

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN INDI

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Abstract

CPD of teachers has become a major policy priority within education systems worldwide. A further review of policy documents and literature reveals that a new concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that builds on current strengths of professional learning and sees teachers as professionals taking responsibility for their own learning and development is also emerging in many countries. In comparison to these international developments, notion of CPD for teachers in India appears in a narrow sense (in-service training) and offers limited opportunities. Present paper details and discusses about Problems of CPD of Teachers in India.

Keywords: *CPD, Teachers*

Introduction :

“A teacher can never truly teach until he is still learning himself

A lamp can never light another lamp until it continuous to burn in its own flame”.

Dr. Rabinder Nath Tagore

Education is the basic necessity to any society and teachers cause desirable and anticipated revolution in the society silently. The National Policy on Education of India (1986/1992) has given very clear directives on this issue, “The status of the teachers reflect the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers”. The role of teacher also involves the character building of the taught apart from designing and

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implementation of the curriculum. Good teachers are essential for the effective functioning of education systems and for improving the quality of learning processes.

The teacher is the key agent in any education system. The National Knowledge Commission of India (NKC, 2007) observed that the teacher is the single most important element of the education system. Echoing the same sentiments an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report observes that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers since student learning is ultimately the product of what goes on in classroom (OECD, 2010). Similarly another report from Scotland suggests, *“We know that it is the commitment and skill of individual teachers which makes the biggest difference to children’s progress and achievement”* (HMIE, 2009, p.3). As stated by NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education, 1998) in *Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education*, “The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage.” This shows that it is imperative to invest in the development of teachers, so that the future of a nation could be secured. The importance of competent teachers to the nation’s education system can in no way be overemphasized. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 also places demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education.

The teaching profession was once widely viewed as one of the most respected professions with a stable, long career path. Times change, and teaching is now facing challenges on many fronts. Evidence from Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) suggests that the good education systems are those in which the value of the teaching profession is widely recognized by society. **Teachers, researchers, policy analysts and politicians across the globe often argue and suggest that meaningful and relevant enhancement of teachers’ professional capabilities and commitment to education is essential to improve education as a whole.** “The most successful education systems invest in developing their teachers as reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals who are able, not simply to teach successfully in relation to current external expectations, but who have the capacity to engage fully with the complexities of

education and to be key actors in shaping and leading educational change.” (Teaching Scotland’s Future, Scottish Government, 2011, p4)

Teachers in India

India is the second most populated country in the world after China, with an estimated population of about 110 million, accounting for 17 per cent of the world population. Geographically, the population has spread over 3.3 million sq km in 35 states and union territories. In all, there are **626 districts and more than 600 thousand villages in the country.**

The figures about teacher population in India are also awesome: **26,84,194** teachers work in primary schools; and another **25,12,968** teachers work in upper primary schools and **12,86,498** in secondary schools and **1785099** in senior secondary schools.. More than 90 per cent of the teachers are trained teachers. The teachers in the higher education system also constitute a large number: **12, 09,211**. In all there are about **(9,477,970) 9.4 million teachers at all levels of education.** Thus India has a large number of teachers and needs many more. All processes of teacher recruitment, training, motivation, incentives, retention and feedback therefore have to be planned on a large scale. Further the ultimate goal of in-service teacher development should be to ensure that optimal learning takes place in the classrooms.

Status of Teaching Profession in India

Teaching as a profession and the profile of teachers has been continuously changing in India over time and in response to changing demands. The fact is that though the Indian teacher to some extent enjoys the freedom and power within the classroom, he has low social status and self esteem. The status of the teachers is one of the basic underlying premises to attract and retain persons of ability to the profession. **With low professional status, therefore, the choice of becoming a teacher is not the primary option amongst the Indian youth. (Report of the International conference on teacher development and management, Ministry of HRD, 2009).** It is obvious that teachers are the backbone of the education system and are central to the reform effort. But for too long in India, teachers have been blamed for poor performance of students and the low levels of learning. However, non-availability of jobs in other sectors encourages many to join as teachers and restricts their opportunities to move on to other professions.

In the Indian context, barring a few institutions, the roles of the teacher has been restricted to the classroom and mainly to the conventional teaching of ‘chalk and talk’. The large area of newer teaching methodologies, assessment methods and facilitating the development of students remain untapped. It is not that Indian teachers do not have the ability to understand or apply, but mainly because these types of educational processes are either not understood or simply ignored by the system that is already in place.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Teachers

Professional development, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, “Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically” (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41). Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline, etc.) (Ganser, 2000).

“CPD is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organizations and their pupils.”

The acronym ‘CPD’ stands for ‘Continuous’ or ‘Continuing Professional Development’ and broadly signifies the process of continuing growth of a professional after joining the profession. In education, generally speaking, it seems that there are two views of CPD – the narrow and the broad. The narrow view considers CPD as the imparting/ acquiring of some specific sets of skills and/ or knowledge in order to deal with some specific new requirements (for example, training teachers to handle a new textbook or using a new teaching aid.) The broad view considers CPD as a much deeper, wider and longer term process, in which professionals continuously enhance not only their knowledge and skills, but also their thinking, understanding and maturity; they grow not only as professionals, but also as persons; their development is not restricted to their work roles, but may also extend to new roles and responsibilities.

According to Day (1999), CPD of teachers encompasses all behaviours which are intended to effect change in the classroom. Defining CPD, he emphasizes, “*Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives*” (Day, 1999, p.4). While A national framework defines CPD as: *'The range of experiences that contribute to teacher development is very wide and should be recognised as anything that has been undertaken to progress, assist or enhance a teacher's professionalism'* (Scottish Government, 2002).

Usually CPD is considered as the process of teachers' development through their involvement in various teaching and research activities on continuing basis. According to Padwad and Dixit (2011, p.10) “*CPD is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisations and their pupils.*”

As summary, CPD of teachers is considered as an ongoing process of education, training, learning and support activities which is: taking place in either external or work-based settings; engaged in by qualified, educational professionals; aimed mainly at promoting learning and development of their professional knowledge, skills and values; to help decide and implement valued changes in their teaching and learning behaviour so that they can educate their students more effectively thus achieving an agreed balance between individual, school and national needs (Earley and Bubb, 2004, p.5).

CPD of teachers has become a major policy priority within education systems worldwide. Highlighting about the importance of CPD, a report from OECD (2009, p.49) observes, “*No*

matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce.” Echoing the same sentiments, Donaldson Review of Teacher Education in Scotland suggests, *“Teachers should have access to relevant high quality CPD for their subject and other specialist responsibilities”* (Donaldson 2011, p.75). A further review of policy documents and literature reveals that a new concept of Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) that builds on current strengths of CPD and sees teachers as professionals taking responsibility for their own learning and development is also emerging in many countries.

Teachers’ Continuing Professional Development in India

The notion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is still relatively little understood and explored in the teaching profession in India. This is evident from the rare appearance the term seems to make in academic publications, in conferences and seminars, and in staff rooms, meetings and teacher discussions. Although in-service teacher education is a recurrent theme in the policies and programmes of teacher education, it all too rarely expands into the larger and more comprehensive idea of CPD. **Teaching is a learning profession and like any other professionals teachers are expected to be life-long learners.** This expectation is not matched by a wide-spread professional learning culture in the teaching profession. An important reason for this, we argue, is the lack of recognition of CPD in its own right as a life-long, continuous and largely voluntary process, and the consequent paucity of support to sustain this process. CPD is usually found reduced to a series of isolated in-service teacher training events focusing on short-term goals of acquiring a set of skills and/ or some knowledge.

In comparison to these international developments, notion of CPD for teachers in India appears in a narrow sense (in-service training) and offers limited opportunities. Commenting on present scenario of CPD provisions for school teachers in India, Bolitho and Padwad (2013, p.7) argues, *“Professional preparation consists of short pre-service teacher education courses with limited field exposure and practical relevance. There is no formalised system of induction and normally a teacher is required to handle responsibility independently and autonomously right from their*

first day in the profession. Ongoing professional development, i.e. CPD, can be seen in a very restricted, narrow sense and there are limited opportunities and support for the CPD of serving teachers.” Usually CPD of teachers in India is equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes. A report from National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) observes that despite the diversity of individual teachers’ CPD needs and interests, the only available avenue for thousands of teachers remains INSET training (NCFTE, 2009, pp. 6-7).

As discussed earlier, CPD of teachers in India is usually equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes. The basic difference between both these terms is that CPD encompasses all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their own practice while INSET mainly focuses on occupational development of person (Earley and Bubb, 2004). NCTE (the apex body of teacher education in India) can be credited for use of term CPD in place of INSET in its National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009. Although, this document often interchanges INSET and CPD (NCTE, 2009, pp. 63-74). According to this framework, the broad aims of Continuing Professional Development Programmes (NCFTE, 2009) are:

- Explore, reflect on and develop one’s own practice
- Deepen one’s knowledge of and update oneself about one’s academic discipline or other areas of school curriculum
- Research and reflect on learners and their education
- Understand and update oneself on educational and social issues
- Prepare for other roles professionally linked to education/teaching, such as teacher education, curriculum development or counselling
- Break out of intellectual isolation and share experiences and insights with others in the field

Instead of this welcome shift of approach from NCTE, the term CPD is still not accepted in principle and spirit in Teacher Education in India. This argument is based on the fact that, Justice J.S. Verma Commission (JVC) recommendations on Teacher Education in India (MHRD, 2012) which came after four years of NCFTE document still used the term in-service training in place of CPD. Even the term INSET and CPD were used interchangeably in National

Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009, pp. 63-74). Talking about this dilemma, Bolitho and Padwad (2010, p. 7) observes, “*The problems begin with perceptions about CPD. Different agencies and stakeholders seem to hold different or narrow views of CPD. It is very common to see CPD equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes.*” In fact, CPD of teachers in India is facing a number of challenges in terms of perception, acceptability and implementation. Some of these challenges are:

- Policy documents often interchange INSET and CPD (NCTE, 2009, pp. 63-74)
- Agencies perceive CPD as one-off, isolated, and short-term training events (Bolitho & Padwad, 2010)
- Teachers perceive CPD in terms of formal INSET programmes designed and delivered by external agencies (Bolitho & Padwad, 2010)
- The broader notion of CPD as a lifelong process is largely missing (Day, 1999; Bolitho & Padwad, 2010)
- Education administrators and school managements relate CPD to teachers’ ability to teach, manage and ensure good performance of students in examinations (Bolitho & Padwad, 2010)
- Limited opportunities for continuing professional development for primary and secondary school teachers (COL, 2010)

In the contemporary socio-economic context of India learners on the one hand have a wide range of demands and expectations from teachers. On the other the teacher’s professional success and capacity to serve the system and its policy goals also depend on his awareness of challenges that India and its society are facing in terms of gender disparity, cultural diversity, inequity and inequality. The two aspects together reinforce the need for a state-of-the-art continuing professional development for teachers in India.

Problems/ Barriers of Teachers’ Professional development in India

1. Inadequate and Low Quality and sometimes absence of Pre-Service Teacher Education

International studies have identified a range of personal competencies which need to be incorporated in pre-service training that make a difference to the quality and effectiveness of

teaching: sound subject knowledge; communication skills; ability to relate to individual students; self-management skills; organizational skills; classroom management skills; problem-solving skills; a repertoire of teaching methods; teamwork skills; and research skills.

In the Indian context most of these competencies are not adequately addressed. Also there is no linkage between theory and practice; ideas about purpose of education, its relationship with society, nature of knowledge, of disciplines, potential of the human child to learn, the human learning process, the background and diversity of children etc. (Report of the International conference on teacher development and management, Ministry of HRD, 2009).

With the demand far exceeding supply, market forces have taken over causing unprecedented rise in the number of teacher education institutions in most parts of the country. The escalating demand for trained teachers and the belief that a training certificate acts as collateral against future unemployment has made teacher education a lucrative business proposition.

An attitude of resignation towards initial teacher education and piecemeal in-service training courses have become an integral part of state provisioning for education. This has led to further degradation of the status of teachers and diluted the identity of teacher as a professional.

More over there is no professional degree in education is needed to teach degree classes as well as to teach in technical and professional colleges.

2. Difficult working conditions

Not surprisingly, the greatest barrier to quality professional development in India is the difficult conditions in which teachers work. The lack of (irregular, delayed or low) remuneration, overcrowded classrooms, the potential for (or probability of) sexual harassment or abuse, a lack of respect from community members, violence in, to, and from educational institutions all contribute to such difficult working conditions. As they would be for anyone, these conditions—both discretely and cumulatively—are often highly demotivating for teachers and negatively affect important teacher characteristics, which are critical to effective teaching performance.

3. Teacher identity

Many teachers become teachers, not by choice but by necessity, and, as Kirk & Winthrop note, “may therefore lack a strong professional identity” or desire to strengthen that identity, even in places where respect for teachers is high and even where education is seen as important.

4. Teacher efficacy

Teachers’ efficacy beliefs are strongly correlated with teacher performance. Teachers with high *self-efficacy* believe that they can teach students well and believe they have a certain degree of control over both teaching and learning process and their performance. There is a strong relationship between teachers’ self-efficacy (meaning teachers’ confidence in their ability to plan and carry out activities to attain their educational goals) and high student outcomes (Bangs 2015).

If teachers are poorly prepared; if they receive little or inadequate professional support—particularly if they teach children with acute emotional and academic needs— they may continue to lack confidence in their own abilities as teachers. They may continue to doubt their own efficacy; they may not believe that their students can learn; and they may begin to channel these frustrations onto students—blaming them for the weaknesses of the system. It’s hard to love your job when deep down you think you are terrible at it. All of this undermines teacher-student relationships, undermines the quality of teaching and learning, undermines student learning, and undermines the notion of teaching as a desirable, even noble, profession.

5. Teacher professionalism

Difficult working conditions, low status, gender bias, and teaching in hierarchical conditions often prompt teachers to look for alternative work and/or resist any attempts to enhance increased professionalism—such as professional development—especially when teachers are not paid for extra hours or when they see professional development as not resulting in either improvements in their own practice or leading to promotion. Hierarchical, rigid education systems exacerbate this lack of professionalism by treating teachers as a problem, by not seeking their input or voice on decisions that affect teachers, and by dismissing concerns about pay or working conditions or safety. This lack of professionalism of teachers is often then a reflection of

the lack of professionalism of the education system itself. Essentially, many teachers, so exhausted and worn down by this lack of professionalism, combined with the conditions in which they work, may resist change of any sort, systematic initiatives of any sort, or new ideas of any sort because they are simply trying to survive, physically or emotionally, in the face of so much adversity.

6. Systematic challenges

Poor leadership, limited administrative capacity or inadequate budgets also acts as strong barriers in professional learning goal. Many countries are unable to provide teachers with salaries and working conditions or professional opportunities that one finds in other professions. Some contexts often lack qualified personnel who can help teachers master content or research, such as proven instructional or assessment strategies. And they lack systems and incentives to encourage and help teachers improve their practice.

If there is some form of professional development, its effects may be nullified by problems related to coordination between the entities that deal with professional development or between entities that evaluate teachers. There are often problems with the quality and variety of the tools used to observe and supervise teachers and provide them with feedback about their teaching.

7. Poorly designed professional development programmes

This last barrier is both a consequence of the above barriers and a cause of the lack of access to quality professional development. Not surprisingly, in many contexts, the professional development that does exist is episodic versus sustained and intensive. It often reflects budget constraints, the lack of qualified facilitators, volatility, and logistical challenges.

Without a long term policy and strategy for CPD the programmes available are mainly short term, ad hoc, and ‘project’ driven. As a result, little impact has been observed in producing sustained changes in classroom practice and in achieving higher levels of learning by students.

8. Top-down transmission model.

In India, the present practice of CPD for teachers is largely characterized by a ‘top down’ model, which is ‘fund driven’ rather than ‘need driven’. This approach is proving to be quite ineffective

in responding to the varied needs of teachers and in bringing visible improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning process. Although CPD programmes cannot compensate for pre-service education of inadequate quality, teacher training nevertheless needs to be strengthened to become more outcome-oriented; that is by transforming training inputs into positive changes in classroom practices and improving student learning. In recent years, the large number of teachers inducted into the system with inadequate pre-service training has put additional pressure on teachers' professional development to remedy this situation. The need is even greater now for deploying capable teachers who can deal with the educational needs of children in a classroom that has now become much more complex and diverse.

While various agencies conduct CPD programmes at the national level and at the local level. A number of these programmes are implemented in a cascade model. However, it has been felt that these programmes lack a coherent institutional framework, are not consistently linked and the organising structures do not have regular communication and information sharing channels. CPD programmes offered have a prominent focus on providing information about the content and give limited attention to critical aspects of children's learning, such as soft pedagogical skills, learner centred pedagogy and the needs of first generation learners.

Role of UGC-HRDC

The Academic Staff College scheme of the UGC brought a serious debate in the country when it was introduced in 1987. Later, it was accepted by the teaching community as a necessary process to be undertaken by every teacher in the system of higher education. The Pay Commissions of UGC have linked the career advancement of teachers with the attendance at the Academic Staff Colleges as one of the important criterion. The University Grants Commission, in pursuance of the National Policy on Education 1986 and its programme of action, had set up 66 **Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs)** now known as **HRDC** in different Universities/ Institutions in the country. The Academic Staff Colleges so established are conducting specially designed orientation programmes for newly appointed lecturers and refresher courses for in service teachers.

- **4 week orientation for all teachers since 2000:** The Orientation programme is intended to inculcate in the young lecturers the quality of self-reliance through awareness of the social, intellectual and moral environment as well as to discover self-potential and confidence. The orientation programmes contribute to the teacher awareness of the problems of the Indian society and the role of education, higher education leaders and educators in the resolution of these problems to achieve desired goals in national development.

- **3 Weeks Refresher courses:** The Refresher course provides opportunities for serving teachers to exchange experiences with their peers and mutually learn from each other. It will be a forum to abreast of the latest advances in the subjects, technological spin off etc.

However, the effectiveness of these programmes has been not very much satisfactory, said a report by a committee constituted by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) on the National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (NMTT).

"The working of the ASCs has been reviewed from time to time to assess the quality of the programmes and to support continuation of their existence. Yet, these colleges have not been able to fully meet the professional development needs of teachers, as is emerging from the various reviews," it said. (Times of India October 6, 2013)

Conclusion

A review study by Avalos (2010) observes that we have to move away from the traditional in-service teacher training (INSET) model as prolonged interventions are more effective than shorter ones. In fact, all those associated with 'CPD of Teachers in India' was expecting that existing CPD scenario come up with-

- A comprehensive and clear CPD policy;
- Specific patterns, provisions and nomenclature of CPD;
- A shift of approach from INSET to CPD and finally to CLPL;
- Useful suggestions for more involvement of NGOs/Private Sector in professional development of teachers;
- A need based action plan for effective use of digital media and resources (Internet, Mobile, Social Networking sites, Open Educational resources, etc.) for CPD; and

- A Bottom-up approach to widen CPD net in place of existing top-down approach of INSET.

Teachers have to be empowered individually and institutionally to lead their institutions towards improved educational standards, and be a partner of the community in all development aspects.

Teacher development therefore needs to instill capability and awareness to learn on one's own. The need for continuous learning emerges from the work of the teacher, and structures are needed to build the curiosity and provide materials and mechanisms for the teacher to engage in her own development as a teacher.

Even though it is important to help teachers become reflective professionals and be able to reason, a teacher needs to have a comprehensive set of ideas and skills to engage. A creative carpenter can only be successful if he or she knows the basic rudiments of carpentry (what woodwork joints work best for which purpose, and what tool is required for what kind of job, etc.) The same applies to a successful “reflective” teacher, in terms of core pedagogical skills and underlying subject knowledge.

The need of the hour and expectations is that we will provide a new vision and approach to improve existing policies and provisions for continuing professional development of teachers in India. **There is a need to see teachers as professionals taking responsibility for their own learning and development.**

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