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Innovations and best practices in Human Resource Development Centres for professional development of higher education teacher

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Abstract
As a direct result of the quality of educators and the teacher education system, the quality of education is influenced by the professional development options available to teachers. The challenge of improving the teacher education system's institutional efficacy is enormous and difficult in and of itself. The changes and advancements of the past 20 years necessitate a new perspective on teacher professional development. The idea that "teachers are made, not born" instead of "teachers are born, not made" is the foundation of professional development for educators. Given that teaching is regarded as both an art and a science, the teacher must learn both information and "tricks of the trade." Through the use of innovations and best practices in Human Resource Development Centres, the general discussion here aims to provide a knowledge of the professional development of teachers. The secondary data included in this work came from a variety of research projects, records, and publications. It is believed that this paper's conclusions will assist institutions and policymakers in taking the required steps and moving forward with creating a successful professional development program for teachers in higher education.

Keywords: Higher education, professional development, innovations and best practices

Introduction

"A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself," said Rabindranath Tagore. Unless it keeps burning its own flame, a lamp can never light another lamp. Given the current era of unprecedented knowledge expansion, even individuals with the most advanced education will soon become outdated. It is imperative that they undergo re-education, re-learning, and de-learning in order to remain relevant and current and to confront the challenges posed by alternative methods of acquiring knowledge. According to the Educational Commission (1964-1966), "The qualitative enhancement of education necessitates a robust professional development programme for educators." The investment in teacher education can generate substantial dividends due to the fact that the financial resources required are negligible in comparison to the enhancement of millions of students' education.

In an age of unparalleled knowledge explosion, even those who have the opportunity of receiving the most comprehensive education will become obsolete in a very short period of time. If they are to remain current and relevant while facing the challenge of other forms of information acquisition, they must undergo re-education, re-learning, and de-learning. Teachers serve education, which is a strong tool for human development. Teachers can master this skill through pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. C.V. Good's Dictionary of Education (1973) defines teacher education as "all experiences and activities, whether formal and informal, that enable someone become qualified to take on duty as a member of the educational profession or to carry out his responsibility in the most efficient manner". The Educational Commission (1964–1966) said that "the qualitative improvement of education requires a strong program of professional education for teachers." Because the millions of kids who will benefit from teacher education outweigh the financial resources required, investments in this field can yield substantial returns. This cannot be achieved through an inadequate teacher education program. In contrast to the past, when educators were tasked with imparting curricular knowledge to a passive student body, modern classrooms are experimenting with novel approaches like project-based learning, thinking skills development, and exploration learning.

Methods and Materials

The study employed a qualitative research design that was founded on secondary data analysis. The objective is to critically assess and synthesise existing literature and data sources that are pertinent to the study issue. To analyse and investigate theoretical ramifications in the gathered data, the discussion approach is utilised.

Secondary data was gathered from books, institutional reports, peer-reviewed journal publications, and official databases that were released in the previous ten years.

Discussion

India is the world's third largest education system, following the United States and China (Jha, 2006). The University Grants Commission (UGC) oversees tertiary education by enforcing standards, advising the government, and coordinating between the central and the states. According to the 2011 census, around 8.15% (68 million) of Indians are graduates, with the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Delhi leading the list at 24.65% and 22.56%, respectively (Rukmini, 2014). The higher education sector in India has experienced rapid growth during the previous decade. Despite excellent growth, India's higher education gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 28.4% (MOE, 2022) is still significantly lower than the global average of 40% (UNESCO, 2022). The government of India aims to increase GER in higher education to 50% by 2035 (NEP, 2020).

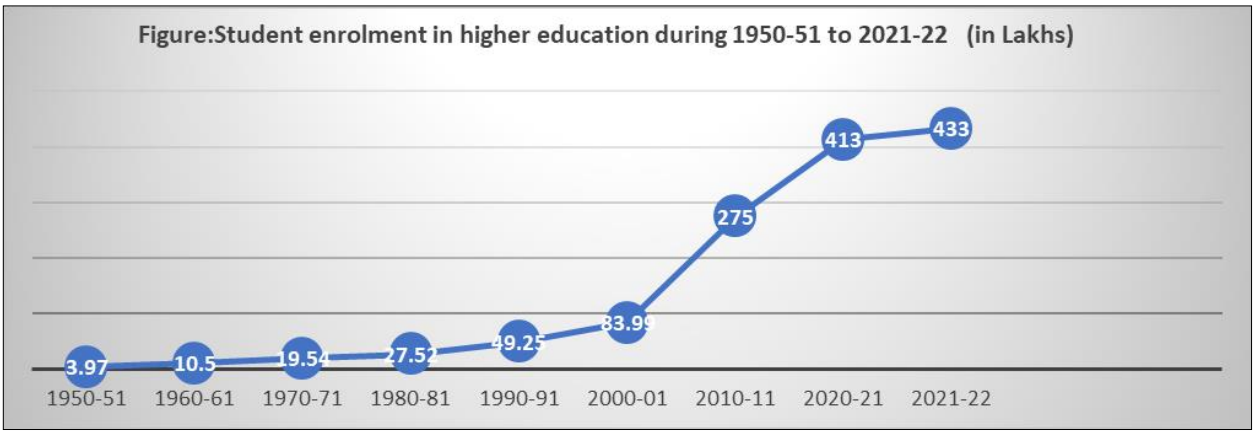
According to a recent MOE study (2022), the number of higher education institutions has expanded from about 30 universities and 580 colleges in 1950-51 to approximately 1168 universities and university-level institutions, as well as 45,473 colleges (as of 2021-22).

Table: Growth of Universities and Colleges in India during 1950-51 to 2021-22

Years	No of Universities	No of Colleges
1950-51	27	578
1960-61	45	1819
1970-71	82	3277
1980-81	110	6963
1990-91	184	5748
2000-01	254	10152
2010-11	621	32974
2020-21	1113	43796
2021-22	1168	45473

Source: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (2022) & MOE report (2022)

The total enrolment in higher education has risen from 0.21 million in 1950-51 to around 44 million in 2021-22.



While the student's enrolments have gone up more than 100 times between 1950-51 to 2021-22, the numbers of teachers have gone only about 65 times that is approximately about 15.98 lakhs (MOE, 2022). India's student-teacher ratio is comparatively low when compared to other nations. The poor quality of teaching and learning, faculty shortages, and inadequate teacher preparation are just a few of the numerous issues facing higher education in India that need to be addressed. They can be identified as follows:

- Outdated curriculum and lack of employer involvement in course content and skill development. There are very few opportunities for transdisciplinary study.
- Pedagogies and evaluations prioritise input and rote learning, leaving pupils with little opportunities to build broader skills.
- Demonstrates diverse talents such as analytical reasoning, critical thinking problem-solving, and collaboration.
- High student-teacher ratio due to personnel shortages and enrolment pressures. Separation of teaching and research; insufficient preliminary research experience.
- Institutions lack accountability to state and federal governments, students, and stakeholders due to poor quality assurance systems.

Thus, it is clear from the section above that giving all students top-notch training in order to advance greater educational equity is a major concern in India. As a result, the NPE 1986 recognised the pressing need to set up effective mechanisms that give educators the chance to advance their professional and career abilities, which are critical for delivering high-quality instruction and research. This will guarantee that they are sufficiently equipped and inspired to face the new obstacles brought about by the growth of new knowledge, the escalating global market competition, and the changing demands of students, especially in higher education institutions. Therefore, it was recommended that a systematic orientation to particular subjects, procedures, and methodologies be provided in order to boost their motivation abilities and understanding. They would acquire the proper values as a result, which would encourage them to take the initiative and operate in a creative and original manner.

66 Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs), later renamed Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs), were established in various institutions as a result of an endeavour started by the University Grants Commission in 1986 to accomplish the aforementioned goals. With the UGC's financial support plan and the universities' cooperation in providing the basic infrastructure and other support needed for the HRDCs to function, the HRDC system has gained recognition and established itself in the university system over the past thirty years or so. Currently, 66 HRDCs are operating in colleges and institutions throughout the nation. These HRDCs train teachers in a variety of ways, including a 28-day orientation program for new teachers, a 21-day subject-specific refresher course for in-service candidates, and one-week courses for in-service candidates that focus on a specific topic like yoga, research methodology, gender sensitisation, spiritual studies, etc. Additionally, a one-day principals' meeting, an administrative staff workshop, MOOCs, e-content, etc. The advantage of these in-house courses is that candidates can focus on the stated goal throughout the duration of the course. Additionally, they can communicate with the resource people and facilitate communication between the participants. Participants are able to exchange ideas and develop close intellectual bonds with one another. However, the drawback is that these applicants will be out

of the institutions for 28/21/7 days, which may interfere with their academic and other institutional duties. If they are having children and the family is a single-parent or nuclear family, it becomes quite tough for them to be away from them. Due to the variety of food options, people are frequently in a difficult situation. Additionally, these individuals are unable to complete any other academic work that they would have otherwise completed after office hours. They will miss their family, which is especially important for participants who could have elderly parents, teenage children, or other dependents. Most participants, especially those who are older, will find it difficult to sit for four 90-minute sessions each day. Additionally, a boring course structure, such as solely using lectures in a chalk-and-talk format, are unacceptable.

The HRDCs should take the aforementioned factors into consideration and try to make the course as engaging as possible by including activities such as group discussions, thought-provoking exercises, and an increasing number of audio and video clips. They should also use films and other media to engage the participants in the lectures. Increased practical sessions, hands-on training, do-it-yourself projects, visits to scientific and other higher education institutions, industrial visits, and visits to historically, ecologically, and archaeologically significant locations, among other things, would improve the quality and value of the courses. Using after-class hours is frequently very difficult for the participants. In these situations, the HRDCs should set up the proper procedures for using this "after office hour" time. engaging the participants in sports and games, enabling them to use the gym to keep themselves healthy, and, if available, indoor sports like table tennis, badminton, tennis, basketball, etc. on the campus where the HRDCs are situated. It wouldn't cost HRDCs anything to provide facilities for football and cricket. Additionally, one might encourage the participants to play games like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, and others that don't require any particular equipment or cost anything. Under this initiative, teachers could choose from any of the 75 disciplines that NRCs provide that piqued their interest and complete 40 sessions at their own speed without leaving their place of employment. Since the candidate can complete the course at his own pace and without having to leave the institution, this will benefit both intuitions and the candidate. The candidate does not have to leave his home throughout the procedure, and the college would not have to pay him to attend OP, RC, or STC, during which time the colleges would not be able to hire such teachers. HRDCs also gain because they save a lot of money by not having to pay the applicant TA/DA or make arrangements for his housing and meals during the course. This approach has a drawback in that it will be challenging for senior teachers who have not had e-learning training and for teachers who are not tech-savvy. However, the reality remains that everything must have a beginning, which the senior professors could try and be successful at.

Conclusion

A person cannot be fully prepared for professional service by formal training received in an institution; education is a continuous process. Because of the constant increase of information in the field of teacher education, teachers' expertise is falling behind, making continuous learning essential. The founding of academic staff colleges in 1986 marked the official beginning of the professional development of higher education faculty in India. Despite numerous changes in style, goals, and content over the past three decades, this field has not grown into a strong, professional field with solid scientific underpinnings. Higher education can be saved by taking a critical look at the highest level and using appropriate research evidence to find appropriate feedback and implementation plans. To solve the current problem in higher education, policy changes, the creation and enhancement of a curriculum specifically for faculty development, and transactions are necessary.

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