

## A framework of continuous professional development of school teachers: Feasibility and perceived effectiveness

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### Abstract

The present paper is about Continuous Professional Development of school teachers in India in which a framework was developed taking ideas from five international models of Continuous Professional Development in USA namely the MiTEP model, Ramp and Pathways model, Guided inquiry model, Wyoming Triad model and the Quest Model which had gained a lot of popularity as well as are known to have been actually implemented and successful widely. An attempt was made to contextualize it in the Indian setting and data was collected from the teacher educators and teachers teaching in Government and government aided organisations through three point rating scales to know about its feasibility and perceived effectiveness.

**Keywords:** continuous professional development, feasibility, perceived effectiveness, framework, school teachers

### Introduction

The importance of constantly updating knowledge base and skills required in a profession has been realized world over and is not a new phenomenon. Professional development of teachers has always been given importance in all countries as well our own and we see how all forms of teacher-training programs such as in-service and pre –service teacher training have been doing it since long. The constant explosion of new knowledge and the globalization of the education sector as well as the increasing awareness of interdisciplinary approaches in education have made it essential that the teacher training programs also constantly upgrade their curriculum to meet these changing needs. Professional development of teachers has been a crucial need and that has been understood and defined in different ways by different people but a consensus can be drawn from Fullan's (1995) definition of professional development as *"the sum total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the teacher in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change."* Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) have used "professional learning" in their writings to refer to the ongoing, focused "daily learning of teachers individually and collectively", and have stated that professional development is a "more narrow conceptual term". Thus we can infer from various available definitions that professional development is a process in which a teacher improves as a professional in terms of his or her capabilities of efficiently contributing to the education and development of students through formal and informal modes and constantly improve his knowledge, skills and attitudes. The term professional development has often being confused with some other terms such as continuous professional development, staff development, in-service teacher education etc. The variety of definitions available have put forward the similar concepts in a different way but definitely help us derive what is meant by these in general and how they can be applied. Professional development is a broader area that includes all kinds of programs meant for preparing for a profession, staying and

doing well while in a profession and also takes place in the form of personal development aimed towards benefitting in the profession ultimately such as a life skill program. When we talk about professional development through an in-service teacher training program, it is then we talk about on-going learning or continuous professional development of teachers. While in-service teacher education program can be considered a process here, continuous professional development can be said to be the goal or product we aspire for here and is the main area of discussion in this dissertation. This dissertation is mainly concerned with the professional development of teachers and development of a framework for the same. It has been discussed already that professional development for teachers involves both in-service and pre-service teacher training programs, but this research has been concerned mainly with in-service teacher training or continuous professional development. A framework based on five international models namely the MiTEP, Ramp and Pathways, the Quest Model, The Guided enquiry model and the Wyoming Triad model that have been successfully implemented in USA, has been developed and an attempt to contextualize it in the Indian setting has been done. Further, the opinions of the stakeholders involved, that is the teachers and the teacher educators on the feasibility and the perceived effectiveness of the framework were also sought.

### Review of related literature

- Armour & Makopoulou (2012) <sup>[1]</sup> in their study titled *'Teachers can engage students as lifelong learners only if teachers themselves are engaged in lifelong learning, The Need for In-Service Training for Teachers and its Effectiveness in School.'* had stated in relation to continuous professional development that :
  - It is important for principals to take part and support teachers in the professional development activities and that they can contribute towards building collegiality.
  - Personal development is strongly linked to professional development

- A very long program is not very suitable.
- It is important to have more need-based professional development programs with well-defined and planned activities for the participants.
- The report published by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) [2] titled *Teachers know best* 'wrote about the following findings after conducting research on 1300 studies in various schools, surveys of NGOs and interviews from teachers and principals on their opinions about professional development programs and what they want from these programs:
  - Teachers feel that the professional development programs are not satisfying and have nothing new to offer to them in terms of technology, innovative practices etc.
  - The teachers were in general not satisfied with the implementation of these professional development programs.
  - They felt that the present programs were of short duration with less coaching and collaboration and support,.
- Nagel (2013) in their report named *Effective Teacher Professional Development Crucial to Common Core* stated that peer coaches and mentors "are found to be highly effective in helping teachers implement a new skill" and so should be employed when possible.
- Law, Sue, Glover and Derek.(1996) in their book *Managing Professional Development in Education* stated that:
  - Professional development is not just an individual thing but a collective aspect. It is important to emphasize the concept of professional culture and encourage its healthy growth (Fullan).

- There is a growing trend of school based professional development program.
- Every teacher is entitled to participate in regular in-service program

**Framework suggested (brief version)**

**Key principles of the proposed framework**

- Committed partnerships(between NGO`s, schools, universities etc):
- Collaborative need identification:
- Back and forth model- between sessions and implementation phases:
- Immediate implementation :
- Continuous interaction:
- Long term, intensive and sustained over time model:
- Tailored to specific needs-individual and general:
- Involvement of administrators from the first stage:
- Horizontal learning instead of top-down approach:
- Discussion based learning and teaching:
- Teachers as leaders, not followers.
- Teachers as reflective practitioners than technicians: Clear, agreed upon, shared goals:
- School /site based approach:
- Caters to autonomy of teachers: Individual differences between participant teachers:
- Multi-disciplinary approach: Opportunity for teacher expression:
  - Teaching teachers to research:
  - Teachers to learn at their own pace :
  - Continuous evaluation of the training:
  - Use of ICT media such as internet, social media like Facebook, Watsapp, Linkedin etc in evaluation and follow up

**Structure of the program**



S. No.	Phase	Activities	Duration
2.	Interaction sessions and implementation	Interaction sessions followed by implementation in a cyclic manner.	1 month
3.	Evaluation	Pre-tests, post –tests, Interviews, surveys of teachers and students.	2 weeks
4.	Teacher Conference	Presentation, submission of reports, sharing experiences and feelings, results of action researches, etc	1 week
5.	Publishing Results	Selected pieces of works by teachers to be published,	1 week
6.	Follow -Up	Inviting feedback and suggestions by previous session and present session participants.	1 week
7.	7.Final Assessment	Evaluating and reporting the average overall success and failure of the program	2. days

Eligibility for participants =Interested and motivated TGT teachers with minimum 5 years experience.

Eligibility for mentorship = Teacher educators from DIETs, SCERTs, IASEs, etc and senior and experienced teachers and eminent Educationists, Counselors, etc.

Areas of training	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesson study cycle</li> <li>▪ Research based teaching</li> <li>▪ 5E learning</li> <li>▪ Seamless Teaching</li> <li>▪ Teacher wellness</li> <li>▪ Teacher behavior</li> <li>▪ Subject clubs</li> <li>▪ Inquiry learning</li> <li>▪ Claim evidence reasoning</li> <li>▪ Developing learning materials</li> <li>▪ Using ICT in teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mentoring</li> <li>➤ Collegial learning</li> <li>➤ Collaboration</li> <li>➤ Team teaching</li> <li>➤ Modeling</li> <li>➤ Discussions</li> <li>➤ Peer coaching</li> <li>➤ Observation</li> <li>➤ Questioning</li> </ul>

**Need of the study**

Teachers have a very important responsibility of shaping the future of our students. They are responsible for development of not only themselves but also their students. The need for professional development of teachers has been felt and given due importance since a long time in our country as well as outside and therefore, various agencies such as DIETs, SCERTs etc. have been conducting refresher programs and orientation programs for the teachers. But research shows that not many of these efforts have been successful in bringing positive results and report a lot of issues and problems. According to some researches, the present model of CPD in India has not been successful in bringing teacher satisfaction and is not democratic in nature as they are based on the deficit model and bring the teachers under a very heavy hierarchical structure. Instead of benefitting from that model of professional development, the teachers feel overburdened when these programs when they are made compulsory for them and mostly take part in them reluctantly or for the sake of getting a degree or a certificate. Thus it becomes necessary for us to shift the focus from the age old ways of INSET and CPD training to more contemporary ways. Some programs of CPD have been innovatively developed in USA and have given positive results. Also, they have adopted innovative ways of transaction and interaction with teachers with an emphasis on collaboration, and teacher support rather than teacher training. This all has made their approach a very democratic one and a kind our country needs too. Thus the need of the hour is to develop a framework that imbibes the best characteristics of the successfully running models with enough evidence of their success and suits the Indian teachers and takes into consideration the problems and situations in our country. Also important is to study its feasibility and effectiveness as perceived by the people who are involved as well as experienced in the field such as teachers, teacher educators and administrators etc. Hence, the present study aims at finding out the answer to the following research question:

**Title of the study**

The present study was titled “Framework for Continuous Professional Development of Teachers: Feasibility and Perceived Effectiveness.”

**Research question:**

Whether the framework of Continuous Professional Development of School Teachers derived on the basis of the features and practices of successful international models of CPD will be feasible and effective in the Indian context?

**Objectives of the study**

The study had the following objectives:

1. To develop a framework of Continuous Professional Development of the teachers based on the successful International models.
2. To study the perception of the teachers and teacher educators about the feasibility of the developed framework.
3. To study the effectiveness of the developed framework as perceived by the teachers and teacher educators

**Delimitations**

Due to time and other constraints, the study was confined to the TGTs, PGTs and teacher educators employed in Government Institutions located in NCT of Delhi

**Methodology of the research**

The following methodology was adopted by the researcher in order to fulfill the above stated research objectives.

**Population**

The population of the present study included those teachers were selected to constitute the population for the present study, who have been working in the government schools of Delhi (at all TGT, PRT and PGT levels) and have attended at least one in-service programs in their career and those teacher educators who had been teaching in the DIETs of Delhi. The sample of the present study included 106 teachers teaching in government and government aided schools (66 TGTs+40 PGTs=106) who have attended at least one in service program and 43 teacher educators teaching in DIETs of Delhi. Purposive sampling was adopted for this study by the researcher.

Keeping in mind these objectives, the researcher had the following tools for the research:

- Document with the developed framework.
- Self-developed Rating scale for feasibility.
- Self-developed Rating scale for perceived effectiveness
- Schedule for focus group interview for teachers.

### Analysis of the data

The analysis of the data collected in the research was done according to the nature of the present study. While the data through the rating scale was quantitatively, the data through focus group discussions with teachers was done qualitatively through content analysis.

### Major findings of the research

The major findings of the research study undertaken by the researcher are reported as follows:

The perceptions of the teachers and teacher educators about the framework developed

- **Duration of the program:** Most teachers were *not very happy* with the three month time frame allotted in the framework because they felt they were already burdened with a lot of work and it was difficult for them to invest so much of time and energy in this long program. The teacher educators however said that although a long program was the need of the hour, but was not feasible in India.
- **Eligibility for participants:** Almost *all teachers as well as teacher educators agreed* that for a program to run successfully and show positive results, the participants needed to be motivated. Many also agreed that it was equally important to carry at least some experience in teaching to participate and hence seemed to be favouring the criteria of eligibility as proposed in the framework. The *element of flexibility in the eligibility criteria was also appreciated* as many teachers said a flexible criterion makes it available to larger number of teachers and more can benefit at the same time.
- **Eligibility for mentors:** Majority of the teachers and teacher educators *liked the idea of involving previous year participants and senior and experienced teachers* for mentoring in the program
- **Immediate implementation:** while most teachers were not sure about the effect and feasibility of immediate implementation in the programs in real school settings, some teacher educators supported it by saying that it was a good idea as it facilitated retention.
- **Horizontal learning:** Majority of the teachers appreciated the suggestion of horizontal learning by bringing all the teachers and administrators at par for learning and not having any status or power differences while learning.
- **Teacher autonomy:** Majority of the teachers and teacher educators supported the idea of endowing them with more autonomy with respect to deciding the areas of professional development and methods.
- **Teacher expression:** A majority of the teachers and teacher educators felt that *letting the teachers speak* about their experiences, experiments, achievements, failures etc. *will help in many ways to them as well as in the evaluation of how successful the program, but some teachers pointed that this can also lead to differences and chaos* among teachers.
- **Content:** Due to excessive workload, *not many teachers supported* the idea of having *lesson planning* as an integral part of the program. However a majority of teacher educators liked the content but not the idea of lesson planning
- **Multidisciplinary Approach:** The response regarding multidisciplinary *was not very clear* as there were divided perceptions of teachers on this issue. However, almost half

of the teacher educators agreed on introducing a multidisciplinary approach as most said that it was already being practiced. Slightly less than half agreed that the approach made the teachers a jack of all trades and a master of none.

- **School based concept:** This idea was also *supported more by the teachers* than the teacher educators, for teachers it sounded more comfortable to have a school based concept as it would save their time, energy and money, but for some teacher educators a school based program was not feasible.
- **Need based program:** Majority of the teachers and teacher educators said they wanted a program that lets them decide their needs of professional development as framework suggested in the framework by the researcher
- **Research for teachers:** Majority teachers feel that though it is a good idea for teachers to learn research to solve problems they face while teaching and learning, but the heavy workload will be a problem. However a majority of teacher educators supported the idea.
- **Policy obligations:** A few teachers reported that the framework was in accordance with the goals envisaged by NPE'86 Less than half said the framework adopted and encouraged the constructivist approach. However most teacher educators agreed about it.
- **Discussion based learning:** Teachers as well as the teacher educators in majority have liked the discussion based approach idea of the framework. They have mostly agreed that adults learn better through discussions.
- **Horizontal learning:** A large number of teachers and teacher educators both liked the concept of bringing together the principals and teachers at the same level or 'learning together' of the framework was very good.
- **Individual differences:** A majority of the teachers and half of the teacher educators said that the framework had considered the need to cater to individual differences and needs in teachers by allowing them to learn at their own pace and arrive at decisions through discussions and interactions
- **Continuous interaction:** A majority of the teachers said that the concept of continuous and need based interaction is neither feasible nor practical in India because the teachers are already overburdened with work and their hectic schedules and pressures of syllabus would not permit them to commit to attend the programs with the desired frequency. But all teacher educators supported the idea of continuous interaction sessions.
- **Partnerships:** Teachers were not very informed about the concept of collaboration and partnership and hence many were indecisive on this. The teacher educators however said that the idea was good but they doubted the feasibility of the same, as the idea was a new one according to them
- **Evaluation:** A majority of the teachers and teacher educators agreed that it is important to evaluate the results of any program of professional development for teachers in a thorough manner and study its impact on the teachers and consequently on the students. However some teacher educators said that student opinions can be misleading too.
- **Follow up:** The framework calls for an extensive and separate phase for follow-up so that it is not just limited to filling up of feedback forms during the end of the program and majority teachers liked the idea. Most of the teachers

and teacher educators said follow up would be easy with ICT and social media like Facebook and Watsaap and through this year wise records can be maintained. However a few were doubtful whether all teachers, specially the senior teachers a majority of the teachers also liked the idea of involving administrators in the process of follow-up and evaluation.

- **School issues:** A majority of the teacher educators agreed that the framework as far as school issues are concerned will be less feasible as the heavy workload on teachers will not let them participate willingly in a three month long program as suggested in the framework.

### Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to develop a framework of professional development, particularly the in-service training for teachers teaching in schools and contextualize it in the Indian setting, as it was based on the international models of CPD that have proven their efficiency and success. Perceptions of the stakeholders on the feasibility and effectiveness were sought from teachers and teacher educators and it was found that there were many areas of the framework which the teachers and teacher educators found were feasible in our country and some were not. For example, the concept eligibility for mentorship and participation was feasible. Also, the idea of immediate implementation was not very feasible but effective according to them. The concept of horizontal learning and teacher autonomy and expression was also found to be perceived as effective if implemented in India. However, it was not feasible according to them in India. Research for teachers was not very feasible or effective according to teachers, however teacher educators found it to be a good idea. The duration of the program in the framework was not supported by teachers and teacher educators who said that it was not feasible. The teacher educators said long duration was the need of the hour and would be more effective. The idea of making it more need based and catering to individual differences however appeared to have appealed the stakeholders and they reported they were feasible and would be effective if implemented. Follow-up and evaluation procedures as suggested by the framework were reported as feasible and perceived effective by most teachers and teacher educators. The content and the collaboration procedures were however not reported as very feasible but perceived effective according to the teachers if implemented. The main concern of teachers and teacher educators was the workload that the framework would add to, if implemented as they believed the teachers and teacher educators were doing a lot of work already and a long duration program would add to their burden. Apart from this, the teachers and teacher educators were very happy with the ideas of democracy and horizontal learning as well as autonomy given to participants in the framework. These ideas were appreciated well by the stakeholders. The researcher has attempted to incorporate those suggestions and has produced a revised framework as a finding of the study. The framework with the changes made after incorporating the changes indicated necessary for feasibility and effectiveness through the research findings is as follows:

### Implications of the study

- Continuous Professional Development for teachers should be given more emphasis by the policymakers and administrators.
- The eligibility criteria should be more relaxed and open to all those who are interested to participate so that the benefit of these programs should reach to as many as possible.
- It is important is to have a more democratic approach to teacher support programs.
- Involvement of people from various disciplines to serve as mentors in professional development programs.
- The responsibility of paperwork can be handed over to a separate support group to reduce the workload on the principals and administrators, so that they can focus more on the content and proper functioning of the programs than paperwork.
- A more democratic approach to professional development than a top- down and rigid hierarchical structure, Letting the teachers voice their opinions and express their feelings and share experiences
- Feedback should not only be limited to filling up of feedback forms after the sessions, but a complete investigation of the real benefits they participants obtained
- Follow up through the use of ICT media and social media and a separate cell for carrying out proper follow up. and maintaining a sound database to avoid repetition and stagnation.
- Teaching research to teachers, keeping in mind their interests.
- Arriving at conclusions and decision making through mutual understanding and collaborative approaches such as discussions, meetings etc.

### Suggestions for further research

More studies on international models, their weaknesses and strengths, comparative studies as well as opinion studies can also be done with a view to understand where went wrong and which aspects need to be changed or evolved. Experimental studies with interventions on continuous professional development of teachers can also be conducted. Impact studies on the same can be conducted to see the change in student achievement and teacher satisfaction and is also one of the main suggestions through this research work. Since the views of the stakeholders matters the most as far as continuous professional development is concerned, hence studies focusing on their needs, highlighting their views and likes and dislikes, problems and concerns etc. are the need of the hour.

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