

# Importance Of In- Service Teacher Education In Sikkim

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## Abstract

*Education helps in preparing such individuals who are socially competence physically well developed, emotionally matured and mentally alert. For improving the status and quality of school education in the state of Sikkim. It is very essential to upgrade our working teachers with adequate skills, competencies and knowledge. The term 'in-service teacher education program' connotes any programme provided to teachers already working in schools, with the explicit purpose of updating and renewing their knowledge, technical skills, etc., for main-training and enhancing their <sup>1</sup>efficiency. In-service teacher education can be seen as a continuation of pre-service teacher education. In fact, the relevance of in-service education can be understood only when viewed in this context. Even in the case of an effective pre-service program, the impact on recipients can wear out over time. The teacher's training program is the activities which may enhance their professional knowledge, interest and attitude so that they are able to maximize their pupils' learning and, in turn, derive maximum inner satisfaction and sense of achievement.*

*This paper deals with different prospects of in-service teachers training program such as concept, needs and importance, scope, aims and objectives of professional development of in-service teachers, major challenges in teacher education, major concerns for in-service teachers' professional development with suggestions and recommendations.*

**Key words:** In- service, Skills, Program, Training.

## Introduction

The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage. The term 'in-service teacher education programme' connotes any programme provided to teachers already working in schools, with the explicit purpose of updating and renewing their knowledge, technical skills, etc., for main-training and enhancing their efficiency. In-service teacher education can be seen as a continuation of pre-service teacher education. In fact, the relevance of in-service education can be understood only when viewed in this context. Teaching, being creative and individualistic, requires periodic rejuvenation of teachers' attributes and upgrading of their technical know-how. Even a school teacher who has been 'an outstanding B.Ed. student', who begins his/her teaching career with great enthusiasm, equipped with an initial amount of technical know-how and the positive feedback received while 'under training', needs

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improvement. Every teacher can perceive his/her own diminishing 'impact' on students. This creates a psychological conflict between one's perception of one's performance as a student teacher, and the students' reactions, which are not always favourable. In-service education would continually help effective teachers stay effective. In the case of 'mediocre' teachers, the effect of their initial training wears off faster, and over the years they become increasingly ineffective. Meaningful in-service education could be one way of maintaining them at least at the minimum level of efficiency.

Thus, in-service education is essentially a continuation of pre-service programmes. The knowledge base has predominance over the practice component in a pre-service teacher education programme. This is because an entrant teacher has to gain a clear understanding not only of the pedagogic details but also the manner in which they operate in the field, and then practice these for confirming his/her own understanding and gaining the initial level of skills. They must, therefore, deal with specific aspects, be more technical and advanced in substance and have scope for 'on-field' experience. They must, further, have the capability to cater to different needs of teachers working under distinctly different conditions, facing peculiar problems and with varying degrees of technical 'wearing out'. The variety of programmes for in-service education, thus, ranging from substantive upgrading in different school subjects to enhancement of pedagogic skills and to field-based problem-solving. These should be undertaken in relation to the school dimension, in terms of the duration, venue and training inputs.

In-Service Teachers training is very vital in any organization that aims at progressing. Training of teacher simply refers to the process of acquiring the essential skills required for development of children. It targets specific goals, for instance understanding a process and operating a certain system. This includes decision making, thinking creatively and managing people. Teachers Training is crucial for organizational development and success. A Trainee will become more efficient and productive if he is trained well. The Trainees are trained to refresh and enhance their knowledge. In order to address issues related to efficacy of teacher training, MHRD undertook a review of teacher training strategies and programmes, with a view to impacting the final classroom processes and learning achievement of children.

### **Importance of In-Service Teacher Education:**

In service teacher education is primarily meant for regular serving teachers. It includes such new courses whose fruitfulness and validity have been tested. It subjects the serving teachers to such activities which may enhance their professional knowledge, interest and attitude so that they are able to maximize their pupils' learning and, in turn, derive maximum inner satisfaction and sense of achievement.

1. **Education of the educator:** It continues throughout his professional career in a planned manner.
2. **Educational extension:** It contributes to the qualitative improvement of education.
3. **Changing areas of human endeavour:** These changes demand corresponding changes in education and the educators. All these new developments, innovations, and changes necessitate corresponding changes to be brought about in educational objectives, curricula, textual content, teaching methods, instructional materials without delay so that education remains dynamic, up to date and responsive. Educational extension prepares in-service teachers and other educators for bringing these required changes in education.
4. **Improvement of competence:** In order to bring about changes in education, corresponding to the changes in other related areas, it is necessary to improve the

competence of the teachers in terms of his knowledge, skills, interests, and aptitudes as an essential means of improving education.

5. **Need of change:** In addition to mass scale changes to be brought about in education from time to time, individual teachers and small groups of school may feel the need of bringing about certain changes and aspire to solve certain specific academic problems. Educational extension is capable of helping these individuals or groups in meeting their academic need and in solving their academic problems.

#### **Scope of in-service Training Programmes:**

- i. **Pre-service and the initial teacher education:** To be provided as a systematic professional induction to all new teachers, entering the teaching profession.
- ii. **Recurrent in service teacher orientation:** To be offered on a recurrent basis and in an organised manner to those teachers who are already on the job, through seminars, workshops and orientation programmes held from time to time as new professional needs arise.
- iii. **Continuing professional self-learning:** To be pursued by teachers on their own through books, journals, audio-video aids and other local, national and international sources as part of self-directed and lifelong learning for their professional progress according to their individual needs, interests and specific professional responsibilities.
- iv. **Up gradation to higher professional education:** Plans and provisions for deserving teachers, headmasters and other educators to upgrade their basic professional qualification, to train high level specialists etc.

Secondary Education (classes IX and X) is a crucial stage for children as it prepares them for higher education and also for the world of work. It is very essential to provide good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all our children in the age group of 14-16 years. To achieve this, there is a need to strengthen the secondary school education by providing opportunities to teachers for improving their professional capabilities/capacities. In majority of the schools, untrained teachers are handling secondary classes. Even the trained teachers are facing lot of challenges to handle classes at secondary stage of school education especially in science and mathematics.

During the XI Five Year Plan secondary education has been accorded relatively high priority in the development agenda of the country keeping in view the demographic profile and the need of a knowledge society and economy. In order to give concrete goal-oriented shape to the efforts, Government of India launched a comprehensive centrally sponsored scheme called 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)', in March 2009 with the objective to make good quality secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons, irrespective of gender, socioeconomic condition, disability, geographical and other barriers. The present aim is to have a secondary school of acceptable norms and standards within 5 km of every habitation in the country, and similarly to have a higher secondary school within 8 km.

According to the Seventh All India Education Survey, 88 percent of habitations, serving a population of 92 percent have a secondary school within a distance of 5.0 km. Number of secondary and higher secondary schools and participation of students at these levels is continuously increasing. During the last three years 2004-05 to 2006-07, number of secondary and higher secondary schools increased from 1.5 lakh to 1.6 lakh. With the increase in enrolment and growth of institutions, the number of teachers has increased from 20.83 lakh to 22.22 lakh.

The pupil teacher ratio has remained static during above period. At secondary stage, subject-wise teachers are required for improving the quality and pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) may be 30:1. States/UTs may follow the guidelines as per NCTE norms for recruitment of subject-

wise teachers at secondary stage keeping in view the diversity and disparities in recruitment policy in different states/UTs.

### **Professional Development of In-Service Teachers**

Professional development is the enrichment training provided to teachers over a period of time to promote their development in all aspects of content and pedagogy. Professional development for teachers should be analogous to professional development of other professionals. Becoming an effective teacher is a continuous process that stretches from pre-service experiences to the end of the

professional career. It is conceptually divided into pre-service and in-service teacher training. It is not simply a time-bound activity or series of events, but a continuous process. From this perspective, the conventionally divided in-service and pre-service activities should be viewed as seamless components of the same process. It is the tool by which policy makers' visions for change are disseminated and conveyed to teachers. The ultimate beneficiary of In-Service Teacher Professional Development (ITPD) is the student though the receiver is the teacher.

Professional development for teachers is more than training or classes as it functions as an agent for change in their classroom practices. The growth of a teacher's skill and understanding is developed through personal reflection, interactions with colleagues and mentoring which gives confidence by engaging with their practices and reaffirming their experiences. It could have a positive impact on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge as many teachers feel challenged with teaching of curricular subjects due to lack of previous experience with hands-on activities, lack of content knowledge, lack of interest to acquire the resources needed to create appropriate learning environments and lack of confidence.

In the last few years, major in-service professional development programmes have been conceptualised and implemented. DPEP and subsequently SSA have brought in the possibility of continuous capacity building exercise for teachers. We need to review and analyse participation of state level and national level organisations in these efforts and the extent to which meaningful progress in design and implementation of the professional development programmes were made, analyse the scope of participation and involvement of agencies working in the field of secondary education and the availability of capable pedagogues.

### **Aims of In-service Teachers Professional Development**

The aims of In-service Teachers Professional Development are to:

1. Enrich and update teachers' knowledge in their discipline, pedagogy and other areas of school curriculum continuously.
2. Develop a culture of shared learning and accountability such that teachers are not mere recipients of training conceptualised in a top-down manner but are engaged with the task to develop their own and the group's knowledge.
3. Evolve a mechanism by which effective programmes of teacher professional development can be initiated for large number of teachers in vastly different areas and to deal with a range of diverse learners for inclusive education.
4. Research and reflect on the gaps in students' learning and their progress
5. Understand and update their knowledge on social issues
6. Apply Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their classrooms for better student learning.
7. Motivate and regenerate enthusiasm of teachers to inculcate interest in innovations.

### **Major Challenges in Teacher Education**

A lot of planning and resources has been spent for improving the quality of teacher education. New technologies have been introduced in the field of education still our teacher-education could not raise up to the expected level. It is lacking behind somewhere in realizing its purpose. Its scope has broadened and its objectives have become focused during the last thirty-five years, but teacher education could not realize its objective fully. Some specific challenges can be identified as follows:

- **Developing Creativity**
- **Working of Teacher Education Institutions**
- **Globalization and Erosion of Values**
- (a) **Developing Life Skills:**
  - Thinking-Skills:**
    - 1) Self-Awareness,
    - 2) Problem Solving,
    - 3) Creative Thinking,
    - 4) Decision making and
    - 5) Critical thinking
  - (b) **Social-Skills:**
    - 1) Interpersonal relations,
    - 2) Effective communication and
    - 3) Empathy
  - (c) **Emotional Skills** – Stress Management.
- **Realisation of Constitutional Goals like:**
  - 1) Equality of status and opportunity.
  - 2) Liberty of thought, expression, faith, belief and worship.
  - 3) Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity and integrity of the nation
  - 4) Justice – Social, Economic and political

These concepts incorporated in the constitutional are essential for national development. One of the major issues of teacher education is the realization of these constitutional goals.

- **Social Issues like:**
  - 1) Population explosion,
  - 2) Unemployment,
  - 3) Diversity
  - 4) Communal Harmony
- **Structure of Teacher Education Programme:** A lot of stress is given on teacher education course in India, although there are several loopholes in the system. Several loopholes are following:
  - a) **Curriculum** - Curriculum of teacher education program in India has been criticized much. Some educationists feel that it does not fully address the need of contemporary Indian Schools and society and it does not contain relevant contents for teachers who are to impart quality education in schools.
  - b) **Quality Concern** - Quality in education relates to the quality of the work undertaken by a teacher, which has significantly affected upon his or her pupils. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issues related to teaching methods, content, organisations etc. more knowledge of theoretical principles is emphasized and teachers are not able to these principles in actual classroom situations.

### **Major Concerns for In-service Teachers Professional Development**

The main concerns that need to be looked into in the secondary education sector include:

1. Evolving a shared perspective on the purpose of in-service teacher professional development.
2. Evolving a mechanism/strategy by which effective programmes of continuous teacher professional development can be initiated for large number of teachers spread over a variety of areas and dealing with very different situations. Because each major centrally sponsored scheme namely SOPT, PMOST, DPEP and SSA used a different strategy for teacher training. The strategies remained traditional and they are 'onetime affair'.
3. Maintaining the enthusiasm of personnel implementing the teacher professional development programmes.
4. Evolving a model for the continuous professional development for building the capacity of individuals who plan, implement and are engaged in this effort.
5. Ensuring that teachers who are involved in developing their professional capacities are motivated to contribute and to learn from these programmes so that they can implement these in their classrooms.
6. Identifying and developing appropriate themes, and interaction mechanisms, procedures, norms and logistics and acquiring appropriate learning resources.
7. Reviewing and analysing the systems for large scale professional development activities.
8. Identifying and evolving the possibility of the extent to use ICT in the trainings through cascade and other models.
9. Analysing the different aspects of in-service teacher professional development and exploring the possibilities that make teachers engage with diversity among the children (such as marginalised, children with special needs) with confidence and competence.

### **Suggestions and Recommendation**

1. Faculty of SCERTs, IASEs, CTEs and University Education Departments would be involved as master trainers and mentors for the following activities:
  - a) Development of a network among institutions and individuals of SCERTs/SIEs, IASEs and CTEs and University Education Departments.
  - b) Organisation of workshops for content and pedagogy enrichment.
  - c) Developing training capacity for action research projects and ICT applications (computer, radio and TV)
  - d) Development of a set of indicators and benchmarks to track in-service professional development of teachers and the institutions which organize them.
  - e) Development of short-term courses for continuous professional development and upload on the websites.
  - f) Devise open and distance learning (ODL) strategies for concurrent/perennial professional development.

As many state governments have recruited untrained para-teachers/vidya volunteers in different kinds of formal schools and non-formal centers, it is necessary to take steps to design in-service teacher professional development programmes to address the needs of such teachers to bring quality in secondary education. Different strategies have to be adopted for different states/UTs regarding recruitment policy of teachers and training strategies e.g., most of the teachers in North eastern region and Sikkim are untrained. Para teachers are also appointed in many states/UTs.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. It refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. Teacher education has the honor of being simultaneously the worst problem and the best solution in education.

Unprecedented expansion of teacher education institutions and programs during the past few years characterizes the teacher education scenario of today. With increasing school enrolments and the launch many education development programs like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Program, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Universalization of Elementary Education, there was a natural increase in the demand for teachers.

Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration and structure.

The teachers at the elementary level need to be trained more and oriented about the conceptual framework and use of mastery learning strategies. The trainings must give importance writing instructional objectives in behavioural terms, setting up mastery criteria, various activities and methods to be used, preparation of formative a diagnostic test, diagnosing the difficulties of the students and providing remedial instruction to the students. Training of the elementary teachers is also needed in the co-scholastics areas so that the teachers can draw out the inner potentialities of the child. After each in service training programme, effective feedback should be collected for future improvement in the training programmes.

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