

NEED OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

To improve the quality of students' learning in schools it is imperative to focus on in-service teacher education. Quality learning depends on quality teaching and quality teaching depends on the teacher's professional competence, motivation and mastery level of the subject. In the absence of any form of continuing education it is quite possible that quality of teaching gets retarded. Thus it is very important to remove the performance deficiencies of the teachers and provide opportunities to the teachers to upgrade their skills, abilities and knowledge throughout their career. This is necessary to place here that in-service teacher education program is an essence, keeping in view the innovations in the field of teaching and learning, curriculum, teaching –learning material and evaluation system. This paper studies the need and importance of in-service teacher-education for the improvement of school and classroom practices through the personal and professional growth of in-service teachers.

KEYWORDS: In-service teachers, in-service teacher education, pre-service teacher education, continuous professional development, skills, knowledge.

CONCEPT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education or teacher training refers to imparting of specific skills, abilities and knowledge to current and prospective teachers through in-service and pre-service teacher education programmes. It is an attempt to improve current or future teachers' performance and thus enabling them to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. Dictionary of Education (1973), defines teacher education as "All formal and informal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume the responsibility as a member of the educational profession and to discharge his responsibility most effectively." In the past the teacher preparation and development programme

whether pre-service or in-service was usually called as teacher training but now the term teacher education is gaining more impetus. This shift is due to the consideration given to human element or resource in the form of present and would-be teachers. It is thought that the term teacher training is more focused towards skill training while teacher education is wider in scope and in addition to mastering skills in teaching it includes professional skills and sound philosophical, sociological and psychological base of education essential for practicing teaching skills. At the other hand, it is presumed that when the term training is used in human context it involves some form of education also. Though it is important to contrast between teacher training and teacher education the difference between the two needs not to be overemphasized as both are complementary to each other and provides basis for the overall development of teacher's competence by emphasizing on positive attitudinal changes, decision making abilities and ethical considerations.

IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

As the term suggests In-service Teacher Education means the education a teacher receives for the continuous growth in his capacity to teach after he has entered the teaching profession on the basis of training & education received in a teacher education institution. It refers to all the educational, social, professional development programs organized for the serving teachers to upgrade their skill, knowledge and attitude through different activities and courses such as conferences, workshops, exhibitions etc. It helps the teachers to get up to date knowledge of their subject. It also helps them to keep track of the recent developments in the field of teaching and learning. Thus it improves the quality of teacher's task from day-to-day routines of instructional process, classroom management, evaluation etc. of students to the higher order task of assisting others in their professional development and to work for the development of institution in collaboration with others such as fellow teachers, head of institutions and parents.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER- EDUCATION

NCTE is the statutory body concerned with planning and development of pre-service education to prepare teachers for the school system. As far as In-service teacher education of the country is concerned National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the top governing body to look into the different aspects of in-service teacher training in the light of current scenario and prepare modules for various teacher training courses and undertake specific programs for training the in service teachers. There are Regional Institutes of Education (REI) which assists NCERT

in planning and development of modules for various teacher training courses. National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) also provides institutional support. At the state level, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) prepare modules for teacher training and conduct specialized courses for school teachers. At the district level in-service training is provided by District Institute of Education and Training (DIET). There are Block Resource Centers (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRC) at the ground level to provide in-service training to teachers.

NEED OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Training and education of the in-service teachers help to remove performance deficiencies in teachers. After completing entry level qualification like B.Ed prospective employees enters into teaching profession and begin to serve in different educational institutions, but that is not enough. A teacher has to refresh and enrich his knowledge for the betterment of teaching and learning. The need for in-service teacher education is discussed in the following points:-

LEARNING IS A LIFELONG PROCESS

The process of learning continues throughout the life. To become and remain a reflective practitioner every teacher needs to learn throughout his career and life. A famous teacher and scholar, Thomas Arnold said "I prefer that my students should drink from a running stream rather than stagnant pool.

CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SOCIETY

The needs of the society are ever-changing depending on the changes in social, political, technological, vocational and academic domains. To cope up with these changes education is also changing. A teacher should also keep abreast of the changes.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a professional, a teacher has to continuously progress towards enriching his knowledge regarding content and methodology. Together with this he has to work towards increasing the efficiency of the institution in which he is serving. He has to collaborate with his colleagues, head of the institution and all the personnel of the institution. He is also supposed to contribute towards professional development of his colleagues. He is also responsible for using the resources in a judicious way. A professionally competent teacher works well towards the improvement of overall school and classroom practices. In no case he bargains the value and ethical considerations of teaching profession for his personal interest. For this purpose, serving teachers need reorientation of the content, pedagogy and code of conduct.

CLARITY OF THE GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The policies designed by the government and statutory bodies are ultimately implemented at the hands of the teachers. Therefore it is essential to orient the teachers about these policies through courses and activities of teacher education programme.

SERVE AS A BASIS FOR UPWARD COMMUNICATION OF PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

In-service teacher education programme serves as a basis for communicating the problems and challenges faced by the teachers in implementing the policies initiated by higher authorities. Teachers can also communicate their grievances regarding inadequacy of current curriculum, teaching-learning material, funds, infrastructure etc.

FORMATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE CAPITAL

Well trained teachers are a source of human capital formation, as the judicious use of other resources in the field of education depends on the skills and abilities of teachers. The potential for future human resource capital also depends on teachers as the current students educated by the teachers will tomorrow serve in the different spheres of society.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE MORALE OF IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

In-service teacher education programme helps in boosting the morale of teachers as it provides a platform for teachers to meet and discuss various issues related to school education. They feel proud of their noble profession and of contribution in nation building.

PROGRAM OF IN- SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

In-service teacher education program can be provided in different forms which are as follows:-

Workshops: Workshops are academic gatherings under the mentorship of resource persons which provide a platform to work in some practical aspect of an issue, problem or concept related to education. Active participation is the key to the success of a workshop.

Seminars: Seminar is also an academic gathering based on discussion of some problems or challenges related to education. The different aspects of the issue are critically analyzed and presented by various delegates. In the end the chairperson of the session highlights the main concerns of the issue and concludes by giving recommendations.

Conferences: Conference is an academic forum where the delegates listen to some known speakers on some controversial issues and put their queries.

Refresher courses: A refresher course is an in-service teacher education programme designed to refresh and enrich teacher's knowledge of content and methodology.

Study groups: Study group is a group formed of the teachers of same subject under the guidance of mentor generally possessing the knowledge of subject and pedagogy. This group discusses problem related to its subject and meet at regular intervals. Conversations among members of the study group are also possible through social networking websites.

Regular courses: In-service teachers can join some regular course related to their subject. For example they can pursue Ph.d.

Correspondence course: Correspondence courses are designed to provide education to aspirant from distance place and thus overcoming the barrier of place. For example an in-service teacher can pursue M.A (Education) by correspondence.

The other forms of providing In-service teacher education are professional writings, TV programmes, radio broadcasts, exhibitions related to different subjects and pedagogy. Normally the program for in-service teacher education runs under the guidelines of concerned agencies of the institutional framework for teacher education and some non-government organizations

INADEQUACIES OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

In-service teacher education programme suffers from manifold problem. The programme has not been able to motivate the teachers to remain open for continuing education and development. Neither it has been successful in engaging the teachers in research activities based on school practices and classroom situations. The monitoring and follow-up work for in-service teacher education programme is also not up to the mark. The instructional material used during the programme is also not able to meet the quality standards. The problems suffered by the teachers at the ground level are also not paid attention. In- service teacher education programme also suffers from the lack of co-ordination between the agencies of institutional framework for teacher education.

SUGGESTIONS

The program for in-service teacher education should be enriched in terms of infrastructure facilities, well experienced resource persons, up-to-date teaching learning material and follow-up work. The research activities should be the regular feature of these programmes. The success of the in-service education depends on the co-ordination of different agencies of institutional framework. The honest

work on the part of teachers should be recognized. The problems faced by the teachers whether related to content, pedagogy or guidelines issued by the higher authorities should be paid attention. In a nutshell it is indispensable to equip the teachers with essential skills and knowledge to cope with the needs of today.

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