

## A Study Of The Professional Development Among Primary And Secondary School Level Teachers

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### Abstract

Before entering the field of higher education, students must have proper development of attitudes required. These attitudes and other qualities are inculcated at primary and secondary school levels of the education. Hence, teachers of the primary and secondary school levels hold more responsibility of their own professional development. The researcher, therefore, conducted the study of professional development among primary and secondary school levels teachers in order to study their views towards the professional development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The survey method has been used for the purpose of this study. The required data have been collected through the questionnaire from total 150 teachers from primary, secondary (i.e. high school) and higher secondary (i.e. junior college) levels teachers, which further has analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The conclusions have been drawn based on findings and discussed. The findings clearly indicate that very few teachers from primary and secondary school levels have the proper understanding about the concept of professional development and are trying to update themselves. However, remaining majority of teachers have no proper knowledge about the concept of professional development and face different problems during their own professional development. It is expected that the findings of this study would help the policy makers of the primary and secondary school levels to make teachers highly positive towards their professional development. Finally the recommendations are given.

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**KEYWORDS:** Professional development, primary and secondary school level teachers.

### Introduction:

While mentioning ‘the destiny of India is being shaped in classrooms’ the Kothari Commission has rightly laid emphasis on the improvement of the status of teachers. It has recognized that a teacher who is ill fed can never be expected to produce better results for the national development. Indeed, teachers in schools are the backbone of the educational system. They play an important role as an agency for implementing the educational programmes at various levels.

Education is the fundamental pillar of the nation’s reconstruction and the quality of this education depends upon the quality of the teachers. Consequently, teachers in the classrooms are very important factors in the process of rebuilding the nation.

Hence, different Commissions and Policies suggested different programmes for the professional development of the teachers. The professional development among teachers is the basic requirement for enhancing their personal qualities, educational qualification and the place and responsibilities that they hold in the communities.

### **Meaning of the Professional Development**

The concept of 'professional development' of school teachers refers to individual development, continuing education, in-service education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups and peer coaching or mentoring. Grant suggests that professional development includes the use of technology to foster teachers' growth.

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities ranging from pre-service teacher education to retirement. So professional development is not a time-scheduled or time-bound process, but it is a continuous process of learning new skills, new insight into pedagogy. It is not imposed like the training. Professional development enables to increase in knowledge or skills through study, travel, research, in-service education, conference-workshop-seminar attendance, inter & intra-institutional visitations, different fellowships, observation of the good work of others, etc. This will enable the teacher to understand emerging standards and views of learning and change their role accordingly.

### **Need of the study of the Professional Development at school level**

In working towards changes occurring in 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers from primary and secondary schools need to continuously supported with the professional development, because the education at this level in general- and at the primary level particularly- is supposed to be the most important and fundamental as far as the basic life skills and literacy are concerned.

At the primary and secondary levels of education, proper attitudes and other values are developed, which are prerequisite for students who are entering the higher education. Primary and secondary schools play vital role in developing these attitudes and other qualities. Here it is important to note that the attitudes developed at these early stages of the education determine their future goals and interests for the higher education. Hence, the primary and secondary school levels teachers hold basic responsibility, in which enhancement of their own professional development is important in order to inculcate the best among their students. Already, by realizing this fact, there are some agencies like State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), etc, which are trying to provide various opportunities to teachers of primary and secondary school levels for their professional development. The topics related to the professional development are also included in various teacher education programmes. However, there arises questions like - does it result in the better professional development of in-service teachers? Do teachers understand the proper meaning of the concept 'professional development'? The researcher, therefore, with curiosity, decided to study whether there was a clear understanding of the concept 'professional development' among primary and secondary teachers or not. With this view, the present study was conducted.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the understanding of the concept 'professional development' among teachers of primary and secondary schools through opinions given by them.
2. To study their participation in various conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.
3. To study motivational factors responsible for their professional development.
4. To study various problems faced by teachers during their professional development.

### **Delimitations of the study**

1. The present study is confined to Marathi medium schools of Maharashtra State.
2. The sample of the study includes teachers from district Kolhapur city and around only during 2008-2010.

### **Limitation of the study**

1. The study of the innate and inherent affinity of teachers towards the improvement of his/her own profession is out of the control of the researcher.

### **Sample**

The total 150 teachers, irrespective of their sex, were selected randomly from district Kolhapur city and around. The sample constitutes, 50 teachers from primary level schools, 50 teachers from secondary level schools (i.e. high schools) and 50 teachers from higher secondary level (i.e. Junior colleges) including arts, science and commerce streams.

### **Procedure**

Being this was a status study; the survey method was used. In order to collect the necessary data to achieve the objectives of the study, the questionnaire was prepared by the researcher. This questionnaire was given to teachers who were requested to fill it. Thus the data was collected which was further analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and conclusions were made. Percentage was used for the statistical analysis.

### **Findings of the study**

As this study was being conducted at three levels, viz. primary level, secondary (i.e. high school) level and higher secondary (i.e. junior college) level, findings of the present study are given level-wise as below –

#### **Findings from primary level**

1. The 16% of primary teachers know the concept of professional development properly. The 12% of primary teachers know the concept of

professional development very poorly while 72% of primary teachers did not know its meaning properly.

2. The 22% of primary teachers did not attend any seminar, conference or workshop. The reasons they told that their school was of non grant-in-aid type and they had no chance to do so.

3. The 60% of primary teachers were not present their research papers because they did not undertake any kind of research work at this level.

4. The 20% of primary teachers were not motivated by their Head Masters; whoever gets motivation is generally of oral type.

5. The primary teachers were found in contact with the institution or organization that conducts programmes for the professional development of teachers through visits (12%) and phones (8%). On the other hand, 80% of the primary teachers were not in contacts with such organizational bodies.

6. Problems faced by primary teachers during their professional development were found as follows – i) It is a time-consuming process and needs more time, ii) Burden of non-educational work like - doing census, election duties, etc. iii) Less number of teachers appointed in schools, iv) Lack of teaching aids, reference books, etc. v) Family and financial problems, vi) Location of schools is in remote area, vii) Workshops are arranged at long distances from their school area, viii) The government emphasizes merely on record maintaining instead of research and teaching-learning process.

### **Findings from secondary (i.e. high school) level**

1. The 26% of high school teachers know the concept of professional development properly. The 12% of high school teachers know the concept of professional development very poorly while 62% of the high school teachers did not know the concept of the professional development.

2. The 8% of high school teachers did not attend any seminar, conference or workshop.

3. The 30% of high school teachers did not present any research work.

4. The 24% of high school teachers were not motivated by their Head Masters; whoever gets motivation is generally of oral kind.

5. A few high school teachers were found in contact with the institutions or organizations that conduct programmes for the professional development of the teachers through visits (20%) and phones (20%). On the other hand, the 60% of high school teachers were not found in such contacts. Some of the high school teachers told the reasons of this – like non grant-in-aid type of schools and inefficient work of Subject Teacher Association at district level.

6. Problems faced by high school (i.e. secondary level) teachers during their professional development were found as follows – i) It is a time-consuming process and needs more time, ii) Physical, family and financial problems, iii) Lack of teaching aids, reference books, etc. in library, iv) Non-educational work like- doing census, election duties, mid-day meal, etc. v) Conferences, seminars, workshops are generally arranged at long distances from their school area, vi) Teachers' handbooks are not available on time.

### **Findings from higher secondary (i.e. junior college) level**

1. The 38% of junior college teachers know the concept of professional development poorly while the rest of teachers (62%) did not know the concept of professional development properly.

2. The 38% of junior college teachers did not attend any seminar, conference or workshop as there were no special seminars, conferences or workshops arranged for the junior college level and no letters or information in this concern reach to them.

3. The 80% of junior college teachers did not present any research work, as there was very poor research attitude among junior college teachers.

4. The 40% of junior college teachers were not motivated by their Principals; whoever got motivation was generally of oral kind.

5. The 28% junior college teachers found in contact with the institutions or organizations that conduct programmes for the professional development of the teachers through their visits (10%), phones (10%) and letters (8%) while remaining majority of teachers were not found in such contacts.

6. Problems faced by junior college teachers during their professional development were found as follows - i) It is a time-consuming process and needs more time, ii) Physical, financial and family related problems, iii) Rural and hilly remote area, iv) Lack of teaching aids, reference books, etc. v) Lack of interest in the process of professional development, vi) Lack of interest to accept new innovations, etc.

### **Conclusions of the study**

1. Very few teachers from primary and secondary school levels know the proper meaning of the concept 'professional development'. Majority of primary and secondary school levels teachers have lack of proper knowledge about the concept of professional development.

2. Some teachers from primary (22%), high school (8%) and junior college (38%) have not participated in seminars, conferences, etc.

The reason could be attributed to this may be that special workshops, conferences, etc, with respect to subjects are not organized (especially for the junior college level) at their regional places and teachers are not interested to go far away

to attend them.

3. About 57% of teachers from primary and secondary school levels are found actively engaged in research paper presentation. On the other hand, rest of considerable number of teachers is not found well interested in the research.

The reason could be attributed to this may be that neither the importance of research is well recognized by teachers nor higher authorities insist for the research.

4. Motivation is also an important factor in the process of professional development. The researcher found about 28% teachers were not motivated by respective higher authorities. Only verbal kind of motivation had been found the most common and other motivation tended to be ignored.

5. About 64% of primary and secondary teachers are not found in contact with institutions or organizational bodies that conduct various programmes for professional development of teachers.

The reason could be attributed to this may be that the poor interest of teachers in their own professional development.

6. The various problems found which are faced by primary and secondary teachers during their professional development are enumerated as follows:

- i. Professional development is a time-consuming process.
- ii. Less number of the teachers appointed in primary schools.
- iii. Non-educational work is allotted to primary and secondary teachers, such as- doing census, election duties, mid-day meal, etc, instead of giving more emphasis on research and teaching-learning process.
- iv. Remote and hilly area; as workshops, conferences, etc, are often organized at far away places from their school.
- v. Lack of teaching aids, reference books, etc, in libraries.
- vi. Health and family problems among old teachers while financial problems in younger and newly appointed teachers are found.
- vii. No emphasis has been given on professional development at school level by higher authorities.
- viii. Teachers' own poor interest.

### **Recommendations**

1. Primary and secondary schools should subscribe to the necessary journals and periodicals for regular readings of teachers. Further, there is need to maintain libraries with good reference books.
2. Higher authorities must provide proper motivation to teachers for their active participation in various seminars, conferences or workshops in order to develop the research attitude among teachers.
3. The government should think positively that how could be the non-educational work allotted to primary teachers can be minimized.
4. Institutions or organizations which conduct various programmes for professional development of teachers should percolate the respective information up

to the grass root level schools or/and colleges.

5. Subject Teacher Associations should organize seminars, conferences or workshops, etc, on different educational topics at regular intervals in rural as well as urban areas for professional development of teachers and try to work more efficiently at district level.

6. Administrators and management should also think to provide modern technologies like internet facilities in schools or colleges so as teachers can go on-line for their professional development.

7. Teachers should also try to overcome their different personal obstacles during own professional development as this is a part of their noble profession.

At the summing up of this paper, it is important to note that the professional development among primary and secondary school levels teachers is very essential at present days, because the best teachers with good professional developments are always shape their students. These students then enter the higher education, which gives rise to new horizon of the development of the nation.

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