

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

The impact of any educational system can only be as powerful and effective as the teachers or the educational leaders who actually perform this profession. The teachers can become the educational leaders as they can bring about positive change in the students to shape the future of the country. The question as to how should these role models be educated and trained has long been debated and till no perfect answer was found to solve this argument. Teachers and schools need to keep up with the recent developments in the field of teacher education and training in order to be able to improve their programs and the quality of teaching and learning process. Teachers provided with proper training on up-to-date information on new researches on classroom management, on emerging technology tools, on new curriculum resources, and more, could become a successful factor to their teaching profession. The increasing interest on teacher training along with research updates is one way to support the complex skills that students need to learn for further education and work in the 21st century.

Keywords : Teacher Training, Professional Development, Educational Research

INTRODUCTION

"Education has continued to grow, diversify and extend its coverage since the dawn of history. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of time". These words of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 subsequently revised in 1992, give direction to Indian Education. One of the most important concerns all over the World is no doubt "Education." From time immemorial education has always been considered as an indispensable instrument for bringing positive change in the social, political, economic and cultural life of people. As stated by NCTE (1998) in Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education, –The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage. High quality teaching is now widely acknowledged to be the most important school-level factor which influence the student achievement. Preparing teachers for the teaching profession is now a higher priority in any country since this profession is considered as being challenging and critical, and may lead to nations' rising and progress in the different domains. It is always an urgent educational need that teachers should receive adequate educational and professional training to possess adequate knowledge and teaching skills and to be able to dedicate themselves to the teaching profession.

Over the last twenty years professional development of teachers is gathering momentum. Much attention are needed to be focussed on the importance of teacher education right from initial training of newly inducted teachers, to on-going professional development to help update teachers' knowledge, to deepen their understanding and advance their skills as expert practitioners. Policy-makers around the world have approached the task of teacher preparation and professional development in different ways, reflecting their distinctive values, beliefs and assumptions about the nature of professional knowledge and how and where such learning takes place. The characterizing factors of education in schools like class size, expenditure per pupil do not have much effects on student performance but the quality of teachers which is measured in terms of skills, knowledge and qualifications plays a decisive role in students' progress (Hanushek, 2003; Barber and Mourshed, 2007; Varga, 2007).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) in their article on policies that support professional development, wrote, "The vision of practice that underlies the nation's reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before". They go on to note that it necessitates professional development that involves teachers in the dual capacities of both teaching and learning and creates new visions of what, when, and how teachers should learn. McKinsey and Company investigated the factors behind the accomplishments of the most successful education programmes in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East as evaluated by the OECD PISA survey¹ conducted between May 2006 and March 2007. In their summary of the research results, the McKinsey report comes to the conclusion that certain education systems achieve substantially better outcomes than others because "they have produced a system that is more effective in doing three things: getting more talented people to become teachers, developing these teachers into better instructors, and in ensuring that these instructors deliver consistently for every child in the system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To highlight the importance of teacher training and professional development

To explore the use of Educational Research in teacher training

To narrate the significance of teacher training in India

WHY TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Teacher training and professional development are two broad goals in education. Good quality teacher training and professional development programs in a motivating environments will have positive impacts on the teaching/learning improvement. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), the term training refers to, activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals. Training involves understanding basic concepts and principles as prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom. Teacher training also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually with supervision, and monitoring and getting feedback from others on one's practice. The content of training is usually determined by experts and is often available in standard training formats or through prescriptions in methodology books. They identified the following goals as examples of a training perspective:

-Learning how to use effective strategies to open a lesson -

-Adapting the textbook to match the class -

-Learning how to use group activities in a lesson

- Using effective questioning techniques - Using classroom aids and resources (e.g. video) - Techniques for giving learners feedback on performance.

Teacher training usually provides training in curriculum subjects to teachers by organizing workshops over periods of time. The main objective of such workshops is to keep teachers up-to-date in their subject area (OECD, 1998). Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications recognize the importance of teacher training and professional development by stating that, "The most important factor in the quality of students' learning is the quality of teaching and school leadership. Teachers and leaders need to develop their professional thinking and practice continuously throughout their careers."

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

The primary aim of any teacher training programme is to develop the educational skills that are compatible with education policies and to enable teachers to deliver these policies. It is difficult to define the impact of teaching practices on student performance since the teaching strategies varies by student age group, personality, learning ability, social background, and different strategies of teacher skills (Gustafsson, 2003). Therefore, formal measurements such as student test scores, teacher qualifications and years of teaching experience are insufficient in evaluating teacher competences (Hedges and Greenwald, 1996). Several other factors like the ability to convey knowledge, communication skills, knowledge of the subject matter and professional development attainment should also be considered. Most studies concerned with the teaching profession observed the measurable characteristics like the composition of the teacher population, the work load of teachers and their salaries. The

portrayals of teachers' life histories, their attitudes towards their profession and their vocational creed have been published in several case studies, collections of interviews and other studies which provided the tools of cultural anthropology or sociology as well (Falus, 2002).

TYPES OF TEACHER TRAINING

-Pre-service Training : It takes place before a teacher starts their job. This refers to student teachers who will become teachers after completing their pre-service training. Its goal is to help the student teacher to develop an understanding of the role of the teacher, and to gain the necessary skills and competences to become a teacher.

- In-service Training : This training is for teachers who are already working as teachers or qualified as teachers. It can be organised for a group of teachers from different schools, or can be organised for a whole team of teachers in one school (whole-school approach). Its duration varies from weekly to monthly sessions over a period of time.

To support teachers from different schools in transferring skills acquired during training, a 'training-of-trainers' module could be added. This would give the teachers the skills, knowledge and tools needed to pass on what they have learned to their colleagues. In addition, Distance learning/ self study Distance learning can be very useful for teachers who are unable to attend training events due to problems with scheduling or long-distance travel. The time flexibility of self-study makes it a good way of training for working adults. A variety of media can be used to compensate for this separation and facilitate communication between the teacher and learner e.g. DVDs, podcasts, online lectures such as those provided by EENET and interactive forums.

The development of teachers beyond their initial training can serve a number of objectives (OECD, 1998), including:

- to update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;
- to update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and new educational research;
- to enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice;
- to enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice;
- to exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, e.g. academics, industrialists; and • to help weaker teachers become more effective.

TEACHER TRAINING IN INDIA

In India, teacher training system mostly embraces the period between 1882 to 1947. The teacher in the early times was not trained, and had no knowledge of pedagogy. After the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission of 1882, and Government of India's Resolution on Educational Policy of 1904, training of teachers became articulate. The Indian Education Commission quoted by S. N. Mukerji (1964) had suggested that graduates and under-graduates should have distinct types of training with reference to course of training and syllabus. By the end of nineteenth century, there were six training schools for secondary teachers. The Government of India's Resolution of 1904 emphasised the problem of teacher education in its various aspects as under:

1. For graduates, the training course should be a one year university course leading to a university degree or diploma. The course should be chiefly directed towards imparting to them a knowledge of principles which underlie the art of teaching and some degree of technical skill in practice of art. For others, it should be a two year course embracing the extension, consolidation, and revision of their general studies to make them capable teachers.
2. Training in the theory of teaching should be closely associated with its practice, and for this purpose, a good practising school should be attached to each college.
3. Every possible care should be taken to maintain a connection between the training college and the school, so that student on leaving college and entering upon his career as a teacher may not neglect practice of the method

which he has been taught. These recommendations has an influence on teacher training in the country. As a result of which the following three developments were found.

1. The number of training institutions was increased.
2. Separate courses for graduate teachers and undergraduate teachers were framed.
3. Practising schools attached to the training institutions were established.

The Government declaration of 1912 quoted by Mukerji (1964) strengthened the resolution of 1904 by stating that, 'eventually under modern system of education no teacher should be allowed to teach without a certificate that he has been qualified to do so.' The Calcutta University Commission of 1919, further strengthened the concept of teacher training. This Commission strongly emphasised the necessity of systematic research work and training the teachers on large scale. It also emphasised the need of creating a Department of Education in Indian Universities, and a demonstration school attached to it, for doing experimental work. The Hartog Committee (1929), also made very important re commendations for training teachers systematically and adequately. As a result of these recommendations and declarations some universities started the Department of Education. There was a steady and systematic development of training institutions. Three types of training institutions came into existence. (1) For graduate teachers, (2) For under-graduate teachers, and (3) For primary teachers. From 1906 to 1947, there was a considerable rise in the number of trained teachers which increased to about 61% in 1946-47 (of secondary and primary teachers) in training of teachers.

Teacher training in India mainly consists of theory and practice in the classroom teaching and teachers learn how to teach in class room, i.e. method of teaching, class controlling, etc. In today's Indian educational context, there seems to be an urgent need for a system of education which encourages and promotes active engagement and reflective teaching and learning. Both experienced and novice teachers might be in need of continuous teaching and professional development trainings provided by the school/university, or any independent or collaborating agency, to help them to improve themselves in their respective fields of specialization. Hence, teachers' training and professional development programs are claimed to be central aspects in the teachers' career improvement and development. In many cases, lack of competence in the subject-matter and the teaching/assessment skills can drive so many novice teachers to lose confidence in themselves and even hate and complain about the profession, but they just keep struggling because they have no other solution for remedy. Some teachers may find themselves confronted with highly difficult tasks and teaching responsibilities because they may lack the sufficient subject knowledge as well as the appropriate teaching skills that are highly needed and required in the teaching profession nowadays. Poor vision and poor knowledge with regard to curriculum content, division, lesson planning, teaching methods, classroom management, assessment methods and so on, will lead nowhere but impede teachers from teaching effectively and students from learning successfully. Teachers of this kind can be a direct source of poor teaching quality as they have not received any kind of training to make them ready for the challenging task of teaching. In Indian schools and universities is teachers are accepted to enter the teaching profession on the basis of their degrees in the first place. To get the job, teachers might be involved in a kind of competition and can take an interview. No importance is being really given to 'teaching qualifications' to enter the teaching profession or to check the suitability of teachers for that profession. It is this 'lack of qualification,' the 'lack of subject-matter knowledge and mastery' and 'teaching/assessment skills' which puts teachers in a difficult situation to adapt themselves and to be able to teach effectively. Thus, to curb this 'lack of professionalism' teacher training and professional development programme is widely recognized.

The Challenges for Improving the quality of Teaching Through Teacher Training

Teacher training and professional development have gained more attention and interest due to the educational reforms that happen, and will continue to happen, in many places around the world and which set ambitious and challenging goals in education (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond et. al., 2017). They are highly demanding also because of the expectations that they will have great impact on the teachers' classroom practices. At all levels of education, teachers have concerns about their personal professional development. For this reason, they try to attend and participate in teacher training and professional development programs (Rodrigues, 2005).

Teachers' training and professional development go beyond workshops because teaching and professional growth require continuous education and teachers should have a deep understanding of the central importance of these programmes. These two aspects are an essential thing in teachers' career and reflect the person's development in his/her professional role. When teachers gain experience in their teaching role and professional growth, they will gain experience also in the examination, reflection and evaluation of their teaching, teaching ability and teaching needs (Glattenhorn, 1987). Teaching must be seen as a profession with qualifications and not simply a job sought for the sake of having a job. Teachers should also be prepared and should be empowered with the right and appropriate skills in order to be ready and suitable for the teaching profession. They should be equipped with the required up-to-date knowledge, the necessary teaching skills and competences in order to provide effective teaching and successful learning.

Since the teacher is the first decision maker in his/her classroom, absence of training, or poor training, will make him/her face the challenge of having poor subject-knowledge and poor professional and pedagogical skills to teach a given subject, deliver the lesson, assess learning, and provide the learner with the appropriate knowledge and learning experience. Today's teaching calls for shift from traditional rote style and lecture style of teaching to the type of teaching that fosters critical and reflective thinking and developing problemsolving skills in students. Teaching for critical thinking is claimed not to be widespread in classrooms (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1991). To meet the needs of students and the great demands in the profession of teaching, teachers have to be trained in the use of the different, old and new, approaches to teaching and assessment. For educational reforms to take place and be of great benefit, effective professional development should also take place. On the basis of that, now-a-days educational reforms urge teachers to foster collaboration debate and make students learn with reflection to help them develop the necessary cognitive skills and processes to meet the standards of learning and education.

Traditionally, pedagogy and psychology departments, and the specific subject instructors are incharge of teacher training programmes. A possible measure of training (and professional development) institutions depend on the extent of their fulfillment of basic education task. It has been shown by several studies that teachers' views of child development and learning only marginally differ from the views of the general public (Hercz, 2005). The following example provides an apt illustration of the gap between teachers' assessment practices and the outcomes of standard competence evaluations. Teaching quality greatly depends on teachers' competence in assessing the progress of their pupils and providing feedback on their performance. Teachers test pupils' knowledge orally and in writing on a daily basis and the responses are marked. Marks give a fairly good indication of what is considered by the teacher to be important in a pupil's performance. Studies (e.g., CSAPÓ, 2002a, 2002b) reveal, however, that marks in many cases show little correlation with the results of tests that assess pupils' knowledge objectively. There is an even weaker relationship between teachers' marks and the results of tests assessing comprehension, the ability to apply knowledge or to solve problems. Teachers tend to equate learning with reproducing knowledge, and the consequences of this approach are clearly reflected in an international comparison showing that Hungarian students have underdeveloped learning skills with the main emphasis on rote learning (OECD, 2003a). Teachers often appreciate subsidiary aspects of pupils' performance such as good communication skills. They may thus continue teaching using the same methods year after year in the firm belief that those methods are the best. Teachers must be much better acquainted with the personal development features of their pupils, with learning processes and with the indicators of learning quality and knowledge application, and they must discover tools for assessing the progress of their pupils more accurately. This should clearly be the responsibility of teacher training and professional development programmes, the effectiveness of which can be assessed through teacher competence tests and by monitoring changes in pupil assessment culture.

RESEARCH-BASED TEACHER TRAINING.

Teachers and schools need to keep up with the recent developments in the field of teacher education and training in order to be able to improve their programs and the quality of teaching and learning process. In order to support this, we need to look at the recent research conducted in the field. The Educational research has enormous purposes. Some important purposes are presented as following.

- To identify truth regarding Enrolment, retention, dropout, quality of Education and so

- forth
- To build new knowledge regarding the methodology, pedagogy or other core subject areas
- Adding of existing stock of knowledge related to educational field
- To solve a problem related to classroom, institution, administrative level, policy level
- Invention of new teaching methods, curriculum transaction strategies, effective grouping
- technique and so forth
- Realizing the exact problem of educational sector
- Assess the Effect of New methodology of teaching
- Identify and assess the ICT enabled classroom and teaching
- To understand the teachers knowledge on latest evaluation techniques
- To identify the hindrances to achieve universalization of education

A teacher training programme that integrates a teacher model with a researcher model not only encourages but also substantially speeds up the continuous renewal of education. To achieve this goal, research centres should be established supporting teacher training. In developing a knowledge base for education, two important factors must be taken into consideration i.e. research into instruction theory and the education of teacher trainers (CSAPÓ, 2006, 2007). It is therefore important that the few research outcomes that are produced in the face of meagre resources should be incorporated into teacher training without delay. Researchers who find new evidence, make new discoveries in connection with education or develop new teaching and learning methods should be able to pass these on to new as well as practicing teachers directly. It is crucial to transfer teacher training programmes to research universities, where pedagogy and psychology courses are taught by academics who are active participants in research projects in their respective fields. With research and training combined at the level of the individual, the process of incorporating new knowledge into the training syllabus will be accelerated. In addition to contributing their own results to the available body of knowledge, trainers will also keep up with the literature in their research area and thus constantly renew their knowledge. Furthermore, publications detailing the results of their research will be the best evidence of the knowledge they possess.

RESEARCHER-TEACHER

Teachers must be shown how to recognize good practices emerging around the world and where to find new scientific results in connection with teaching. They must be equipped with the skills needed to participate in research activities, to contribute to research and development projects and to make use of research conclusions in their teaching practices. Research-based teacher training goes even further: a teaching career is seen as a continuous research and development process, whereby the teacher makes use of scientific evidence to generate the knowledge needed to improve teaching activities. This approach gives rise to a new role model, that of the researcher-innovator teacher.

CONCLUSION

Since teaching is considered as an art and a science, the teacher has to acquire not only knowledge, but also skills that are called “tricks of the trade”. Programs of teachers’ training and professional development are of central importance in any educational institution, be it in the primary, middle school, high school or even the university level. If we aspire to achieve improvement and change in the our education system then teachers at all levels need to be trained in their related fields and subject matter on a regular basis and they have to change their teaching beliefs, attitudes and daily life practices in classrooms.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 subsequently revised in 1992, emphasized that “the Government of India will also review, every five years; the progress made and recommend guidelines for further development”. In the light of the aforesaid statements, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body, established by the Government of India for the maintenance of standards and improvement of the quality of teacher education in the country. Such programs will help teachers sharpen their teaching skills and deepen and improve their knowledge in the subject matter they teach, and hence improve students’ learning and schools education. Teachers will always be learners and learning is an ongoing process and knowledge has no reachable limits. Besides that, teachers’ learning is no longer seen as being straightforward whereby teachers just meet and be presented with information about effective teaching strategies. Teachers’ learning process is more complex than is perceived and needs continuous reflection and evaluation. The most successful countries are selective in admitting applicants to teacher training programmes. The two most

important examples are Finland and Singapore. Selection procedures are designed to assess skills and aptitudes needed for a teaching career and are used to select applicants for admission. The selection procedures of both countries focus on applicants' academic performance, communication skills and professional motivation.

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