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## **TEACHER EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME IN TAMIL NADU UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN – AN ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which means 'Movement of Education for All' was implemented as one of India's flagship programmes for universalising elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan visualizes Block Resource Centres/Urban Resource Centres/Cluster Resource Centres to provide academic support to schools on a continuous basis through teacher training. Teacher Empowerment Programme (which is also called as Cluster training) is an important aspect of teacher training conducting under SSA for teacher empowerment. The training programmes at CRC level is meant for improving the efficiency of teachers in the classroom process that will eventually enhance the achievement levels of all children. Cluster Resource Centres have been functioning as Centres of teacher empowerment. 200 teachers were selected randomly as the sample of the study. Questionnaire on Teacher Training was used as the tool and percentage analysis was employed as the statistical technique. Results revealed that 77 percent of teachers from Tamil Nadu are highly benefited from the Teacher Empowerment Programme of SSA. Cluster training helped the teachers to enrich their abilities and to solve the problems they faced in the classroom.

Key words: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Teacher Empowerment.

Empowerment has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individuals believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it. Empowered schools are organizations that create opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed.

With the formulation of NPE, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education. These efforts were intensified in the 1980s and 1990s through several schematic and programme interventions. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which means 'Movement of Education for All' was implemented as one of India's flagship programmes for universalizing elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.



Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan visualizes Block Resource Centres/Urban Resource Centres/Cluster Resource Centres to provide academic support to schools on a continuous basis through teacher training, monthly meetings for academic consultations, etc. These sub-district academic support institutions are expected to work in close collaboration with DIETs to render support to schools to improve the quality of elementary education.

Several studies, including an independent study commissioned by MHRD to ascertain the effectiveness of Block Resource Centres ( BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres in discharging their designated functions and responsibilities have observed that these institutions are working sub-optimally and have limited or no impact in improving academic performance in primary and upper primary schools. The expected duties and responsibilities of the functionaries are based on the overall framework of implementation.

CRCs functioned mainly to deliver training to reorient pedagogic practices of primary school teachers, to make them more sensitive to children from excluded groups and to make learning more enjoyable and interesting. Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) actively promote and support a process of school quality improvement.

Teacher Empowerment Programme (which is also called as Cluster training) is an important aspect of teacher training conducting under SSA for teacher empowerment. Cluster training is conducted by Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) under Block Resource Centres. It involves sessional meeting of all teachers emphasizing Sharing of the best activities or experiences, Finding out hard spots, tryout, demonstration, sharing of reference materials, preparation for comprehensive planning, division of responsibilities etc.

The training programmes at CRC level is meant for improving the efficiency of teachers in the classroom process that will eventually enhance the achievement levels of all children. Cluster Resource Centres have been functioning as Centres of teacher empowerment, where the teachers share their experiences and innovative practices in the teaching learning processes. The teachers have primarily used the monthly CRC meetings for sharing innovative practices in classrooms.

The meetings have now been used for discussing the implementation of ABL (Activity Based Learning) Methodology and Active Learning Methodology. Thus, the teachers are also trained on effective use of these methodologies during these meetings. Model classes are conducted by the Resource Teachers for the benefit of all other teachers for emulation. Teachers find these sessions very useful as their doubts in implementing ABL in their classrooms are cleared in the demonstration classes.

**OBJECTIVE:** To analyze the Teacher Empowerment programme (Cluster Training programme) carried out by Cluster Resource Centres of SSA, Tamil Nadu.



## METHODOLOGY

As an exploratory study mostly qualitative techniques are employed.

### Sample

The study was conducted in six districts of Tamil Nadu. 200 teachers were selected randomly i.e., 20 teachers from 10 Cluster Resource Centres of five districts of Tamil Nadu were selected as the sample for the study

### Tool used

Questionnaire on Teacher Training was used as the tool for collecting data

### Statistical technique

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, percentages were calculated wherever necessary.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The investigator analyzed the Questionnaire on Teacher Training administered and the study revealed the following about cluster training.

### i) Effectiveness of Cluster Training

Opinion regarding the effectiveness of cluster training was drawn from the teachers and detailed in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: Percentage of Opinion about Effectiveness of Cluster Training conducted by SSA**

Response	Tamil Nadu (%)
Effective	77
Need improvement	20
No response	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

It can be seen that in the opinion of 77 per cent of teachers from Tamil Nadu, the cluster training is effective. 20 per cent of teachers opined that the cluster training should be improved and 3 percent of teachers did not respond to the question.

### ii) Different Sessions of Cluster Training

Questions regarding effectiveness of cluster training with respect to different sessions of the training elicited three kinds of responses like Satisfactory, need improvement, not satisfactory. Some of the teachers did not respond to the item. Details are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: Effectiveness of Different Sessions of Cluster Training in Tamil Nadu**

Sl. No	Sessions	Response	Tamil Nadu (%)
1.	Sharing of the best activities or experiences	Satisfactory	92
		Need improvement	4
		Not satisfactory	3
		No response	1
2.	Finding out Hard spot, tryout, demonstration, sharing of reference materials etc.	Satisfactory	66
		Need improvement	28
		Not satisfactory	4
		No response	2
3.	Preparation, comprehensive planning, division of responsibilities etc.	Satisfactory	72
		Need improvement	20
		Not satisfactory	6
		No response	2

Table 2 shows the responses regarding different session of cluster training, which reflect satisfaction from the part of teachers. 66 to 92 percent of teachers from Tamil Nadu expressed their satisfaction in different sessions. Four percent to 20 percent of Teachers expressed that the training need improvement.

### iii) Useful Aspects of Cluster Training:

Analysis of the data obtained revealed the usefulness of cluster training in different areas and are presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: Useful Aspects of Cluster Training Reported by Teachers of Tamil Nadu**  
**Usefulness of Cluster Training**

- Helped in all aspects mainly the training in English.
- Training through activities helped the teachers.
- Innovative ideas were included in teaching and learning.
- Teachers' ideas are explored.
- Enhanced the training capacity through technology.
- Built confidence to face the class.
- Helped for preparing annual plan and lesson plan.
- Clarified and comprehends each and every hard spot.
- Helped to improve the identity and solved the problem.
- Got new ideas, methods, techniques, approaches and knowledge.
- Improved extracurricular and co-curricular activities.
- Improved teaching skills.
- Complex concepts were taught in simple manner.

Table 3 gives a list of useful aspects of cluster training as reported by teachers from Tamil Nadu. It can be seen that Teacher Empowerment Programme helped the teachers to enrich their abilities and to solve the problems they faced in classroom to a great extent.



#### iv) Suggestions for Improving Cluster Training

Suggestions were drawn regarding the improvement of cluster training from teachers of Tamil Nadu. They are presented in Table 4.

**TABLE 4: Suggestions for Improving Cluster Training in Tamil Nadu**

Suggestion For Improving Cluster Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should adopt the correct approaches.</li> <li>• Specialized Resource Persons should be involved.</li> <li>• Centers should be mobilized.</li> <li>• Field trip can be arranged for teachers.</li> <li>• Practical CDs should be given and demonstration classes are needed.</li> <li>• Make the cluster meeting once in two months.</li> <li>• Give more opportunities for sharing experiences.</li> <li>• Experts from NCERT, SCERT should be involved.</li> <li>• Quiz and debate programme should be included.</li> <li>• Needs physical education periodically.</li> <li>• Demonstration and tryout may be conducted in training.</li> <li>• New and updated areas should be addressed.</li> </ul>

Table 4 shows the common suggestions put forth by teachers of Tamil Nadu regarding teacher Empowerment Programme. It includes the suggestions that resource persons should be resourceful and specialized, more opportunities for sharing experiences, mobility of the centres. New and updated areas should be addressed during training.

#### Conclusion

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan visualizes BRCs/URCs/CRCs to provide academic support to schools on a continuous basis through teacher training and monthly meetings for academic consultations. In the opinion of 77 percent of teachers from Tamil Nadu, cluster training (Teacher Empowerment Programme) is effective. Cluster training helped the teachers to enrich their abilities and to solve the problems they faced in the classroom. Suggestions put forth by teachers include Resource Persons should be resourceful and specialized, new and updated areas should be addressed by training, more opportunities for sharing experiences and mobility of the training centres.

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