

## **Efficacy of Continuous Professional Development Programs in Special Education Department, Punjab**

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### **Abstract**

CPD (continuous professional development) is crucial for quality education. The study "efficacy of CPD in the field of special education" interested to trace the structure, criteria, process, content, field practices and effectiveness of CPD special education. The design of the study was qualitative in nature and it was phenomenological study. Sample of 10 teachers serving in special education department of Punjab were selected by convenient sampling. A semi structured open ended interview was conducted individually with all subjects of the study to gather data. Thematic analysis was used to reach the results of the study. The results of the study revealed that the scheme, schedule, magnitude, criteria and content of CPD were unsatisfactory and inconsistent. It was suggested that structure, scheme, process, criteria, content and practices regarding CPD should be reconsidered/revised in the field of special education. Efficacy of CPD programs can be sustained by linking increments, distant education, technology driven and learning.

**Key words:** Efficacy, Continuous Professional Development, Special Education

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### **Introduction**

Teacher education should be continuous and should not end when a diploma/degree or certificate is received. It should be the major vehicle for the construction of learner-centered initiatives through socializing, sponsored internships, and continuous educational requirements (Hammond, 2006; Hammond & Bransford, 2005). It is commonly acknowledged that

the learning atmosphere (classroom and institute), experimentation, reciprocal dialogues, and reflections are important factors in individual learning (Borks, 2004, p.4). Teacher development has been demonstrated in studies to be a substantial impact in student accomplishment. Teacher professional development can improve educational quality (Anderson, 2002). The concept of "reflective participation" inspired

the concept of teacher empowerment. This concept acknowledges that "educators are professionals" who can reflect on the school and classroom environment (Heibert et al. 2002; du Plessis et al. 2006).

The concept of teachers' constant professional development is promoted in both national and international studies. Teachers' ongoing professional development is critical for improving student achievement. Teachers' ongoing professional development can help to improve educational quality (Anderson, 2002). Quality education is a moving target. Teachers, instructional methods, educational material, learning environment, scheduling, management, funding, and organization, among other things, are all included. For different people and individuals, the term quality education has different meanings. These interpretations are based on their views, viewpoints, roles, and experiences, among other factors. 2009 (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral).

Education quality is difficult to define since, like "justice and independence," quality can only be experienced. Experts have recommended quality measures rather than making philosophical assertions. The parameters of have been determined by higher education institutions based on their operations. These indicators include student results, employment ratios after graduation, the organization's external reputation, instructor education, and so on. Even though, there are several levels and degrees of "quality", it can broadly be defined as "the diversity between the ordinary and extraordinary" or "the distinction between failure and conquest" (Haseena & Mohammed, 2015).

Improved teacher performance was consistently linked to a better developed concept of the "teacher as professional"

(Boyle et al. 2003; Heibert et al. 2002; Verspoor, 2006).

One of the most crucial matters in teacher quality education for policymakers is to ensure that all teachers are involved in influential ways to continuing professional development (Santiago & Mckenzia, 2006).

Global teaching and learning progression scholars are of the opinion that flourishing learning reforms can better achieved in the course of teachers' capacity building rather than curriculum imposition (Craig et al, 1998; Hammond, 1993; Lieberman & Miller, 1990).

The proposed study is an effort to depict the efficacy of CPD programs in the field of special education. Numerous research work has been finished nationwide as well as globally to enhance the quality of teacher and their education or training but now question arises what has been done to improve for the teacher of students with special needs. The present study is an attempt to describe the recent scenario and practices regarding CPD of special education teachers in the province of the Punjab.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was 1) to describe the efficacy of Continuous Professional Development programs presented by government for special educators. 2) To conclude the approval of teachers concerning continuous development programs. 3) To discover the relevance between continuous professional development programs and practices.

### **Methodology**

The design of the study was qualitative in nature. The intent of the study was to describe the CPD efficiency in the field of special education. Teachers who were serving in the special education institutions of the Punjab were the participants of the study the subject of the study were selected

by purposive sampling. The sample was selected on the base of a prescribed criteria. Teachers who were recently serving in the field of special education and also attended minimum one or more CPD trainings from the government of the Punjab were selected. Semi structured interviews were conducted in face to face meetings to attend in depth inside into the phenomena of the interest thematic analysis was applied together the results from data the results

were reported under the themes of training scheme schedule of institute participants selection process for training criteria of selection for training duration and magnitude of training and content of training.

The data was gathered from seven districts of Punjab (Gujranwala, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi and Sargodha).

Table 1

*Participants breakdown by area*

Sr. No.	Div. Name	District	f	%
1	Lahore	Lahore	2	20%
		Sheikhupura	1	10%
2	Multan	Multan	1	10%
3	Rawalpindi	Rawalpindi	2	20%
4	Sargodha	Sargodha	2	20%
5	Gujranwala	Gujranwala	1	10%
		Hafiz Abad	1	10%
			10	

30% of the participants were from Lahore, 10% from Multan, 20% from Rawalpindi, 20% from Sargodha and 20% from Gujranwala.

**Tables Concerning Sample Characteristics**

Subsequent tables are reflecting the characteristics of the teachers of students with disabilities.

Table 2

*Participants' breakdown by gender*

Gender	f	%
Male	04	40%
Female	06	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 2 reflects that 40% participants were male and 60% were female.

Table 3

*Participants' breakdown by age*

Age ranges	f	%
25-30	3	30%
31-35	5	50%
36-40	2	20%
Total	10	100.0%

Table 3 reflects that 30% participants were of age range 25-30 years, 50% were of age range 31-35 years and 20% were of 36-40 years age range.

Table 4

*Participants' breakdown by designation*

Category	f	%
SSET	4	40%
JSET	6	60%
Total	10	100.0

Table 4 reflects that 40% participants were SSET and 60% participants were JSET.

Table 5

*Participants' breakdown by qualification*

Level	f	%
B.A B.ED	2	20%
M.ED	4	40%
M.A	4	40%
Total	10	100.%

Table 5 reflects that qualification of 20% participants was "B.A" with B.ED (special education), 40% were "M. Ed" (special education) and 40% were "Masters" (special education).

Table 6

*Participants breakdown by area of specialization*

Type of specialization	f	%
EOPI	2	20%
EOHI	3	30%
EOVI	3	30%

EOMD	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 6 reflects that 20% of the participants were educators of students with physical impairments, 30% of the participants were educators of students with hearing impairments, 30% participants were educators of students with visual impairments and 20% participants were educators of students with mental deficits.

Table 7

*Participants' breakdown by experience*

Experience In years	F	%
1-5	2	20%
6-10	3	30%
11-15	3	30%
16-20	2	20%
Total	10	100.0%

Table 7 reflects that 20% participants were with 1-5 years, 30% participants were with 6-10 years, 30% participants were with 11-15 years and 30% participants were with experience of 16-20 years.

#### **Results about Efficacy of CPD Programs**

According to survey participants, the special education section has an entity that is liable for teacher professional development in Punjab. This institution has its personal scheme of trainings, assets, trainers/staff, and financial resources. The institution was founded in order to increase the skills of instructors working in Punjab's special education department.

#### **Training Scheme/Schedule of the Institute**

The institution, according to respondents, features a year-round system for training programs. These sessions are planned ahead of time. The framework of training programs, according to respondents, comprises instruction before

entering the school and during professional development programs throughout service; however the institution does not follow the prescribed format.

Most teachers are required to enter the field without any introductory training, according to respondents. A few teachers received training before starting at the school. The majority of teachers may or may not attend training in the future. The number of people who can participate in CPD programs is also limited and selective. The institute offers a variety of courses for instructors of various positions and classifications. Some courses are designed specifically for junior instructors, while others are designed specifically for older teachers. Some courses, JSETs of all fields and SSETs of all fields, are meant for instructors of all areas and designations, while others are geared for a particular category of teachers, JSETs VI or SSETs HI.

According to the respondents, the

institution is not doing enough to fulfill the professional development needs and obstacles that teachers face. The institute's training system is neither strong nor well-functioning. According to the majority of responders, training structures are unrelated to field activities. Some responders were pleased with the training structure, but the majority was not.

### **Participants Selection Process for Training**

According to the data, there is no defined and systematic process or method for selecting participants for CPD programs at in-service teacher training colleges. The selecting method is ineffective and ineffective, because there is no specific selection process at the institute. They stated that the selecting procedure is unclear. Influential people and references in the field and department of special education influence the selection process.

The respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the selecting procedure. The majority of responders stated that personal relationships influence the process. The majority of them stated that the selecting procedure is unfair and vague.

### **Criteria of Selection for Training**

There are no selection criteria for admitting participants to the training program, according to all responders. The only condition is that teachers who have already completed some form of training prior to and during service are not eligible. Selection criteria are inadequate, according to responders. Members' selection criteria have no bearing on field practices. The selection criteria did not satisfy all of the responders.

### **Duration and Magnitude of Re-training**

According to the responses, there is no set time limit or duration for inviting the same person to the CPD program. Respondents believe the institute's defined train re-training time duration is insufficient. The duration of training retraining is unrelated to field practices. The time length and duration of training and retraining were not specified in a way that satisfied responders.

### **Content of Training**

Scheduled trainings include specified and planned content that must be provided during training, according to responders. Teachers receive training in teaching different therapies (for teachers with mental and physical disabilities), instructional techniques, tutorial preparation, classroom organization and management, evaluation (for all teachers of all categories), play, behavioral and cooperative therapies throughout the training sessions (for teachers of students with intellectual and developmental deficits). The substance of these trainings, according to responders, is predetermined and not adjustable. The distribution of content during training is prioritized over skill development.

Half of the responders said the training content is adequate for meeting the various needs of time and field, while the other half said it is insufficient. The majority of responders were unsure about the field's content relevance. A few others believed that content was relevant to field activities and aided in the teaching/learning procedures.

Some of the responders were dissatisfied with the training material, knowledge, and skills they received. While

some were dissatisfied with the knowledge and skills emphasized throughout training sessions, the majority were satisfied.

### Conclusion and Discussion

Although there is now just one institute working in the subject of special education to support teacher professional development, this is insufficient to meet the needs of teachers. The organization of training programs, the selection procedure, selection criteria, and the training content are insufficient and do not appropriately align the needs. To improve instructor quality, the existing system must be improved, and a new institute must be established.

The study also sought to determine the effectiveness of continuing professional development programs special education section. CPD is critical to increasing educational quality. Training programs in special education field are poorly developed and implemented. These programs do not provide enough possibilities for teachers to benefit.

In Punjab, there is just one institute that conducts trainings, which is insufficient to address the needs of teacher CPD. To make the current training framework effective, more institutes and people are required. The institute lacks a clear and well-defined selection procedure and criteria. The current state of the system is inadequate. It is need of hours to strengthen the scheme in order to raise the educational quality of students with special needs.

Subject-based teaching is not emphasized in CPD programs and is completely ignored. Holistic assessment, psychological therapies and treatments (for instructors of PHCs and IDD), classroom

organization and management, and disability-related instructional approaches are all covered in these training programs. In both degree and training programs, the emphasis was on knowledge rather than skill development.

### Suggestions

- 1) To ensure maximum compliance from newly recruited instructors, the structure and procedural problems should be resolved at the in-service education institute. In view of new research developments, refresher training for older teachers are also required to maintain them on pace with developing countries.
- 2) An in-service training college could launch online and distance professional development courses for more teachers. An authorized web site can be developed and launched, where footage of training sessions can posted and all teachers can register themselves with a unique ID. This ID allows teachers to access the shared content on the website at any time.
- 3) In addition, experienced and skilled instructors who have completed in-service training can advise newly inducted teachers as a Master Trainer.
- 4) By establishing cluster heads at the divisional level, the training scenario can be decentralized.
- 5) To assist instructors and achieve international standards, training sessions can be performed at regular and periodic intervals in cluster heads.

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