

Professional Development of Teachers and Teacher Educators

Dr. Ramesh Kumar

Assistant Professor, Teacher Education Department, Shivpati P.G. College, Shohratgarh, Siddharth Nagar, U.P.

Email- rkfrds1308@gmail.com



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Corresponding Author:

Dr. Ramesh Kumar

Email: rkfrds1308@gmail.com

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Abstract

Professional development of teachers and teacher educators takes shape through the teacher education. Teacher Education is a wider and more appropriate concept of teacher preparation which implies the need to develop a broad base for understanding the basic conceptions of educational practice and through it preparing a would-be teacher to draw his own conclusion about the methods and technique which is to adopt as a teacher professional. For the development of professional teachers and teacher educators we would improve the quality of the teacher education and competencies. It is widely accepted that teacher competence in respect of their mastery of the subject matter and the professional skills they acquire are the most important determinants of the quality of teacher education. This would mean the designing and operation of a teacher education curriculum which would help to develop these two basic dimensions of teacher competence. Professional development implies updating, strengthening and sharpening of the professional competencies and development of understanding and insights concerning different processes of a profession. Professional development also leads to job satisfaction and helps the professional to achieve a higher degree of self-actualization. In case of teacher educators, strengthening of professional competencies may lead to more effective preparation of prospective teachers. There are so many in-service programs and strategies like self-study and self-improvement programs, in-service education and training, study visits, study circles and book clubs, seminar presentations and conferences, which can be used for the professional development of teachers and teacher educators. Preparation of professionals must involve an education in the ethics, it must centrally involve critical and interdisciplinary thinking, discussion, debate, research and innovation. Professional education should thus become an integral part of the overall higher education system. In this paper the main emphasis is lead on the preparation and professional development of teachers and teacher educators.

Key Words: Professional development, Teacher Education, Teacher Educator, Professional Competencies, In-service education and training.

Introduction

The issue of quality education is now very much on the world agenda in 21st century. Quality and relevance have become the catch word of 21st century. Teacher competency is considered as the single most crucial factor which determines the quality of education and teaching learning process. For this the new challenge in the professional development of teachers. Professional development and support to the teachers have become crucial areas of concern for modern educational practices. Professional preparation of teachers and their continuous professional development are essential prerequisites for improvement of the school system. The professional preparation of teachers has to change considerably to develop a new breed of knowledge workers armed with new knowledge, skills and a vast repertoire of methods and techniques for providing education. With the institutionalization of teaching, preparation of teachers as a specific activity distinct from general education emerged. Teacher education is a specialized activity. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) recommended the introduction of a sound programme of professional education of teachers. The commission has highlighted the fact that investment in teacher education can yield very rich dividends to society in the form of competent human resources. It has been mentioned in the report of the Education Commission (1964) that, "In the absence of other influences a teacher tries to teach in the way in which he himself was taught by his favourite teacher and thus tends to perpetuate the traditional methods of teaching. In a situation like the present when new and dynamic methods of instruction are needed, such an attitude become an obstacle to progress. It can be modified only by effective professional education which will initiate the teachers to the needed revolution in teaching and lay the foundation for their future professional growth. First rate teacher training institutions can thus play a crucial role in development of education."

According to the Dictionary of Education, "Teacher education is the program of activities and experiences developed by an institution responsible for the preparation and growth of persons in the work of the educational profession." The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has defined teacher education as "program of education, research or training of persons for equipping them to teach as pre-primary, primary, secondary, and senior secondary stage in schools and includes non-formal education, part- time education, adult education and correspondence education." It is conceived as a full education programme where the 'rationale of procedures is provided along with procedures. NCTE, as the statutory national organization for maintaining and controlling the quality of teacher education in India has determined the academic and professional qualifications for the teacher educations.

According to Education Commission (1964), "The quality of training institutions, remains with few exceptions, either mediocre or poor; competent staff are not attracted; vitality and realism are lacking in the curriculum and program of work which continue to be largely traditional and set patterns and rigid techniques are followed in practice teaching with a disregard for present day needs and objectives. Existing programs of teacher education are largely traditional, rigid and divorced from the realities of school and existing or proposed programs of educational reconstruction. Courses

for professional subjects contain a great deal of matter which is either out of date or has little relevance to a teacher's work in the school such dead matter should be eliminated and replaced by what is directly related to the personal and professional needs of student teachers." Preparation and professional development equipped the teachers with necessary skills and knowledge to succeed the classroom. In the constantly changing world's political, economic and social dynamics, continuous development of social science teachers equipped them with new research, trends and techniques.

Aims of Education for Teachers and Teacher Educators

The University Education Commission (1948-49), the first commission on education set up in independent India, underlined the objectives of teacher education specially when it stated that teacher education has to perform the right kind of teacher. In the words of commission, "The right kind of teacher is one who possesses a vivid awareness of his mission. He not only loves his subject, but he also loves there whom he teaches. His success will be measured not in terms of pass percentage alone, not even by the quality of original contribution to knowledge important as they are but equally through the quality of life and character of men and women whom he taught". According to commission the programme of education for the professional development of teachers and teacher educators should aim at re-orientation of subject knowledge, vitalization of professional studies, improvements in methods of teaching and evaluation, development of special courses and programmes and revision and improvement of curricula. The Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (1978) developed by NCERT, treat education as an effective instrument of social change and teacher as a change agent. The aims of teacher education were redefined to empower teacher professionals and make them play leadership role both inside and outside the classrooms. The specific objectives of each and every stage of teacher education (from pre-primary stage to the higher secondary) have been delineated within the broad framework (Teacher Education Curriculum Framework, 1978). The curriculum framework for quality teacher education brought out by the NCTE in 1998, has its major thrust on transforming the teacher education system into an indigenous dynamic and culture specific in addition to making it responsive to the changing scenario of 21st century education. This document emphasizes the need for teachers to acquire the necessary competencies, capabilities expertise and commitment essential for realizing the major social objectives set for the country of social justice, equity and equality and keeping pace with the needs of the fast-global knowledge society. The framework conceives the curriculum of teacher education curriculum as, "an important instrument for the realization of national and educational goals". The aims of teacher education are fast getting redefined to accommodate the needs of the fast-changing knowledge scenario of the world.

Initial and Continuing Education of Teachers

Professional preparation of teachers which begins with pre-service education, is likely to get outdated even if we assume that the teacher had the benefit of attending a sound programme of in-service education. Initial teacher education can bring the teachers to the point where they can enter the classrooms with minimum essential teaching competencies. However, they need to further

strengthen and sharpen their professional competencies in view of the changing demands of education, society and the advancement of the technology of education. This necessitates the need for continuing education for all teachers. The New Policy on Education (1986) very strongly recommended the need to establish a close linkage between pre-service and in-service education of teachers.

Professional preparation of teachers has been recognized as crucially important for the qualitative improvement of education by all important commissions of education in pre-independent and post-independent India. Teacher education should have a sound philosophical base that emphasizes laudable visions and deep insights competence and commitment, dedication and discipline, ethos and morality. It Should also have a solid scientific foundation that evolves and improve continually, suggesting a wide array of effective techniques. Teacher education in this sense is a life-long professional development process beginning with initial pre-service education and continuing throughout the teaching career of a teacher.

During the period of pre-service education of teacher new recruits, graduates from colleges or universities are prepared for taking up assignment of teaching young one at school stage. It is the teacher education provided before a teacher join the teaching profession and therefore known as pre-service teacher education. Pre-service teacher education is designed as an activity which will certify the suitability of a would-be teacher. It is used to certify the professional competence of a new teacher. The professional preparation of teachers of pre-primary stage hitherto unplanned and unclear for, demands throughout planning of training sequences, relevant to the developmental needs of early childhood (NCTE, 1998). All curriculum frameworks developed by NCTE during the past (1978, 1988 and 1998) make specific mention of pre-school teacher education programs although it has not been given a formal shape up to now.

Continuing or in-service education of teacher in its broader sense can be described as everything that a teacher experiences from the day one to the last day of his/her job as a teacher that contribute directly or indirectly to the professional competence. According to Cane (1971) "in-service teacher education includes all those courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate for the purpose of extending his professional knowledge, interest and skills. Preparation for a degree or diploma or other such qualifications, subsequent to initial training would also be included in this definition". Bolam (1982) describes in-service education as "the education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers and principals, following their initial professional certificate and intended mainly or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitude in order that they can educate children more effectively". Hoyle, Joyce & Shower (1980) describes that "In-service education consists of all natural teaching experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be a direct or indirect benefit to the individual teacher group or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in classroom. According to NCTE, a post-graduation with B.Ed./ graduation with Master`s degree in education etc. for Primary School Teacher Trainers and a double Master`s degree in a major discipline

and education for Secondary School Teacher Trainers with some variations. Post graduation in education- M.Ed. (Master of Education) and M.A. (Education) are programs which aims at preparing teacher educators, educational researchers, educational administrators and specialists in areas like evaluation, guidance and counselling etc.

Education for Teacher Educators

The term "teacher educator" in the Indian context covers a variety of educational personnel concerned directly or indirectly with the education and training of teachers for different stages of formal system of education including special education and physical education and with research development and extension activities in school education. Teacher educator who operates the in-service programme should be those who are well acquainted with modern developments in the concerned areas. In-service educators should have the total know-how for teaching how to teach". The teacher educators for their purpose should have good academic background and proper professional preparation, through initial pre-service and in-service education throughout their service. They need to have higher qualifications in academic subjects with qualifications in education/teacher education and or methods of teaching. The importance of training of teacher educators for their job has long been acknowledged at national and international level. In fact, no system as such exists for the preparation of teacher educators especially at the induction level. Master of Education (M.Ed.), the study of the discipline of education at the post graduate level in the universities has long been associated with the initial training of teacher educators, especially the training for secondary teaching. The convention that a B.Ed. degree is all that is required for elementary teacher educators and on M.Ed., degree for secondary teacher education still work although the NCTE has recently developed new norms. NCTE (1998) document stressed that education of teacher educators will necessarily have to correspond to teacher preparation programmes. It further underlines the need to consider alternative programmes like M.Ed. (teacher education) to cater to the needs of a stage specific and category specific preparation of teacher educators alongside general M.Ed. programme. Studies shows that the M.Ed. is not fully useful for teacher trainees. It is conceived as an academic course. It does not equip the teacher educators with necessary knowledge, skills and competencies, which they will require even during the first year of their job. The demands on the teacher educators change considerably during their job. It is necessary to ensure that teacher educators are not only familiarized with the emerging issues and concerns in education and teacher education; but also, to new methods and strategies of teaching. Thus, continuing education needs to be planned and organized systematically and continuously and should be properly coordinated with their initial pre-service education. There should be in-service training, professional self-learning, professional upgradation, opportunities for teacher educator's enrichment.

Professional Development of Teachers and Teacher Educators in Social Sciences

Professional development of teachers implies updating, strengthening and sharpening of the professional competencies and development of understanding and insights concerning different

processes of a profession. Professional development also leads to job satisfaction, and helps the professional to achieve a higher degree of self-actualization. It includes formal and informal experiences of life, it is multidimensional content, process and context as well as long term process. In the case of teacher educators, strengthening of professional competencies may lead to more effective preparation of prospective teachers. This will also equip them to innovate not only new methods of teaching but also more imaginative ways of curriculum transaction. Classroom management and more effective use of learning resources available to them. Improved professional performance of the teacher would also contribute significantly to the balanced development of a teacher's personality as it positively impacts on all other aspects of his personality. Professional development should undoubtedly become the major concern of every teacher and of the whole education system. It is the enlightened teacher educators who can prepare an enlightened teacher for the general system. There are several strategies which can be used for the professional development of teachers. Self-study or self-improvement is probably the most effective means for achieving the professional growth of teachers and teacher educators. This strategy allows an individual the freedom to choose area of learning on the basis of felt need. Teacher educators teaching child psychology, sociology of education, curriculum designing, educational evaluation or methodology of different school subject which have different learning needs, interests and preferences. A teacher educator has to remain in touch with the latest developments and publications in the area of his interest and professional needs.

In the field of social science, the practitioners or professors study the society and human behaviour by examining the people groups and social institutions. They carry out and facilitate social science research to thoroughly understand human behaviour. In the drastically changing society, the social science teacher should be equipped with new research, pedagogical methods and techniques and frequently emerged technologies. So, the professional development of social science teachers must have improved teaching strategies, enhanced subject knowledge, staying ahead of technological advancement, increased teacher confidence which can be achieved through workshops and seminars, collaborative learning communities, action research and reflective practices, online courses and certifications, mentorship and peer observation etc. Innovative teaching strategies like project-based learning, inquiry-based approaches and flipped classroom model encourage student participation and critical thinking in social science subjects. Social science covers various disciplines like geography, history, political science, economics and sociology. So, the teachers with deep expertise in these areas can provide students with more comprehensive and advanced knowledge, improving overall quality. Social science teacher should update with latest tools and techniques like interactive maps, data visualization software and online collaboration platforms to interact and prepare the students for upcoming digital world. Thus, passing through these continuous professional development practices teachers feel more confident in their abilities by new teaching-learning strategies, updated relevant subject knowledge and mastering latest technologies.

NEP-2020 draft also advocates about teacher education that it is vital activity in creating a team of school teachers that will shape the nation's future. It requires multidisciplinary approach, perspective, knowledge, values and dispositions under best mentors. Teachers must be equipped with nation's values, language, knowledge, ethos and traditions and being well-versed in latest pedagogical and educational advances. According to The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2010), "Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the body of systematic activities to prepare teachers for their job, including initial training, induction courses, in-service training and professional development with school settings." Teacher educators should also develop the habit of consulting some professional journals regularly. A number of national and international journals are published in education and its cognate disciplines like psychology, philosophy and sociology and on its various specializations like teacher education, curriculum, measurement and evaluation, psychometry, comparative education etc. Often newspapers also published editorials on some current issues and controversies related to education. All teacher education institutions should organize forums for informed discussion on current affairs in education and new practices and policies with expert participation. ICT, multimedia, social media Platforms, Interactive TV, internet, watching films and documentaries may also be helpful in the professional development of teacher educators. In spite of these the study visits, study circles and book clubs, seminar presentation, symposium, workshops, conferences, formal and informal discussions with colleagues, using community resources and fieldworks also help in enhancing professional development of teachers and teacher educators. The online training of teachers using technological platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA also encourage the professional development of teachers and teacher educators. NEP-2020 also trying that by 2025, only educationally-sound, multidisciplinary and integrated teacher education programmes shall be in force to maintain the standard of teachers and teacher educators.

Conclusion

Professional preparation of teachers is crucial for the qualitative improvement of education. It is an ongoing process which begins with initial pre-service teacher education and continues throughout the career of teacher in the form of in-service education. Both pre-service and in-service teacher education is design to respond to the changing demand of school education. The initial pre-service teacher education is designed to develop basic competencies, attitudes and values among prospective teachers, who wish to enter the teaching profession. Teachers have to learn continuously to keep pace with the changing demands. In-service education should be based on the needs of serving teachers and has to be designed carefully to serve the specific needs of teachers. Continuous professional development is very essential component of effective teaching. Professional development implies upgradation of an individual's knowledge and competencies relating to his profession. In the case of teacher educator, it obviously implies further enrichment of person's knowledge about theories and practices of education, particularly teaching and training and further refinement of one's teaching and training skills. Teacher education is really vital in creating such school teachers

that will shape the next generation of the country. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, the formation of dispositions and values. Social science teachers are in direct touch to that subject areas which are linked with the society or behavioural aspects of the society. So, the social science teachers cannot enhance only their own career but also responsible for more informed, engaged, rational and thoughtful next generation of the students. In order to improve the professional competencies, we have to think other strategies besides formal in-service programs, like self-study participation in seminars, conferences, membership in study circles, conduct of study visits etc.

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