.

### CURRENT STATUS OF DIETS

The performance of DIETs across the country has been abysmal. The poor educational achievement among students in government schools is a telling example.

Specifically, some of the problems/issues encountered are:

- 1. Poor Infrastructure:** While most DIETS have their own campuses
  - **Inadequate space** – very few have the mandated 10 acre space
  - **maintenance** of most DIET buildings is poor
  - **hostels** are not available in DIETs of several states

- women’s hostels are not utilized for security reasons in several states
- **libraries**, a key facility , are totally neglected in most DIETs
- **computer cells** in majority of DIETs are unused due to absence of electricity, UPS. Utilization is mainly for admin purposes
- **laboratories** for different subjects and specifically for psychology and language are absent in most DIETs

### The Sorry State of DIETs in India

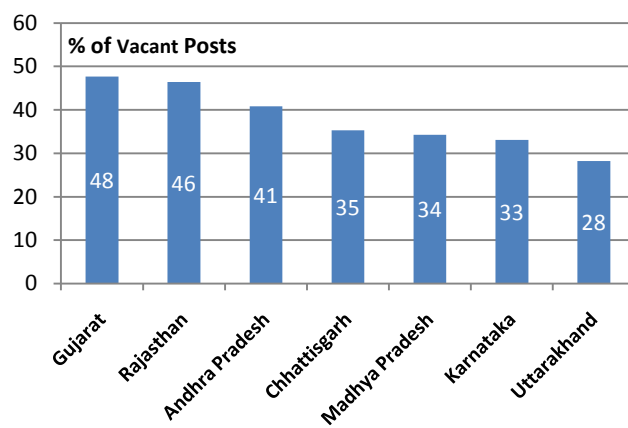
- 17%** do not have their own building
- 40%** do not have their own hostel facility
- 43%** have done no research in last 2 years
- 70%** have no librarian
- 80%** vacancy in faculty positions exists in some DIETs

## 2. Disturbing Number of Vacancies

A large number of unfilled posts exist in many DIETs thus making it difficult for them to function effectively. Shortages range from 4% to 80% in different states on an overall basis.

This is evident from the adjoining chart.

### High Percentage of Vacant Posts in DIETs



## 3. Personnel Issues

DIETs are almost always in isolated locations and considered neglected institutions.

Transfer to DIET is seen as a ‘punishment posting’ in the department. Absence of vision, mission and perspective is common among the faculty and staff

The quality of leadership in most DIETs is poor and the average tenure of Principals is less than 2 years

## 3. Dysfunctional Programs

The DIETs are almost dysfunctional in the following areas:

- adult education and non-formal education
- Research and Field Experimentation

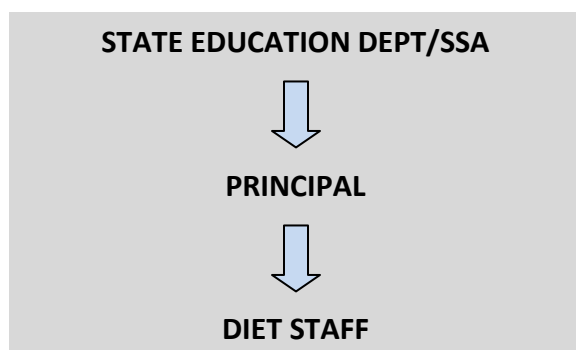
- 82% of DIETs do not have Program Advisory Committee meant to finalize in-service training programs
- The Tenth Plan proposes to lay high emphasis on pre-service and in-service training of teachers; much of it seems to be only rhetorical as no concrete action can be seen on the ground.

### Training and Innovation

- Staff and faculty members are not adequately trained especially in IT
- Training programs lack innovation
- The faculty members have not undergone any capacity building in the last 5 years

### Top Down Approach

A hierarchy driven approach exists in most DIETs which limits the academic autonomy and flexibility of DIET operations. This relationship is also reflected in the pre-service training classroom, where the interactions are largely uni-directional from the teacher to the student.



Support from the SCERTs is poor and coordination between DIETs and other education departments is inadequate.

## IMMEDIATE ACTION PLAN

There is no clarity on why DIETs have been established and how they should operate. Only from a clear vision will the design of the DIETs emerge properly. There is an urgent need to take a serious and comprehensive re-look at the functioning of the DIETs.

It is critical that the DIETs focus on their core academic functions and not become mere “administrators of academic work”.

The DIETs need to have complete autonomy in operation and thus be able to address the academic needs of the local requirements in their respective districts.

A detailed study based action plan is required. In the meanwhile, some possible suggestions are given below which can be taken up on an immediate basis:

1. **Fill Vacancies:** All sanctioned posts should be filled.
2. **Improve Infrastructure:** Create infrastructure according to MHRD norms.
3. **Improve Transfer Policy:** An appropriate transfer policy to DIETs should be drawn up. Such a transfer policy should make provision for identification of academically well qualified and interested persons, from amongst the officers of the department and post them to the vacancies in DIET.

4. **Improve Morale:** Faculty and staff morale must be improved and they should actively participate in the decision making process.
5. **Leadership Training:** Principals must be equipped to become effective leaders of modern institutes of excellence.
6. **Quality Focus:** Regular use of quality monitoring tools developed by NCERT and UNICEF by all the DIETs should be mandated. All training programs developed and delivered by the DIETs be evaluated by the participants.
7. **Establish Participative Processes:** interactive and participative processes have to be established at all levels in the DIETs – between the Principal and the Lecturers and between the Lecturers and Students. Unless these constructive environments are created there is no hope that the guiding principles of NCF 2005 will come into effect in our schools and Students. Unless these constructive environments are created there is no hope that the guiding principles of NCF 2005 will come into effect in our schools.
8. **Leverage External Resources:** Organisations (both not-for-profit and for profit) connected with education and research could run the DIETs in PPP mode or provide specific management and training support.

## LONG TERM ACTION PLAN

1. **Separate Academic Cadre:** In the long term a separate cadre needs to be formed for education functionaries.

This will provide academic support, along with growth and development opportunities. Besides the DIETs this would include, functionaries at the State Councils for Education Research and Training (SCERTs), Teacher Training Institutes, and Block and Cluster Resource coordinators.

2. **Elevate DIETs to ‘Academic Lead Institution’:** The critical task is to create a pool of competent faculty, leading to the creation of an institute of excellence in every district of the country. This specifically implies the need for developing:

- **Competency Framework:** Development of a competency framework for faculty
- **Selection Process:** Better selection and preparation program for faculty
- **Career Path:** Faculty retention process by providing a cadre and career path.

DIETs should work as ‘Referral Units’ for addressing all academic challenges in the district.

DIETs should function as vibrant resource centres for all individuals and groups connected to education in the district.

- 3. Strengthen Core Processes:** Academic and academic processes should be strengthened as follows:
- a) Encourage a decentralized planning process with autonomy of DIET
  - b) Establish strong linkages with higher education
  - c) Use principles of motivation, delegation, leadership, performance based progression
  - d) Conduct international assessment and accreditation like ISO – 9001 : 2000 or NAAC
  - e) Conduct periodic academic and financial audit of DIET performance.
  - f) Mandate minimum number of innovations in teaching-learning material, research studies and assessment processes
  - g) Encourage evolution of DIETs as Mini-Universities

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