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Research Management Cell (RMC)
Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Teacher Professional Development in the Secondary Schools in Nepal: Some Opportunities and Challenges

Ambika Prasad Poudel, PhD¹
Email: poudelap@gmail.com

Abstract

Quality education has been one of the important concerns among the stakeholders in the field of education. Teacher professional development (TPD) is considered as one of the essential components for improving and reforming quality of education in the recent years. This article attempts at describing the existing TPD status of the secondary level schools in Nepal, and exploring the opportunities and challenges of TPD programme for the teachers in those schools. In the study, the Headmaster, and secondary level senior teachers were the informants; and an observation check list, and an interview questionnaire were used as the research tools to collect the information. The data were analyzed both descriptively and thematically. The study found that the secondary schools were quite poor regarding their performance of TPD activities. Some of the major advantages of the TPD programme to the teachers were that they got opportunities to take part in training and workshops; and to be involved in discussion and collaboration among the teachers. On the other hand, difficulties in the implementation of their knowledge and skills into the classroom, and lack of financial support for TPD activities were some of the major challenges of TPD process.

Key words: TPD, quality education, supplementary materials, collaborative work

Introduction

Teacher professional development (TPD) is one of the essential components of quality education and education reform. An ideal education reform process necessitates improvements not only on the physical infrastructures of the educational institutions, but also on the professional quality of the teachers working in those institutions. In fact, teachers are the key persons affecting quality of education, and they influence the success or failure of the whole education system (OECD, 2002). More importantly,

1. Dr Poudel is a Lecturer of English Education at Tribhuvan University, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta.

teachers have direct impact on the students' progress, growth and development, Therefore, increasing the number of highly qualified professional teachers has become the main focus of an education system nowadays in both developed and developing countries. A high-quality professional development has become one of the main components in most of the proposals for improving education (Guskey, 2002), and a greater emphasis has been given to promoting professional development of the teachers.

TPD is a process that brings an ongoing change in the quality of the teachers which makes them professional. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] defines professional development of teacher as 'the activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher' (OECD, 2009, p. 49). To Perry (1980), TPD is the personal growth in the professional life of the teachers, it is the enhancement and improvement of their skills and confidence, and their expertise of disciplinary knowledge with constant update. Fullen (1995) defines professional development as "continuous learning focused upon the sum total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the teacher in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change" (p.265). According to Hummond et al. (2017), effective professional development creates learning opportunities; identifies learning needs; enhances self-evaluation and peer-review skills; engages in reflection, professional dialogue and feedback; and builds strong working relationships among teachers. To be brief, TPD is a process of preparing better quality teachers enhancing their professional life and overall development which plays significant role for ensuring educational quality. It is an on-going activity during the professional life of the teachers that includes training, practice, feedback, self-observation, and follow-up support. It has been supposed to be a key mechanism for bringing improvement in classroom pedagogy and students' outcomes.

The concept of teachers' professional qualification was introduced in Nepal in 1971 with the implementation of National Educational System Plan (NESP). In 1993, National Center for Educational Development (NCED) was established under Ministry of Education with a view to enhance teachers' professional development giving priority to In-service Teacher Training Programme (ITTP). Likewise, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009-2016 gave a high emphasis to TPD training for enhancing teachers' knowledge, competency and capacity (MOE, 2009). Consequently, the government has prioritized mandatory training requirements and regular updates of the teachers. With regard to all such development in TPD, the status of the TPD activities in the schools, and the opportunities and challenges of TPD program to the teachers, has been a subject of common concern in the field of teacher education at present in Nepal.

Research Questions

- What is the status of the secondary schools regarding the TPD related activities?
- What are the opportunities and challenges to the secondary school teachers in their professional development process in Nepal?

Objectives

To analyze the status of the secondary schools regarding the TPD related activities.

To explore the existing opportunities and challenges to the secondary school teachers in their professional development in Nepal.

Significance of the Study

TPD is one of the widely concerned subject matters worldwide because it is one of the crucial factors for quality education and education reform. It has been a more important issue for some decades in Nepal too. This study aims at exploring the existing opportunities and challenges to the secondary school teachers in their process of professional development. Thus, this study will be worthwhile to develop an insight of the teachers, students, educators, and scholars about some issues related to TPD. Moreover, this study will give a guideline to the government, and other NGOs and INGOs who need to make further plans and policies related to teacher education and teacher professional development.

Literature Review

A number of studies and research works are available that explore different issues related to TPD. I have reviewed some of the more relevant literature thematically under different sub-headings in this section.

Professional Teacher and TPD process

A profession, simply, is an occupation, which requires specialized training or knowledge, and a high degree of education and expertise in the concerned area. A professional teacher has specialization and a specific set of pedagogical skills. Ur (2002) makes a comparison among a professional, a lay, an amateur, a technician, and an academic person. To her, a lay is a person who does not possess certain skills and knowledge, and does not belong to any specified professional group while an amateur does an action well or badly, but s/he does it for fun. Ur views, a technician person is a skillful craftsman though s/he is not able to articulate, relate and innovate skills. In contrast, an academic person is occupied in thinking and researching and acts in order to refine thinking though s/he is not an immediate agent of real world change while a professional person is occupied to improve real-time action, and is an immediate agent of real-world change. To Ur, 'professional' person is someone who performs a certain function with some degree of expertise. She opines professional teachers are responsible autonomous committed community who learn and publish. According to Richards and Farrell (2005, p vii), for professional development, the teachers need to take part in the activities such as:

- (i) engaging in self-reflection and evaluation

- (ii) developing specialized knowledge and skills about many aspects of teaching
- (iii) expanding their knowledge base about research, theory, and issues in teaching
- (iv) taking on new roles and responsibilities, such as supervisor or mentor teacher, teacher-researcher, or materials writer
- (v) developing collaborative relationships with other teachers

Thus, the professional teachers are responsible persons who regularly update themselves being involved in self-evaluation and collaboration. They possess a high degree of expertise, knowledge and skills required in teaching career.

Professional teachers are always engage in TPD process which is ongoing activity of learning. Ackerman (2006) carried out a study entitled 'The learning never stops: Lesson from military child development centers for teacher professional development' to examine the effect of TPD training on teachers learning. The study used a qualitative interview method, and 13 caregivers and 8 training and curriculum specialists from the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S were taken as the sample. The study concluded that quality teacher training was beneficial for the teachers to improve learning. However, it was found that most states had minimal educational requirements for the teachers and they faced barriers in accessing effective professional development.

The teachers needs need to be addressed by the professional development activities. Othman (2005) conducted a study entitled 'Managing teacher professional development in changing times: a study of in-service teacher professional development in Malaysian smart school' to explore in-service professional development activities and their impact on the implementation. The study had used semi-structured interview data to collect experiences from teachers and school administrators (principals and senior assistants) of Malaysian Smart School (MSS). It was concluded that the TPD activities should focus the demands and needs of the market rather than giving priority on the values and morals of teacher professionalism in this age of world globalization.

TPD indicators and TPD activities

There are several indicators of teacher professional development. Education review office (ERO), under Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education identifies six indicators of teachers' professional development in the 'work performance audit tool-2020' they developed. Those TPD indicators (ERO, 2020, p.12) are:

- (i) Creative and collaborative work (workshop, seminar, project work, subject teachers meeting etc)
- (ii) Capacity building work (capacity building training, resource class conduction)

- (iii) Journal, bulletin, wall post, article publication
- (iv) Study visit (inter-school visit, model school visit, geographical visit)
- (v) Learning/study material management (daily/monthly, half yearly/yearly newspaper)
- (vi) Teacher encouragement/reward

Richards and Farrell (2005) identify five major areas of teacher professional development. They are: (a) subject matter knowledge, (b) pedagogical expertise, (c) self-awareness, (d) understanding of learners, curriculum and materials, and (e) career advancement. Different activities are needed to be performed by the teachers for their overall professional development. Such activities can be categorized into four types (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 14) as below:

- (i) Individual activities (self-monitoring, journal writing, critical incidents, teaching portfolios, action research)
- (ii) One-to-one activities (peer coaching, peer observation, critical friendships, action research, critical incidents, team teaching)
- (iii) Group activities (case studies, action research, journal writing, teacher support groups)
- (iv) Institutional activities (workshops, action research, teacher support groups)

To be brief, TPD includes both individual and group activities such as self-updating activities, creative and collaborative activities, learning resource management activities, study visit activities, and publication activities.

TPD Plans and Projects in Nepal

Different national education plans and projects have been made in Nepal with the aim of quality growth of education, and TPD has been included as one of the essential components in those plans and programmes. Among them, National Education System Plan (NESP)-1971, Teacher Education Project (TEP)-2001, Secondary Education Support Project (SESP)-2003, and School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP)-2009 had given more emphasis on TPD as a part of education reform.

NESP-1971 aimed at bringing a drastic change in the existing disorganized education system of that time. NESP identified several weaknesses of the existing education and pointed out that shortage of trained teachers, standard textbook, and physical aids in the educational institutions were some of the main constraints for the development of modern education system (MOE, 1971). Therefore, it gave more emphasis on teacher training and on the improvement of the standard of teacher training for bringing quality in education. The plan also made a provision for in service training, and teacher training scholarships for enhancing professional development of the teachers.

TEP-2001 was implemented to bring improvement in the poor quality of teaching-learning, and low student achievements. The TEP aimed at strengthening teacher training infrastructure, and establishing an effective and sustainable teacher education (ADB, 2012). The project had four major components: building institutional capacity, developing teacher education and teaching-learning materials, providing training to teachers, and educating teachers to better serve the needs of girls and other disadvantaged groups (ADB, 2012). In this way, the project targeted professional development of the teachers through teacher training and learning materials development.

SESP-2003 was implemented by the Department of Education under the ministry of education, with the support of the key educational agencies such as the National Centre for Education Development (NCED), Curriculum Development Center (CDC), and Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE). The Project had five components: (i) enhancing teacher effectiveness by improving teacher training curricula and providing teacher training in core subjects; (ii) developing new secondary curricula and textbooks in the core subjects; (iii) improving the student assessment system; (iv) providing learning materials, science equipment, and civil works for school laboratories and buildings extension; and (v) strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in planning, management, and benefit monitoring and evaluation (ADB, 2004). Teacher training, an important part of TPD, was given a greater priority by the project.

SSRP (2009-2015) was implemented as a continuation of on-going programmes such as Education for All (EFA), SESP, and TPA. SSRP aimed at strengthening education reform giving emphasis on the restructuring of school education, improvement on quality of education, and institutionalization of performance accountability (MOE, 2009). Professional development of the teachers was one of the major components of SSRP. It gave the highest priority in teacher preparation and in the quality and efficiency of the teachers. The main objective was to enhance teachers' qualifications and professional competencies to better facilitate students learning process (MOE, 2009).

Methods and Materials

The methods and research tools used have significant value in any research work. The methods and materials used in this study have been discussed below.

Research Paradigm

This study has been guided by interpretivists' research paradigm and it adopted qualitative research design. Interpretivists believe in multiple reality of the truth and that qualitative design attempts to investigate in-depth experiences of the participants

by means of observation and interviews explaining and interpreting the information in words. Guided by interpretivists' philosophy, it has been assumed that there can be different conclusions and/or interpretations regarding the experiences and challenges that the teachers experience during their TPD process, and that the conclusion drawn in a study need not necessarily resemble with the conclusion made in another study.

Field of Study

The study site of this study is Terhathum district selected using random sampling methods among the districts of Koshi zone, Nepal. Random sampling is a useful method in which there is non-zero probability of each unit being selected (Mertens, 2010), and it helps to avoid possible biasness of the researcher in the study. Particularly, the smallest local government of Terhathum district, Menchyayem rural municipality, which could be the representative of all the local governments, was selected as the study site using purposive convenient sampling methods considering time, money and labor to be spent. The interpretivists prefer non-random purposive sampling methods in which the members/ items are selected intentionally, who/which in researcher's judgement can provide needed information (Creswell, 2012, Kumar, 2011). All the four secondary schools of Menchyayem rural municipality were included as the sample of population in the study of teacher professional development in the secondary schools. Those four schools were assigned pseudonyms as school-A, school-B, school-C, school-D for confidentiality and research ethics (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015).

Participants

This research aims at studying the secondary level teachers' experiences of the TPD activities. The Headmaster and the most senior secondary school teacher from each school were requested to be involved as the participants in the study. These participants were believed to share their experiences regarding the opportunities and challenges they encountered in their TPD process.

Research Methods and Tools

Guided by qualitative research design, observation and semi-structured interview methods were used in the study. These methods are considered to be more suitable in qualitative study to obtain in-depth information allowing the researcher to be an insider (Mertens, 2010). Likewise, observation checklist, and interview questionnaire (see appendix-A and B) were developed as the research tools. Observation is a useful method that enables the researchers to understand the context or real situation; and to discover the things the participants might not like to communicate freely in the interview (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2005; Patton, 2002). The observation checklist and the questionnaire (see appendices-A and B) were prepared carefully well so as to receive required information. The observation checklist was used in each

school to gather TPD related information from the Headmaster, and the semi structure interviews were carried out with the most senior teacher of each school for about half an hour. The interviews were recorded by using the recording devices for further use.

Information/Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), qualitative data analysis and interpretation is the process of data–organizing, segmenting and coding, generating patterns or themes; and explaining and interpreting the themes. Guided by qualitative research design, I adopted thematic data analysis in this study. Thematic analysis is one of the widely used methods of analyzing qualitative data for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire and Delahunt 2017) . Lapadat (2010) opines that thematic analysis is a process of reducing and managing large volumes of data, organizing and summarizing them, and presenting their interpretation without losing the context.

In this study, the information received from the respondents through semi-structure interviews were transcribed, and were read and re-read to have their clear understanding. Then, they were segmented, and categorized to generate themes. Finally, the meanings of the themes were interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework and comparing them with past literature. The quantitative data were presented in the Table, and were analyzed descriptively. The interpretation also incorporated the facts collected using observation checklist and personal reflections of my teaching experiences.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the findings of the study gained through the observation and interviews. The analysis and interpretation of the findings regarding the issues 'opportunities and challenges in TPD process' have been discussed thematically, and have been presented in the sub-headings to come.

TPD Related Activities and TPD Status of the Schools

This study aimed at exploring the improvements or achievements and challenges regarding TPD in the secondary schools. To understand about the TPD related activities performed by the teachers and their TPD-related achievements, a checklist for school observation was prepared; and it was filled in by the researcher observing the school records and documents during the study. The headmaster in each school were requested to provide the records, documents, and other information required. The information obtained by using the observation checklist has been presented in Table 1

Table 1:Schools’ Status Regarding TPD Related Activities

S N	School	Number of trained teacher	Number of teacher having upper level qualification	Number of TPD related workshop/ seminar conducted in the school last year	Number of teachers encouraged/ awarded last year	Number of institutional publications last year	Number of observational tour organized last year
1	School-A	14 (60.86%)	19 (82.60%)	1	1	0	1
2	School-B	9 (52.94%)	11 (64.70%)	1	0	0	0
3	School-C	10 (55.55%)	12 (66.66%)	1	0	0	1
4	School-D	3 (23.07%)	8 (61.53%)	0	0	0	0

The Table above shows some of the major TPD-related indicators/activities; and school performance and progress in such activities. It is clear in the Table that the TPD progress varies a great deal in different schools. Particularly, the percentage of the number of the TPD trained teachers surprisingly varies- it ranges from 23.07% to 60.86%. Another important TPD indicator 'the percentage of the teachers with upper level qualifications' seems to range from 61.53% to 82.60%. The data shows that none of the schools had any publication in the previous year, and that three of the schools had conducted TPD related workshop once in the previous year. Among the four schools, half of them had provided their teachers with the opportunity of observation to neighboring school activities. It was also found that one of the schools had encouraged their teachers providing award for the teacher for achieving best student-result in the school.

The findings above indicate that still there is quite large number of the teachers waiting for TPD training. In the observation it was found that many of the untrained teachers are novice and temporary teachers, Most of these teachers are fresh– by product of current curriculum and current teaching-learning practices. It is also that they are relatively more familiar with modern teaching-learning materials. However, they have not developed more confidence due to inadequate experiences of teaching.

The status of the teachers' upper level qualification seems to be quite satisfactory. The percentage of the teachers having upper level qualification is above 60% in each school. Moreover, it is more than 80% in one of the schools. Most of the teachers in the schools have adequate qualifications than it has supposed to be required. This qualification indicates that there is better possibility of obtaining quality education in the secondary schools.

The data shows that none of the schools had any institutional publication in the previous year. It indicates that the teachers do teaching, but they have not been

involved in the expansion and dissemination of their knowledge and experiences. One of the Headmaster's comment in this regard is noticeable here. He reacted,

The teachers have not been motivated and/or encouraged towards such works of publication. Moreover, many of the teachers are over-loaded, as most of them need to teach seven periods a day, and they are unable to manage their time in such activities.

In addition to teaching the students, the teachers can be involved in many academic works such as writing research article, preparing conference paper, preparing a report of an event or a project. Involvement in such activities not only disseminates their knowledge and experiences, but also enhance creativity. The teachers need to be encouraged to do such academic creative works.

The data show that only two (half) of the schools were able to send a few of their teachers for observational study of neighboring schools. Many of the teachers did not seem to like such activities. One of the Headmasters reacted, "*Class observation, and giving and receiving feedback is one of the very important part of observational tours. Such tours did not attract the teachers because many of the teachers do not like being observed their classes*". Likewise, only fifty percent of the school were able to organize TPD related workshops in the previous year, and they held it only once. It shows that the schools themselves were not capable enough to conduct such activities. The main cause of this, as found the study, is unavailability of the resource persons/facilitators to facilitate the teachers in such programmes. In fact, such programmes are very useful to the teachers to discuss and share the knowledge and skills they need. The schools need to search for supporting agencies or organizations for such activities.

Opportunities to the Teachers

Professional development of the teacher was given highest priority in SSRP 2009-2015. The main goal was to ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills required to effectively facilitate student learning processes (MOE, 2009). SSRP planned the increment in the minimum qualifications of the teachers and mandatory training requirements and regular updates. The participants' experience regarding opportunities created by TPD plan have been discussed and interpreted in the sub-headings below.

Teacher Training and Workshop

The participants had positive attitude towards TPD training and workshops. Such activities provided them with new knowledge, refreshment and updates to recent trends. One of the participants opined,

TPD training and workshops are a good opportunity for us to learn and share the skills and knowledge which can contribute for making our teaching more

effective. It also provides us with an environment to discuss among the group members about the useful techniques and materials essential for teaching.

The teachers shared their experiences that the teacher with TPD training at least understand the relationship among the curriculum, text-book, and teacher's guide. They also have some knowledge and importance of learner centered methods and techniques such as task-based and project-based methods; and discussion, role-play. The teachers' belief is that TPD has improved the students learning achievement as well.

In fact, TPD is a continuous process that has broadly two aspects: teacher training, and teacher development. Training of the teacher includes mainly 'what aspect' (content) and, 'how aspect' (methodology and technology). Thus, TPD training provides the teachers with the ideas of the effective delivery of contents associating them with appropriate pedagogy and technology. This knowledge, to Koehler and Mishra (2013), the TPCK (technological pedagogical content knowledge), is a good benefit of TPD training and workshops to the teachers.

Supporting Materials

Providing the schools with the teaching materials and other supplementary materials is another important advantage of TPD programme. The government, under the Ministry of Education, has prioritized preparation and producing the essential teaching materials such as text books, reference books, teacher guides, and many other visual and audio-visual materials. Besides, preparation and collection of teaching-learning materials is one of the main components of TPD training package. This not only encourages and strengthens the ideas of preparation of teaching materials but also develops their skills of their effective use.

In addition, the essential teaching-learning technological equipment such as Desktop, Laptops, Projectors, Smartboards, CDs and VCDs are being made available to the schools. Use of such technological equipment has contributed to improve the quality of education. One of the participants viewed,

The teaching materials and other modern technologies have been useful for effective delivery of the contents and concepts. They help attract students' attention to the lesson, and increase their level of motivation. They also help make the classroom environment more interactive. This certainly makes students' learning more permanent.

Availability of the teaching-learning materials and their appropriate use in the teaching-learning activity is one of the essential aspects of quality education. Realizing this fact, TPD programme has emphasized using teaching materials and modern technologies in the teaching-learning activities.

Subject Committee Discussion

Subject committee meeting, one of the components of TPD programme, is very important activity for advancing teacher quality. It is a group discussion in which they can discuss about their problems, confusions and the methods and techniques of teaching and learning. They also can interact about effective delivery of subject matter exchanging their ideas about making good lesson plans and preparing and collecting essential teaching materials. The most important advantage is that the experienced teachers share their teaching experiences and the novel teachers can exchange their ideas of current trends and concepts. Both experienced and novel teachers can be benefitted from subject committee discussions.

In this study, the participants viewed that they found subject committee meeting much beneficial. One of the teachers opined, "*Subject committee discussion is very useful for me because I can learn the solution of many of my confusions and problems that appear while handling the text-book*". "We can exchange our teaching experiences about methods and materials, and get into the best solution for effective teaching" another of the participants expressed.

Subject committee meeting is mainly important for sharing ideas and exchanging resources. The discussion can be a very good collaborative activity for the tasks such as carrying out action research and project work, writing articles, organizing seminars or workshops, and for publication of their articles, journals or bulletins. This can be utilized as the opportunities for enhancing their creativity and dissemination of their experiences and knowledge.

Challenges/difficulties

The participants shared their experiences that there were many challenges and difficulties they encountered during the TPD process. The difficulties they experienced were mainly related to the implications of the ideas and knowledge into the classroom environment, TPD training and workshops, and availability of supplementary materials. These have been discussed below in brief.

Implementation of Knowledge and Skills Gained

One of the major difficulties that the teachers encountered was that there were many problems in the implementation of the knowledge and skills they learn in the training and workshops. The classroom context was not favorable for them so as to apply the methods or techniques they practice in the training. One of the teachers commented, "*We learn knowledge and skills in the training and workshops, but our classroom environment is quite different and difficult to apply the skills and knowledge we learn*". They argued that the availability of the tools and materials, class size, work load given to the teachers, and students' level knowledge are some of the major factors that influence their teaching activities.

They shared that the teaching materials such as maps, posters, charts, pictures, flashcards, are not available in adequate number, and that the modern tools such laptops, projectors, smartboards are not available in many of the schools. Likewise, in many of the schools, the size of the class was quite large to conduct student centered and more interactive techniques such as role play, discussion, and group work activities. It was also that the teachers were compelled to teach seven periods a day which made them too tired to teach more energetically and actively in all the periods. The work load given to the teachers was also a main problem that influenced the quality of teachers' preparation for the class and their presentation. Moreover, many of students in most of the schools do not have required basic knowledge to carry out the tasks and projects to be conducted.

TPD Training and Workshops

The participants were not satisfied with the TPD training they participated. They shared their experiences that they often did not find the contents of TPD training based on their needs or demand. One of the teachers opined,

The training programmes are not so satisfactory in that they are often not need based. The trainers come with a training package designed somewhere which in many respects, do not address our demands/needs. It is also that we do not find many of the theories, and methods discuss in the training are far from the classroom contexts.

The excerpt above indicate that the TPD training programmes were fruitful for enhancing the teachers' personal knowledge and skills, They, however, were not advantageous from their classroom implementation points of view because many of the techniques and methods they discuss in the training sessions have been developed/designed in foreign contexts. It was also that of training course have been designed to be conducted their continuity indifferent phases, but the training programmes have not been organized in a certain regular interval. This has created difficulties in recalling the previously learnt ideas, and link them with present learning.

Availability and Use of Supplementary Materials

The participants opined that the supporting teaching-learning materials available to the schools were quite inadequate. The teachers use only the textbooks and duster and chalk (recently, marker in some schools), and they do not think of using other supplementary materials due to two main factors: lack of time for preparing/collecting them, and lack of supervision of their classes. Many of the teachers have not developed their habit of making a collection of the teaching materials for his/her subject, and it is often very difficult for a teacher who need to teach seven periods a day to prepare or collect a box/bag of teaching materials that s/he needs every day. It is also that there is neither any provision of any regular and/or occasional class observation (by peer,

Headmaster, or school supervisor), nor is there any system developed for punishing and/or encouraging the teacher/s who make/s an effort in such activities.

The participants were not quite satisfied with the way that the supplementary materials were distributed. One of the teachers reacted,

It is the responsibility of the Government to make the needed teaching materials available to the schools. What we get in most of the schools is only the textbook. We neither get the books in time nor is there any equality in the distribution of the supporting materials, only a few schools have been supported with such materials.

The Headmasters opined that lack of budget was the main cause affecting the management of supporting teaching materials. A few model schools have been supported with certain amount for purchasing teaching-learning tools and materials. This inequality in the distribution of the supplementary materials have created a negative effect towards using supplementary materials in the classroom. In fact, only a few of the schools have access to the modern technological tools such as laptops, projectors, smart boards etc, and still the teachers and the students in many of the schools listen about such tools as a story. More importantly, such tools have not been utilized properly in the schools where some of these tools have been made available due to lack of technological knowledge of the teachers. The teachers were not provided opportunities to take part in the training programmes that are concerned with the pedagogical use of such modern tools and technologies.

Publications and Observational Tours

One of the important difficulties to the teachers was publication of the journals and making observational tours. The teachers shared their experiences that there were mainly two types of problems that affect such activities of publications. The first was they lack time to engage in research and writing. It was because they were over loaded, and they needed to spend most of their time in preparation of the lessons and teaching the students. The second reason was that they lacked financial support to make publications.

Observational tours are also of great advantageous among TPD activities to the teachers. Such programmes provide the teachers with practical experiences of school administration and teaching-learning activities. However, different schools have different physical and academic contexts which makes them difficult to apply the ideas they learn in the observation. One of the teachers opined,

I once got opportunity to visit one of the model schools in my local level. I learnt many ideas there about school administration, classroom management, and classroom teaching. However, the problem is that I do not find any favorable context/environment in my school so as to apply the ideas I learnt.

In addition, the problem of financial support also influenced in their organization of observational tours. Therefore, such programmes have been very rarely organized by the schools. There was also that they lacked experts to give suggestive feedback in the class observation.

Conclusion

TPD, a continuous process, is an important requisite of quality education. TPD can be evaluated on the basis of several indicators such as teacher training, teacher qualification, workshops and seminars, journal publication, observational tours. It was found in this study that the schools had very poor status regarding such activities. Likewise, it was also understood that TPD program gave both opportunities and challenges to the teachers. The TPD programme created some advantages to the schools and teachers, though they were not complete satisfactory in this study. Opportunities of training and workshops for updating and refreshing themselves, sharing and exchanging ideas and teaching-learning resources among teachers, discussion and collaboration with the teachers and experts are some of the major advantages of TPD programme. On the other hand, difficulties in the implementation of the knowledge and skills, inadequate teaching-learning materials and technological tools in the schools, and lack of financial support were some of the major challenges. The concerned authority need to be more conscious to make improvements in such situations.

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Appendix-A

Observation Checklist

TPD related activities and TPD Status of the Schools

S N	School	Number of trained teacher	Number of teacher having upper qualification	Number of TPD related workshop/ seminar conducted in the school last year	Number of teachers encouraged/ awarded last year	Number of institutional publications last year	Number of observational tour organized last year
1	School-A						
2	School-B						
3	School-C						
4	School-D						

Appendix-B

Interview Questionnaire

Please give your opinion being related to the following questions,

- 1) Have you been involved in TPD activities? If yes, for how long?
- 2) Have you taken TPD training? If yes, what is your general impression towards TPD training? Please share your experience.
- 3) What is your experience regarding the implementation of knowledge you gain during training and workshop into the classroom?
- 4) What sorts of TPD supporting materials are available in your school?
- 5) Have you involved in any TPD related workshop/seminar? What is your experience about such programme?
- 6) What TPD activities are you impressed with?
- 7) What are the challenges/difficulties you encounter in the TPD process?
- 8) What is your suggestion for the betterment of TPD?

