

## TEACHER'S CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is gradually developed from in-service teacher training programmes which are normally one-off, isolated, short-term and infrequent training events. Contrary to developed countries in India it still treated as in-service teacher training programme. Such a restricted view not only excludes informal and voluntary contributions to teacher learning and teachers' desire to learn, but also assumes authorities to be the sole provider of CPD, disregarding any possible role for teachers in their own CPD. Probably under the impact of this view, teachers too often seem not to think beyond INSET programmes, not to take responsibility for their own development and to rely on external agencies to plan and deliver CPD, irrelevant though it may turn out to be to their needs and interests (Padwad & Dixit, 2013, p. 13). In India CPD is still equated with in-service teacher training programmes. Due to this teachers are still far behind their stipulated position of enlightened lamp. Although a few attempts are being implemented to improve the existing situation, but these are also insufficient.

*Key Word*: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

### Introduction

The strength and quality of any profession largely depends on how it manages the three stages of preparation, induction and ongoing development of its members. In an ideal scenario, adequate preparation is ensured through profession-specific education with judicious balance between theory and practical components, supplemented by field exposure, apprenticeship and on-the-job training. It is followed by systematic and gradual induction supported by mentoring, internship, shadowing, team work, etc, preparing new entrants to be independent, autonomous professionals. For their ongoing development there are many CPD (Continuing Professional Development) avenues and mechanisms. Medical and legal education in India are good examples of this combination of theoretical and practical learning backed up by on the job training and followed up with systematic induction and CPD.

But in terms of these three stages of preparation, induction & ongoing professional development, teaching in India scores poorly as a profession.. Professional preparation consists of short pre-service teacher education courses with limited field exposure and practical relevance. There is no formalized system of induction and normally a teacher is required to handle responsibility independently and autonomously right from their first day in the profession. And especially ongoing professional development, i.e. CPD, is seen usually equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes. (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013, pp 6-7). But CPD is not so narrow in its meaning. It should be perceived as a broad and wider term. Several problems are related to CPD are due to the narrow and restricted point of view about CPD. The existing CPD programmes fail to realize the stipulated aims of CPD.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Meaning**

Generally CPD is equated with in-service training programmes which are normally one-off, isolated, short term & infrequent training events. Bolitho & Padwad (2013) were of the view that CPD is considered to be related to teachers' ability to 'properly' teach prescribed courses, manage their classrooms and ensure good performance of students in examinations by the administrators & school managements. But to perceive CPD as INSET is very restricted view. It should be perceived in a broad sense as a lifelong process of teacher's development after joining the profession. It is a process of a lifelong learning, both formal and informal, involving both voluntary teacher initiatives & programmes externally planned and mandated by authorities.

Padwad & Dixit (2013, p.13) have defined CPD as: '...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.'

Day (1999, p. 4) understands CPD as: " the process by which ... teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents ... and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice... through each phase of their teaching lives."

Thus CPD may be termed as continuous collaborative efforts both formal and informal to keep teachers up-date with the new innovations in academic sphere and to keep them alive and energetic as well as to enable them to realize the stipulated goals of education within the rapidly changing social and economic scenario.

### **Importance of CPD**

Kothari Commission (1964-66) has said, "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms." So the development or future of nation depends upon the quality of education that is provided to learners in its schools & the schools cannot be very different from the quality of their teachers. A good teacher is one who is still learning by himself as Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore has remarked "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame." The teacher who has come to the end of his subject but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds. He can not quicken them. Truth not only must inform but also must inspire. So to keep a teacher an enlightened lamp his continuing professional development is necessary.

Mudaliyar Commission (1952-53, p. 139) having identified the weaknesses of pre-service teacher education programmes has unconsciously laid emphasis on the need of CPD by saying that "However excellent the programme of teacher-training may be, it does not by itself produce an excellent teacher. It can only engender the knowledge skills and attitudes which will enable the teacher to begin his task with a reasonable degree of confidence and with the minimum amount of experience. Increased efficiency will come through experience critically analyzed and through individual and group efforts at improvement."

Kothari commission (1964-66, p.138) which was the first policy document to stress the need for continuous professional development of the teacher and inservice support and training has said: "In all professions there is a need to provide further training and special courses of study, on a continuing basis, after initial professional preparation. The need is most urgent in the teaching profession because of the rapid advance in all fields of knowledge and continuing evolution of pedagogical theory and practice."

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF, 2005) followed by the Right to Education (RTE, 2009) have created a new environment for school education. As a result the vision of education is substantially different from the traditional one, entailing changes in curricular goals, pedagogy and assessment. These changes reflect a renewed commitment to universal education, to a democratic ethos and to a constructivist pedagogy based on a better understanding of how children learn. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC, 2007) observing that the teacher is the key agent in this transition to this vision of

education, has stressed the need to substantially enhance teachers' professional capabilities, standing and commitment to education. In recognition of this need, the importance of continuing professional development becomes an understood phenomena (HBCSE, 2011, pp.1-2).

Besides the above written statements and facts the importance of CPD can be made clear with the redefined meaning of teacher as observed by Padwad & Dixit (2013, p.13). What it means to be a teacher is being redefined under the impact of radical changes in the socio- economic situation in India, the changing nature of education and the learner and the increasing penetration of information technology. The conventional view of the teacher as an expert transmitting knowledge to students is gradually becoming redundant. The very nature of the teaching profession is undergoing unprecedented changes. New roles and responsibilities are being constantly fixed and re-fixed for teachers. The new roles for teachers include being a facilitator of learning rather than a transmitter of knowledge, a counsellor, a coach, a subject expert, an IT trainer, a manager, etc. The teacher is now called upon not only to gain new professional knowledge and skills, but also to be inclusive and socially more responsible. The profiles of the learner and the classroom have also radically changed. On a more concrete level, new education policies, curricula and materials keep bringing regular changes and challenges in teachers' lives and work.

Discussing the professional role of teachers in the 21st century, Hargreaves (2000, p. 166) observes that 'The fate of teacher professionalism in this era is by no means fixed, but is being and will be argued about, struggled over and pulled in different directions in different places at different times. One possible outcome of these processes is a new, postmodern professionalism that is broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns, than its predecessors.' So CPD is the demand of rapidly changing needs of the society and the nature of teacher's job.

### CPD: Aims & Objectives

NCFTE (2009, pp. 44-45) has suggested the following aims of CPD for providing teachers a fora and avenues for their self-development:

- To explore, reflect on and develop one's own practice.
- To deepen one's knowledge of, and update oneself about one's academic discipline or other areas of school curriculum.
- To research on and reflect on children and their education.
- To understand and update oneself on education and social issues.
- To prepare for other roles professionally linked to education/teaching, such as teacher education, curriculum development or counselling etc.
- To break out of one's isolation and share ones experiences and insights with others in the field, both teachers, academics working in the area of one's discipline, as well as intellectuals in the immediate and wider society.
- Education and curriculum planners also seek to provide avenues for the professional development of teachers as a part of curriculum reform and strengthening.
- To enable teachers to work towards prioritised goals in education such as universalisation and inclusion.
- To influence social attitudes and generate greater commitment to constitutional values and overcoming discrimination in the classroom.
- To transform existing practices towards more child friendly methods and methods suited to strengthening conceptual learning and understanding rather than rote learning.
- To enable teachers to implement and achieve specific targeted aspects in the curriculum, such as the use of a type of technology, or the addition of topics such as AIDS, or population education,

etc. In the context where many pre-service training programmes are of poor quality and often fail to provide teachers with sufficient understanding that could lead to reflective practice, and where state governments have recruited untrained personnel (para-teachers) in various kinds of non-formal centres, it becomes necessary to include the unaddressed needs of pre-service programmes through continued professional development.

- To prepare teachers to play enhanced roles in the education system, as resource persons, or head masters, etc.

### CPD: Indian Scenario

The concept of CPD is gradually developed from in-service teacher training programmes which are normally one-off, isolated, short-term and infrequent training events. Contrary to developed countries In India it still treated as in-service teacher training programme. Such a restricted view not only excludes informal and voluntary contributions to teacher learning and teachers' desire to learn, but also assumes authorities to be the sole provider of CPD, disregarding any possible role for teachers in their own CPD. Probably under the impact of this view, teachers too often seem not to think beyond INSET programmes, not to take responsibility for their own development and to rely on external agencies to plan and deliver CPD, irrelevant though it may turn out to be to their needs and interests (Padwad & Dixit, 2013, p. 13). Even the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), a key policy document of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), uses INSET and CPD interchangeably (NCFTE, 2009, pp. 63-74), though it does set out a number of ways in which CPD can be addressed (NCFTE, 2009, pp.67-70).

NCFTE (2009) has recognized that for the sake of CPD in India several states school clusters are working to forge inter-linkages between primary, middle and high school and to provide a forum and structure of interactions between teachers and receiving professional inputs. Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) to chosen University Departments of Education and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in each district are working with a view to provide a space for the conduction of in-service courses for teachers of high school and elementary school. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP, 1995- 2003) across the country set up the structures of the block and cluster resource centres with the explicit mandate to provide in-service training to primary school teachers in new, child-centred pedagogic methods and to provide school based support to teachers. The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA, 2003) has also emphasized on continuous in-service teacher education requiring each teacher to receive 20 days of training every year.

There have also been other kind of professional activities for teachers. All teachers are members of associations which have from time to time taken up academic activities and organised conventions and meeting to discuss professionally important developments. There have been Teachers' involvements in textbook preparation and indeed even in the preparation of training modules etc. Teacher themselves have opportunities to work in the block and cluster centres as well as to contribute to trainings as resource persons. They are also members of committees formulating policies in education. NGO initiatives such as the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme (HSTP) in Madhya Pradesh, the Uttarakhan Seva Nidhi of Uttaranchal, BVIER, Pune, and PRISM of the Homi Bhabha Centre in Mumbai, have developed and implemented models of teacher professional development and support in ways that directly impact the classroom.

It seems a plethora of opportunities and avenues for the continued professional development of teachers. But all these avenues seem to 'fail' when up scaled. HBCSE (2011, p.3) in its working paper on In-service Teacher Professional Development for elementary education has mentioned some of the problems existing in the path of CPD. The structures created for pre and inservice teacher education at the level of DIETs have largely limited their scope to preservice teacher education which often carries on

in wellworn, traditional ways. In many states, the lower level structures such as BRCs and CRCs have seen attrition or have been diverted to administrative rather than academic functions. Even where regular inservice programs are held, there is no unified vision of the. The existing institutional framework, overlain with this topdown design, forces a cascade model with two or more tiers of training, with a dilution at each tier. Teachers in India are already down at the bottom of a rigid, hierarchical administrative structure. This lack of administrative empowerment (acknowledged and addressed to a extent by the RTE) is exacerbated by the lack of academic autonomy. There are also no mechanisms for building up of engagement before and after the contact periods, to ensure that the learning continues, and finally reaches the schools and students.

There is very little research into the effectiveness of training, or the status of school support activities on the ground, or detailed understanding of even reported successes and failures. Currently all the so called avenues for CPD target only government and aided schools, leaving all teachers of private schools out of the ambit. They are all based on memos which are issued to teachers to attend these trainings, without giving teachers any choice in the matter. As Bolitho & Padwad (2013, p.7) commented: "Despite the diversity of individual teachers' CPD needs and interests, the only available avenue for thousands of teachers remains INSET training, the nature, structure and content of which often lack relevance for individual teachers." Identifying one more worrying factor that is the state is seen as the sole provider of CPD and officially sanctioned programmes as the only channels of CPD Bolitho & Padwad (2013, p. 7) have further commented that "Teachers are led to believe that CPD is the state responsibility and that they are incapable of doing anything on their own. Teachers' voluntarism, initiative and efforts to initiate and support their own CPD are quite rare. Teacher associations, conferences and seminars, research journals, publications, etc. which can be directly linked to teacher voluntarism and initiative, are poor both in quantity and quality. Educational administrators and school managements seem to be unwilling and unable (because of constraints of regulations and resources) to support any CPD undertaking beyond those mandated by the state." And NCFTE (2009) has suggested that there is no coordination between the agencies working for providing training for teachers, nor does the education department have any mechanisms for coordinating the total training being undergone by teachers, with the result there is a lot of over-training, repetition and overlap.

### CPD: The Way Ahead

NCFTE (2009) has suggested a number of ways that could prove quite helpful in improving the existing condition of CPD in India. Some of them are as follows:

**Short and Long term Courses:** some short term courses for a period of 4-5 days & other long term courses for 1-4 months could be developed and offered to teachers to take over the year to enable teachers to develop a specific core area in which they need to strengthen their knowledge-base and professional skills with pre announced schedule & content. Some of these courses may be designed as continuous periods, while others may be designed with gaps in between, during which teachers could practice and come back to share experiences. Such courses could award certificates.

**Use of Distance Media:** Distance media can be effectively used to keep teachers in touch with other professionals in the field and to give access to professionals in education as well as in pure academic disciplines (within universities). This would go a long way in breaking the isolation of teachers while promoting a 'culture' of seeking academic support and providing the necessary platform for the same.

**Sabbatical for Study and Research:** Teachers could be provided with the option of taking a year off (paid or unpaid), in order to pursue a course or spend time at another school, university or NGO, in order to learn and study the result of which could be tied to a report or even a publication for wider dissemination that is produced at the end. Small research projects through which teachers can reflect on, share and develop their practice must be encouraged.

**Professional Conferences and Meetings:** NCEFTE (2009) has also suggested meetings and conferences connected to the profession, e.g. on one's subject areas, etc. & to permit duty leave of 3 to 4 days a year to attend such meetings could also be helpful. Some funding support to travel to and attend such meetings could also be provided.

**Professional Fora, Resource Rooms and Materials:** Providing professional fora such as meeting in the school and in the cluster to discuss and review one's practice as well as to discuss with colleagues, the school academic head and resource persons resources in the form of reference materials, access to internet resources and to resource persons may be quite helpful.

Teachers could also be encouraged to form subject groups at the block level, which could be provided with support to plan for the development of the teaching of the subject in the block. These could be given an official status and space at the concerned block resource center and have linkages with the DIET. Such subject groups could be linked with the faculty of local colleges or universities in order to strengthen interactions between groups and provide for synergy between them. Each district education institute, e.g. DIET could support a few university faculty fellowships, to enable interested people from the university to come and spend upto 4 to 5 months undertaking activities with teachers and children.

**Faculty Exchange, Visits and Fellowships:** A few exchange teacher fellowships could be provided for each district, to enable selected teachers to go for a period of three months to one academic year to a school in another state within the country, or even outside the country, to teach and learn there. Similarly, schools could play host to such visiting teachers and plan how best to utilize their services during the period of their stay. Teachers could also be provided with short term fellowships and funding support (based on proposals) to either come to the DIET or carry out specific activities for the school children and teachers in their own district.

Teacher fellowships could also be provided to enable them to spend one or two years in colleges of teacher education, as faculty of these colleges, involved in the preparation of teachers. For such fellowships, instead of the regular norms of PG degree in education, etc., even D.Ed and B.Ed graduates who have experience and established track records of being excellent, innovative and reflective teachers could be considered.

Besides, NCFTE (2009) has also suggested that University and college faculties of sciences, humanities and social sciences could include extension services for school teachers, opening up their labs and libraries to teachers and sharing with them advances and new ideas. Schools, under the leadership of interested principals and able to support additional adjunct faculty, could, themselves could develop into resource centers for neighboring schools. These could also include schools run by NGOs and other private agencies, interested in contributing to the development of all schools in the neighborhood, both government and private, and affiliated to any board.

Apart from the provisions provided by NCFTE(2009) some researchers have put forth some suggestions that can be effectively used to improve the current status of CPD. Waris (2013, p.46) through a case study in Bihar has suggested that "School libraries are important on-site avenues for teachers' CPD and can contribute significantly to improving the quality of teachers and of teaching-learning. Provision of qualified library staff, adequate and regular funding, strengthening of infrastructure, especially in ICT, regular training of library personnel and embedding library use into teacher appraisal and career enhancement are some immediate steps the policy makers may consider to address the issues in question." Menon (2013) has suggested that social media is a great tool to help teachers become reflective practitioners through peer networking and sharing of classroom practices. His study also looked at how user-generated content is a major force in pushing a CPD initiative to a meaningful level.

## Conclusion

In India CPD is still equated with in-service teacher training programmes. Due to this teachers are

still far behind their stipulated position of enlightened lamp. Although a few attempts are being implemented to improve the existing situation, but these are also insufficient. NCFTE (2009) has set out a number of ways in which the current position of CPD can be improved. A number of researchers have also tried to remove the haphazard situation of teachers' ongoing professional development. But there is still much more work to be done in the field of teachers' continuing professional development. There is a need to fulfil the basic assumptions of CPD that are collaborative efforts on the part of all stakeholders of education and feeling of sharing & initiatives on the part of teachers to manage programmes for their own professional development. So lots of studies are needed to conduct in the field of CPD of teachers to suggest the appropriate ways for bringing about the required provisions for teachers' continuing professional development.

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