



Professional development programmes in improving the quality of teachers

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Abstract

This is the changing time in education system around the world. With the start of the new millennium many societies are engaging in serious and promising educational reforms. One of the key elements in most of these reforms is the professional development of teacher; societies are finally acknowledging that teachers are not only one of the 'variables' that needed to be changed in order to improve their educational system, but they are also the most significant change agents in these reforms.

Keywords: development programmes, quality of teachers and promising educational reforms.

Introduction

This double roll of teachers in educational reforms, being both subjects and objects of change makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area, and the one that has received major attention towards the teacher professional development.

Professional development is the enrichment training provided to teachers over a period of time to promote their development in all aspects of content and pedagogy. Professional development for teachers should be analogous to professional development of other professionals.

It is not simply a time-bound activity or a series of events, but a continuous process. From this perspective, the conventionally divided in-service and pre-service activities should be viewed as seamless components of the same process. It is the tool by which policymaker's vision for change are disseminated and conveyed to teachers. The ultimate beneficiary of in-service teacher professional development is the student though the receiver is the teacher.

Professional development for teachers is more than training or classes as it functions as an agent for change in their classroom practices. The growth of a teacher's skill and understanding is developed through personal reflection, interactions with colleagues and mentoring which gives confidence by engaging with their practices and reaffirming their experiences.

It could have a positive impact on teacher's pedagogical content knowledge as many teachers feel challenged with teaching of curricular subjects due to lack of previous experience with hands-on activities, lack of content knowledge, lack of interest

to acquire the resources needed to create appropriate learning environments and lack of confidence.

In the last few years, major in-service professional development programs have been conceptualized and implemented, the main concerns that need to be looked into in the secondary education sector include:

- Ensuring that teachers who are involved in developing their professional capacities are motivated to contribute and to learn from these programs so that they can implement these in their classrooms.
- Identifying and evolving the possibility of the extent to use ICT in the trainings through cascade and other models.
- Analysing the different aspects of in-service teacher professional development and exploring the possibilities that make teachers engage with diversity among the children (such as marginalised, children with special needs) with confidence and competence.
- The aims of in-service teacher professional development are to enrich and update teacher's knowledge in their discipline, pedagogy and other areas of school curriculum continuously.
- Research and reflect on the gaps in students learning and their progress.
- Understand and update their knowledge on social issues.
- Apply Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in their classrooms for better student learning.
- Motivate and regenerate enthusiasm of teachers to inculcate interest in innovations

The following strategies may be taken up for achieving the above aims:

- Faculty of SCERTs, IASEs, CTEs and University Education departments can be involved as master trainers and mentors.
- Development of a network among institutions and individuals of SCERTs/SIEs, IASEs and CTEs University Education and Departments.
- Organisation of workshops for content and pedagogy enrichment.
- Developing training capacity for Action Research projects and ICT applications.
- Development of a set of indicators, marginalised, and benchmarks to track in-service professional development of teachers and the institutions.
- Development of short-term courses for continuous professional discipline, development and upload on the website
- Devising Open and Distance Learning (ODL) strategies for concurrent/perennial professional development.

Pre-Service teacher education

Pre-service education is carried on for preparing different types of teachers. Pre-service teacher preparation is a collection of unrelated courses and field experience. Research-based curriculum development of pre-service teacher education is yet to take roots. These programs are intended to support and enhance teacher learning and instil in them a greater degree of self-confidence.

In the beginning teachers in this case learn from their practise and form the culture and norms of the unique school settings wherein they have been placed and interact with these cultures. Pre service training takes place before teacher starts his job this refers to student- teachers who will become teachers after completing their pre-service training. Pre-service training could involve a component on inclusive education, or how to respond to special educational needs in the classroom.

The goal of pre-service training is to help the student-teacher develop and understand the role of the teacher, and to gain the necessary skills and competencies to become a teacher. When organising a component on inclusive education in pre service training, different activities like school visits, class room observation activities and practical assignment based on the content of the training will need to be arranged.

The student-teachers who are enrolled in a teacher preparation programme and working toward teacher certification complete supervised field based teaching experiences with the support and mentorship of the faculty. Pre service teachers are those who are in a teacher- education programme in order to pursue teaching credential in public schools or private sector domestically or internationally.

Pre-Service training programs

The following are the pre-service training programme:

1. Primary Education Programme
2. Primary Teacher Training Institute
3. College of Education for Secondary Teachers
4. Regional Colleges of Education
5. Institute for Post Graduate Teacher Education
6. Online e-learning courses

In-Service training

In-service Education and Training of teachers has its own historical roots. Its journey from pre-Independence to Post-Independence is characterized by numerous policy statements and recommendations of different commissions regarding its content and strategies for implementation. It has grown from a concept to a process and gained its importance for preparing teachers towards professional growth and development.

The secondary education commission was more specific in recommending the program of extension services for secondary teachers.

We talk about in-service training when we organise training for teachers who are already working as teachers or qualified teachers. This training can take many forms

- Two-week intensive training
- Weekly/monthly sessions over a period of time
- Several intensive training sessions during a long period.

In-Service teacher training program

According to Kothari Commission, a teacher unlike an ordinary worker acts as a master, craftsman, an artist, a strategist and a powerful motivator. The environment of the classroom is enlivened by the inspiring, dynamic, enthusiastic, encouraging, skilful and dedicated teacher. It is he who shapes the destiny of students and that of the future citizens who eventually shape the destiny of the Country. Such a teacher only can successfully inculcate among children values that straighten the ideals of social justice, equality, secularism and pluralism.

Pre-service education of teacher means education of teachers before they enter the service as teachers. During this period of teacher education programs, teaching practice goes side by side, while they are getting knowledge about theory papers. A good deal of improvement in the teacher education program is needed. Pre-service Education is carried on for preparing different types of teachers. Pre-service teacher preparation is a collection of unrelated courses and field experience, these program are intended to support and enhance teacher learning and instil in them a greater degree of self-confidence. In the beginning teachers in this case learn from their practice and from the culture and norms of the unique school settings wherein they have been placed and interact with these cultures. The teacher education programs needs to allow the space wherein a teacher's personality could be developed as someone who is reflective, introspective and capable of analysing his or her own life and the process of education at school so that after becoming a teacher he becomes an agent of change.

The following are needs and importance of In-Service Teacher Training Program:

- Teacher is a student
- New concept of lifelong education
- Development of professional growth
- Dynamic change in education
- Democratic way of living

The following are the In-Service teacher training programs Seminar

In a seminar some problems of education are taken up and there is collective thinking. Discussions are held and conclusions are arrived at all under the guidance of some experts.

Refresher courses

A refresher course means an educational programme organized for refreshing the knowledge of in-service teachers. Generally, they acquire the teachers with the new developments in the field of education. With the coming up of new education policy, refresher courses were arranged all around for teachers of different categories.

Workshops

Workshops are organized for giving in-service education to teacher. They involve more of practical work and less theoretical discussion. These types of programmes are more useful for the teachers. The teachers have to work practically and come out with final material to be seen by others. Organization of workshops consume more time than a seminar or conference.

Conference

In a conference, there is a broad discussion of subjects of practical interest. Generally, there is a central theme around which several subtopics are given. Teachers as per their interest present papers at the time of conference. The session ends with the concluding remarks of the president.

Online e-learning programmes

Online e-learning programmes can be designed for giving in-service education to teachers. A few universities and institutions have already started working in the area of in-service teacher education programs. Several IT companies are offering platforms to organise elearning programmes like Google classroom, Zoom video conferencing, Google meet, etc.

Other programs

A few programmes for in-service education of teachers are suggested below. They are:

- Educational tours
- Exhibition
- Radio broadcast
- Film shows
- TV programmes
- Extension lectures for teachers
- Exchange of teachers
- E-learning programmes

Conclusion

Regarding the organisation of training for professional development and the possibility of attending these training programme. These training programmes primarily target innovative and up to date practises, including changes in teaching methodology, using new methods and techniques that focus on students-centred teaching, Activation of student, critical thinking and so on.

The issue of the importance of professional development on gaining new knowledge and in rising the quality of teaching is considered a necessity of time, because of the dynamic development of technology and which should occur at any stage throughout life.

Finally we may conclude that professional development has direct impact on the career of teachers. This impact relates to

the fulfilment of the criteria for reforming the educational system, among other licensing criteria, as well as the changes in the system of teachers' salaries. Actually, the changes in the system of teachers' salaries, are enabled through in-teacher qualification service programme.

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