

Professional Development of 21st Century Teachers in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The present research article aims to discuss the professional development of teachers in higher education in India. It also analysed the elements and area of professional development of teachers in 21st century. As it has been claimed that 21st century acting as an active force behind the rapid transition of higher education. Traditional means of knowledge are all most washed out by the scientific ways. Use of information and technology has got maximisation in each and every field of knowledge. The whole world is moving fast to make permanent impression in the world of knowledge. Nation after nation is coming forward with the novel facts of life. Researchers are getting acceleration in all the academic fields. Most of the countries are busy in restructuring their higher education system in order to survive in this competitive world. As the 21st century has brought about quantitative and qualitative changes in all the disciplines of knowledge. But we cannot ripe the fruits of such occurred and occurring transformations until we have professionally developed and trained teachers in higher education system. At present, in India several short terms and refreshers courses were mooted out by experts to train and develop the professional competency of university teachers. In India, most of the universities running refresher courses with the help of University Academic Staff colleges. These Academic Colleges are largely responsible to organise workshops and newly invented academic activities for the teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Professional development of teachers, role of teachers, domains for professional development, academic staff college

21st century is accorded as the embedded forces behind the rapid transformation in Higher Education System. Quality education has got maximum attention since last decade. Quality assurance cell has been set up at University and College level. Attempts have been made to improve the class room teaching scenario by putting focus on the globally approved pedagogical aspects of higher education. Research and innovation have become the fundamental aspect of University education. In order to put the education system as par the global recognition, our nation has signed MOU with different foreign Universities.

Now faculty exchange programme is being conceptualised among the concerned universities at regular. But all these will remain dormant and neutral until and unless our nation has a good and sufficient numbers of professionally developed

and globally claimed teachers at higher education. Without a sound philosophy and goal oriented education system of higher education, the very dream of reconstructing nation's economic, social, political life cannot be realised in order to fulfil the fundamental ideals of quality education.

The overall quality of education of any nation depends upon the quality of its teachers. Thus, this reflects that the role of teachers has become the key to the success of nation as well as education system at any level.

If the teachers are excellent and imbibed with globally claimed teacher's quality then undoubtedly our nation's education systems and nation simultaneously would definitely march ahead on the path of development and prosperity. Therefore, since last decade, professionally efficient teacher

as well professional development of teachers got the maximum attention in developmental plan of education system at every level.

Review of Related Literature and Documents

The Mudaliar Commission (1952) Report Stated, "We are convicted that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his personal training and the place he occupies in the community."

Thus, professional training is required for the professional development of the teachers. As different commission and policies suggested different programmes for the professional development of the teachers.

National Education Commission (1964-66) that for the professional preparation of teachers of high education orientation is necessary especially of junior teachers. The commission recommended that the orientation course should be organised for the new staff in every university.

National Policy on Plan Education in its Programme of Action (1986) proposed:

1. To organise specially designed orientation programme for all new entrants.
2. To organise refresher courses for all the teachers at least once in five years.
3. To organise orientation programme for the teachers.
4. To encourage teachers to participate in workshop, seminars, conference and symposia etc.

Ramamurti Committee (1990) recommended that there should be one year training after the recruitment of teachers for their professional development.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) indicates the needs of enhancing professional competencies, ability and capacity to inspire and motivate learners. It has also spotted the importance of devotion towards profession, excellent academic records and quest for knowledge for better teaching career. (Fenstermacher & Berliner, 1983) conceptualised that professional development is the provision of activities that has devised in order to advance knowledge, skill and rest of competence.

Conceptualising Professional Development

All the commission and Committee always highlighted the issues and need of professional development for teachers of higher education. But firstly, in the year of 1950 and U.S.A based an educationist mooted out the idea of formal training of university teachers. After some time a research work on the same issue was started in few universities of U.K. and when the training programme of teacher education was came to an existence in U.K., it was very much liked and appreciated by majority of teachers.

As, professional development is the provision of enhancing and shaping the skills and knowledge of both pre and in-service teachers. It involves the career-long processes and related system and policies designed to enable educators (teachers, administrators, and supervisors) to acquire, broaden, and deepen their knowledge, skill, and commitment in order to effectively perform their work roles (Schwille and Dembele, 2007). Professional development of teachers consists of three tier system that includes Pre-Service, induction and In-Service. However, this paper is vehemently concerned only to professional development of In-Service teachers of higher education.

Definitions of Professional Development of Teachers

As the definition of, "*Professional Growth*" is given in the *Dictionary of Education* by Carter V. Good; *Professional Growth* means increase in subject matter knowledge, teaching Skills and efficiency and insight in to educational problems with a concomitant increase in success a teacher."

Professional development, in a broad sense refers to the development of a person in his professional role. Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meeting and mentoring etc. and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline etc.) (Ganser, 2000). This conception of professional development is, therefore, broader than career development, which is defined as "the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional cycle" (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41).

Professional Development includes subject matter, insight into educational problems or subject area should increase with expertise in teaching skills, and teachers' role as carrying research activity, curriculum development and as instructor too is called professional development of teachers.

Here, on the line of professional development of teachers, responsibilities and roles of teachers can be divided into two categories, (Mack and Williams 1984)

Responsibilities of Teachers

Above mentioned role of teachers are very much important in relation to professional development of 21st century teachers.

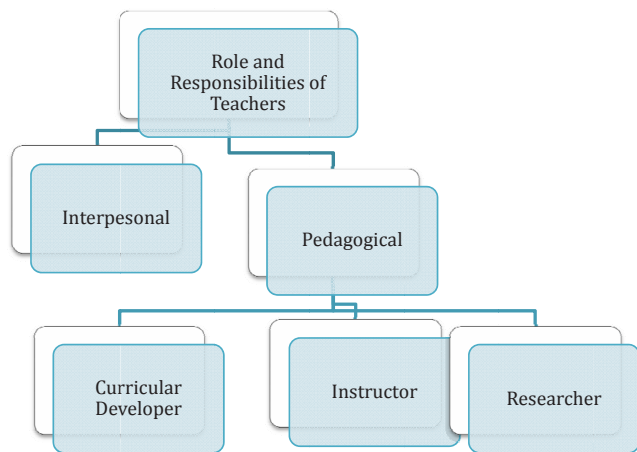


Fig. 1: Responsibilities of Teachers

Interpersonal Role

A teacher is supposed to work in an institution with teaching and non-teaching staff, administrators, parents, and community members to whom he formally and informally giving and receiving social and professional supports. A good and cordial relationship among teachers keeps all the staff members and administrators stress free at work place.

Pedagogical Role

A teacher is not only supposed to a teacher for classroom teaching but also to be a curricular developer, a researcher, instructor etc. A 21st century teacher should be efficient enough to determine the learning of objectives of his/her subject and be able to select the meaning full learning materials. Second important pedagogical role of a teacher is

instructor; here teacher has to instruct the youth or impart meaning full learning experiences by keeping in mind the individual differences of learners. Teacher should expert in all the needed teaching skills. Lastly, a teacher should be a good researcher. He should know the very aspects of research and problems of education pertaining to the class room teaching as well as evaluative aspects of education system.

But unfortunately in India, a very less attention was give on pedagogical aspects of teachers, and training to the teachers. It has been experienced that that, generally a person joins teaching profession either by choice or by chance. He takes on teaching without any orientation and even he has no idea of research activity too. Owing to this, he has no option left except to emulate the prevalent methods and procedure of other teachers.

Existing Scenario of Professional Development of Teachers in India

With the inception of New Education Policy (1986) in India, Academic Staff College; for the training of in-service teachers of higher education, has been established at National level. At present 66 academic staff colleges that have now been replaced to UGC- Human Resource Development Centres. These centres are supposed to cater the needs in compliance to the professional development of teachers in high education. Following are the main existing features of professional development of teachers in India:

- (a) Conceptualising and formulating orientation programmes, workshop and refreshers courses.
- (b) Identifying and selecting resource persons of different disciplines for conducting orientation programmes and refreshers courses.
- (c) Maintaining a library for reference and resource materials required for the courses.
- (d) Development of materials required for conducting the courses.
- (e) Proper organization, monitoring and evaluation of the courses for teachers.
- (f) Building a culture of learning and self-improvement among teachers.

- (g) Organising Ops for senior administrators and other decision-makers in order to facilitate the needed reform in higher education.
- (h) Make available opportunities to teachers in service to exchange experience with their peers and to mutually learn from each other.
- (i) Make availability a platform for serving teachers to keep themselves abreast of the latest advance in various subjects.
- (j) Offers opportunities to advance their knowledge and pursue research studies.
- (k) Introduce target teachers to the new methods and innovations in higher education.
- (l) Setting out a platform to bring out the publications relevant for enhancing the teaching and research capabilities of teachers.
- (m) Conducting capability enhancement programmes for non academic staff so as to strengthen the teaching-learning environment.
- (n) Imparting Basic Academic Skills.
- (o) Setting out platform to discuss the indicators of quality assurance, assessment and accreditation and quality assurance agencies viz; UGC, AICTE, NCTE, NAAC, etc.
- (p) Offering training programmes on methods and materials of teaching.
- (q) Offering Short term courses on academic writing skills, effective use of ICT in teaching, research, personality development, academic leadership, management of institutions, effective use of SPSS, stress management, communication skills: verbal and non-verbal, industry-university linkages, guidance and counselling, career planning, mental health, time management and so on.

Despite of above mentioned functions features of ASCs (UGC-HRDCs); following are the suggestions to be considered effective for the improvement in the professional development programmes for 21st century teachers of higher education.

Suggestions for the Improvement in the Existing Professional Development Programmes

In order to eradicate the above discussed shortcomings education system, the U.G.C has established

nation wise Academic Staff College at university level with the purpose of professional development of 21st century teacher of higher education. Conducting short term courses, refresher courses and orientation programme for university and college teachers are the main function of ASCs. For the professional development of teachers, following are the main suggestions for the improvement of programmes conducted by ASCs:

1. Teachers must be able to know the objectives of their subjects.
2. They must be able to select the learning material according to their objectives.
3. They must be aware about different methods of teachings.
4. They must be practiced at least few very important teaching skills during "Orientation" or "refreshers" course.
5. They must be able to create very healthy environment of teaching in which students work with rather than depend upon teachers.
6. They must be expert in research methodology.
7. They must be to select the useful research problem.

Despite above mentioned suggestions for the improvement in existing system of professional development programmes, following formal and informal domains to be considered important for the professional development of 21st century teachers of higher education.

Domains to be considered for the Professional Development of 21st Century Teachers

1. Regular readings of professional journals and periodicals.
2. Attending the workshop, conferences, lectures and seminars.
3. Regular readings of latest books of their subject areas.
4. Use of video tape in effective teaching, learning style and writing.
5. Regular use of internet
6. Regular sharing of experiences and ideas by faculty members both formally and informally.

7. Visit to other university and colleges observe other teachers.
8. Quarterly self-evaluation of teaching effectiveness.
9. Habit to maintain a good personal library in their houses.
10. Habit to maintain to organise academic programmes.
11. Habit to carry out administrative works.

CONCLUSION

Twenty first century higher education has under gone the rapid changes. Teachers are supposed to excel in every related aspects of Higher education including class room teaching practice. Role of higher education teachers has become diversified: teacher, curriculum developer and researcher. Except all these, a teacher has to perform as a counsellor, administrator, policy makers and so on. But professional development, including professional attitude, aptitude etc are very much needed in discharging the different types of supposed responsibilities. Thus, to be an efficient higher education teacher one should has a need to develop professional competency through available efficient and effective means. Then only the whole higher education system would be productive one and could assist the growth and development of the nation.

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