Professional Development of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teaching requires expertness which proliferates over the time. Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for personal as well as career development. Continuous professional development of teachers is the need of the hour because the students have to face the ever changing world. The knowledge domain, lifelong learning, pedagogy, information and communication technology, communication are the core areas which should be addressed through professional development programmes of teachers.For transacting the professional development programmes agencies like NCERT, State Education Departments, Centre of Advanced Studies in Education etc. undertake the responsibilities.

Keywords: Development, Communication

Teaching, as a professional career, requires expertness which proliferates if the person is instrumental enough in undergoing professional development and is capable enough in bringing substantial changes in the desired directions over the time. Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for personal as well as career development. It encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. In this information based and technology oriented era, professional development of teachers is indispensable as National Commission on Teachers for Higher Education (1983-85) is of the following views with respect to teachers that is Teacher

(1) as an agent of *change* and *cooperation* with community.

(2) to remain up-to- date (in the context of *explosion of knowledge*).

(3) to adopt new methodology to utilize *interactive methods* of instructions. A dynamic teacher can engage students *"meaningfully"* in classrooms- meaningfully means active participation / involvement of students leading to some skill development, on their part, ultimately leading to learning. This requires substantial qualitative enrichment of teachers through teacher education programmes which may be facilitated by developing a continuous professional development programmes for them preferably at in-service level. For example, in seminars, conferences besides formal sessions, teachers may be encouraged to share their views/

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experiences and a session may be organized to demonstrate, practice the innovative idea, activities etc. Thus, continuous professional development of teachers is the need of the hour in the sense that the students, which are being prepared by teachers, have to face the world which is rapidly changing. Thus, to combat this demand, teaching skills should be developed proportionately. Competence with reflection keeps the learning spirit, among teachers, alive.

(4) touse his/her *creativity*.

(5) as a procurer of knowledge to *enlarge the sphere* of his/her knowledge.

The domainsor the core areas which should be addressed, through professional development programmes of teachers, are:

(1) Knowledge: as this age is facing knowledge explosion and also there is exponential growth in terms of knowledge acquisition but on the other hand, conventional methods of teaching-learning are still prevalent because they are convenient to practice so to balance this, knowledge is the first roadmap to work upon through professional development programmes.

(2) Scenario: There is a continuum between pre-service and in-service teacher education and**Life Long Learning** (LLL) concept of education bridges the two. LLL states that **learning is life long, life wide and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.** *LLL enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, competitiveness and employability*. It connotes that learning is not confined to the childhood or classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations.LLL means accumulation of knowledge and skill development over a period of time. This requires learners to be in a state of inquiry with knowledge thirst hence learning turns into an independent and self-regulated process of gathering information and knowledge generation.

The professional development of teachers must emphasize upon:

(a) **Up gradation of knowledge of school subjects:** here, latest information pertaining to the content must be provided to the teachers. Also, the difficulty level of the content, under deliberation, should be at least one level higher than the teaching, concerned, at a particular level for example in the seminars, workshops organized for primary school teachers

the focus with respect to the content may be at the middle school level etc. and so on. This may lead to conceptual enrichment on the part of teachers so, facilitation of concept learning for students, on teachers' part may take place smoothly.

(b) **The pedagogy:** the presentational skills of teachers should be addressed properly that is there should be provision of teaching practices which focus on the development of teaching skills by (i) increasing the difficulty level of same content with same students over a period of time, (ii) teaching same content to students from different background like urban, rural etc. for example in science, teaching the chapter "Agriculture" to students from rural and urban areas, there may be better exemplification from students hence dynamic interaction between teacher and students in rural classes in comparison to an urban class.

(c) **Communication skills**: in class rooms, teacher with abundance of information and knowledge will not be able to interact or promote learning unless the communication, comprising of oral and written components, on his/her part is well developed.

(d) **Information communication technology (ICT):** most of the developed countries, now, prefer to recruit school teachers from our country. This requires that teacher education programmes should be enriched with technology component. Some universities have taken initiatives in this regard by introducing electives exclusively focusing on ICT. But merely integration of ICT component will not be sufficient as demonstration of the skills, developed, is equallyimportant so technology supported teacher education curriculum should comprise both components, integration as well as demonstration, through school teaching practices.

(e) **New and emerging issues and teachers' concerned role:** Rather than conventional teaching, practicing some non-conventional methods in class rooms which promote creativity, innovation, expression etc. among students, may be given some weightage in teacher education curriculum. Inculcation of leadership skills, value enrichment etc. as recent and emerging aspects need to be mastered by teachers themselves and they should be expected to translate such tendencies among their students. Teachers should act like facilitators for creating such environment for students.

(f) Classroom dynamism: Itrequires active involvement of students in the learning process like question framing by them at the end of the lesson, discussion, debate, explanation etc.

Sometimes, many people, including teachers, cannot distinguish between Job, Service and Profession as all stand same for them. Following block provides an example to differentiate between the three:

One day, Rajesh, an NRI, met his old friend Sunil. After formal hugging and greetings, the following conversation took place:

Rajesh (1): Hey Buddy! Watz up?

Sunil: I am a teacher.

Rajesh (2): Great, where are you posted?

Sunil: I am teaching in *Sarvodya Bal Vidyalaya,* XYZ Nagar, Delhi.

Rajesh (3): Wow! What do you do there?

Sunil: It is a morning shift Government school which runs from class 1 to 12 and is meant for boys only and I am a primary teacher who can teach all subjects namely Languages, Environmental Science and Mathematics from class 1to 5 and at present I am class teacher of class 3.

The interaction- cum -discussion continued further…..

Rajesh (1) ask his old pal that what is he doing and in reply Sunil says that he is a teacher so, Sunil's professionis teaching. Rajesh (2) again asks about his posting and in turn, Sunil replies that he is teaching in Sarvodya Bal Vidyalaya, XYZ Nagar, Delhi that is he is serving as a school teacher in Delhi. Finally curious NRI probes his nature of duty as school teacher and in turn Sunil says that he teaches up to primary classes and this is his job in a Government school.

So, this discussion attempts to dwell upon job, profession and service of a professional as job is an economic role for which a person is paid (in the example, the *job of Sunil is as a primary teacher* and his salary would be as per norms that is different from trained graduate teachers' and school lecturers' salaries) and a profession is an occupation in which one has a professed expertise in a particular area especially one requiring a high level of skill or training (in the example, *Sunil would have undergone required pre-service teacher training like JBT etc.* and acquired the necessary skills and competence to work upon). Service is the *means* to discharge duties through acquired and developed proficiency and the means may be an organization where working, post held in an institution etc. (in the cited discussion, *Sunil is serving in Sarvodya Bal Vidyalaya, XYZ Nagar Delhi).*

The professional development of teachers mustfocus upon to:

- ☐ remove the obsolescence of teachers in c*ontent* and *pedagogy*, *transactional skills* and *evaluation techniques,*

- ☐ prepare teachers to accept and utilize the educational potentialities of modern technologies,

- ☐ make teachers aware of the new developments in the areas they teach and information they impart to the students.

- ☐ prepare a forum for teachers for e*xchange of ideas, experiences* and enable them to integrate *values* and *environmental awareness* with subjects they teach,

- ☐ sensitize teachers with educational problems of the neglected sectors to equip the teachers with the job specific skills and competencies,

- ☐ empower them to realize the objectives of school curriculum,

- ☐ increase *thelevel of motivation* of teachers, *develop self-confidence* and *promote the spirit of inquiry*,

- ☐ help teachers in becoming a c*ommitted* and *reflective* teacher.

While planning professional development programmes for teachers, the concerned imperative provisions are:

(a) Workshop: involves a range of group discussions and practical work, while there are basically group activities, the participants work individually for some time.

(b) Seminar: is a type of group discussion where participants prepareacademic/research paper on a given topic/theme/issue/problem and then the entire group discusses it.

(c) Panel Discussion: is held by generally three to six speakers and is listened by the audience who follow the panel discussion with a general group discussion.

(d) Conference: is a meeting of intellectuals to present and discuss their work and it provides an important channel for exchange of information between them.

(e) Group Discussion: is an activity where group members learn through communication and interaction with each other. Group discussion is formal when specific rules are followed.

(f) Symposium: consists of formal speeches given by experts and followed by general group discussion.

In a realistic sense, there are some suggestions with respect to professional development:

(1) **Need for expanding facilities:** there must be involvement of, institution wise, maximum teachers.

(2) **Co-operation of various agencies:** like Extension Services Department, State Institute of Education, State Department of education, State Boards of School Education etc. should work together in a synchronized manner.

(3) **Role of Administrators:** Head of School, Education Officers should encourage the teaching staff to participate in such programmes.

(4) **Organization of programmes:** the organization should focus upon well planned, properly executed and objectively evaluated.

(5) **Resource persons:** well qualified, skill oriented, situational flexible, dynamically teaching oriented (communication and content wise) resource persons should be invited. There must be a provision of dialogue between resource persons and participants so, that goal (achievable and realistic) may be decided and the implementation may be worked upon.

(6) **Follow-up programmes:** the organizers should ensure proper and authentic follow up.

(7) **Research:** the programmes should be backed by the findings of educational research and school teachers should be encouraged to undertake action research.

(8) **Incentives to teachers:** appropriate amount with sufficient refreshment should be given to participants.

(9) **Attendance and participation certificate:** Genuine attendance at the venue and look wise nice certificated should be timely given.

(10) **Subject Teachers 'Associations:** Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested Subject Teachers' Associations should be formed at All-India, State and District level.

To transact the professional developmentprogrammesfollowing agencies,inholistic sense, undertake the responsibilities:

(a) National Council of Educational Research and Training(NCERT): was established on September 1, 1961and it is an autonomous organization under the Societies Registration Act (1860). It took over the Central Institute of education (1947), the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (1954),All India Council for Secondary Education (1955), Directorate of Extension Programme for Secondary Education (1955) and National Institute of Basic Education (1956), National Fundamental Centre Education (1956) & National Institute of Audio-Visual Education(1959). The functions of NCERT are (1) to co*nduct, aid, promote* and co*ordinate* research in all branches of school education, (2) to *organize pre-service* and *in-service training* of teachers, (3) to *develop* and e*xperiment* with improved educational techniques, practices and innovations, (4) to a*ssist* the states in developing and implementing programmes for qualitative improvement of school education, (5) to *prepare* and *publish* qualitative instructional material for school education.

(b) University Teaching Departments: The major functionsof Teaching Departments at university level are to (1) o*ffer* a strong programme of teacher education at graduate and post graduate level and promote research, (2) *develop* language laboratories, *prepare/produce* instructional materials and *try out* experiments in education.

(c) Directorate of Education (DoE): the major professional aspects at school level are undertaken by the DoE that comprise of to (1) monitor the professional status of in-service teachers, (2) organize INSET (In-Service Training) programmes regularly, (3)provide relevant instructional material / academic literature to the teachers.

(d) Colleges of Education: the main thrust is on to(1) improve methods of teaching, (2) conduct different types of methods of work such as lectures, seminars, group discussions etc.

(e) Centre of Advanced Studies in Education (CASE): undertakes these responsibilities to (1) *bring out publications* which will give valuable information to teachers, (2) *launcha nationwide campaign* for encouraging teachers to form subject teachers' associations at national, state and district level.

Thus it can be concluded that professional development of teachers is the need of the hour and in the long run, the nation growth depends upon the competence and professional outlook of teachers which in turn is dependent upon their rigorous professionalization by taking into account technology oriented, resourceful and vision based comprehensive monitoring over the time.

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