

Prospect and Practice of Teacher Induction in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

The process of converting pre-service teaching into an in-service teacher is known as induction and this technique of teachers' professional growth has been gaining momentum in the world of teacher education throughout the world. Nepal is a developing country and it has not started the teacher induction program formally yet. This study is an attempt to investigate the role and prospect of teacher induction. The study employed a descriptive method and used secondary sources to make arguments. For the argumentation, the study at first makes a claim and it is supported by already published literature. Those secondary sources of data comprise previous researchers, journals, and other standard publications. The study found that using induction, teachers around the world developed their professional abilities and their inhibitions and disappointments were removed since they got an opportunity to collaborate with professional teachers, it has become a life-long experience and different features and components of it made it more reliable and valid. The study suggests that it is extremely necessary to introduce a teacher induction program in all levels of education and if can be done teachers' professional development can be practically achieved.

Keywords: induction, life-long experience, features, components, TPD

INTRODUCTION

The term "induction" is derived from the Latin word "inducere" which means a process of leading one into a new experience (Cherubini, 2007). Robinson (1998) defines it as "the introduction to an unfamiliar situation, an activity of a new kind" (p.3). Likewise, teacher induction is defined as the mortar that cements pre-service training to be continued in-service professional development (Farhat, 2015). In its simplest form, it is the process of welcoming and helping beginners to adjust to their newly assigned roles as in-service teachers. Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) assert that induction programs "are designed to support, assist, train, and assess teachers within the first three years of employment in public schools" (p. 13). While conceptualizing, it relates to teacher preparation, it has evolved and changed with increasing interest in the topic, it continues to be understood in wide terms as a supporting mechanism for the teachers who are at the beginning stage of their career (Lawson, 1992).

Similarly, this mechanism has four goals which are socializing the teacher into the school culture, enhancing teaching skills, solving beginning the problems that the novice teachers are likely to face, and assuring teachers' professional development (Arends & Winitzky, 1998). The participation of pre-service teacher programmes has increased since 1990 (Feiman-Nemser, Schulle, Carver, & Yusko, 1999). Concerning the history of teacher induction, Reeder (2013) asserts that there are five waves in the history of teacher induction. The first wave was earlier to

1986, the second wave came during the years of 1986 to 1989, 1990-1996 was the time for the third wave for the induction programme, the fourth wave occurred from 1997- 2006 and now we are in the fifth wave at present (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). In 1978, Florida was the first state to establish a state-level induction programme (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). The second wave of induction programmes which arose between 1986-1989 concentrated on mentoring and differ in programme structure (Furtwengler, 1993). Likewise, the third wave which emerged between 1990- 1996 was focused on developmental and structured approaches to induction that also included formative evaluation as the component of the programme (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The fourth wave of induction is characterized by the inclusiveness, organized system of integrated novice teacher assistance (Bartell, 2004). It is essential to clarify that teacher induction is different from the pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. The induction programs are the bridge from the student of teaching to the teacher of student (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

The teacher induction programme makes an unfamiliar situation familiar to those who want to be accustomed to it and from ELT practitioners' point of view, induction paves the way to professionalism. From the discussion made above, it is crystal clear that the role of induction is very paramount in the process of professional development of novice teachers for various reasons. Moreover, it is through induction the gap between theory and its practical implementation can be maintained on one side and on the other, it does not matter whether it is pre-service or in-service, but induction plays a very significant role in the professional development of a naïve teacher. Considering this, no study has been carried out to find out the role, prospect, and practice of induction in Nepal so this study is an attempt to investigate the same.

METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of the present study is to investigate the prospect and practice of teacher induction in Nepal and for that the research question is -what is the prospect and practice of teacher induction tradition in Nepal? To explore those prospects and practice the study employed a qualitative research perspective since using it enabled me to have in-depth information about the prospect and practice of teacher induction. Moreover, the study relied on a secondary source of data since this is desk research. In this study, at first, a claim is made and the claim is supported by argumentation. The argumentation, for example, has been developed with the help of a secondary source of data. Such secondary source comprises of books, journals, articles, periodicals, reports, etc. Hence, being inclined towards desk research, the present study utilized already published materials to support the argument presented at the beginning section of the study.

As this is an argumentative qualitative paper, the argumentation has been made based on the claim that has been made in each section of the theme. This study used the framework of data analysis and interpretation propounded by Braun and Clark (2006) in which at first code is generated, then after the similar codes are categorized into a coherent whole after those categories are converted into themes and emerged themes were related with existing literature.

Following the framework of Braun and Clark (2006) data collected from the secondary source has been analyzed and related to the existing literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the available resources, I have drawn the findings of the study in the following themes.

Components of a Teacher Induction Programme

After specifying the induction programme, it is very important to establish its goals since goals direct other necessary components for the teacher induction programme. As talked above, the role of the induction programme is to enable the professional development of novice teachers, mentoring their professional skills and making them familiar with the pedagogic process, hence it is only through induction professionalism can be found on the part of teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Carver, 2012). Feiman-Nemser and Carver (2012) have presented a comprehensive framework by specifying the components of an induction programme that comprised of:

- Matching a good job with an academic qualification
- Orientation towards the relevant work
- Support from all stakeholders of the school community,
- Specifying the role
- The focus on professional development
- Constructive mentoring.

Similarly, Huling-Austin (1992) focused on specifying objectives of the induction programme in behavioral terminology and further opined about constant feedback to the participants of the induction programme. However, Schlechty (1985) focuses on the observation of teachers and the administrative body's attitude and behavior towards the induction of novice teachers' progress through constant feedback from professionals in and outside the institution. Moreover, the study of Galvez-Hjornevik (1985) reports that an induction programme should have the internship status (which is done after completing a particular degree, say M. Ed in Nepalese context), the mentor (which novice teachers are assigned to a professional teacher and the professional teacher supervises the classes and provides feedback whenever needed), and the committee (it is responsible for ensuring the professional development of the novice teacher which consists of the school principal, a counselor on curriculum, a peer teacher and the mentor).

Ingersoll & Smith (2004) assert that teacher induction has a direct connection with the type of programmes being induced which yields in the professional growth of the novice teacher by various means and the professional growth is measured by the school's academic council and district academic head. Moreover, Heidkamp and Shapiro (1999) advocate that components of induction should include a support programme for a novice teacher so that professional growth can be achieved. According to them, the component of the induction programme comprises of

providing administrative support and direction that comprised of meeting one to one to those novice teachers and solving the problems that they have been confronting, making the novice teacher feel relaxed in the school environment that encompasses of assimilating them to the school environment and helping them develop a positive attitude towards their professional growth, maintaining frequent contact that involves of making them aware about duty and responsibility of every individual of the school and allowing the administration to make an informal observation of the novice teachers, allowing them to have time for professional development and having a professional relationship to those who are academically connected.

Features of the Teacher Induction Programme

Even if the primary purpose of the teacher induction programme is to enable novice teachers to be proficient in the act of teaching, it has many more features that should be taken into consideration while making an induction programme for them. Many scholars of teacher education argued that because of distinct features, the induction programme has been very effective in many parts of the world. For example, Schlechty (1985) argues that an induction programme explains the novice teacher about the process of their selection which is based on the special requirement that ensures future success. Moreover, Schlechty (19985) provides the following features of an induction programme:

- It is divided into progressive steps of novice teachers' achievement
- Induction training ensures the successful futures of inductees
- Induction yields long term career objectives for them
- Inductees' problems and immediately addressed in real-life situations
- Novice teachers should develop their academic vocabulary
- They receive supervision, demonstration, and feedback from higher authorities periodically
- They are allowed to share their happiness and difficulties with the academic council and other academic bodies from time to time.

Moreover, the study of Feiman-Nemser and Carver (2012) came across about the features of an induction programme that includes one – to two years taught programmes that laid attention to teacher learning and their evaluation, provision of a mentor, an opportunity for collaboration, making a structured observation, intensive workplace learning, and organizing seminars and meetings on a timely basis so that problems could be solved academically. In Japan, a novice teacher is required to conduct action research about the practice and problem that s/he encounters once a year, and such research should be published in the annual magazine of the concerned school (Kock, 2007). However, Fulton et al. (2005) asset that induction in Switzerland is different than induction in other countries since the country begins induction programme for pre-service teachers at first and only after than to other teachers, like-in-service one. According to them in the pre-service induction programme teachers are expected to work in teams and offer support and encouragement to each other. Additionally, induction in Germany and France is

based on an apprentice-style system. In those induction programmes novice teachers are aligned with professional teachers and professional teachers are required to make novice teachers as their assistants for a period of at least six months, during that time they are expected to demonstrate professional abilities and once novice teachers learn professional etiquettes and manner from their seniors, the classes are handed to them and professional teachers should allow them to teach fully for a month and make an observation (Howe & Xu, 2013).

Induction: The Beginning Phase of Professional Development

The teachers who are recruited today are the teachers for the next generation and their success determines the success of the whole generation of the students (Wong, 2004). Likewise, their success is possible with an inclusive coherent professional development programme. The induction programme prepares, supports, and retains new teachers (Carvar, 2003). Induction programmes are considered the beginning phase of professional development (Nielsen et al., 2007). The teachers who are at the starting phase of their career also need the support for professional development to prepare for and hold their teaching profession which is the objective of the induction programme (Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). While analyzing the literature, it shows that the induction programmes are helpful in the professional development of teachers. They have become the first ladder to reach the goals of a teaching career, for example, a study (Elsner, 1984) found that the positive changes were seen in the teaching skill in the teachers who were assisted by the induction programme than the teachers who were not. Odell (1986) found that the novice teachers were supported emotionally by the induction support which resulted in the positivity towards the profession which motivated them to work hard and retain in the teaching career but that was lacking in the teachers who didn't get support through the induction programme. Likewise, as one of the fundamental characteristics of an effective teacher is to be able to find and use the resources for fruitful teaching, this was able to be achieved by the teachers who were facilitated by the induction programme (Runyan, 1991).

Induction Programmes: A Lifeline for Novice Teachers

Induction programmes are considered as the lifeline of novice teachers (Bloom, 2014) because of several reasons. The teachers at the beginning phase are also known as novice teachers might feel disappointed and frustrated in the first years of teaching because of the inability to navigate the teaching-learning process in a systematic manner (Voss & Kunter, 2020). It is my experience that every teacher at the beginning phase of the teaching profession can be intimidating as we have to struggle with classroom management issues, lesson plans, supporting the children with special needs, etc. In case the teacher who starts his/her teaching career from the junior grades has to be competent enough to keep records and do a lot of paperwork which is necessary for child assessment, certification, and other aspects of programme responsibilities (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). The bitter truth is that only a few new teachers get emotional and technical support when they first step into the teaching profession. I have heard the teacher reflecting their memories of first-year teaching as “reality shock”, “sink or swim” and so on. That's the reason why the teacher retention rate in the first few years is high

(Buchanan et al., 2013). So, the teacher induction programme answers to develop the promising and hardworking teachers as the induction programme regards the novice teachers not as a finished product even if they have completed the teacher certification programme (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

Induction programmes, however, for new teachers are popular these days and work as a tool to reduce teacher turnover, reinforce teacher practice, and enhance students' learning (Wong, 2004). The researchers at the Southeast Centre for Teaching Quality found the specific causes that enforces to drop out (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007) which were the weak of leadership, lacked sufficient time for preparing the lessons, and working with students. Likewise, the research carried by Simon et al. (2015) on the project called the Next Generation of Teachers at Harvard University found that the present generation of new teachers are different from the past generation as these generations have many job opportunities unlike the past generations so, when they don't get support to handle the challenge of teaching in the first years, and they are likely to quit. So, teacher induction programmes can be a useful tool to overcome novice teachers' retention. Thus, Steffy et al. (2000) assert that induction programmes should be offered during the hiring process which should be following the developmental needs of the teachers and be systematically woven into the fabrics of the system of the school.

Induction in Nepal: A Personal Reflection

I could not find any literature on the teacher induction programme in Nepal for the newly recruited teachers as well no documentation has been made on the same issue either. In my own experience, I first have gone for teaching in a private school where I didn't get any induction for teaching, but in some schools, I have seen headteachers, coordinators orienting the teacher who is newly recruited to help them adjust to the school environment. But when I talked to my friends and seniors who passed Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) exams and have been working as teachers, then I came to know that recently there is a provision of induction as orientation for the novice teachers who have recently joined the service. When I talked, I found that one of the teachers, who had joined the teaching job in government school five years ago, according to her, they were given five days' orientation. They were inducted along with the other subjects' teacher although she was an English teacher. Without any consideration, all teachers were kept in the same place and oriented. The induction or orientation was given by the local trainers or resource persons. All the teachers who were newly recruited that year in that district were in the same orientation programme. So, due to lack of specialization, the induction programme was not fruitful as it should be but as she was already in the teaching profession in a private school. Even if the teaching environment was not new to her, but it was not helpful for all teachers. Likewise, one of my friends who joined the government school in the year 2064 B.S told me that he didn't get any induction or orientation for his teaching job. He taught with his knowledge and the skills that he had but later on training programmes that he attended sharpened his skills of becoming an English language teacher.

CONCLUSION

For a developing country like Nepal teachers' induction programme is a relatively new concept and because of know-how and financial constraints, it has not been effectively introduced in the pedagogical practice of the country formally so far. Therefore, no previous study has been done in this area. Induction, in this sense, is a process of professionally converting pre-service teachers into in-service teachers by enabling them to practically implement the theoretical stuff they acquired in their formal instruction into a practical field. Moreover, induction is crucially needed for familiarizing school culture, enriching teachers' skills, solving personal and academic problems professionally, and enabling teachers to grow professionally in their respective working environments. Even if the concept of teacher induction is a newer concept in Nepal, it has been widely used in many parts of the world so that pre-service teachers are converted into professionals in their working environment. Nonetheless, there are five waves of induction in the world. The first one has begun in 1986, the second was from 1986 to 1990, the third one from 1990–1996, the fourth one from 1997 – 2006 and the last was has been from 2006 onwards.

On the other side, different components of the teacher induction programme made it trustworthy and valid. For example, the task of it is to support those novice teachers through different mediums since whenever they are in an induction programme, they are engaged in goal-directed activities, an induction programme for the teacher should enable naïve teacher to grow professionally and for that constant feedback, workshops and seminars should be organized on a periodic interval. Moreover, the features of an induction programme should include those activities that enable a novice teacher to be able to gain career objectives, get the experience of the lifelong learning experience by implementing theoretical stuff into practice, get an opportunity to collaborate with professional teachers, and learn many more things from them and learn the mannerism of professional teacher and apply the same while teaching in the classroom.

Finally, as the teacher induction programme is the beginning phase of teachers' professional development, it is regarded as the first ladder of their professional development so novice teachers experience it differently. It is because if there would be no induction programme, a naïve teacher would have been frustrated, disappointed, and intimidated towards the teaching and learning process but it is the teacher induction programme that enabled them to overcome such a negative attitude. Moreover, if an induction programme is strictly implemented, it reduces teachers' turnover since a well-trained teacher does not like to change the profession as he becomes well experienced in course of time in one hand, and on the other hand, after the induction programme, he gets a handsome salary. Regarding the case of teacher induction in Nepal, the situation is very frustrating and only the academic heads of schools do it. For example, in my interview with some teachers, I found that headteachers and higher secondary level coordinators have been doing the task of teacher induction informally and it has not been documented in literature about teacher induction so far in Nepal. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to introduce a compulsory teacher induction programme at all levels of education in Nepal.

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