

Teachers' Professional Development at Public Campuses: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Teacher professional development is the process of becoming competent teacher. It is an opportunity for teachers to share their knowledge and develop new instructional practices. TPD helps to keep academics up-to-date with the changing world and knowledge. The objective of this study was to explore issues and challenges of teacher professional development in public campuses of Nepal. This study was qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. The participants of the study were three teachers of different public campuses of Rupendehi district selected purposively. The study revealed that teachers of public campuses deserve TPD high significance in the sense that it helps teachers develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge, and new techniques of teaching. However, Public campuses are facing many challenges which include proper management TPD for faculties of their campuses and there is a gap between policies and practices in implementation of TPD in public campuses of Nepal.

Key words: Teacher Professional Development, Public campuses, Opportunities, Challenges, Phenomenological design

Introduction

TPD helps any teacher to enhance the teacher's professionalism. TPD starts from the beginning and continues until the retirement professionally and deathbed personally. TPD works toward a longer-term objective and aims to improve teachers' self-improvement and progress in their understanding of teaching. It is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically. The TPD program aims to improve teachers' abilities in the classroom and their effectiveness overall. TPD has been realized as a powerful approach to implement child-friendly activity-based education for education in the twenty-first century (Pokhrel, 2016). It maintains a certain level of professionalism and has a positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices. As part of their ongoing development, teachers must keep up with new issues and challenges as well as new ideas and concepts in their respective fields in order to be effective educators. They must also adapt to their own evolving needs and preferences as well as changes in the economy, society, and technology.

Public campuses are those higher education institutions. Most of the public campuses are in rural areas so we can find local manpower mostly engaged in other schools and sectors. The public

campuses are unable to offer better facilities for their teachers and do not have a very sharp vision and policies regarding the professional development of the faculty members. Reflecting on my fifteen years of experience teaching in a public campus in Rupandehi, I realized that very few teachers from public campuses have got the chance for professional development activities. Being a campus chief of a public campus I have an understanding that the stakeholders are muddled for the professional development of their faculties. Present provision of teacher professional development is inadequate to prepare for the changing nature of their jobs, including using technology and digital learning tools, analyzing student data to differentiate instruction, and implementing real-life situations.

Higher education has been very essential for us in shaping our careers. It is also important that we have quality education to shape a better future. For this, we need to have quality teacher professional development strategies. TPD is a process of institutionalization of knowledge, skills, and ethics. It is an ideology that emphasizes more knowledge, skills, and ethics than the material benefits which accrue to a profession. TPD is an ideology that emphasizes more knowledge, skills, and ethics than the material benefits which accrue to a profession. The teachers of public campuses have not been getting such facilities. So it is necessary to find out whether the public campuses are delivering such opportunities to the teachers or not? How often teachers got the opportunity to participate in career development and TPD activities? And what provisions are made for TPD and how are they practiced at public campuses? To answer these questions I attempted to find out the provision of teacher professional development, TPD implementation strategy/status, and means of TPD adopted by Public campuses really in practice or not. It has seemed an emergence need to study the TPD status, facilities, provisions, and their practice in real situations at public campuses. Since a huge number of students, guardians and stakeholders are dependent on public campuses to shape their careers and direct their future. If the programs of such campuses run without a TPD plan then the future of public campuses may fall at the risk.

There is a gap between policy and practice for TPD at public campuses. No much more researches have been carried out for TPD of the teachers of public campuses in Nepal. Many types of research have been carried out for TPD of school-level teachers in Nepal but less in TPD of the teachers of public campuses. So, there requires specific research regarding TPD at public campuses of Nepal. Few research works have been carried out about the TPD of public campuses. So, I had selected the present research topic to mitigate the gap on it. For that I prepared the research questions; how do the teachers of public campuses perceive and practice the teacher professional developments? And what are the opportunities and challenges of TPD in the Public Campus? To find the answer of these questions I formulated these research objectives as to explore the perception and practice of teachers on teacher professional development in public campuses and to find out opportunities and Challenges of TPD in Public Campuses. Due to the different contextual constraints, the study

was limited to find out the perception and the practice of teachers of public campus on teacher professional development. It was limited to the public campuses under Tribhuvan University. The study site was limited to the selected three public campuses in Rupandehi district.

Introducing Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is a process of improving both the teachers' academic excellence and the acquisition of greater competence and efficiency. According to Sysko (2018), as cited (Glatthorn, 1995, p.41), TPD is the development that takes place as the teacher progresses through the professional career cycle. Lambert (2003, p. 22) stresses that professional development "includes learning opportunities that can be found in collegial dialogues, coaching episodes, joint decision-making groups, reflective diaries, parent forums, or other such occasions." TPD improves teachers' ability to grow in their subject-matter expertise as well as their knowledge, abilities, attitudes, approaches, and tactics. According to Head and Taylor (1997), teacher professional development is a continuous process through which teachers continue to advance by their own free will. It aids in the development of teachers' varied professional competencies. Teachers can improve their teaching abilities and stay in the profession by participating in ongoing professional development initiatives.

According to Bredson (2002), professional development is "learning opportunities that engage educators' creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice." He further defines professional development as "learning opportunities that engage educators' creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice." Villegas-Reimers, (2003) reviewed international literature on teacher professional development and considers the professional development of teachers as one of the key elements in most of the educational reforms currently in progress in the world. Three TPD objectives are mentioned by Richard and Farrell (2005), including institutional development, career development, and improved student learning levels. Beavers (2009) outlined the TPD guidelines as allowing teachers to contribute ideas on professional development topics, utilizing teachers' diverse experiences as learning opportunities, keeping topics practical and applicable rather than theoretical and philosophical, facilitating peer dialogue geared toward problem-solving, and providing options and alternatives to support different learning styles. According to Avidov-Ungar (2018) Professional development might involve a range of different projects (e.g. workshops, seminars, conferences, summer institutes, action research, and so on) It is crucial to precisely define what TPD involves because it might represent either constrained or expansive views on professional growth.

TPD is a procedure for raising a teacher's academic status as well as helping them become more

competent and effective at carrying out their professional responsibilities both inside and outside of the classroom. The term “TPD” refers to a group of organized activities that include initial training, induction programs, in-service training, and ongoing professional development in educational settings. Teachers continue to evolve as a result of their voluntary efforts in this continuing process. For teachers to alter education, TPD is crucial.

Methodology

This study was based on a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological method that studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity Creswell (2003). Smith, (2004) states that Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The research site was Rupandehi district of Nepal which was selected purposely. The teachers of public Campuses under Tribhuvan University were the universe of the study. The participants of the study were three teachers of the different public campuses of Rupandehi district. They were selected purposively according to the demand and need of this study. For locating the research participants, First of all, I enlisted all the public Campuses in Rupandehi District. After that, I selected three Campuses by using a purposive method. I chose three teachers; one teacher from each campus as participants based on my judgments and the purpose of the research. First Participant P1 is an energetic and young faculty member of his campus. He has been teaching on his campus for ten years in BBS, B.Ed. M.A. The second participant P2 is also an enthusiastic and dedicated faculty of his campus. He has been teaching on this campus for 14 years. He is teaching in the bachelor’s program (BBS, BED, and BA) of TU. In the same way, third participant P3 is an energetic and laborious faculty member of his campus. He has been teaching for Bachelor in Education for ten years under TU. He is the campus chief of his campus. I asked them ten different questions related to different aspects of teacher development. They provided their responses based on teaching in the public Campus of Rupandehi under Tribhuvan University in this research. Finally, I took an in-depth interview with the selected participant using semi structured guideline questions. My interview questions were directed to the participant’s experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions about the theme in the research questions. I audio and video recording, with the permission of interviewees, all interviews. I gave different codes for the different interviews that were identified by an alphabet character P1, P2, and P3. I recorded each interview in a separate folder on my computer. I labeled each folder with the assigned interview code. As soon as possible after each interview, I listened to the recording and made notes. I transcribed keywords, phrases, and statements to allow the voices of research participants to speak. I stored the data which includes audio recordings, field notes, and

filing of hard copy documentation. The interview transcriptions and field notes were also stored electronically on multiple hard drives. The collected data were analyzed descriptively developing themes based on the response of the participants. I used the thematic analysis in this paper as a descriptive approach with a focus on lived experience, which refers to our experiences of the world.

Result and Discussion

Knowledge, Perception and Practices of Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is the modern aspect of the teaching-learning process. Joshi (2012) argued that teacher development includes both formal and informal means of helping teachers to master new skills, widen their knowledge, and develop an innovative insight into their pedagogy, their practice, and their understanding of their own needs since a teacher's professional development is an aspect of his or her personal development as a whole. Participant 'P1' said 'The teacher professional development activities are inevitable. TPD helps teachers enhance and arouse the students' learning pace and efficiency'. Teachers who involve in TPD process engage in the process of reviewing, renewal, and enhancing thinking and practice. Participant P1 added that Professional development is needed for teachers for self-satisfaction and self-updating, keeping up to date with new knowledge, new perspectives, and new ideas. TPD is any type of continuing education effort for teachers which can improve their skills and, in turn, boost student outcomes. Participant 'P2' defined 'Teacher Professional Development as a way to help teachers in the teaching profession to formally update themselves by developing new knowledge and skills in their subject matter, which helps any teacher to conduct excellent educational activities by making timely changes'. TPD helps to develop the knowledge, capacities competency, and performance of the teacher as well as the performance of the institution in which s/he is involved. The third Participant 'P3' claimed that 'professional development inspires us to be more creative and innovative. He further said ' of course, it is inevitable for teachers. It helps us to build up confidence and quality education. TPD is a personal journey in which the teacher involves actively himself or herself to update his/her professional knowledge since knowledge about language and learning is always in a tentative and incomplete state.

Teacher professional development is the most important aspect of the teachers of public campuses. In this regard participant, 'P1' expressed his idea as

Teachers' professional development is quite important for teachers. When teachers are professionally developed, they can teach their students as per the needs of the student and their society. If they are not professionally developed, they can't be influential teachers to their students.

Awasthi (2010) proposes two types of experiences that can be utilized by teachers for professional development: Formal: attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, attending university classes, participating in training sessions, etc., and Informal: Reading professional publications, watching TV documentaries, etc. Participant P1 said TPD is a way to acquire new skills and knowledge in the teaching profession. TPD helps any teacher to conduct excellent educational activities by making him or her updated. “Teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). In the same way, participant P2 gave more emphasis on TPD as a way to help teachers to update formally by developing new knowledge and skills. There is a great importance of TPD in the teachers of the public campuses in the sense that it helps the teacher to develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge, new techniques of teaching, and the modern technology of teaching. P2 claimed that “teachers’ professional development inspires teachers to be innovative in teaching.” It encourages teachers to explore their own beliefs and thinking processes and to examine how these influence their classroom practice Richards and Farrell, (2005). In this context participant, ‘P3’ expressed his opinion as; it is important for teachers because it offers them an opportunity to explore new ways of teaching and learning. It shows that there is very much importance of TPD in the teachers because it helps improve the teacher professionally, academically, and technically. Likewise, participant ‘P2’ explained the importance of teachers’ professional development is to explore new methods and techniques of teaching and learning. Teachers need to revise and update their knowledge and skills. In the same way participant, ‘P3’ has taken TPD as important tool for teachers to develop the practical skill for teaching effectively and managing the different aspects of the teaching profession. TPD is important for teachers because of quality education, personal development, leadership development, updating, research writing, and proper use of technology.

The issues of TPD in Public Campuses

TPD is an action that helps the teacher to solve the practical problems of teaching and learning. TPD can take place in formal or informal settings. Formal settings include conferences, courses, seminars, retreats, and workshops. Informal setting for teacher professional development include independent research or investigation, peer learning initiatives or even just chatting with a colleague in the staff room (Kampen 2019). Various provisions are prepared at public campuses of Tribhuvan University for their teachers using regular activities, research opportunities, study leave, and various projects. They all have formulated TPD plans at their strategic plan too. It shows the provision and facilities of TPD at public campuses as facilities of study leave for further study as per the decision made by Campus Management Committee (paid study leave/partially paid study

leave/unpaid study leave too). But watching documentaries, faculty exchange, mentoring, and peer observation was not mentioned in public campus documents. The intention of such provision in the public campus where the teachers should be trained in their subjects according to the demand of time or changes of the contents. They should refresh themselves from time to time by taking training or participating in seminars, workshops, or writing different journal articles to develop their professions. But the provisions and facilities are mentioned in the paper not enough in practice. Participant 'P1' has participated in various teacher development programs at different times. Participant 'P2' participated in such a program occasionally. Participant 'P3' has participated in different TPD activities during his teaching career. In this regard participant 'P2' said

'beside the provisions of TPD such as workshops, Professional meetings, professional publications, and career development opportunities, the public campuses have made provisions of facilities such as; permanent appointment, subject-wise teacher networking was facilitated'.

CMC and campus administration have not added the value of TPD at the time of promotions but now it is in practice. Nowadays due to the force and grants of UGC, some public campuses organize TPD-related programs.

The teachers of public campuses hardly participate in the activities of teacher professional development. P3 had a bitter experience on it he stated that 'teachers themselves are not aware of TPD activities as they are more allowance oriented so they cannot be motivated towards TPD'. It seems there is a necessity for motivation for professional development. To meet the needs of students and the great demands in the profession of teaching, teachers have to be engaged in the use of the different, old and new, approaches to teaching. TPD is either advancement of teachers in the field of teaching or improving teachers professionally, academically, and technically. In the same way, my respondents took TPD as a process of enabling teachers to move with changes in science and technology, and as a new way of acquiring new methods of teaching.

TPD is the development of teacher's qualifications and efficiency. Regarding ways of delivering teachers' professional developments participant 'P1' expressed his idea about TPD activities like researching and writing, further study, collaborative research and article writing, attending conferences, workshops, seminars, training, etc. Successful TPD programs involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities (OECD, 2005). Participant P2 said,

"the activities which enhance our profession like training, seminar, workshop, field visit, research activities, journal article writing, peer sharing, etc. are the activities for teacher professional development".

OECD (2009) states that professional development activities develop an individual's skills,

knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics as a teacher. The teacher can use new ideas and methodologies in the classroom if they are updated through different activities of TPD. Participant P3 said

‘Research training, ICT workshop has been organized by the campus in collaboration with the University Grants Commission. The campus encourages teachers to participate in similar programs organized by other campuses’.

He further added that the campus encouraged teachers to carry out small research, action research, and write research articles in journals. ‘We publish journal regularly through RMC and there is the allocation of a certain amount of money those who write the article in the journal’. The same environment found in next campus that publish research journal regularly and encourage teachers to write research article participant P1 said that ‘our campus publishes research journal regularly and there is the competition of teachers to write the article and make publishable’. According to Boudersa (2016) teachers often involve documenting different kinds of teaching practices; reflective analysis of teaching practices; examining beliefs, values, and principles, self-observation and critical reflection, conversation with peers on one core issue, and collaborating with peers on classroom projects.

Challenges of TPD at Public Campuses

Professionalism is very difficult to find on public campuses. Participant P1 argued that teachers of public campuses (especially part-time who work in other institutions) are not interested in TPD but in money-making. They spend their whole career doing just a job (Ojha, 2012). It shows that the teachers are not concerned about their professional development. P1 accused teachers as ‘some teachers are not given attention towards TPD only focused teaching the same thing and same way and earning money. They hardly get any time to think about anything else let alone professional development (Ojha, 2012). Similarly, Shrestha (2012) argues that the current professional development programs are unlikely to address teachers’ attitudes and lack of transfer of training into the classroom.

The public campuses are facing financial problems about their sustainable development however they are planning to deliver TPD opportunities for their faculties. Public campuses don’t have sustainable financial resources (Timilsina, 2014). Participant P3 said ‘it is difficult to handle regular activities due to the financial problems of the campus so it has not been possible to focus on professional development. The main challenges for TPD which was obtained during this study were concerned with financial and disciplinary. The specific challenges shared by all three participants are decreasing tendency of attraction of creative, enthusiastic, and intelligent professionals in the

teaching profession and teachers' unwillingness towards regular TPD. Another challenge is the physical and financial limitations of the institutions and teachers themselves. Participant P1 said that the teachers are getting less amount of salary which is the very little amount for sustaining their family. The next challenge of TPD is the attitude towards teachers of public campuses Participant P3 said 'it is because the attitude of the campus stakeholders towards the teachers and staff is not positive'. Another challenges shared by participants are decreasing study and sharing culture among teachers, lack of availability of TPD package at appropriate time and emerging needs, over course load provided to the teachers, arrangement of teachers in more than one institute for teaching, acquisition and adaptation of traditional teaching-learning methods at campuses, old and outdated note keeping and note delivering procedure in class-room teaching, lack of facilities of TPD related activities like workshop, seminar, training, research work etc., lack of expertise available at local level, lack of opportunity to participate in curriculum formulation, revision and assessment systems for public campus teachers, unnecessary political disturbances at organizational, institutional and individual levels, lack of confidence and willingness at organizational and individual level, lack of appropriate plan and programmed schedule, high turnover ratio of teachers, lack of interested teachers in career development, inadequate sharing culture of learned skills and knowledge, lack of devotion in teaching profession, and lack of evaluation and monitoring practices for reward and punishment. Very few research studies are conducted within public campuses. Participant P1 blamed that there are absences in research activities in public campuses we don't find supporting intuitions for supporting research except for UGC. Some institutional challenges were shared by the participants at the time of interview as weak management and weak library resources, providing affiliation to public campuses and do not bear other responsibility by TU, lack of adequate vertical and horizontal communication, insufficient networking among subject wise teachers, lack of a specific and uniform plan of TPD to all institutions, a rapidly increasing number of affiliated campuses, unnecessary and unhealthy competition among institutions and lacking monitoring and supervision are other challenges faced by public campuses of Tribhuvan University.

Findings

The finding of the study showed that teachers need to expand their knowledge and improve their skills if they want to maintain the pride of their profession and this can only happen through teachers' professional development. Every teacher needs to improve their abilities. Even if one enters the teaching profession with skill, the innovations and diversities that emerge every day mean that things don't always turn out the same for them over the course of their career. It is found three key domains of professional knowledge and skills are necessary for improving teachers' classroom teaching: subject-matter or content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge concerning how

and when to teach the subject matter and, developmental knowledge concerning how and when to teach content to students of different ages. Activities for ongoing professional development assist teachers improve their instructional techniques and stay in the teaching profession. There is great importance of TPD in the teachers of the public Campuses in the sense that it helps the teacher to develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge, new techniques of teaching, the modern technology of teaching, and other aspects of TPD. If the teacher keeps up with new concepts and teaching techniques through TPD's various activities, they can apply them in the classroom. They are able to identify with students' issues and adapt their instruction to meet their needs. TPD is a feature that encourages teachers to do a variety of academic research projects. TPD is the most essential aspect for the teachers who are teaching in public Campuses for the reason that it helps them to revise and update their knowledge and teaching skills as well as assessment skills. It is also helpful to choose the right teaching materials since TPD guarantees that teachers' knowledge is current and relevant by educating teachers how to choose teaching materials during the training process. It enables teachers to keep providing valuable services to society. It helps teachers to stay interested and interesting. TPD helps advance the body of knowledge and technology within the teacher's profession. TPD contributes to improved protection and quality of life, the environment, sustainability, property, and the economy. This applies to specialized practice areas. TPD for a teacher is necessary, as new teaching information, techniques, and methods are continually being updated and changed. TPD is about life-long learning and growing as an educator.

Various facilities and activities are provisioned for TPD at public campuses. However, teachers at public campuses have been hampered by a lack of comprehensive TPD facilities at work and context/subject-specific teaching issues. It seems to be the reason for the absence of such opportunities is because of the great financial problem of sustainability of campuses. So, the provisions made by public campuses are limited in the paper and into the formal commitment only. Public campuses are facing the challenges of the negligence of CMC for TPD toward faculties of their campuses. The major problems for the professional development of the teachers in the public campus are the unwillingness of the teachers, financial constraints, unconcern of CMC towards teacher development, poor monitoring system, etc. The teachers are so back that they are not updated in the current knowledge because they have not participated in any kinds of training that are related to TPD. The concerned agencies are unaccountable and active for the TPD of the teachers of the public Campuses. The same type of challenges is found in a study in India as the researcher found three major kinds of barriers in TPD at all levels as psychological barriers, administrative barriers, and material barriers. One study by Hanover Research (2017) highlighted that TPD content must be directly relevant and applicable to teachers' classrooms, be differentiated to teachers' individual needs, and build on teachers' previous knowledge and experiences. So the chances for teacher preparation, in-service training, additional education, career development, and a fair pay scale must be provided in accordance with the arrangements they have made.

Conclusion

Being an important part of the professional lives of the public campuses, TPD carries the huge value of bringing out the self to be more constructive and professional abroad.

TPD carries the enormous importance of bringing out the teachers to be more positive and professional overseas since it is a vital component of the professional lives of the public campuses. TPD conspicuously will help them to be a leader, researcher, risk-taker and problem solver of every difficulty they are going to face in their instructional professional situation. In light of the fact that teachers are dynamic learners, reflective practitioners, and lifelong learners, it is important to maintain a conducive campus climate since professional development has a greater impact on specific instructors, students, and the entire institution. With the help of TPD, teachers can critique and challenge alternative practices, with real and helpful debate, facilitating growth. Various facilities and activities for TPD are provisioned at public campuses but there lack in a real situation. However, the teachers of public campuses have been struggling with context/subject-specific instructional problems and having no kind of systematic TPD facilities in their workplace. It seems to be the reason for the absence of such opportunities is because of the great financial problem of sustainability of campuses and attitude towards TPD. So, the provisions made by public campuses are limited in the paper and into the formal commitment only. Public campus TPD policies are now being improved in several areas, and these campuses are attempting to concentrate on the application of their policies in order to increase teacher professionalism and provide high-quality education.

CMC of public campuses must be thoughtful to fulfill the minimum physical and instructional requirements. Teachers should be encouraged to take part in workshops, seminars, and other professional development events hosted by various organizations. They must implement the provisioned policy in their practice. Through previous approval and collaboration, campus administration, Campus Management Committee, Public Campus Teacher Association, Public Campus Association, RMC, and related authority must be instructed of the specified, planned, and scheduled TPD activities. Every public campus must incorporate TPD activities in the strategic and master plan for campuses, which must take problems and opportunities into account and contain policies, strategies, and implementation procedures. University Grant Commissions should keep an eye on the TPD of public universities they sponsor as well as strong governance practices. Teachers of public campuses should be more positive and aware about their professional development. They show interest in acquiring higher degrees. They must attend periodical professional development programs, refresher courses, meeting the subject wise experts, seminars and workshops. They ought to make good use of the resources offered by the institutions.

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