Perception of Teacher Educators Towards Professional Development

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Abstract: *This paper investigated the perception of teacher educators towards professional development. The survey method was used with sample of 59 teacher educators working in five Regional Institute of Educations. Self developed perception scale consisting of 59 items based on different aspects of professional development was used as tool. The study found that i) 69.49% of teacher educators strongly percieved that professional development programme develops positive attitude towards school education and teacher education among teacher educators, ii) 74.58% of teacher educators strongly agreed that professional development helps teacher educators to discharge their duties in evaluating, encouraging student, for maintaining discipline inside the classroom, iii) 61.02% of teacher educators strongly agreed that institutions must create opportunities to practice new skills acquired during different programmes for PD, iv) 55.93% of teacher educators strongly agreed that professional development programmes should be based on the needs of TEs and on relevant topics and v) 74.58% of teacher educators strongly agreed that developing e-content and video content brings PD among TE. The present study has its implications for teacher educators, principals, educational administrators and planners of teacher education.*

Keywords: Teacher Educator, Professional Development, Perception of Teacher Educators, Positive Attitude.

1. INTRODUCTION

Well trained and well-prepared teacher educators are central to preparing high quality teachers for school education. In decade years, work in practice-based teacher education has focused on identifying and elaborating Pedagogies that teacher educators can employ to prepare novice teachers for socially and intellectually ambitious teaching Practices (Kazemi, Ghousseini, Cunard & Turrou, 2016; Lampert et.al., 2013; McDonald & Grossman, 2008; Kumar, 2017). Educators have genuine information, which led to emancipation from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality and teacher educators are the person who could show this path of liberation/strivings/salvation. The teacher educators believe in the worth and dignity of man. They recognize the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence and the nature of democratic citizenship (Kumar, 2017).

Professional development for teacher educators provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues, and community. Increased awareness of the principles governing profession is essential to ensure "professionalism". The teacher educator engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice; particularly effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community) and adapt practice to meet the needs of each learner. There is a need to delineate the value addition components of professional development of teacher educators, in terms of service related issues covering improving qualifications, contributing professionally by way of attending conferences, seminars, symposiums on the one hand and output performance indices to achieve benchmarks in the transaction of the curriculum and excelling in one's own profession on the other.

The professional development of teacher educators will have to be individual need-based and must be able to cater to the needs as and when needed by teachers and teacher educators. The ICT mediation indeed can contribute to the enhancement of quality in teaching-learning if used meaningfully. But there is a need to study different models of ICT which can suit best at different levels and for different contents. ICT can also be a specialized area for teacher educators. It is not out of place to think of roping in the IT companies in honing up the skills of teacher educators

and teachers. Perhaps, development of a national portal for teacher education for the continuous professional development of teacher educators is the need of the hour. National organizations like NCTE, NCERT and such must take initiative in this direction.

There is a need to reach out to teacher educators about their basic ideologies, their aspirations, and prerequisites. For this to happen, teacher educators must be sufficiently equipped. Teacher educators are not only to adapt to the above concerns, they need to adapt to different changing contexts and circumstances as and when situation demands. They must also be able to communicate the need and necessity for contextualization of education so that their trainees would be able to achieve them when they actually become teacher educators. These adaptabilities and skills commensurate with the above could come with the development of meta-cognitive abilities. Therefore, our approach should be to develop abilities to become relevant to all learners in varying contexts by becoming autonomous practitioners who are capable of the consequences of their autonomy of their own decisions and practices. Our standard-setting activities need to keep the above in mind. The national level organizations like NCTE and NCERT can take lead in articulating on the above issue and pave the way for enhancing the credibility of the teacher education programmes in the country by bringing professional development of teacher educators.

2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The teacher educators play an important role in grooming the teacher who is the yardstick that measures the achievements and aspirations of the nation. The worth and potentialities of a country get evaluated in and through the work of the teacher who has been trained in the profession b**y** teacher educators. The people of a country are the enlarged replica of their teacher. They are the real nation builders. Teacher educators are architect engineers in molding and designing these teachers. It needs no description that the teacher educator is the pivot of any educational systems. On him/her rests the failure or the success of the system. If the teacher educators are well committed to the profession and if they are intellectually alive and take a keen interest in their job, then only, success is ensured. On the other hand, if they lack in imparting quality training in education and cannot give their heart to their profession, the system is destined to fail. Hence, the teacher educator is a vital component of the profession.

There are a few research studies available on different aspects of the teacher educators at different levels. Some these are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Many of the new teacher educators are a struggle to know what to teach their students about teaching and how to teach in ways that will effectively support their learning as new teachers (Berry, 2007; Brooks and Brooks, 1999; Gowsami, Rath and Mohalik, 2017) contend that our perceptions and knowledge are continuously shaped by social factors. Apart from constructing knowledge individually, people construct knowledge socially. Through interaction with the environment, individuals continue to construct new knowledge. Research studies have concluded that the biggest indicator to predict student achievement is educator effectiveness (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Wong, 2001). Guskey (2000) found that never before in the history of education has greater importance been attached to the professional development of educators. The varying perceptions which societies, policy-makers, and teacher educators have of teachers are an influential factor on how teachers are prepared and how their professional development is promoted (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997; OECD, 1990). Teacher educators have multi faces: school person, scholar, researcher, methodologist, and visitor to a strange planet (Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014; Gowsami, Rath and Mohalik, 2017). Gowsami, Rath, and Mohalik, (2017) find out the six roles that teacher educators have to fulfill; teacher of teachers, researcher, coach, curriculum developer, assessor and broker.

The above studies reveal that few researches were conducted on professional development of teacher educators in India. Hence it is relevant to study the perception of teacher educators towards their professional development. The investigator raised following research question for investigation.

Whether teacher educators have favourable perception towards professional development?

3. OBJECTIVES

- To study the perception of teacher educators towards their professional development.

4. METHODOLOGY

The survey method was used to study the perception of teacher educators towards professional development. The sample consists of 59 teacher educators selected purposefully from five Regional Institute of Education (Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysuru, and Shillong). The teacher educators are belonging to Department of Education, Department of Social Science and Humanities and Department of Education in Science and Mathematics. Self developed questionnaire consisting of 59 items based on benefits and quality of professional development, the role of principal/department, role of NCTE, NCERT, UGC, NUEPA, SCERT, On-line resources and self effort for professional development. The content validity of the tools was ensured by incorporating comments and suggestions of experts and Cronbach reliability of tool was .68. The collected data were processed by using Excel and item wise analysis was done by using percentage. The detail of analysis is presented in following sections.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

After collecting the data through questionnaire, the investigator analyzed the data as per the objective. The objective of the study was to examine the perception of teacher educators towards their professional development. The investigator presents the data in percentage and frequencies in the following tables.

Table-1: Related to Benefits of Professional Development (PD)

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	DA
1	Professional development programme (PDP) develops positive attitude towards school education and teacher education among Teacher Educators (TE)	41 (69.49)	18 (30.51)	0	0
2	Academic discussion with other colleagues promotes PD	28 (47.46)	31 (52.54)	0	0
3	PD helps in developing better attitude towards their work	44 (74.58)	15 (25.42)	0	0
4	PD helps teacher educators to think critically about their own professional practices	35 (59.32)	17 (28.81)	7 (11.86)	0
5	Knowledge competency of teacher educators develops through participating in PDPs	36 (61.02)	23 (38.98)	0	0
6	PD helps teacher educators to perform their duties (Evaluating, Encouraging students, Maintaining discipline inside the class...) better	42 (71.19)	7 (11.86)	10 (16.95)	0
7	PD of teacher educator is a continuous process	44 (74.58)	14 (23.73)	1 (1.69)	0
8	Participant in PD activities develops TEs leadership's qualities	43 (72.88)	11 (18.64)	3 (5.08)	2 (3.39)
9	PD brings change in teacher educator's professional behavior	28 (47.46)	26 (44.07)	5 (8.47)	
10	PDPs sensitizes teacher educators about professional ethics	24 (40.68)	31 (52.54)	3 (5.08)	1 (1.69)
11	PD helps teacher educator in self reflection	34 (57.63)	23 (38.98)	1 (1.69)	1 (1.69)
12	PD helps teacher educators in career promotion	34 (57.63)	25 (42.37)	0	0
13	PDP develops skills for innovation in teaching	28 (47.46)	29 (49.15)	2 (3.39)	0

SA*- Strongly Agree, A*- Agree, UD*- Undecided, D*- Disagree, SD*- Strongly Agree

Table-1 reveals that 69.49% of teacher educators are strongly agreed and whereas only 30.51% teacher educators are agreed that PDP develops a positive attitude towards school education and teacher education. The same table indicates that more than 50% of teacher educators agreed that academic discussion with other colleagues promotes PD. (75)% of teacher educators strongly agreed that PD helps in developing teacher educators (TE) standard in their work and training. PD helps TEs to think critically about their own professional practices. Only 11.86% of teacher educators responded that PD activities have the least impact on improving teachers' behavior. Whereas 47.46% of teacher educators believe that PD brings change in TE's behavior. 57.63% of teacher educator strongly agreed that PD helps teacher educators for self-reflection and also for career promotion. Moreover table indicates that 70% of teacher educators strongly agree that PD is a continuous process and participating in PD activities develop leadership qualities but less than 50% of teacher educators strongly agreed that PDP develop skills for innovation in teaching.

Table-2: Related To Role of Head of COLLEGE/DEPT/INSTITUTE

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	DA
1	The principal must ensure that teacher educators are informed about avenues for updating their knowledge and skills	32 (54.24)	23 (38.98)	4 (6.78)	0
2	The role of principal is to provide innovative directions to teacher educators for their PD	29 (49.15)	28 (47.46)	2 (3.39)	0
3	Supervising work of teacher educators by principal helps in PD	33 (55.93)	16 (27.12)	9 (15.25)	1(1.69)
4	Institutions must provide opportunities to practice new skills acquired during different programmes for PD	36 (61.02)	19 (32.20)	4(6.78)	0
5	Providing opportunities during office time for professional discussion promotes PD among TE	39 (66.10)	17 (28.81)	3 (5.08)	0
6	Institute must provide facilitator and consultant to help teacher educators for PD	34 (57.63)	18 (30.51)	6 (10.17)	1 (1.69)
7	Providing facilities to organize seminar/workshop under the faculty improvement programme help in PD	19 (32.20)	40 (67.80)	0	0
8	Making availability of research journals helps in PD	19 (32.20)	28 (47.46)	0	12 (20.34)
9	Distributing work according to specialization of teacher educator enhances PD	35 (59.32)	16 (27.12)	1 (1.69)	7 (11.86)
10	Institute must create a learning community for PD of teacher educators	31 (52.54)	24 (40.68)	4 (6.78)	

It is discern from the table-2 that 54.24% of teacher educators responded that the principal must ensure that teacher educators are informed about avenues for updating their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, 49.15% teacher educators strongly agreed that the role of the principal is to provide innovative directions to teacher educator for their professional development. But, very fewer respondents disagreed for supervising the work of teacher educators by principal helps in professional development. 61.02% of teacher educators agreed that institutions must provide opportunities to practice new skills acquired during different programmes for PD. 66.10% of teacher educator responded that providing opportunity to teacher educator during office time for promoting professional development. More than 50% of teacher educators strongly agreed that institute must provide facilitator and consultant to help teacher educators for professional development. On the other hand, 52.54% teacher educator responded strongly that the institute must create a learning community for the professional development of teacher educators.

Table-3: Related to Regular Works/Responsibility for Professional Development

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD
1	Working with team helps in PD	37 (62.71)	22 (37.29)	0
2	Writing books/research papers contributes for PD	43 (72.88)	16 (27.12)	0
3	Undertaking field work like internship in teaching enhances PD	31 (52.54)	26 (44.07)	0
4	Attending conferences and workshops helps in PD	39 (66.10)	20 (33.90)	0
5	Organizing seminars/ conference/ symposiums helps in PD	37 (62.71)	22 (37.29)	0
6	Engagement in research project promotes PD	31 (52.54)	28 (47.46)	0
7	Working for developing new curriculum along with other experts promotes PD	26 (44.07)	33 (55.93)	0
8	Guiding M.Phil. /Ph.D. scholar brings PD	26 (44.07)	30 (50.85)	3 (5.08)
9	Editing journals/books promotes PD	23 (38.98)	26 (44.07)	10 (16.95)
10	Closely working with students help in PD of TEs	22 (37.29)	27 (45.76)	10 (16.95)
11	Involvement in institution/college activities promotes PD	26 (44.07)	30 (50.85)	3 (5.08)

Table-3 reveals that 62.71% of teacher educators strongly agree that working with the team help in PD and 72.88% teacher educators strongly agreed that writing books/research papers contributes for PD. On the other hand, more

than 60% of teacher educators responded that attending conferences and workshop helps in PD. Above 50% of teacher educators agreed that undertaking field work like an internship in teaching enhances PD. 52.54% of teacher educators responded strongly that engagement in research project promotes PD and less than 50% of teacher educators responded strongly that working for developing new curriculum along with other experts promotes PD. 50.85% teachers educators agreed that guiding M. Phil./ Ph.D. scholar brings PD but 16.95% of teacher educators undecided about editing journal/ books promotes PD.

Table-4: Related to Quality of Professional Development Programmes (PDP)

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	DA
1	Professional Development programmes (PDP) to be based on the needs of TEs	33 (55.93)	22 (37.29)	2 (3.39)	2 (3.39)
2	Resource Persons (RPs) in PDP provides professional learning and content specific resources	33 (55.93)	16 (27.12)	9 (15.25)	1 (1.69)
3	Feedback of participants/students helps in PD	33 (55.93)	20 (33.90)	3 (5.08)	3 (5.08)
4	Satisfied with current PDPs offered by department/University as TE	27 (45.76)	20 (33.90)	6 (10.17)	6 (10.17)
5	PDPs encourage TEs to master latest methods of teaching	32 (54.24)	18 (30.51)	9 (15.25)	0
6	PDP must be organized on relevant topics	33 (55.93)	20 (33.90)	4 (6.78)	2 (3.39)

Table-4 is related to the quality of professional development programmes. From the table data, it is revealed that very fewer teacher educators (3.39%) disagreed and also undecided about professional development programmes (PDP) to be based on the needs of TEs. On the other hand, more than 50% of teacher educators responded strongly that resource persons (RPs) in PDP provide professional learning and content specific resources. Whereas 5.08% of teacher educators disagreed and also undecided about feedback of participants/students helps in PD but, 55.93% of teacher educators responded strongly to this. 54.24% of teacher educators responded strongly that PDPs encourage TEs to master latest methods of teaching but, 15.25% teacher educators undecided about it. 55.93% of TEs responded strongly that PDP must be organized on relevant topics but, very fewer TEs (3.39%) disagree and also 6.78% of TEs undecided about it.

Table-5: Related to On-Line Resources

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	DA
1	Developing e-content and video content brings PD among teacher educators	44 (74.58)	9 (15.25)	6 (10.17)	0
2	Using online materials developed by e-pathashala and pg-pathshala helps in PD	36 (61.02)	22 (37.29)	1 (1.69)	0
3	Using ICT facilities during professional development programme brings PD	19 (32.20)	22 (37.29)	1 (1.69)	17 (28.18)
4	Attending refresher courses and orientation programmes brings PD of teacher educators	46 (77.97)	12 (20.34)	0	1 (1.69)
5	Use of Inflibnet helps in PD of teacher educators	33 (55.93)	22 (37.29)	3 (5.08)	1 (1.69)
6	e-Content provides learning material for PD of teacher educators	28 (47.46)	25 (42.37)	5 (8.47)	1 (1.69)
7	On-line resources provide access to huge amount of study materials for the PD of teacher educators	35 (59.32)	21 (35.59)	2 (3.39)	1 (1.69)

Table-5 revealed that 74.58% of teacher educators responded strongly that developing e-content and video content brings PD among TEs. On the other hand, 61% of teacher educators responded strongly that using online materials developed by e-pathashala and pg-pathshala helps in PD and 28.18% of teacher educators disagreed that using ICT facilities during professional development programme brings PD. But, majority teacher educators (77.97%) strongly agreed that attending refresher courses and orientation programmes bring PD of TEs whereas very fewer respondents (1.69%) disagreed about the use of Inflibnet helps in PD of TEs. 47.46% of teacher educators responded strongly that e-Content provides learning material for PD of TEs whereas 59.32% of teacher educators strongly agreed that online resources provide access to huge amount of study materials for the PD of TE.

Table-6: Related to Role of NCTE/NCERT/UGC/NUEPA/SCERT

Sl No.	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	DA
1	Social networking brings PD by providing opportunities for sharing information among students and TEs	27 (45.76)	27 (45.76)	4 (6.78)	1 (1.69)
2	University Grants Commission (UGC) provides awareness about new technology and methodology to upgrade the standard of TEs	22 (37.29)	26 (44.07)	8 (13.56)	3 (5.08)
3	SCERT publications (books, journals, reports) help TEs in their PD	20 (33.90)	25 (42.37)	10 (16.95)	4 (6.78)
4	National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is responsible for bringing PD of TE	27 (45.76)	20 (33.90)	11 (18.64)	1 (1.69)
5	UGC provide the grants to the University/Institute for organizing PDP for TEs	25 (42.37)	20 (33.90)	12 (20.34)	2 (3.39)
6	NCERT provides academic support to TEs for PD	25 (42.37)	33 (55.93)	1 (1.69)	0
7	SCERT and NCERT works jointly for the PD of TE	23 (38.98)	33 (55.93)	3 (5.08)	0
8	SCERT provides facilities to organize orientation/in-service programmes for the professional growth of Teacher Educators	25 (42.37)	26 (44.07)	8 (13.56)	0
9	NCERT publications (books, journals, reports) helps TEs in their PD	32 (54.24)	24 (40.68)	3 (5.08)	0
10	NCERT funds research project for TEs to promote PD	37 (62.61)	21 (35.59)	1 (1.69)	0
11	SCERT supports research in education for PD of teacher educators	30 (50.85)	18 (30.51)	9 (15.25)	2 (3.39)
12	NCERT develops capacity of TEs on latest pedagogy and technology	31 (52.54)	26 (44.07)	1 (1.69)	1 (1.69)

It is revealed that 45.76% of teacher educators strongly agree that social networking brings PD by providing opportunities for sharing information among students. On the other hand, 5.08% of teacher educators disagreed that University Grants Commission (UGC) provides awareness about new technology and methodology to upgrade the standard of TEs and 42.37% of TEs agreed that SCERT publications (books, journals, reports) help TE in their PD. 42.37% of teacher educators responded strongly that UGC provides the grants to the University/Institute for organizing PDP for TEs. On the other hand 54.24% teacher educators responded strongly agree for NCERT publications (books, journals, reports) helps TEs in their PD. 62.61% of teacher educators strongly agreed that NCERT funds research project to promote PD.

6.　MAJOR FINDINGS

1. 69.49% of teacher educators strongly perceived that professional development programme develops positive attitude towards school education and teacher education among teacher educators.

2. 74.58% of teacher educators strongly agreed that professional development helps teacher educators to discharge their duties in evaluating, encouraging student, for maintaining discipline inside the classroom and 72.88% of teacher educators strongly agreed that participating in PD activities develops teacher educator's leadership qualities.

3. 61.02% of teacher educators strongly agreed that institutions must create opportunities to practice new skills acquired during different programmes for PD and 66.10% of teacher educators strongly agreed that providing opportunities during office time for discussion promotes PD among TE.

4. 62.17% of teacher educators strongly agreed that PD helps to develop activities like working with team members, 72.88% of TEs writing the books/research papers and 66.10%. of TEs attending conferences and workshops.

5. 55.93% of teacher educators strongly agreed that professional development programmes should be based on the needs of TEs and on relevant topics.

6. 74.58% of teacher educators strongly agreed that developing e-content and video content brings PD among TE and 77.97% of teacher educators agreed that attending refresher courses and orientation programmes help in PD among the TEs.

7.   54.24% of teacher educators agreed that NCERT publications (books, journals, reports) and technology helps TEs to bring PD and 52.54% of teacher educators agreed that the NCERT develops the capacity of TEs on latest pedagogy and technology.

8. 42.37% of teacher educators agreed that UGC and NCERT organize professional development programmes for teacher educators. The SCERT and NCERT must work together for the development of professional skills of teacher educators.

7.   EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study has its implications for teacher educators, principals, educational administrators and planners of teacher education.

1. The study revealed that the professional development brings change in the attitude of teacher educator towards teacher education, school education and own profession. So teacher educators must be encouraged, motivated and sponsored by the educational administrators and   Principals to participate in different professional development activities.

2. The professional development helps teacher educator to discharge different responsibilities such as teaching, evaluating, managing students etc. Hence need based and relevant professional development programmes must be organized by SCERT, NCERT and University Departments.

3. It is found that professional development programmes does not sensitize and develop professional ethics among teacher educator. Teacher educators must be familiar with ethical standards and behaviours of teaching profession. So care must be taken to create awareness among teacher educators about professional ethics of teacher educator.

4. The principal has great responsibility for the professional development of teacher educators. So the principal must provide opportunities and facilities to teacher educators for prating new methods and content learned from the professional development programmes. The principal must create a learning community in the institute for academic discussion among teacher educators. It is also responsibility of principal to guide the novice teacher educator in teaching learning, internship and other management activities.

5. Teacher educators must be involved in designing new curriculum, writing research papers, book chapters, guiding research scholars as these are helpful for the professional development. They must be encouraged to attend and organize conference/seminars and workshop.

6. Teacher educators are not satisfied with quality of professional development programmes. The SCERT, NCERT, RIE and University Departments must take initiatives for organizing quality training programmes. Professional development programmes must help teacher educators in personal and professional development.

7. ICT is very useful for professional development of teacher educators. So adequate ICT facilities must be available in teacher training institutes that can be utilized by the teacher educators for teaching and learning. All teacher educators must be oriented in using online tools and mobile applications that can help in professional development.

8. The NCERT, SCERT, NCTE and University Departments has significant role in professional development of teacher educators. These institutions must organize orientation and training programmes for teacher educators on new and innovative teaching practices and research skills.

8.   CONCLUSION

The quality of teacher education mainly rests on professional development of teacher educators. Hence initiatives must be taken by the Principal, NCERT, SCERT, University Departments, NCTE and UGC to educate both prospective as well as in-service teacher educators. Teacher educators must be encouraged and motivated to involve in reflective practices which is key to professional development. On the other hand all the teacher educators must be oriented in the use of ICT resources, open learning resources, mobile applications and 21st century skills which can

help them in professional development. The quality of teacher education and school education cannot be realized without the professional development of teacher educators. Since NCERT is the apex body at National level in the field of school education, its faculty members must be professionally developed so that they can bring qualitative improvement in school and teacher education.

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