

## **Perception of Political Science Education Teachers' Towards Professional Development**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to analyze how the Political Science Education teachers' perceive professional development. Similarly this study has focused on the different experience in teaching professionalism and it influenced in teaching learning process. But, in here, teachers perceived the teaching profession as well respected one and look at it as a low grade profession and they are only teaching, till they get an opportunity for a more lucrative job. Participants emphasized to make common consensus that society plays a crucial role in steering reinforcement from society towards the profession; it motivates the teachers to develop themselves professionally. There is always be the few people that don't and will not see the profession as respectable one, but teachers required to look past these, and try to understand the gravity of the responsibility entrusted upon them.*

**Keywords:** achievement, participants, perception, professional development

### **Introduction**

Teachers are knowledgeable, intellectual and smart members of society. They carry the responsibility to guide the rest of the people and lead the community to a brighter future. Teaching became a necessary element of society for people to learn more about the world (Galami, 2004). So, teachers are an essential component of the society and educational process. Their performance plays a vital role in meeting the learning needs of individuals and also in bringing about societal or national change as demanded by this changing context. They need to be efficient in conveying knowledge, using suitable methods and techniques to facilitate learners, effectively meeting the curricular goals.

It seems that teachers' professional development plays an important role in the educational development of Nepal. The professional development of teachers directly influences the achievement of the education. So, it became interesting subject for study.

Teachers play an important and valuable role in the development of education. Teachers themselves need to be developed as professionals. Professional development identifies and creates ethical aspects that are recognized and valued by society. Political science education teachers as the undercurrent strengths of society for the changing world need to be professionally developed to impart genuine knowledge required in shaping future generations of the country and thereby assist in nation building as skillful craftsman. But, like every other driving force of change, there are obstacles that are negatively impacting development of professional teachers.

There are numerous other problems in TU teachers' professional development. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the political science education teachers' perception on professional development in TU of Nepal. Professional development of teacher in Tribhuvan University have been rarely explored. So, I think, this is an important issue which will provide important insights into personal experiences of teachers which will help to understand how much supportive the environment, and concerned authorities are towards teachers.

Since there have been very few researches on Tribhuvan University teachers' professional development. So that this study will be a valuable asset towards it. Teachers having professionalism not only provide quality education but also produce professional teachers for the future. In this reference, the government has also realized the need to continue professional development support through recurrent training (MoE, 2002). Thus, it is equally significant to different training institutes, professionals. To be more specific, this study will provide ways of developing professional among teachers. These information are useful for policy maker and national planners of whole educational sector.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study has the following objectives,

- i. To explore political science education teachers' perception towards the teaching profession.

- ii. To analyze the impact of perceptions on political science teachers' professional development

### **Methods and Study Area**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study and primary data collected through interview and observation on the central department of political science education faculty. Then secondary data were taken from different libraries as well as published and unpublished document.

This study followed qualitative research approach with interpretive way. For this purpose, research adopted a qualitative approach with interpretative way. Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting (Creswell, 2003). Thus, data were collected through interview and observation as tools.

The interview is a principal source for data collection and interview guidelines developed with reference to research objectives. Similarly there are different tools to gather data and observation tools used to capture the physical environment of related field on the basis of observation checklist.

#### **Sample population**

| S.N. | Population | Type             | Number of participants | Used tools                |
|------|------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | Teacher    | Pol Science dept | 4                      | Interview and observation |
| 3    | Teacher    | Other dept       | 2                      |                           |
| 4    | Head       | Edu faculty      | 1                      |                           |

This study was carried out in central department of political science education faculty other department of education faculty. In this way, political science education teachers were interviewed, other faculty of two teachers and Education faculty head selected on the basis of purposive sampling.

#### **Political Science Education Teachers' Perception toward the Teaching Profession**

There are ones that feel that the profession is indeed a respectable one, whereas others perceive it differently. Similarly, some educators take this profession as an opportunity for professional development, while to others it might just be a means to make ends meet; in other words a profession that pays the bills. Following this chain of thought, teacher's professional

development is gravely influenced by the perception that teachers have towards the profession. It is obvious that if teachers regard the profession highly and have a positive outlook towards it, the devotion towards the profession definitely yields constructive outcomes, which include teachers' professional development as well. On the contrary, if the profession itself is regarded as one that is just a transit, or a stepping stone until other lucrative opportunities arise, the teachers' professional development would be at a minimum and in some cases even nonexistent.

To better understand the opinion of educators involved in the teaching profession, I interviewed University teachers. The general outlooks of these interviews have been presented herewith. As mentioned earlier, the interview lead to the notion that some teachers get into the profession in order to intellectually promulgate education and enhance their own personal development as well as provide opportunities to enhance the professional development of other individuals. Other teachers on the other hand regard the profession as merely a profession, one that pays.

Teacher are teachers that perceive the profession as one that is beneficial to societal development, and are quite satisfied in being involved in a profession that helps build futures. This kind of dedication to the profession also fosters an environment that enforces teachers' professional development.

*I perceive teaching as society developer, skill and knowledge provider and educated peoples' profession. It gives me immense pleasure to be a teacher. I believe the teachers are taking this profession as their future. Therefore, teachers are devoting their full time in teaching that supports the teacher in their professional development.* Commented a teacher.

This notion is enforcing the impression that some teachers do regard the profession as one that yields not only personal professional development, but as one that also attributes to the development of various aspects of society and societal development and that there are teachers that do take this profession as a long term career.

According to Bansal (2007) formal professional training on continuous basis is necessary for becoming a good teacher as it caters to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills.

Thus teacher also corroborates this impression and takes it a step further. He talks about how the profession is satisfactory and how society views the profession as a respected one. Also, some teachers regard the profession as one that cultivates a teacher student relationship that not only helps the students, but also helps the teachers in understanding the students better thus leading to their own personal professional development.

*Political Science Education accumulated maximum satisfaction. Above all, I got the teacher students never ending relation. That's why, teaching profession is my future and it is everything for me. He added, at present, the society is looking the teaching profession very respectively. Teaching profession is taking as educated person's job. In my opinion, the people who are in teaching profession get more respect than other profession. The positive perception of the society to teaching profession motivates us towards our profession.* He commented.

His profession earns him a respectable position in society. This kind of positive reinforcement encourages teachers to improve professional development, while making the profession a long term career goal that is motivational as well as professionally stimulating. The educators that fall in this category are constantly trying to expand their horizons in order to pass on the necessary skills to the students. They also believe that society views this profession as one that is respectable.

As mentioned earlier, there are educators that regard the profession. These kinds of teachers do not have a long term career goal as teachers in mind; hence professional development is the least of their priorities. In the course of my interview, part time teacher commented

*I am here as a temporary teacher till I get another permanent job. I am preparing myself for section officer of government. If I am selected in section officer of government, I will leave this teaching profession. In teaching profession, there is less opportunity for further promotion. But if I join as section officer in government there is a chance of further promotion as joint secretary and undersecretary.*

This kind of attitude discourages teacher professionalism development. If there would be proper incentives, benefit plans and salary options, a lot of teachers that are capable would be retained in the profession. Society cannot expect any professional to try to develop himself/herself

professionally until and unless there is some stimulating incentive. The lack of advancement and unattractive salaries/incentives are also what are creating this barrier to the professional development of teachers.

### **The Impact of the perceptions on Political Science Teachers' Professional Development**

In order to explore the impacts of the various different perceptions that these different individuals have towards the profession, I approached my research participants again.

Perception of the teachers towards their profession needs to be positive in order for any kind of professional development in teachers. If the teachers will take a positive outlook towards their profession, and regard it as a long term career goal, they will be motivated to better themselves. Motivation and teachers' political science professional development have a directly proportional relation; an increase in motivation usually shows an increase in professional development. Moreover, society as a whole also should perceive the teaching profession positively this in turn would encourage and motivate teachers towards their professional development. If society perceives teaching as a respectable profession, teachers get motivated towards their profession. Motivation leads to professional development. But there are different kinds of people in the society and their perception to the teaching profession is also different. The perception of the teachers to teaching profession needs to be positive for the constructive professional development of political science teachers. If the teachers are positive towards their profession, they will be motivated, and motivation and teachers' professional development have a positive relation. Substantiating this very notion, a political science teacher mentioned

*I accumulated maximum satisfaction. Above all, I got the teacher students never ending relation. That's why; I love and respect my profession. Teaching profession is my future and it is everything for me. When somebody perceives to the profession everything, they devote themselves for it. Devotion to the profession carries them towards professional development.*

We can infer from the above statement that there are teachers that feel that the teaching profession gives respect. Society loves and respects them which in turn attract them towards the profession very much. According to

this particular individual, teaching is his future and he has the highest regards for the profession. The devotion to the profession positively supports the teachers towards their professional development.

A comment expressed by the Faculty head is contextual to the current tone of the discussion. He viewed

*Teaching profession is one of the best professions. So, I personally found that teachers perceive this profession seriously. They respect the teaching profession very much. When the teacher respect their profession, they will be responsible to their duty. The responsible towards the profession help the teachers for their professional development.*

Respect towards a profession does not only mean taking pride in being in the profession. It also represents responsibility towards the profession. If teachers are responsible and are accountable to their actions, there will be more motivated towards improving themselves, which in turn helps the teachers towards their professional development. But not all teachers regard the teaching profession as a career development goal or a long term ambition. Some teachers perceive it as just a means of earning and passing time till they move on to 'better' opportunities.

According to another teacher at central department education faculty, the current outlook of society towards the teaching profession is quite positive. He reinforces the notion that the attitude that society has towards the profession also motivates or discourage teachers towards developing themselves professionally. He remarks

*At present, the society is looking the teaching profession very respectfully. Teaching profession is taking as educated person's job. In my opinion, the people who are in teaching profession get more respect than other profession. The positive perception of the society to teaching profession motivates us towards our profession.*

Teachers feel a sense of responsibility towards society, parents and the nation as a whole, if they are perceived as professionals that carry a grave responsibility towards the betterment of society, nation and humankind as a whole. The respect that the teachers get from society, turns into positive reinforcement and this kind of positive reinforcement if channeled into the correct corridor would yield infinite possibilities towards the professional development of teachers as well as educators.

Contrary to the notion that the profession is indeed a respected one, there are also people out there who view the profession as one that is a springboard to launch into other professions till it becomes available. When one is not respected for what they do as a profession, we cannot expect him/her to even try to better himself/herself in that field. They would rather concentrate on trying to find other avenues of employment.

Also, the fact that it is difficult to sustain oneself financially adds to the discouragement that teachers face as professionals. Most part time teachers get paid minimal salaries, which present financial challenges. In this context a part time teacher commented

*Once, I met one of my far relation cousins who were my class fellow. Unfortunately, my cousin could not success in SLC examination. During the course of time he got an opportunity to go abroad and earned some money and bought some plot in the town area. While our meeting after longtime, the cousin asked me, are you doing any good service or simply teaching in the University. This kind of perception of the society impacts the teachers' professional development, the teacher commented.*

“Simply teaching in part time is time pass”, just this part of the statement shows the lack of respect that some members of society have towards the profession. This kind of negative attitude towards the profession does not help in the development of teachers as professionals at all. On the contrary it negates the little motivation that the teachers have towards the profession and repels them to different paths that would be more respectable and lucrative. Corroborating this very attitude, a comment by a part time teacher is worth mentioning

*The reputed person of the society; doctor, engineer, army officer, police officer, govt. officer and businessman) send their children in the private and boarding school, but they see the teaching job as one that is not respectable profession. This kind of perception de-motivates the teachers from their profession.*

This kind of hypocrisy exists which is also discouraging capable and motivated individuals to enter the profession.

Society however is a melting pot consisting of people from all walks of life. A similar perception towards the teaching profession as we have already

seen is not held by all members of society. Although some people see this profession as a low grade one, that pays minimal and is not respectable, there are others that perceive the teaching profession as a respectable job.

### **Conclusion**

The perception of political science education teachers towards the profession varies. As has been already mentioned, some teachers perceive the teaching profession as a well respected one and look at it as a long term career, while there are others that look at it as a low grade profession and they are only teaching, till they get an opportunity for a more lucrative job. If the teachers perceive teaching as their future long term career, in the long run, it motivates them to devote themselves to develop professionally. While on the flip side of the coin, the teachers that take the profession just as a means of earning, and as a stepping stone to other professions, there is no motivation to actually expand their horizons and it does not motivate the teachers towards their profession, which in turn negates professional development. Moreover, the participants that were interviewed had a common consensus that society plays a crucial role in steering the direction that the profession takes. If there is positive reinforcement from society towards the profession, it motivates the teachers to develop themselves professionally. In addition, there will always be the few people that don't and will not see the profession as a respectable one, but teachers need to look past these, and try to understand the gravity of the responsibility entrusted upon them. There are expectations that students, parents, society, and the nation as a whole have from teachers and without respecting the profession itself, it is impossible for them the teachers to nurture their professional development to new heights. A positive outlook of society towards the profession most definitely sustains political science teachers' professional development.

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