* **A very strong notion that uniform application of RTE is to be blamed for multiple woes currently ailing education and teacher education scenario (A1)**: One of the senior most bureaucrats met strongly felt that uniform implementation of RTE across the country is a one-size-fits-all approach. He expressed at length that due to RTE the total number of teachers across the state has shot up by 2.5 lakhs (from 3 lakhs to 5.5 lakhs). This has also led to need for recruitment from open market, to recruit para-teachers whose quality is not up to the marker. This in turn has led to fall in the quality prompting the parents to take their children off the government schools. “*In the last5 years alone there was a dip in strength of students from Grade I to VIII by 25 lakhs” (A1).* This sudden spurt in demand has also resulted in the mushrooming of the private colleges which in turn led to huge increase in the number of trained but not (TET) qualified youth across the state. One other impact, he added, is that this has led to commit most of the available funds to pay the salary of the teachers, with *“nothing left to invest on infrastructure”. “Centre should drop this one-size-fits-all approach. ‘If it works in Delhi and Maharastra, why not UP’ is what they would think. But it wouldn’t. The PCI of Delhi is 2lacs while that of UP is only 50,000” (A1)*
* **That the ever decreasing proportion of centre’s contribution is putting pressure on the (state) system (A1)**: The centre-state contribution in case of SSA has come down from 90-10 to 80-20 to 65-35 and then 60-40. “*Currently, over the last couple of years it is like 50-50... Similarly, there used to be 156 centrally sponsored schemes, they have now been brought down to just 20-30. Look at the revised estimates, it will show. This has been huge loss for UP” (A1).*
* **SCERT needs to be autonomous not just academically but financially too (A1)**: *“Autonomy comes from money” (A1)*. One of the ideas suggested by the senior bureaucrat met is to take money from teachers, as user-fee. The proposed idea of diverting the training funds that are currently being given from SSA and RMSA is well agreed to
* **Quality concerns related to private TEIs (A2)**: In case of UP, from about 2013, the number of private BTC (Basic Training Certificate) institutions has shot up from 100 to about 3000 (a 30 fold increase). However, apart from initial assessment while granting the permission, there is no structured mechanism or dedicated resource allocation to monitor the quality of these institutions.

Though DIETs are assigned this duty, they have not been able to do the needful. *“Far from being able to monitoring private institutions, DIETs are not able to manage their own show” (A2)*. *“The flipside (of the upsurge in the number of private institutions) is that is that one has no clue if classes are happening or what the admission process is” (A2).*The challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that DIETs do not have an authority to supervise these private institutions. *“There is no legal provision, there is only administrative provision”*

*“These institutes are opened with profit motive and no commitment to quality. The admissions are not orderly done and students are not attending and there is a lack of commitment to quality”. (A2)*

* **Limited presence of private TEIs in backward areas:** Private investment in TE is generally limited to economically prosperous districts. This limits the extent to which government can rely on private players in improving the access to TE in the backward regions ***“****There are 10-12 districts where HDI+EDI is low. In these backward districts, there are more vacancies and a large number of schools. However, if you see the private investment is not there in these areas – like, Maharajganj, Sravasti, Gonda, Khushinagar, Vaishali etc.****”***
* **School teacher recruitment procedures that directly undermined the quality of teaching-learning process (A1, A2):** In case ofUP, there were massive teacher recruitment drives of individuals who have not had pre-service teacher training. About as many as 1.5 lakhs teachers were recruited in three such drives (in 2004, 2006 and 2008). They were only given a condensed training input of six months. While such drives had been put on hold, they sure undermine the quality of teaching-learning process
* **Inadequacy of funding**: Thefunding approach came under serious criticism, as being one that is *“fragmented and a lackluster one” (A2).*The lack of proper funding from centre’s side is doubly debilitating. *“When central government will give its share, the state government will open its purse. That is not happening, so this is not happening… The PAB agrees in principle to the proposals made. But in the end would say ‘due to paucity of funds, we cannot allocate’. What is the point?” (A2)*
  + **Imbalance in teacher-student ratio in TEIs**: While the strength of student intake of DIETs has been increased, there has not been a proportionate increase in the strength of faculty. *“When you are expanding DIET, why haven’t you recruited more” (A2)*
  + **Infrastructural gaps**: Physical capacity in the TE institutes visited was found to be quite ill-equipped. *“There is no holistic view. ‘2 more additional rooms’ is how it would allocate for” (A2). “It’s very simple. You want to cut down the funds, where will you cut… One would ask for 40 computers, you would say ‘take 2 computers’”*
  + **Difficulty in meeting operating expenses:** “*For 3-4 years, they stopped contingency fund. What about other expenses of DIETs (apart from that of salary)?*” *(A2)*
* **Perception of trust deficit and issues of fund ceiling**: Apart from issues of fund inadequacy, one of the senior bureaucrats met has also expressed serious concern about sub-head wise fixed allocation. *“It’s like a shoe company saying – ‘7 foot shoe for all’. It would be too long for those with 4ft and will be too short for those with 10ft... There are some 10-12 of sub-heads and they fixed allocations for each of these sub-heads…. The student intake is 50 in case of some DIETs like Sravasti and 200 in some DIETs like Lucknow. There are no untied funds... Itna toh humey trust kijiye. Ek democratic setup mein itna rigid hone ki kya zaroorat hai… This (level of ceiling) leads to minimalist approach. You do just as much as you have been told to and nothing more. Diversity-wala element hum allow hi nahi kar rahe hai” (A2)*

Instead, it is recommended the allocation limit be set at a more macro level. *“You tell us, this 500 crore funds is for training and we will work with it*. (Otherwise) it is a problem to make changes mid-course”. Similarly, instead of elaborate and minutely detailed scheme implementation document, it was recommended that only a brief 10-pager document of policy guidelines with roles, expected outcomes and fund flow. The respective SCERTs would then work out the details as per the needs of the individual states.

* **Timeliness of fund release**: It was strongly recommended by one of the senior bureaucrats met that funds related to salary disbursement be made at the beginning of financial year (as against the current scenario where the funds are released in the first funds transfer that happens 4-5 months into the financial year). “*Salary toh committed hai naa. Release at least that part… It will take 4-5 months for the first release to happen… Ask any teacher and their first complaint would be about salaries” (A2)*
* **Recruitment of faculty**:
  + **Lack of intrinsic motivation to join as a teacher educator** (A2): *“Often, instead of shifting to some other location, one would opt to become a DIET faculty in the same city as theirs. Take the cases of Kaushambi, Muradabad, Meerganj and Meerganj, there people won’t go by choice” (A2)*
* **Infrastructure woes:** Infrastructural issues, it was found, are directly related to lack of proper funding.
  + **Lack of updated resource centers**: *“You talk of knowledge resource centre, we still have only 90s books in the library” (A2)*
  + **Critical lack of physical capacity: *“****We do not have labs with 40 computers. But then again, even if you give 40 computers, where will keep them (there is no room)” (A2)*
* **There’s no sense of owning BITEs:** In multiple interactions (A1, A3), it was found that there is no sensing owning of BITE set-up on behalf of the states. *“There’s no necessity of BITEs, in case of larger districts, have 2 DIETs instead” (A2) “It (BITEs) was not our idea, it was centre’s idea”. (A3)*
* **Issues of institutional arrangement:** It was felt that the current institutional arrangement between SSA, RMSA and SCERT, particularly with regard to quality monitoring, is not properly aligned. *“CRC and BRC are part of DIET monitoring. However, we have no authority. I can only complain. For making it a working relationship, this needs to change… You have kept financial and administrative functions with yourself and have given only academic responsibility to us! You give money to one but expect outcomes from another!”*
* **Lack of synergy between the different institutions involved: *“****BSA, SSA does not have time, orientation and inclination to look into the training aspect… There was a meeting with all the functionaries and BSA, BRC are fighting tooth and nail. Everybody is busy fighting their territory”. (A2)*

**NGO & Institutional Support**

* **Lack of faith in institutional set-ups in being able to provide guidance and support**: One of the senior bureaucrats met expressed lack of faith in institutional set-ups (including NCERT) in being able to help them. He felt that there is a “disconnect” between imagination of the universities and reality, that they are not staying updated with the changing times. He, however, had explained that his department works with a few individuals in the universities and institutes of higher learning on an individual case-to-case basis based on their experience and expertise. “*They (universities) are not upgraded. They do not know ‘S’ of school education… Instead of going by the institutes, fund the individuals. Why can’t I contact the individuals directly if I need something?” “Dismantle the structures. Make NIE into NPE (National Personnel of Education). Faculty may go and get consultancies”(A2)*
* **Allowing SCERTs to lend their expertise and be able to monetize**: One of the senior bureaucrats met had suggested that institutions of the state should be allowed to let their staff lookout and provide consultancy. This, he expressed, will help bring more dynamism, accountability and financial wellbeing.

**Technology**

* **Increasing reliance on smartphone as the device of choice for ICT approach**: Given the costs involved in providing access to desktops or laptops to the large number of target population (student-teacher community), one of the states (UP) is looking at using smartphones as the device of choice to impart ICT enabled training inputs. *“In case of smartphones, I do not have to invest anything. When I have money, I will buy the SD cards and provide them with content.*” *(A2)*

**Training Quality**

* **Poor perception of training among in-service teachers**: One of the DIET principals met expressed that the in-service teachers perceive training to be *“routine work and very repetitive” (A4)*. One exception though was that of training on health and hygiene that has also included a component of adult hygiene. In this case, the teachers felt that the content delivered was relevant, needful and immediately applicable.
* **Lack of follow-up training and robust feedback affecting impact and scope for improvement:** Currently, in UP, due to lack of funds there has not been any rigorous research on the impact of the trainings that are being imparted. This is leading to stagnancy in the content and delivery of the trainings. Further, since there has been no focus on the follow-up trainings, the on-ground impact of the trainings is also being limited

**DIETs - Challenges**

**Slashes in funding**: “*Earlier* *DIETs used to get funds from SSA. There’s no funding anymore from SSA. We get only training related money from them now. Similarly there is no funding anymore for research and evaluation. So research got affected. There is no impact evaluation; no funds for any innovation. If you want any field activities, give funds”(A4)*

**Staffing**: Lack of sufficient number of faculty is one of the most critical challenges being faced by DIETs. One of the principals met had mentioned that while the current DIET that he is working is moderately staffed, that, in the previous DIET he worked is very abysmal. “*In all there were only one lecturer and one principal” (A4)*

**Lack of dedicated transport arrangement**: There are 15-20 DIETs that are far off from the district headquarters and there is no dedicated transport facility for them. This has impact on the attendance rate of in-service training in case of these institutes.

**Power issues**: Lack of good electric power supply is another challenge faced by DIETs. *“There is discussion these days about providing desktops and laptops. Those things come much later. Some of our interior areas do not have proper electric connectivity.” (A1)*. It was recommended that non-conventional energy resources should be tapped into to address this *(A4)*.

**Best/Novel Practices**

* **DIET Grading**: SCERT UP is currently mooting to a grading scheme to increase the sense of competitiveness among the DIETs of the state. One of the DIET principals met has mentioned that any such mechanism has to take into consideration not only the current capabilities of a given DIET but that of historical imbalance. For example, while physical infrastructure of DIET is to be considered, it should not be given undue importance as in that case all those DIETs in interior and backward districts would lose out on grading for no fault of theirs.
* **In-house TET Training to address the issue of student absenteeism**: Attendance was found to be an area of concern in case of the students who perceive the TE training as only a mandate to be fulfilled but would rather focus their time and energies on cracking the TET exams. To address this issue, after remodifying the classroom schedule (by bringing down the duration of each class from 70minutes to 55 minutes), DIET Lucknow has started a new initiative to impart TET focused coaching too to the students in a few dedicated periods scheduled. Apart from addressing the issue of absenteeism, it is believed that this initiative would also help increase the employability of the PSTE student community.

**Responses to questions on policy changes**

**On discontinuing PSTE in DIETs:** There was clear and strong disappointment towards this idea among the DIET principals and faculty met.

That would seriously affect the quality of teaching schools. You compare an average DIET student vis-à-vis a private BTC student and then you may decide if you want to take away pre-service. *Yahaan pe lesson plan banta, bachcho ko teaching methods pe train kiya jaata hai (A4)*

*Ye jo 200 bachche jo har din aate hain, yahi toh jaan hai… Jo guru shishya parampara chalte aayi, woh khatam ho jayegi (A4)*

*That is the primary activity of DIETs. What will the faculty do for the rest of 7months in a year (A4)*