

Literacy Workers or Competent Professionals

(A Case Study)

Abstract

The paper presents a case study of how a well thought out teacher develop program can contribute positively towards innovative education of tribal children. The paper draws upon classroom observation of teacher's practices, children's reading writing and comprehension (pre, mid and post) in project schools and control schools and qualitative data from teacher and student interviews. By enabling teachers as professionals through professional development and not just training, it was possible to create an ecosystem where all stakeholders were invested in the education process. This study indicates that the successful implementation of the new practice results in improved reading ability, visible increase in student attendance and greater student interest towards school.

Introduction

The title of the paper states the question of whether we should be training or educating teachers. In a general sense, the term **training** implies the act of imparting a special set of skills or behaviour to a person, in order to improve performance at the operational level. It is not exactly same as **education**, which is a process of systematic learning in an institution that develops a sense of judgment and reasoning. Much of our teacher preparation models follow a training approach that is stapled on to a theoretical component consisting subjects like educational psychology and philosophy. Perhaps the expectation is that teachers will be able to make the connections between theory and practice and develop the required understanding and expertise to deal with the everyday classroom situations in competent and effective ways. The somewhat depressing situation of learners in our rural and tribal schools indicates that even trained and qualified teachers are failing

to respond adequately to the learning needs of children. There are of course systemic failures that also contribute to this undesirable situation, however the focus in this paper will be on how a different approach towards teacher development can offer a possible route to better learning outcomes for all children – particularly those from rural and tribal communities. This approach was tried out in the context of work done by Agramee, an NGO that runs a free primary school for girls in a remote rural corner of Odisha. Agramee undertook an intervention project – Creative Language Development Efforts (CLDE)- to improve children's reading in 18 government schools in rural Odisha.

Tribal children's' education

The Sixth All India Educational Survey of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT 1999) shows that, out of 41 languages used in schools (grades 1–10) as languages of

teaching or the Medium of Instruction (MoI) and as school subjects, only 13 are tribal languages, all but one (Nicobaree) from the North-Eastern States. Further, only three to four of these 13 tribal languages are used regularly as MoI (Jhingran 2005), whereas the others are taught as school subjects or used as MoI in occasional special programmes. Less than 1% of the tribal children have any real opportunity for education in the medium of their mother tongues (Mahanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala 2009). Mismatch between home language and the language of formal instruction is primarily related to educational failure (Mahanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala 2009). This issue has been discussed in the literature on minority education (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins 1988, Cummins 2009, Jhingran 2009).

State and national level initiatives have tried to address the problems faced by children who study through an unfamiliar language. Most of these efforts suffered from severe limitations (Jhingran 2009). NCERT, Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) and Tribal Research Institutes produced a large number of primers in several tribal languages for the initial primary grades based on the 'bilingual transfer model'. In most cases the approach was limited to the publication of these textbooks or readers and components of teacher training, regular academic follow-up and evaluation were not included. Further, many schools, where these books were introduced did not have 100% tribal children with the same first language. Without adequate grounding in theoretical perspectives of language and literacy learning and with no teacher preparation these experiments were bound to fail. Such efforts also "queered the pitch for any further effort at introducing more comprehensive bilingual education

programmes." (Jhingran 2009, p.263). Some other efforts such as the use of bilingual language inventories for teachers or word and alphabet cards for children in the initial months of grade 1 were inadequately supported in terms of teacher preparation and follow up. Since 2006 some multilingual education (MLE) initiatives have been taken up in Orissa.

Despite the above mentioned efforts, in all the 18 project schools, teachers typically followed conventional teaching methods, as this excerpt from classroom observation indicates, *"He didn't care to know if children understand the meaning of some difficult words or they are ready to learn in the class without any pre-texting of teaching. Then continued to explaining little on lines. He was not sure what he was teaching. It was difficult to relate what exactly he wanted to start and finish. Finished the topic in 10 minutes."*

Typically in the classrooms, spent most of their time reciting or copying. These activities provided no scope to start understanding the unfamiliar language being taught to them. The text was read aloud by the teacher followed by chorus repetition by the students. The children do not ask questions or say anything on their own. Overall, the stress was entirely on rote memorization of the answers. Moreover, it was observed that many children were frightened of teachers and school and preferred to keep away as much as possible. This in turn led many teachers to conclude that tribal children were incapable of formal learning. The hostile and in-conducive school atmosphere leads to dropping-out and discontinuation of most of the students from school. The situation in the project schools was not any different from that described by Jhingran (2009) and the Orissa Review, 2004.

The Agramee Effort

Agramee teachers, guided by Vidhya Das had begun to try out an approach to literacy education – an adaptation of Warner’s “organic method”. Children were familiarized with whole words that they could relate to from their own context. Later they learnt the alphabets. In order to facilitate the teachers’ work, a primer ‘Kau dake ka’ had been developed for classroom use. Teachers were also counselled not to punish or threaten children in any way. They were helped to develop classroom practices that utilized games and activities to hold children’s attention. This new approach resulted in a marked increase in children’s reading and writing abilities. With a view to expand the work into government schools, Agramee embarked on a pilot project to try out the method in 18 government schools.

Agramee’s experience indicated that teachers with B.Ed. or Certificate in Teaching (CT) qualifications were unable to move out of formulaic styles of teaching and come up with adaptive and innovative solutions that could improve children’s reading levels. Therefore, it was decided to implement the method in government schools by hiring youth from the rural communities and training them as teacher helpers – Shiksha Sathies. The selection process required applicants with higher secondary or higher qualification to take a written test through which they were assessed for writing proficiency. Only candidates who had a good writing skills were selected for the interview. There was a conscious decision to include more women and also to find suitably qualified Shiksha Sathies who belonged to tribal communities. Of the 18 Shiksha Sathies selected, 7 were women, 6 had college degrees and 9 belonged to tribal communities.

Approach to Teacher Development

Key principles:

- Developing conceptual understanding through discussion and interactive sessions
- Observing children and classroom teaching
- Provision of well-designed curricular resources for the CLDE program
- Providing opportunities to experience teaching– learning activities
- Planning and teaching in the presence of observers followed by group mediated reflection on teaching – lesson
- Sustained follow up interactions including on-site visits and support
- Periodic assessment of student learning

Conceptual Understanding: Literacy means being able to think independently, to make meaning of what one sees, hears or reads and being able to communicate ideas, thoughts or feelings through spoken, pictorial, written or other forms.

During the first training workshop, conceptual understanding about the nature of language as a sound symbol system was developed. Attention was then drawn to the way in which children naturally acquire their home language. It was pointed out that by the time a child enters formal schooling at the age of five or six years they know at least one language. Research on cognitive linguistics indicates that a child at the age of five has a good vocabulary of as well as knowledge of grammar. When participants expressed surprise at children having knowledge of grammar it was explained that native speakers of a language have a set of internalized rules for using that language. These rules constitute grammar, and a child

learns them not by conscious study or instruction, but in the normal course of interaction with various family members.

Participants were helped to understand that language is expression and exchange of thought, feelings, experiences and instructions through symbols. The confusion about words, symbols and letters was cleared through discussions that helped participants understand that spoken language consisted of sound symbols. Each word of a language can be thought of as a sound symbol. These sound symbols mean the same thing for all those who speak a language. A word as a sound symbol has to be contextualized and embedded in its root language. Without this contextual embedding, the sound does not symbolize anything, and thus does not have any meaning. An alphabet also symbolises sound. But it is a different kind of symbolism. An alphabet represents a constant sound (phoneme), quite apart from its language context and is used for written language. Though scripts do relate to specific languages, a set of alphabets can be used to write any language. Tribal languages that do not have a body of written texts can make use of an existing script to develop written texts in the language. During the workshop there was a lively debate over whether it was possible to write Kui (a tribal language) using Odiya script. A live exercise for doing this was tried out during the workshop. There were some problems while doing this, as the language has some phonemes that are not represented in the Odiya script. However, participants were able to agree that much of Kui language could be written out in Odiya script. All participants came to the understanding that a script is a set of visual symbols representing spoken sounds and that these symbols could be used to express any language.

The second set of concepts related to naturalistic acquisition of language by children and how the inherent tendency of children to make meaning of the world and words around them can be used to develop literacy. There was considerable discussion about why the CLDE approach to literacy teaching started with whole words rather than beginning with alphabets in the traditional way. Participants were able to realize that children are interested in meaning. Isolated alphabets do not convey any meaning and children have to struggle to learn all the alphabets without understanding how the alphabets can be combined to make meaningful words. Secondly, children who do not speak Odiya are unable to make sense of the words and instruction of their teachers. By introducing whole words supported by pictures, children are able to connect the written with the spoken word. Similarly, they are enthused about learning to write out their own names and the names of their parents, family members and friends. Thus, writing in the form of whole words becomes meaningful to the child who then develops the ability to recognize whole words and also write these down. The next step is to facilitate the child to recognize the alphabets/phonemes that constitute each word.

Observing Children: In previous site visits it was noted that teachers were not much focused on individual children and had a tendency to use teaching methods that did not specifically check for engagement, understanding and performance of individual children. In order to build a sensitive and empathetic approach towards children, specific observation tasks were designed for the Sathies to observe and take notes of children's play/ activities/ talk/ responses. Each period of observation was followed with a debrief session where the observations were discussed

and implications for pedagogy were drawn out. Sathies were able to see how children responded in various situations and could conclude that fear inhibits the natural tendency of a child to be inquisitive and exploratory. They could also observe how children were attracted by songs and games and were bored and distracted when teachers resorted to extended monologues in the classroom. Sathies were able to observe the change in Kui language speakers when Odiya songs from the CLDE primer were translated into Kui.

Curricular Resource Development:

Appropriate supportive material for early grade reading plays a very important role in classroom teaching. Two children's workbooks were developed specifically for CLDE. These served to provide teachers with the day-to-day content for classroom teaching. Each workbook also has a note for the teacher, explaining key concepts and guidelines for using the workbook. The note includes ideas on literacy teaching for Grades I and II, especially in the case of first generation school goers. The note is meant to help teachers plan their daily lessons and to accommodate individual differences among the learners. In addition to this, the note deals in a concise way about how the teacher should plan for a classroom where children speak different languages. Teaching Aids such as picture cards, flip charts, poem and story sheets were also provided.

Experiencing Teaching-Learning

Activities: The workshop design allowed Sathies to experience teaching learning activities at two levels. At the first level, the Sathies themselves participated in the learning activity to get first-hand experience of the same. After experiencing the activity the Sathies would discuss about learning outcomes that could result from the activity. Learning outcomes were not

narrowly defined in terms of testable abilities but included aspects like motivation, generation of curiosity, joyful participation by all children etc. Participants had to plan how the activity could be integrated into their teaching.

At the second level Sathies were able to observe an experienced teacher use the activity during classroom teaching and note down the way the teacher used the activity to teach and note how children responded to the lesson.

Lesson Study: Inspired by descriptions of the Japanese Lesson Study process, Sathies were facilitated to collaboratively develop lesson plans and teach in the presence of observers followed by group mediated reflection on the observed classroom. This took place as a part of the training workshops.

Sathies worked in collaborative groups to develop a teaching plan. Some of them would then volunteer to actually conduct the class based on the teaching plan while other members of the group worked as observers and took notes about the children's responses to the lesson. Since the training workshops were held at Agramee campus that had a well-functioning school, it greatly facilitated the adoption of the lesson study model to the workshop situation.

After the lesson, the participants would meet for an extended discussion on the classroom processes. These discussions would focus on multiple aspects of the lesson like the way in which the activity was conducted, the various responses observed by the children, adaptations made by the Sathi conducting the lesson, factors that facilitated learning or impeded learning, etc. The largely peer led but moderated discussion set the ground for discussing the practice of education in a grounded and professional way. Individual challenges, school specific challenges could be brought to the

surface and solutions suggested in non-threatening atmosphere aimed at improving children's educational outcome. It was made abundantly clear that the aim of the lesson studies was not to point fingers at individual shortcomings, but to evolve collectively as a set of committed professionals. The key principle of respecting every individual was emphasized during the post-lesson discussions.

The Sathi who volunteered to conduct the lesson would first give his own analysis before hearing from the observers. Observers were guided to focus more on children's responses to the lesson as indications of the extent to which the lesson's stated objectives were achieved. These observations provided valuable insights to the Sathies. They could then reflect on how their teaching could best meet the learning needs of various children.

On-site support and follow up: All 18 schools were visited at least once a month by project personnel. Sathies were observed and supportive feedback provided to them. After the two initial training workshops, three review workshops were held where experiences were shared and observations reports discussed with the Shiksha Sathies. The emphasis was on improving practices and not on finding shortcomings of individuals.

Periodic Student Assessments: After the baseline test at the start of the program, two written tests were conducted to check the children's progress in reading. These tests were conducted by observers and not by the Shiksha Sathies and therefore provided a fairly reliable indication of children's progress in reading levels. Findings of the workshop were discussed with the Sathies.

Findings

Impact on Students

Removal of Fear: The fact that children are no longer afraid of school and are showing more and more interest in coming to school and learning to read has been mentioned many times by the Shiksha Sathies, other observers and children's parents. This is not a trivial achievement, given that Sathies themselves had experienced harsh and authoritarian schooling as pupils. Children in the project schools were more confident and able to converse freely with visitors. Children themselves reported how they now liked coming to school because the teacher was friendly and learning became fun. Sathies interacted informally with parents to develop a better understanding of children and be more empathetic. They were able to provide both emotional and educational support to their students. Knowing children individually had some interesting consequences as this statement from a Sathi indicated "... earlier there were no attendance records maintained but now children tell us during attendance that who is present and who is not."

Better Attendance: Children became much more regular in attending school. They were coming to school early and not just for the sake of the mid-day meal. Sathies themselves felt enthused to come to school early when they saw the children eagerly waiting to walk with them to school. Children who were enrolled in ashram schools but had come back home since they didn't want to stay in the hostel, now regularly started attending the village school.

Improved Reading: One clear indicator of the Sathi's efforts was the progress in children's reading levels as shown by the mid-line evaluation. Initially, only 11 % of the children were able to score 70% on the reading assessment tests. After about 7 months of work done by the Shiksha Sathies, there was a jump to 46% children scoring 70 %.

Impact on Teaching

Focus on the Individual Learner:

Teachers have developed acute awareness and sensitivity towards each individual child. They no longer talked in general terms about their pupils and were able to track the progress of each child. In an interview a Shiksha Sathi said, *“In class observation, I see who’s giving attention and who is lagging behind or getting disturbed. The children who is lagging behind, we will ask them question. If we’re teaching them a story, then after the story ends, we ask them one question at least.”*

Although, this may seem like something that should be the norm with all teachers, it was not the case as evidenced from the classroom observations preceding this study. Teachers delivered lessons standing in front of the children and did not seem to observe children except for the purposes of curbing what they perceived as undesirable behaviours on the part of children. The shift towards more learner-centric teaching involves in part, the ability to see learners as unique individuals. It also requires the teacher to have the willingness and capability to adapt and modify her pedagogy to meet the learning needs of each child. The classroom interactions of the Satues indicate that they have both. Shiksha Sathies are now less inclined to blame children or circumstances for gaps in expected learning and are able to see themselves as empowered professionals who are capable of solving pedagogical problems.

Using Child Friendly Teaching Materials and Methods

“Before CLDE Teacher training we could not engage the children. Training helped us understand what interests children and they started grasping my lessons quicker.” (Shiksha Sathi during an interview)

The CLDE program is premised on the notion that every child is inherently engaged in the process of making sense of the world around her and true education should build upon this natural tendency. Further, the program recognizes that play has a significant place in cognitive development. These two key insights were thoroughly discussed with teachers involved in the program since we wanted the Shiksha Sathies to critically engage with the CLDE process and not mechanically carry out a set of classroom procedures/ techniques. The training focus was not merely to familiarize teachers with the resources and procedures, but to involve them in thinking about the ideas behind the material. This training approach has resulted in two key developments: a) Shiksha Sathies are able to use and improvise on the resources provided in intelligent ways and can adapt them to the specific needs of their classroom; b) In many cases the Shiksha Sathies have been able to develop their own TLM and use these effectively in their classrooms.

“I know this at least that I’m no more teaching them the same way. I used to teach them in a way I was taught in our primary school. I understood the importance of TLM and class observation...”

I teach with TLM and story chart which helps children to understand easily, in our time we did not have these. Playing with children also helps. In story chart if one child cannot tell the other would help him understand. TLM such as Animals and birds picture card helps. In mathematics I developed my own TLM with sticks and stones.”

Respecting children’s prior knowledge is one of the key principles of CLDE pedagogy and the Shiksha Sathies are successfully doing this. They have become increasingly proficient in teaching through child

friendly methods using songs from the primers. To reinforce learning teachers use games and TLM based activities and are also able to evaluate children's learning using such play-way activities. This is very much liked by the children.

During one of the training workshops, Shiksha Sathies were introduced to the role of stories and 'read-alouds' in the classroom and they have been able to successfully use story based lessons in their classrooms. Children have expressed their enjoyment of these lessons and it seems to have further strengthened the positive teacher- student relationships.

The joyful classroom environment that has been created by the Sathies has inspired quite a few drop outs to be the part of school again.

Addressing Linguistic Differences:

The importance of positively acknowledging the child's linguistic identity has been an important tenet of the CLDE program. This quote from an interview of Sathi well captures the importance of acknowledging the child's language, *"When we went to school initially, we went without training. If I ask pupils their name, their address, their mother's and father's name they won't respond. I tried to talk to them in Odiya language and they would find it really difficult to understand but after training first thing I did was I started talking to them in Desia (Local language) and it really encouraged them for better communication between us."*

The CLDE primers are in Odiya language and the expectation was that the Sathies would act as mediators between the child's home language and Odiya. After initial encouragement to translate the Odiya songs into tribal languages like Kui and Pingo, the Shiksha Sathies are now comfortably doing so. They were sensitized to respect the language spoken by the

children and to freely communicate with the children in any language that was understood by the children. During a sharing workshop with government officers, teachers and SMC members at Naurangpur, the Sathi explained how Kui speaking children could be helped to learn through the CLDE primer *Kau dake ka*. *"In the first stage, children should be asked to identify the pictures using words from their own language. After this the children are made aware that the Odiya word for the same picture. The Odiya word is written below the picture. The child then says both the Kui word, and follows it with Odiya word. After this, the teacher encourages the child to write the Odiya words in her note book."*

Rising up to meet systemic challenges:

One major surprise that emerged in the initial phase of the CLDE project was the prevalence of multi-grade situations. The CLDE project had not specifically envisaged this while developing the primers and other TLM. However, once it became apparent that Shiksha Sathies had to work in multi-grade classrooms, there was a fairly intense discussion about how this could be handled. They discussed problems and also shared strategies that they had tried to overcome the problem. The focus was on problem-solving rather than on analysing the causes for the observed situation. The Sathies have been able to adapt to the situations they found themselves in and came up with a range of solutions which they freely shared with each other. It is to be noted that during subsequent review/training meetings, the problem of handling multi-grade classes did not feature indicating that the Sathies had figured out ways to manage the situation and continue their work of teaching children to read with comprehension.

Impact on other Stake Holders

Government School teachers became more regularly as they were conscious about the regular presence of Sathies in their schools. Many of them have been motivated to become better teachers after observing the work of the Sathies. They have requested that the CLDE primers be made available to them. With the help of Sathies they have started to teach using games, activities and other have decreased beating children.

Sathies were able to demonstrate to stakeholders how Kui speakers could be effectively taught using the textbook. During a block level interaction, one Shiksha Sathi used Kui and immediately caught the attention of the SMC members who were Kui speakers. They cheerfully took on the role of children for the duration of the demonstration which became very lively. The session proceeded with the Sathi explaining how bi-lingual songs were used in the classroom and how children were helped to transition gradually from Kui to Odiya. When songs are sung in a language not understood by the children, there was low enthusiasm. When the same song is sung in the children's own language, their faces lit up and they participated with much greater energy and evident enjoyment. The BEO observing this demonstration appreciated the effort and pointed out that this method helped children to easily move towards bi-lingual understanding and he recommended that it should be practised in all schools in Kui villages.

Reflections

Guskey (2002) pointed out, that successful educational improvement programs have a well-conceived and adequately supported professional development component. There is widespread acceptance for education reform to be backed up by appropriate

teacher training. The sad fact is that trainings have become routinized and often meaningless for many teachers.

Typically trainings focus on pedagogical skills and don't attempt to build teachers' conceptual understanding about a particular teaching technique or method. More often than not teachers are given lectures about the new method without providing them opportunities to try the method out themselves. In some cases the method is demonstrated and although this is a step towards building better teaching skills, teachers do not feel confident to try out the new method or technique on their own and there is no follow up support for a teacher wishing to adopt the new method. Often there is little evidence to support a particular method by way of carefully conducted research about its efficacy. When a particular method that has been advocated fails to yield the desired outcomes in terms of student learning one of two things typically likely to happen:

- a. the method is immediately discarded without inquiring into the causes of its failure and another method is suggested as the panacea
- b. teachers are blamed for lacking the motivation to take the method and its proper implementation

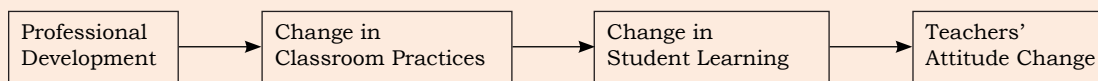
This results in a bewildering carnival like procession of new methods which are serially pushed onto teachers without proper study about their efficacy and the required support for implementation. Teachers are rarely consulted before the implementation of one or another method and they in turn become apathetic and lose motivation to try anything new and ultimately there is low learning levels and high drop-out rates in our schools. It has been suggested that the majority of programs fail because they do not take into account two crucial factors: (1)

what motivates teachers to engage in professional development, and (2) the process by which change in teachers typically occurs (Guskey, 1986).

An Insightful Model of Teacher Development

If we see teachers as literacy workers then we will train them in a narrow set of skills. If we see them as professionals then we will build their capacities through Professional Development programs. Guskey's model offers an interesting insight, showing that teachers' attitudes change as a result of professional development and improved student learning. This is important for us, as it helps us to work constructively without the requiring teachers to come with favourable teacher attitudes.

Guskey's model



According to the model, significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs occurs primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning. These improvements typically result from changes teachers have made in their classroom practices - a new instructional approach, the use of new materials or curricula, or simply a modification in teaching procedures or classroom format. The crucial point is that it is not the professional development per se, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. They believe it works because they have seen it work, and that experience shapes their attitudes and beliefs. Some key aspects of Guskey's model are as follows:

- Successful implementation of new practice lead to teacher motivation that will sustain better teaching

practices over time.

- Changes in teaching practices are mainly based on experiential learning.
- Practices that work are retained and repeated and those that do not work are abandoned. Demonstrable results in terms of student outcomes are the key to endurance of any change in teaching.
- Teachers attitude about students are also to a great extent derived from experiences.
- If teachers are consistently unsuccessful in helping disadvantaged students they are likely to believe these students have poor abilities. If a new method/

practice leads to better outcome, teachers' attitudes towards these students will change for the better.

Guskey's model also suggests the need to acknowledge that change is a gradual and difficult process for teachers and they will need on-site support and opportunities to share experiences. Teachers must get regular feedback about students. This can include attendance, learning outcomes and observations about improved student behavior. Since the model indicates that attitudes are shaped by perceived effectiveness of teaching, it is important for teachers to get relevant information about students, both through their own observations and through other stakeholders. Teachers also require continued follow-up, support and pressure.

Evidence from the initial study indicates that the Shiksha Sathies

trained under the Creative Language Development Effort (CLDE) project are doing remarkably well under trying circumstances. Seeing the enthusiasm of the children towards CLDE methods, most Shiksha Sathies remained enthusiastic and motivated and were able to creatively adapt and innovate to suit the school environment that they found themselves in. If trainings were based on mechanical acquisition of a particular pedagogical skill, they would not have been able to adapt

Observer reports have indicated that Shiksha Sathies have been able to carry out and put into practice many of the teaching ideas that form the basis of CLDE. One can surmise that their good practices are being sustained and strengthened by the visible improvement in student attendance, interest and reading abilities after they started teaching

Conclusion

Among other things, this case study highlights the importance of a lab-school in a teacher development program. Teacher development institutions like DIETs (District Institute of Education and Training) are expected to have lab-schools attached and this case study shows how these have a great potential for serving the needs to teacher professional development.

The overall plan of Agramee's CLDE project has proved to synergize well with effective teacher development. The development of the reading primer based on several years' work was able to support the Shiksha Sathies classroom teaching. The workshops helped them understand the concepts behind the CLDE program and also to observe it in practice. In addition to observing experienced teachers at work, the Sathies could also gain some first-hand experience of working with children in an innovative reading program. Regular onsite visits ensured that the Sathies

experienced both support and pressure to carry out their work in the expected manner. The second workshop allowed contextual issues to be foregrounded and several solutions to classroom management in a multi-grade situation emerged. More work needs to be done to better understand what the implication of multi-grade situation may have on CLDE process. There have been some drop-outs from the initial cohort of Shiksha Sathies and there is yet no systematic response to the entry of new individuals into the program cycle.

The twin questions of long term sustainability and scalability loom large in the horizon and there has to be a carefully thought through plan to address both these questions. It would be a pity if the enthusiastic young men and women who are part of the CLDE project at present will have to move out of the field of education once the project ends. How can these efforts feed cumulatively into the education of tribal children is probably the most significant question that needs to be addressed.

As far as teacher professional development is concerned, it is important to remember that it is a continuing process, not a onetime event. Once teachers taste the fruits of their efforts they begin their journey of lifelong learning. To sustain the process and take it forward we need to think of the following:

- Build and support a community of teachers
- Evolve platforms for teachers to exchange notes and share solutions and innovations
- Make available useful resources like articles, teaching journals, books, videos and TLM
- Provide ongoing support and feedback to teachers
- Nurture teacher leaders

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