

Improving In-Service Teacher Training

Well-trained and motivated teachers are central to the RMSA goal of expanded quality education. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of RMSA provision is made for in-service teacher training for all government and government aided schools in states. While most states have been implementing in-service training since 2011-12, the quality of this training can be improved.

This Policy Brief summarises the factors that currently limit the effectiveness of in-service teacher training, and the opportunities for addressing these based on an extensive evaluation of teacher in-service training under RMSA.

The evaluation of teachers who have taken in-service training found that it is generally valued and considered to be effective. However, it is clear that there remains significant scope for improvement in the way training is planned, delivered and followed-up.

Challenges

The evaluation has identified several areas where improvements could be made. These include:

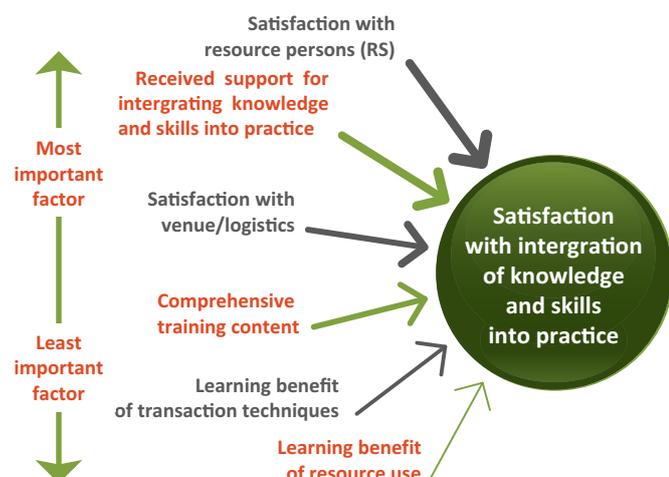
- Assessments of teachers' needs for training is not always systematic, and may not be informing the development of training.
- Criteria for deputation of teachers are generally unclear.
- The effectiveness of the trainings are reduced due to:
 - Delayed flow of RMSA funds
 - Lack of prompt useful feedback and follow-up
 - Problems with the logistics of training
- The training content is currently focused on subjects and pedagogic skills, rather than RMSA priorities such as inclusive education, ICT, life skills and leadership.
- There is a heavy reliance on conventional instructional methods such as lectures and whole-group discussions.
- Monitoring and evaluation of training is often ineffective.
- Transfer and application of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) is limited.

Principles for quality training

The following principles should guide improvements to in-service teacher training:

- Training needs to recognise issues in the day-to-day work of teachers in relation to student learning.
- Development for teachers should not be viewed as a simple linear process. It is a cyclical programme of; needs assessment, training, practice, feedback and retraining.
- In-service training programmes have to be responsive to diverse needs.
- There needs to be a sustained timeframe for professional development that is built into the ongoing work of teaching.
- The expectations of training programmes must be made clear from the outset.
- Effective planning in advance of training is critical
- Availability of materials and their effectiveness is crucial to success of learning
- Evaluation must be seen as an integral part of professional development.
- Several factors increase the likelihood of knowledge and skills being transferred after training. These are shown in Figure 1. Overleaf

Figure 1: Factors that increase likelihood of knowledge and skills transfer



Next steps

Several specific measures, if introduced, would improve the quality of in-service teacher training:

Policy

- Create a national training framework for RMSA in-service teacher training, which should be harmonised with states' secondary education policies.
- RMSA funds to be made available at the earliest in the academic annual cycle to harmonize with school calendar and teachers' availability
- Develop a coordinated in-service training monitoring system at state level, which tracks financial allocation, training process quality and results.
- Establish a system of formal recognition for participation in training, providing incentives for teachers to take part and use what they learn.
- Plan an impact evaluation of in-service training to follow the development and implementation of a national policy framework.

Planning

- State and district RMSA units should be strengthened to organise training and to support teachers who complete training.
- A system to assess teachers' needs should be developed and installed.
- Teachers, school administrators, regional or district officers and teacher educators should be involved in planning training programmes.
- Ensure RMSA priorities are integrated into training modules.
- Processes should be developed to recruit and maintain a pool of well-qualified Resource Persons (RPs) and Key Resource Persons (KRPs).
- Training should be flexible enough to meet the needs of teachers with different levels of experience.

Delivery

- Trainers should use broader modes of instruction, including online training, materials-based self-learning, discussion forums and video conferencing.
- Teachers must have adequate access to functioning computers and be provided with support if they are to effectively integrate ICT in their teaching practice.
- Schedule the training programme strategically, offsetting competing demands on teachers' time and taking into account local needs.
- Select training venues carefully, ensuring they have adequate equipment, food services and facilities.

Follow-up

- Establish a formal mechanism to collect participants' feedback in terms of the impact on practice.
- Training developers and implementers should develop opportunities for networking and sharing of ideas and concerns among teachers and trainers.