

(Paper to be presented at PCF 6, Kochi, India, November 2010)

Theme : Formal Education
Sub-theme : Revamping Teacher Education.

TITLE : TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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I PREAMBLE

Way back in 1990 the World Education Meet held in Jomtien, Thailand, outlined the World Declaration on Education For All, declaring that every child, youth and adult has the human rights to benefit from education that will meet his/her basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term 'education' which includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be.

The Dakar Declaration, 2000, besides reaffirming the goals set up for the EFA at Jomtien in 1990 laid special emphasis on the quality aspects. Thus it advocated that by 2015 all children including girls should have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality, and improve all aspects of quality education and essential life skills. A review of the work done in the last one decade or so brings forth the fact that despite Jomtien's commitment to an "expanded version of basic education" EFA was generally interpreted to be centred around formal schooling of children. The goal of UPE tended to be centred round enrolment indicators with insufficient attention to retention, completion and effective learning. Quality aspects also seem to have been relegated to a back seat. Quality however is an elusive criterion

Quality improvement is closely related to teacher professional development. In a recent UNESCO publication attempt has been made to collate various definitions of TPD which is in fact defined as "professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically." The concept of professional development is broader than career development which is defined as the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through professional career cycle. Sometimes staff development is considered synonymous to professional development though staff development is generally used in reference to in-service training. The UNESCO publication brings forth several characteristics of professional development such as constructivism, long term process, process that takes place within a particular context, intimate linkage to school reform, encouragement, reflective practice, a collaborative effort, a different look in different settings

The term professional development seems to have been derived from the management education literature, and has a respectable standing in the context of trade, commerce, industry and more particularly productivity, marketing, human resource development , etc. Its use in the field of education *per se* is of relatively recent origin. Professional development does not necessarily link development to organizational interests but is directed to the individual's personal growth for use in wider fields.

II Teacher Professional Development Models.

It is necessary to distinguish between models and systems developed in the developed countries like the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Japan, etc. and those practiced in a developing country like India. There are not only subtle differences in the two sets but these differences are the result of and accentuated by the social and economic factors prevalent there, as well as the composition and ethos of their respective societies.

III International models and systems (practiced in developed countries)

Besides the familiar pre-service and in-service teacher training models and systems still holding sway almost all over the world, some new ones have been developed in the last two decades or so in the developed countries. A recent UNESCO publication has listed several such models. These are divided into those which call for organizational partnerships with other institutions and those which can be managed by small groups and individuals. These are presented below, *albeit* briefly, maintaining the same distinction.

3(a) Pre-service and in-service models.

The Teacher Professionalism is an important pre-service model used in the developed countries. This model is based on the principle of matching academic or subject knowledge and professional competencies. Future teachers are expected to be provided with instructional skills and knowledge of pupils' learning practices and child development. The Personal Growth model of pre-service education assumes that if teachers have greater self-understanding, are more reflective, more sensitive, more empathic and more fully self-actualized, they would be better teachers. Therefore, the Personal Growth model emphasizes development of these qualities among the teachers. It is natural that the content of pre-service teacher programs should differ from country to country; nevertheless, most include the foundation of education courses, professional studies like pedagogy, methods, etc and child development practicum.

3(b) New Models.

Over the last two decades, several new models of teacher professional development have been developed and used in some of the educationally highly developed countries, notably the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, and Japan. While it is not possible to describe them fully, effort is made to present them briefly hereunder.

3(c) Professional Development Schools.

These schools represent an organizational set up involving partnerships between teachers, administrators and university faculty members. The PDS attempt to restructure the preparation and induction of teachers into the teaching profession, improve their working conditions, raise the quality of education imparted to the students and provide opportunities for professional development to teachers as well as the administrators. The student-teachers gain new knowledge and enthusiasm, the experienced teachers are better informed of the latest research and development in the profession, and the university-level faculty benefit from the partnership with actual practitioners of the profession in the schools. In the recent years many PDS have been converted into e-PDS with emphasis on the use of technology in the professional development model.

3(d) The University-school partnerships.

The University-school partnership model seeks to establish firm base in two distinct cultures, school and university, to cross institutional boundaries, to ensure inclusive decision making and to create new venues for educator development. These partnerships are a kind of networks which connect the practitioners who share common interest and concerns about education and are found in schools with the institutions of higher learning and research like the universities. The partnerships are with a number of schools with the universities of the area, but sometimes the area boundaries are also crossed over.

3(e) Inter-Institutional Cooperation.

This model is a step further than the University-school partnership model in that it envisages partnership between the schools, universities, district institutions, ministries of education and other organizations involved directly or indirectly in professional development in the educational field. Pre-service and in-service training institutes are also roped in. The idea is to draw upon wider experience and at varying levels of educational activity with the expectation that teachers' professional horizons will be widened

3(f) Schools' Networks and Teachers' Networks.

Under the school network model a number of schools are brought together in the district/state to share experiences, curriculum development effort, research activities etc. Such networks are popular in Australia. Teacher networks are formal or informal associations of school teachers in their personal capacities who hold regular meetings to discuss professional problems, innovations, research and benefit there from in their professional development. These teachers' networks generally do not derive any funding from the school or the state, exceptions apart, but their associations provide help, if necessary.

IV Distance Education.

Distance education has caught with the imagination of the teachers, educationists, administrators, planners, etc. all over the world and its popularity is increasing day by day. Many developed and most of the developing countries have adopted this mode of mass teacher education in the last couple of decades. There is no doubt that distance education has come as a boon to millions of primary and elementary school teachers working in the remote areas, small villages, hills, forests, deserts, small islands, etc to acquire professional qualifications for career advancement. Distance education is backed by organizational set ups. Use of technology (computers, satellite based telecommunication, internet, website, facsimiles, cell phones etc) has virtually reached education to the door steps of the learners.

V Models practiced by small groups and individuals.

So far we have discussed models which depend upon institutional support or organizational backing for successful operation. Partnerships with other institutions at different levels is also envisaged in these models. There are several other models of teacher professional development which are practiced by small groups and even individuals. Such models are presented, very briefly, in the following section.

5(a) Supervision in the class-room is an age-old practice to examine a teacher's competence, class control, students' response, etc. The older-time inspectorate system has now

given way to a meaningful discussion between the teacher and the observer so that the teacher is enabled to change for the better in career development.

5(b) Performance Assessment of students model relates teacher's competencies to students' achievement. Sometimes parents use this model to pinpoint the teacher's limitations in general or in respect to certain specific subjects. Workshops, seminars, short duration training of the in-service teachers is another popular model among the schools. Participation is of one school teachers or of a number of schools from the neighbouring areas. Success stories are discussed by the teachers, administrators, parents together for the teachers' benefit.

5(c) In the Self Directed Development model teachers set for themselves certain targets to be achieved in a given time-frame and work hard to achieve them. Japan has successfully tried this model. In the Cooperative or Collegial development model a group of teachers comes together for professional development. Matters like professional hazards and issues, curriculum development are discussed, peer supervision is valued, some times action research is cooperatively carried out.

5(d) Under the Observation of Teachers' Practices model teachers are provided opportunities to observe colleagues who are recognized for their expertise and excellence. In the Teacher Participation Role model teachers are allowed participation in such activities as management, organization, support, monitoring etc. This model has brought about good results in countries like Spain and Australia.

5(e) The Skill Development model is designed to develop new techniques and skills. Teachers are given time off from the class-room work to experiment new techniques and skills. This model was tried with good results in the kindergarten schools in the USA.

5(f) The Reflective model requires the teacher to note down his/her daily routine and events and activities during the school-day and reflect upon them with a view to searching the plus as well as minus points, limitations, mistakes, etc and learn lessons for improvement. This model has been tried in the pre-service as well as in-service teacher training programs in many developed countries with good results.

5(g) There may be many models tried in individual schools on small-scale and on experimental basis. In a Project Based model tried in the Netherlands, secondary school teachers were involved in an in-depth study on how to develop thematic learning materials. Sometimes Portfolios are used to illustrate a person's work, professional growth and abilities. Action research is another model tried to improve the actual life situation through investigation and experimentation.

VI Teacher Professional Development in India.

India has made commitments to fulfil the goals of Education For All (EFA), both at Jomtien and Dakar, and has even brought about certain Constitutional amendments for that purpose. In spite of considerable progress made during the last three or four decades, the problem of illiteracy still continues to be the main national concern. India is home to almost 35% of the world's illiterates. The entire school education system needs a thorough reorientation. The school teacher also needs to a thorough professional development. The National Policy on Education, 1986, and the Program of Action, 1992, have rightfully placed great emphasis on these aspects. India's effort in the field of teacher professional development is briefly presented here under :-

6(a) A Centrally sponsored scheme of teacher education was launched in 1987 which aimed at mass orientation of school teachers in the main priorities and directions envisaged in the NPE , 1986, and also at improving their professional competencies. Orientation camps were held all over the country during the summer vacations. A special training package was incorporated for training the teacher in the use of teaching-learning materials (TLM).

6(b) Almost simultaneously a program of setting up District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in each of the 600 districts in the country, was also undertaken to create a proper structure for providing quality pre-service and in-service education to elementary school teachers and adult education/non-formal education personnel. The DIETs are also looked upon to provide academic and resource support to the elementary and adult education systems and to carry out action-research and innovative projects in these areas.

6© Another important post-NPE development is the setting up of a large number of Elementary Teacher Education Institutes (popularly called the D.Ed. colleges) all over the country. With the tremendous growth of elementary schooling in the country, covering most of the hitherto unserved areas , the demand for teachers has also, *pari passu*, gone up. In view of the stress on quality education in the NPE/POA, many states have prescribed D.Ed. (Diploma in Education) as a pre-condition for recruitment of elementary teachers. This resulted in establishment of a large number of D.Ed. colleges in different parts of the country, with provision for internship.

6(d) The teacher training programs are expected to cover the following aspects for teacher professional development.

- Attitude change.
- Understanding rural children and their special needs.
- Class-room management.
- Changing focus from teaching to learning.
- Creating student-friendly class-room and school atmosphere.
- Effective use of teaching-learning materials and creating such materials by using locally available materials.
- Essentials of pedagogy.
- Alternatives to class-room teaching/learning.
- Multi-grade teaching.
- Basic computer knowledge (use of the computer, surfacing the internet, word-processing, etc.).

6(e) Colleges of Education are functioning in all the States for the last several decades. and award degrees such as B.Ed., M.Ed., etc. In many states a B.Ed. degree is an essential qualification for appointment as secondary school teacher. M.Ed. degree holders are preferred for appointment in the higher secondary schools/colleges.

6(f) Almost all the universities have post-graduate research and teaching departments in education. Teacher seminars, workshops, conferences, orientation and refresher courses are regularly conducted in the universities as well as colleges with a view to enlightening teachers on latest developments in the field of education, which helps teacher professional development. Recently with the ushering into the era of globalization of education and incorporation of GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), a series of seminars was held in most of the universities and leading colleges of education to examine the implications of these developments on the Indian education system.

6(f) At the national level organizations like the NCERT, NIEPA (now NUEPA), NCTE, AICTE, UGC, DEC devise policy frameworks for teacher professional development and popularize them through periodical seminars, workshops, conferences etc. Short duration training and orientation programs are also held for the benefit of the teachers. These national level institutions also organize international seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. from time to time.

6(g) Distance Education mode is being increasingly used in India for promoting education at all levels. Besides a national level open and distance learning (ODL) University – Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) - most of the other major states have also set up their own ODL universities. Teacher education is one of the popular programs of ODL in India, so much so that the mad rush for admission had to be curbed by imposing seat-restrictions and certain minimum entry qualifications. The distance education mode has a special advantage in teacher education in that it can take place without taking the teachers away from their work. DE is particularly suited to the women, especially the rural women, who were denied opportunity due to various social, economic, historical, cultural and even religious factors. DE is also cost effective. Confidence building is an essential aspect of teacher professional development which ODL is capable of providing even in the remote, out-of-reach areas..

CONCLUSION.

It may be stated by way of conclusion that teacher professional development is of utmost importance in ensuring quality in the educational programs. This aspect has been a matter of serious concern among world education community over the last two decades or so. It is being given serious attention in India also. However total eradication of illiteracy, especially the rural illiteracy, is a stupendous task in India where 74 % population lives in the rural areas. While teacher professional development will go a long way, there is need to bring about a change in the mindset of the rural parents/elders. This is not easy to come about in a tradition bound Indian rural community.

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