

Teachers' Professional Development at Public Campuses in Nepal: Policies and Practices

Dinesh Panthee

Lecturer, Sahid Narayan Pokhrel Ramapur Campus

Sainamaina, Rupandehi

Email: pantheedinu@gmail.com

Abstract : *Teacher professional development (TPD) is the process of making teachers competent at applying the knowledge and skills they have attained in the classroom practice. TPD keeps academics up-to-date with the changing world and knowledge. The objective of this study was to explore policies and practices 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 Rupandehi district selected purposively. The study revealed TPD policies as opportunities for teachers of public campuses deserve high consequence in the sense that they help teachers develop various kinds of professional skills, knowledge, 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, policies, practices

Background of the Study

TPD is the process of becoming the best sort of teacher. It begins at the beginning and continues until retirement from the profession and until one's deathbed individually. TPD helps any teacher to enhance the teacher's professionalism. TPD advances teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as best teachers in order to achieve a longer-term aim. TPD wants to improve teachers' abilities, understanding, and effectiveness in the classroom. It has been realized as a powerful approach to implement child-friendly activity-based education for education in the twenty-first century (Pokhrel,

2016). TPD maintains a specific standard of professionalism and influences teachers' practices and views for the better. 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 campuses which are run by public for public. Most of the public campuses are in rural areas. The public campuses lack a clear vision, policies and regulations surrounding the professional

development of the faculty members and are unable to provide improved facilities for their teachers. In Rupandehi, where I have been teaching for fifteen years, I observed that very few teachers from public campuses get the opportunity to participate in professional development events. Being a campus chief of a public campus I have an understanding that the stakeholders are muddled for the professional development of their faculties. The TPD activities now offered to teachers of public campuses is insufficient to prepare them for the evolving nature of their professions, including the use of technology and digital learning tools, the analysis of student data to differentiate instruction, and the implementation of real-life situations.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education has been very fundamental 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. Professionalization is a process in which a vocation tries to become a profession. This is a process of institutionalization of knowledge, skills, and ethics. TPD is an ideology that emphasizes more knowledge, skills, and ethics than the material benefits which accrue to a profession. While TPD is concerned with standardization, TPD is concerned with standards. It 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

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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. The objective of the study was to explore the perception and practice of teachers on teacher professional development in public campuses and to analyze policies and practices of TPD in Public Campuses. TPD is 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 ongoing process through which teachers keep growing with their voluntary effort. TPD is essential for teachers to transform education.

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

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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 store 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 Discussions

Knowledge 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

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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.

Awareness of TPD as Growth and Development of Teachers

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

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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 policies and practice of Teacher's Professional Development Activities

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

Kaladarpan | Volume :3 | No.: 1 | Oct/Nov. 2023 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.

Common TPD Activities in Public Campuses

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.

Findings and Conclusion

The finding of the study showed that teachers need to expand their knowledge and

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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 upgrade his/her skills. One may be skilled at the time of entry in teaching but things don't work out the same way throughout his/her career because of the innovation and diversities emerging every day. 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. Continuous professional development activities upgrade teachers' teaching skills and help teachers survive in the 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. The teacher can use new ideas and methodologies in the classroom if they are updated through different activities of TPD. They can understand the problems of the students and they can teach according to the need of the students. TPD is such an aspect that encourages the teachers to do many kinds of research in the academic fields. 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 useful to select the appropriate teaching materials since the ways of selecting teaching materials are also learned in the training in course of TPD. TPD ensures that teachers' knowledge stays relevant and up-to-date. It helps teachers to continue to make a meaningful contribution to society. It helps teachers to stay interested and interesting. Experience is a great teacher. TPD helps advance the body of knowledge and technology within the teacher's profession. TPD can lead to increased public confidence in confidence in individual professionals and their profession as a whole. 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, 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. 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

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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 teacher preparation opportunities, in-service- training opportunities, further study opportunities, career development opportunities, and adequate pay scale opportunities need to deliver as per the provisions made by them.

Being an important part of the professional lives of the public campuses, TPD carries the massive value of bringing out the self to be more constructive. TPD prominently will support them to be a leader, researcher, risk-taker and problem solver of every complication they are going to face in their instructional professional condition.

Taking teachers as active learners, reflective practitioners, lifelong learners, it is necessary to maintain the proper campus environment the professional development makes a higher impact on individual teachers, students, and the whole institution. TPD is important for both new teachers and experienced teachers. 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 context. 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. Current provisions for TPD at public campuses are improving in some prompt and these campuses are trying to focus on the implementation of their provisions which helps to grow teacher professionalism and quality education.

CMC of public campuses must be thoughtful to fulfill the minimum physical and instructional requirements. They should encourage the teachers to participate in workshops, seminars, and similar professional development programs

Kaladarpan | Volume :3 | No.: 1 | Oct/Nov. 2023 organized by different institutions. They must implement the provisioned policy in their practice. Campus administration, Campus Management Committee, Public campus Teacher Association, Public Campus Association, RMC, and concerned authority must be oriented for the specific, planned, and scheduled TPD activities through prior acceptance and cooperation. Each public campuses must include TPD activities in the strategic and master plan for campuses including policies, strategies and implementation mechanisms, and budget taking into consideration of the challenges and opportunities. University Grant Commissions should monitor its funding activities of TPD of public campuses and good governances. Teachers of public campuses should be more proactive and conscious 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 should properly utilize the resources available in institutions.

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