

# Expectations of Teachers from Teachers Professional Development Program in Nepal

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**Abstract** Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) has been realized a powerful approach to implement child friendly activity based education for education in the twenty first century. Though there are at least six models of teachers development, teacher training is the mostly used model in Nepalese context. It has been realized the important of expectations of teachers in TPD program to make TPD bottom-up so that its implementation can be optimized. Eight teachers from four schools of the western part of Nepal were interviewed to get their expectations. The main expectations of teachers are related to delivery methods, implementation of training skills and knowledge and participatory approach of TPD. Trainers need to demonstrate as a role model on how to deal in the classroom and learning is to be helpful for teachers in developing and performing activities. The problems faced by teachers in their classroom are to be dealt in depth. Teachers like to share their practices and shape for the future. Teachers expect to play active role not only in training but also in identifying needs and developing training modules and resources. They expect training module, reading and activity resources are to be provided to teachers before they come to TPD program so that they can prepare and can plan to share their experience. Teachers expect skill oriented and subject specific experts to observe and provide very specific comments and feedback which are helpful to improve. Participants expect critical thinking and creating activities to be dealt in TPD program so that they can introduce in their classrooms. Participants want to move beyond the use of charts and flashcards in TPD programs. They expect to be strategic in improving their teaching and want to improve students' achievement. They expect to learn setting targets and implementation strategies to achieve those targets.

**Keywords:** *Expectation, Teachers' professional development, teaching improvement plan, observation and feedback, andragogy*

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## 1. Introduction

*"The nation can adopt rigorous standards, set forth a visionary scenario, compile the best research about how students learn, change textbooks and assessment, promote teaching strategies that have been successful with a wide range of students, and change all the other elements involved in systemic reform - but without professional development, school reform and improved achievement for all students will not happen".*

--The American Federation of Teachers (2002)

Teachers' professional development is an indispensable part of wide-ranging educational development. Teachers are at the center of educational development because they must make every effort to ensure that their students meet the high standards that districts and states have adopted. Teachers are made rather than they are born. History shows that there are several teachers who are developed from initial phase to better and then excellent teachers. The change of teachers' existing way of teaching in the class has been realized in context of Nepal. Teachers are

expected to use child-friendly teaching methods and strategies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) friendly pedagogical approaches, etc which are suitable for twenty first century education. Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) is one of the major reform initiatives in order to transform to existing education compatible to the 21st century.

## 2. Teacher Professional Development

Teacher Professional Development is defined as a process of improving both the teacher's academic standing as well as -acquisition of greater competence and efficiency in discharging her/his professional obligations in and outside the classroom. TPD is the body of systematic activities to prepare teachers for their job, including initial training, induction courses, in-service training and continuous professional development within school settings. Teacher development is an on-going process through which teachers keep growing with their own voluntary effort. A facilitator can help teachers realise that 'they have the potential within themselves to

become better teachers through deepening their own understanding and awareness of themselves and their learners' [1]. TPD is an approach which enables teachers to realize change and act as change agents. Teachers through TPD develop their competences. Competence is an integrated form of knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour. The goals of TPD are termed as "equipping and enabling" (Prabhu, 1987, as cited in Wajnryb, 2002, p. 12) [2]. Proving the skills and knowledge for immediate implication is equipping and developing the teacher's ability to meet the future professional demand is enabling. Thus TPD is an essential for teachers to transform education. We cannot deny the contribution of teacher training to teachers' professional development. It plays a prominent role in teacher professional development. But, the teachers on-the-ground usually perceive that teacher training and teacher professional development program are synonymous [3].

TD "is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically." [4]

Teacher Professional Development (TPD).....

- It is based on constructivism rather than on a transmission orientation model.
- It includes: formal and informal experiences.
- It is a long term process.
- It is a process that takes place within a particular context.
- It is a collaborative process.
- A teacher conceived as a reflective practitioner.
- It is multi-dimensional: content, process and context.

There are several models through teacher development takes place. These models serve as options for teachers. Conference plan, peer coaching, pre-conference, action research, collaborative study groups, individual development plan and dialogue journals are the six models as options for teacher development [5]. There are other options like participating in training, workshop, sharing ideas and making discussion in blogs, etc. Participating in a conference, seminar, talk, etc help teachers to share idea, strengthen idea and direct for work and hence supports for TPD. It is better to prepare and make plan regarding the role and activities to be done as participants while attending in any of these types of meets as a participant. Preparation about the related concepts, students' learning, procedures about assessment in the stated objectives/outcomes, etc can be more useful. Teacher can set personal expectations to be achieved as a participant. Teacher as a participant can plan for discussion, demonstration of new idea in certain related problem, and sharing plan. This can be an alternate way for classroom teaching/facilitation, publishing on a journal/news bulletin, or like. Any way the participating in the conference with plan helps for professional development. "This option for professional development is particularly suited to professionals who are in need of incentives to renew their commitment to their careers. It is also useful and safe way for novices to explore new ideas and techniques" [5].

In a school, there are two teachers namely Ram and Shyam. Ram is teaching mathematics in lower secondary level and Shyam is teaching mathematics in secondary level. They prepare a weekly schedule for observing one

class of each by another and sharing experience each other as well as receiving comments and feedbacks for the improvement. This process of observing colleagues class and providing feedback and sharing classroom strategies and experience helps for professional development of each teacher and is commonly known as peer coaching.

Training is one of the most practical and direct approach to TPD. Training is a strategy for direct intervention by the collaborator, to work on specific aspects of the teacher's teaching [6]. The main assumption of training is that teachers will improve their effectiveness in the classroom after mastery of discrete aspects of skills and knowledge. Thus teacher training is most popular approach of professional development and mostly ensured to be implemented in the classroom. One reason why training serves as an excellent means of staff development is that it compels teachers to reflect on and re-vitalize their thinking about teaching, and thereby inevitably subject their own teaching behavior to scrutiny [2]. Thus training is most powerful option of TPD which is most commonly used in many countries including Nepal.

### 3. TPD in Nepal

The essence of TPD in Nepal has instrumented by policy in 1971 by including professional qualifications of teachers in addition to academic qualifications. National Education System Plan (NESP) declared academic qualifications and professional qualifications for the first time in Nepal in 1971. The professional qualifications for teachers consist of training of at least ten months. The requirements of professional qualifications remain challenging to make cent percent teachers trained for at least of ten months. National Center for Educational Development (NCED) was established in 1993 under the Ministry of Education, Nepal with a view to provide teachers professional development opportunity formally to the teachers as an in-service teacher training program. NCED was able to provide training to 98.2% of permanent teachers of community schools of Nepal by the year 2009. The successfulness in terms of implementation in the classroom is realized as challenging. NCED (2009) has mentioned that the application of training skills in the classroom is partially achieved across both teachers and schools [7]. Then NCED has envisioned by extending the horizon of training by conducting Teachers Professional Development (TPD) program. NCED has developed policy guideline, program handbook, etc in order to transfer TPD successfully in instructional activities.

The main intent of the TPD program is to refresh, strength and update the knowledge and skills of teachers so that there will be visible change in the classroom and help for the improvement of learning achievement. As a result, teachers do self-reflection, teachers access to knowledge and skill required for liveliness of classroom activities, developing habit of self-study and reading culture are some of the means of TPD (NCED, 2009). But the gap between intention and practice can be accepted by each stakeholder.

Different researches for example CERID (2005) and DOE (2006) show that the transformation of training into the classroom is around 50%. This situation shows that there are several aspects of teachers' professional development

program to be addressed. One of the aspects of improvements is related to teachers themselves. How teachers are feeling about the program and what activities are expected by teachers are mostly important components of TPD. Professional development approaches are categorized into two groups: Self initiated and directed. Teachers' training is one of the approaches of teachers' professional development, but in Nepalese context, teacher professional development is synonymously known as training by the practice. The design of policy and TPD module (or training module) is based on the top-down approach in terms of addressing expected activities in TPD process. But these bases may not be as expectations of the teachers. It is necessary to know how teachers feel comfortable to work and what they expect from any TPD program.

#### 4. Objective of the Study

Who should decide the nature of service to teachers may be have different options. Top-down and bottom-up are two approaches common to all of us to decide the nature of services. The bottom-up approach seeks to meet the expectations of teachers from the TPD program. To make TPD program more useful, it is realized that expectations of teachers are the keys. The main objective of the paper is to explore the expectations of teachers who participate in TPD program in Nepal.

#### 5. Research Question

The research question set to study expectations of teachers as the participants of the TPD program in Nepalese context is "What are the expectations of teachers in TPD program?"

#### 6. Research Site and Participants

This research was done in the western part of Nepal in a district namely Rupendehi. Two Resource Centers, one from rural and one from urban were selected. Two schools from each of two resource centers were selected. Two teachers from each school were selected as research participants. There were eight teachers participated in the research. Among eight teachers, 5 are male and 3 are female; 3 are primary level, 2 lower secondary and 3 secondary level teachers and 5 completed third phase, 2 completed second phase and 1 completed first phase on TPD module.

#### 7. Tools and Techniques

An un-structured interview guideline was prepared as a theme and was used during interview. The researchers visited each of the teachers in their respective schools and tried to manage their leisure periods to interview. The interview was recorded in cell-phone. Apart from the record in cell-phone, the researchers tried to maintain note of the interview in short form. The authors did not transcribe all the interviews but listened the records several times and transcribed only important narrations.

Different themes related to expectations were generated based on the interview and presented here.

### 8. Results: Expectations of Teachers

Expectations of the teachers are themetized as delivery of TPD, participant-focused and friendly, use of modules and resources, observation and feedback system, Innovative ideas and ICT, teaching improvement plan and transfer of training skills. The short description of each of these themes is presented here in this paper.

- **Delivery of TPD**

There are different approaches of learning. Learning approaches of children and adults are expected to be different. TPD facilitators are to deal with adults. The principles and skills in facilitations suitable to adult learning are expected by the teachers in the TPD program. Facilitators are to be familiar with the approaches of andragogy. Teachers expected the TPD program to facilitate their learning as cyclical as Knowles (1970), the father of adult learning mentioned, that it to be designed so that experience leads to reflection, which leads to action, which leads to concrete reflection and so on[8]. Furthermore, the training and TPD programs are designed and delivered using the four assumptions of andragogy in learning as given by Forrest III and Peterson (2006) are self-directing self-concept, use of experience, a readiness to learn and a performance-centered orientation to learning [9]. Teachers expect two modes of learning in the TPD program. First, teachers expect that the trainer need to demonstrate how to deal in the classroom as a role model. Second, the mode of learning preferred by teachers is to be directly applicable in their classrooms. Participants expect delivery of TPD program is to be activity based. For example, Facilitators need to use manipulative in the training sessions with a view to empower competence of teachers in using manipulative, low cost and no cost, rather discussing about the use of low/no cost materials. Further, the facilitator can ask teachers to prepare and demonstrate how to use in their classroom in the training so that teachers can use materials in their classrooms.

- **Participant Focused and Friendly**

Teachers prefer to share their practices and shape these practices for the future. Even teachers prefer to share their problems and get appropriate solutions for the problems. By policy the existing TPD program is designed with a view to share teachers' best practices and shape for the future work. But in practice the sharing is seen less focused. The facilitators develop module based on the mostly demanded themes. Teachers expect the problems faced during teaching in their classroom are to be dealt in the training in depth. One of the major features of the TPD program is to be need based. It is reflected by the teachers in the field that when needs of teachers are addressed in the training sessions, teachers seems to be more motivated to learn and teachers are more engaged in learning process. Teachers as participants expect to be active and play active roles in the TPD program from developing module to implementation of the training in their classroom. This can be aligned with the argument of Kennedy (2008) that teachers are thoughtful professionals, not merely skilled laborers, and teaching requires professional judgment, not

merely training in skills. Teachers expect thinking opportunity as well as experiential learning opportunity in the TPD program [10].

*In the fourth, very few participants (4 or 5) were found inactive and not participated in the work. As they expressed in group discussion, they were not active because contents were not as per their demand. (Teacher Interview, July 16, 2014).*

- **Use of Modules and Resources**

By policy, it is suggested to prepare training modules and then facilitate training sessions. But teachers as participants in the training could not value the module developed without participation of teachers. Teachers reflected that preparation for the training is to be done jointly by teachers and trainers. As teachers they want to participate in preparation so that they can contribute in training and in implementation in their classroom. They also expect that training module and reading and activity resources are to be provided to teachers before they come to TPD program so that they can prepare and can share their experience. They expect standard resources with a view to have quality. These quality standards expected by the teachers are matched with the context, process and content standards [11]. TPD program needs to recognize that teachers expect the right combination of where to apply learning, how to develop expertise in applying and what to learn.

- **Observation and Feedback System**

Teachers expect more skill oriented and subject specific experts to observe their classes and provide very specific comments which are helpful to improve. Teachers shared their dissatisfaction with the existing observation and sharing with meeting because of the comments they receive are too generic. They expect that observation and feedback is to be individual manner and more clinical approach. Some of the teachers are also willing to share their good lessons but no one is willing to observe those lessons. This may be a type of challenge for observer to observe and provide feedback. They expect that trainers are to be well competent in providing feedback to participants. Teachers expect developmental feedbacks rather judgmental. The easiest way to feedback is to build it seamlessly into the process of gathering feedbacks [12]. To provide developmental feedback it is better to follow a specific model for example Heron's (2001) model of six category intervention analysis. Observers are to be trained in observation and feedback skills. These feedback skills are of two types: authoritative and facilitative. Teachers expect facilitative feedbacks namely catharsis, catalysis, and supportive [13].

- **Innovative Ideas and ICT**

Lecture and discussion is common to all the training sessions. Participants want to have different activities other than lecture and discussion. Group work and other activities like problem solving, project based learning, ICT integrated activities, etc are some examples of moving beyond the common practice. Participants expect clear instruction from the trainer about the tasks. Participants are encouraged by problems to be solved. Participants expect critical thinking and creating activities to be dealt in TPD program so that they can introduce in their classrooms. Participants want to move beyond the use of charts and flashcards in TPD programs. They expect ICT as an essential to be used in TPD programs.

Teachers expectations about innovative ideas and ICT can be viewed from the model of "Whole of the three lines" [14].

- **Teaching Improvement Plan**

Teaching Improvement Plan (TIP) is strategic plan for teachers. Teachers understood TIP as a commitment to show improvement in students' achievement. They just set the target to achieve in terms of achievement score in the examinations. Teachers are not familiar about the strategies to set to achieve those targets. Teachers expect the process of preparation of TIP in realistic manner with strategies. They expect to be strategic in improving their teaching and want to improve students' achievement. They expect to learn setting targets and implementation strategies to achieve those targets with monitoring and evaluation with schemes.

- **Transfer of Training Skills**

Teachers are aware of students centered teaching is more suitable than teacher centered. Teachers' understating of student centered activity is not to be limited as being liberal in the classroom. But the continuation and increase in activities are still challenging. The shift in teaching approach of teacher centered to student centered is accepted but may require time to change in their practices. Some teachers have realized that they got some knowledge about classroom management and are confident that they can use grouping techniques in the classroom. They also applied some techniques to group students, keep students in rotation, prepare homogenous/heterogeneous grouping. But the way of grouping is seen same for all time and teachers expects different techniques so that they can vary by each lesson and each day. Teachers expect to learn those skills and strategies so that they can apply in their classrooms. They want to change but because of encouragement and skills and idea teachers find very hard to start and training and TPD programs are to be encouraged to motivate teachers.

## 9. Conclusion and Implication

Teachers expect TPD is to be demand based in practice not only in policy. The demands of teachers are to be collected with a view to design training. TPD program is to be helpful to solve teachers' classroom problems. Teachers can identify weaknesses and start improving in teaching after training. They expect an adequate training duration of the workshop with practical. Some of the teachers expect training is to be able to link theory and practice. Trainers are to be expert in subject matter and training with more experience. There is to collaboration between teachers and trainers in developing training modules and programs.

There is a gap between teachers' expectation from TPD programs and what they are getting. Teachers are expected to use child-friendly teaching methods and strategies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) friendly pedagogical approaches, etc which are suitable for twenty first century education. But existing performance in training programs are not able to these expectations. The main major concern of improvement is to be given on training performance so that teachers' expectation can be met. On the other hand there should be quality promotional initiatives so that the main intent of

the TPD program, to refresh, strength and update the knowledge and skills of teachers so that there will be visible change in the classroom and help for the improvement of learning achievement, can be realized everywhere. Teachers' expectations on sharing their best practices among other teachers are to be included in such TPD program. This will give platform for teachers to learn among themselves. Suitable TPD policy guidelines and practice based refinement are the main tasks to be internalize trusting teachers. Consequently, it helps to teachers as participants to be active and play active roles in the TPD program from developing module to implementation of the training in their classroom. It is better to engage teachers in preparing training modules along with reading resource and activities for the training. It is better to provide reading materials beforehand so that teachers can active in training.

Training providers are to be more conscious on providing more skill oriented and subject specific experts to observe teachers' classes and provide very specific comments. Trainers need to be addressing clinical approach to observe teachers' classes and provide feedback. Feedbacks are expected to be developmental rather judgmental. Trainers are to be helping teachers in moving beyond the use of charts and flashcards in TPD and use ICT as an essential to be used in TPD programs. Teachers are to be made skillful in developing and implementing Teaching Improvement Plan (TIP). Teachers are to be well versed in the process of preparation of TIP in realistic manner with strategies. TPD programs are to be designed with a view to address teachers' expectations.

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