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INSIGHTS AND KEY STRATEGIES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW STUDY

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Abstract: The study aims to explore valuable insights that make teacher professional development effective and identify key strategies that can make professional development productive. The study employs analytical method, so as to review and analyze different existing literature. Through this review it was found out that selection criteria of instructors and master trainers are one of the major factors that falls under effectiveness of any teacher training program and ought to be selected very judiciously. The study concludes that intensive and critical study is proposed to uncover any root cause that hinders in leading towards acquiring effective quality teacher professional development goals.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Teacher, the way makers persistently on a journey towards leading a child become visionaries of a nation that calls for array of qualities and to cultivate that it directs us towards teacher professional development. Quality education is guided by the quality of teachers' content mastery, professional and pedagogical skills that leads to students experiencing constructive learning and in association to which teachers' devotion, proficiency and persistence is necessary that educate us to why professional development is crucial for a teacher (Saleem et al., 2021). Teachers are the key agents of reform according to NEP 2020 and it focuses on giving possibilities for teachers to develop competencies, provides consistent effort to encourage engagement in self-motivated activities for personal and professional gain, (Mehrotra, 2023). Professional development is a process of providing persistent development of new knowledge and skills for teachers with change in time and demand which continuously build and renew teachers' professional attributes (Ungar, 2016). We can use an example to very simply understand what Professional development is for a teacher, which may be suitable which may not be, it can be accepted by some and may not be accepted, so professional development in simple term can be taken as, professional development as the shopkeeper that fills the shop with things required and teacher is the shop, interconnected to reach the goal.

Executing the example of toy blocks that enriches a child in many educational ways such as enhancing creativity, problem solving, learning shapes etc. likewise professional development enriches a teacher with enduring foundation such as required knowledge, updated skills of teaching that ensures effective teaching. A teacher illuminates the path towards wisdom, knowledge, growth and lead towards an inspiring future for every student and to do so, execution of fixed instructional methods will make the teaching learning unengaging and mind-numbing, keeping in view the evolving educational landscape and in relation to this professional development provides and enable teachers' with continuous learning cycle providing a platform for teachers' to grow by means of which students will be benefitted leading to

education evolving dynamically (**Mehrotra, 2023**). For professional development to be well-structured and highly efficient it should be crafted in such a way that can be considered as the core element in guiding teachers towards a transformative teaching learning outcome (**Hammond et al., 2017**). Effective professional development is when teachers adapt progressive measures that results in students' academic excellence (**Sparks et al., 2000**). Quality in teaching learning will take place through effective professional development that are deliberately concerned with the needs of educators and students alike thus leading to teachers' satisfaction that will boost interest among teachers for attaining future professional development program gradually resulting in students gain (**Darling-Hammond et al., 2017**). Effective teacher professional development means attainment of any educational policy goals related to quality education and that of teachers, also we can say that educational reforms in relation to teaching learning is dependent on teacher professional development and are interrelated and interdependent since both aims for enrichment in students' achievement on account of which success of one can be reflected on the other, hence, it is vital to perceive what contributes in making teacher professional development efficient to grasp the attainment and shortcoming of any educational policy (**Desimone, 2009**).

Researches have shown that effectiveness of a professional development differs when it comes to enriching teachers' insight and proficiency depending on various factors with regard to professional development (**Meyer et al., 2023**). Why is it so that despite several efforts and attempts to provide quality training through various professional development program it fails to reach the needs of many teachers who finds it unhelpful and ineffective (**Jayaram et al., 2012; Hill, 2009; Smylie, 2014**). Unquestionably teacher professional development programs are formulated with comprehensive in-depth study presenting the best version yet there is rise in teachers' engagement in teacher professional development (**Hill, 2009; Hustler et al., 2003**). and researches provide effectiveness in the professional development program yet minimal utility of professional learning by teachers with hesitation and unwillingness to engage in professional development, so in order to uncover the shortfall we can analyze the existing programs to make it reliable and assist every teacher regardless of differences to engage (**Hill, 2009**). Concerning this, the intent of the study is to review various literature to explore valuable insights that makes teacher professional development effective and to identify key strategies that can make professional development more efficient. Hence, the study aims to explore the possibilities that can contribute to facilitate in crafting impactful and result-oriented teacher professional development.

1.1 Objectives of the study:

1. To explore valuable insights that makes teacher professional development effective.
2. To identify key strategies that can make teacher professional development effective.

1.2 Methodology:

The present study has been performed through analytical method. For analysis different literature has been reviewed.

2. Teacher professional development:

Teacher professional development can be perceived as a room for change, a space to contemplate and examine self as a teacher, a place for growth, a platform to learn as a learner, an opportunity to practice, experience and synthesize with novel ideas and concepts that associates with the teaching domain, it is clothing self as a teacher with updated and innovative teaching insights moving towards enriching students learning with assurance and determination for holistic development of a child (**Marcelo, 2009**). Teacher professional development is a platform of learning for teachers through an array of formal and informal networking it is a refinement process for teachers (**Desimone, 2009**). When teacher professional development is connected to enrich students learning it supports teachers to gradually grasp and assist in aligning and presenting the content with learners' cognitive level (**Mundry, 2005**).

Furthermore, teacher professional development like any object that needs a touch up, for example cleaning and rearranging a room time to time, it boost and refreshes our mind and soul likewise in teaching as well application of new novel strategies, methods to make instructional learning creative, experiential, interesting professional development training accumulates those factors in teachers it supports the contents and pedagogical skills to make it more stimulating that fosters teachers with zeal to teach as well

stimulating students to learn and enrich minds, professional development prepares and align teachers with recent up to date skills enlightening continuously thus leading to professional growth.

3. Effective teacher professional development:

Effective teacher professional development promotes engagement in real learning (Kennedy, 2016). Motivation a vital factor that can make teacher professional development to be efficient (Prenger, 2017). Teacher professional development is effective when it is engaged in ongoing enrichment cycle (DeMonte, 2013). Composition of multiple factors that are focused and interconnected with student learning, reshaping teacher in continuity aligning with content needs, refining instructional related problems, incorporation of trust and openness in training platform, collaboration and open-minded interaction, supportive environment for teachers to learn as learner themselves, relevant expertise with valuable and diverse insights, these features contributes to foster and define effective teacher professional development (Borko, 2010).

4. Characteristics of effective teacher professional development:

Characteristics of effective teacher professional development facilitates the purpose and quality of any program that associates with modification of educators and enrichment of students (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Following are some essential characteristics that falls under effective professional development:

- Content focus: The core component that is discussed in making teacher professional development effective is emphasis laid on focusing on the content, to integrate subject matter with classroom teaching (Saleem et al., 2021; Oyedele & Chikwature, 2016; Desimone, 2009; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jayaram et al., 2012).
- Experience to enrich new skill: in any teacher professional development when a teacher is presented with task that involves experiencing new skills with previous knowledge, the experiences gained by the teacher opens ways for new ideas and generates motivation aligning the experience with effective professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002; Desimone, 2009; sparks & Hirsh, 2000).
- Curriculum aligned tasks: when any learning activity is focused on measurement of the outcome of an activity and not the activity and aligns the task with the content and pedagogy of a teacher it is another characteristic of an effective professional development which enables teacher to employ in actual classroom setting for elevating students learning (Desimone, 2009; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).
- Collective engagement of educators and pedagogical collaboration: after every participation in professional learning activities, teachers' engagement in academic discussion and interaction among peers about formal and informal professional and academic experiences will enhance intellectual growth and productivity, pedagogical collaboration among peers will enrich new ideas and take a step closer to professional development (Avalos, 2010; Hustler, 2003; Desimone, 2009; Meyer et al., 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002).
- Feedback followed by reflection is another characteristic widely accepted and considered effective for any teacher professional development, instead of participating passively if teachers are provided reinforcing questions after every session, it gives teachers opportunity to interact, clarify concerns and eliminate confusion through feedbacks from the experts and room for growth through reflective process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Avalos, 2010).
- Ongoing duration: paves opportunities for facilitating learning outside the realm of formal learning supported by practical individual and group learning, it supports comprehensive learning that involves first-hand experience, learning practically, application of new learning within their teaching environment, opportunity to learn as learners. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009).

5. Valuable insights that can make teacher professional development Effective:

- Ethical values guide teachers in their professional conduct and when teachers are guided by ethical principles, dedication and applicability in every learning environment is determined and it will guide teachers understand their responsibilities towards students, peers community, for this reason when teacher professional development is integrated with ethical trainings that provides opportunity to teachers for ethical reflection after any form of activity it can make teacher professional development effective (Estrela & Freire, 2009).
- In order to monitor and track teachers progress as well to assess whether teachers' needs are attained from professional development so also, to analyze the effectiveness of any teacher professional program it is essential to evaluate teacher before and after attending any teacher professional development, evaluation of teacher professional programs will identify its credibility, shortcomings, and in the same way evaluate the teacher professional development to optimize its effectiveness and reach its target to meet the ultimate goal that is student enrichment (Smylie, 2014; DeMonte, 2013).
- When teacher's individuality and uniqueness is prioritized in every professional development program formal or informal activities since every teacher have diverse individual learning requirements it can promise an effective professional development (Ungar, 2016). Also, when selection of teacher professional activities is structured to gather the diverse traits of teachers keeping in view the distinct qualities of teachers, environmental attributes and regional attributes it will ensure success of any teacher professional program (DeMonte, 2013).
- When professional development fulfills academic needs of participants and when it is practically relevant as well as implementable in classroom instruction (Borko et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2021).
- When professional development is guided by specialized subject instructor, supplemented by every teacher according to one's pedagogical requirements receives structured oversight (Saleem et al., 2021).
- When teacher professional development encourages and prioritizes self-guided and question-driven learning (Mehrotra, 2023).
- Encouraging, open-minded, empathetic instructor without any biasness and non-judgmental manner provides an environment of positive learning for teachers, in addition selection benchmark for trainees, their competence and area of specialization can make any professional development successful (Bomna ko et al., 2006; Saleem et al., 2021).
- When professional development is continuous, assistance is acquired by teachers and in this process competencies and gaps are measured making professional development effective (Mehrotra, 2023; Saleem et al., 2021).

6. Key strategies that can make teacher professional development effective:

- Teacher professional development to be crafted to suit the preferences of teacher participants (Mehrotra, 2023; Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Concerning this, if mentors or instructors of teacher professional development, preliminary to the training program can assign teacher participants who have been enrolled to bring up their content and pedagogy uncertainties and obstacles faced during classroom instruction, this insight if applied may foster interaction, critical thinking, instill problem solving skill, foster reflection and provide a brainstorming experience in the process that can incorporate to make teacher professional development effective.
- Suggestion for implementation of new intensive research findings to be incorporated was found necessary and also to diversify research focus, expand research coverage with rigorous monitoring in order to attain its goal and acquire impactful result from teacher professional development, and in order to implement novel research findings from comprehensive study, for which intensive study can be incorporated before framing any teacher professional development programs with focus on examining schools' current educational approaches, classifying teachers as per their level of knowledge and prior experience and to structure program goals for professional growth aligning with diverse regional needs and demands (Postholm, 2018; Desimone, 2009; Guskey, 2002; Sims, 2018).
- Failure on the part of teacher in application of knowledge in classroom set up which are gained after attaining professional development program can be dealt by providing experiential learning through real-life situations and hands-on training with authentic examples (Ko et al., 2006).
- Recommendation for the need of blueprint that focuses to bring cohesion between pre-service and in-service teacher professional development as per National Professional Standards for Teachers

prioritizing hands-on-learning that will generate sense of achievement at work and provide professional fulfillment to teachers (**Mehrotra, 2023**).

- Upon review it was also regarded that training of teachers to mentor and act as instructors to train the new recruited teachers was also found effective where the teachers experience and gain leadership skills, long term impact of learning and an opportunity to reflect on self, which can be noted to make professional development effective (**Admiraal et al., 2019**).
- The analysis also highlighted analyzation of an event or situation, where during any professional development activities teachers can be assigned a task to write down any incident that occurred during classroom instruction and to think about the cause and mechanism of the experience or incident, how they dealt with, what could have been done, why it occurred which can then be followed by feedbacks and interactions among the teacher participants, which can ultimately turn the training into an effective enriching learning outcome for the teachers (**Murray, 2010**).
- The need to incorporate continuous short-term training for digital literacy in order to integrate application and use of digital tools in teaching among teachers which exist as a major knowledge gap among teachers despite several attempts to equalize the digital division, for which hands-on activities during training session can be provide using digital tools, also can recruit local digital experts to assist cluster-level workshops to train teachers as well organize a workshop and blend online training with face to face cluster-level workshops (**Mehrotra, 2023**).
- It is supported by many researches that for teacher professional development to be effective, mutual professional learning among teacher is also one prominent factor of enrichment in teaching learning for teachers' however, when collegial learning and sharing is lacking, participation among teachers' can be low and it may become a source of demotivation as a result in order to deal with circumstances of similar kind, it is recommended that institutions support and allow substantial number of teachers' to participate in teacher professional development programs or to organize professional development in respective institutions to experience and share first hand experiential learning which can be shared among peer teachers' to boost learning from each other and to motivate future participation that can enhance teaching learning among peers (**Prenger et al., 2017**).
- An instructional environment is impacted by many factors it can be external, internal and environmental factors and for any individual specially like a teacher who has been assigned with the responsibility to educate, nurture and enrich a student is a complex task to perform that demands step-by-step progression therefore in order to reduce complexity and ease the process teachers can be provided gradual time with progressive steps, one at a time which can be followed up by incorporating constant coordination among teacher professional development training experts, coordinators and teachers that will ultimately result in yielding effective teacher professional development program (**Guskey, 2002**).

7. Discussion and Conclusion:

Professional learning of teachers should be taken with utmost sincerity and dedication. Skill, information and cognitive disparity and shortfalls should not be overlooked pertaining to which may compromise educational standards. When we look into the scenario of educational environment it is acceptable to say that for any educational policies and reforms teachers are the cornerstone in the eco-system of educational setting, which is why much emphasis is laid upon teacher, their roles, qualities and training owing to which the NEP-2020 have also laid emphasis on teachers' continuous professional development, with regard to that as a teacher, a scholar and a lifetime learner question arises to what is the status of these implemented professional development in India, are these programs meeting the required needs of teachers, that includes teachers of diverse discipline, are they effective in reaching to the needs of every teacher from different geographical and regional backgrounds, many researches have provided the effectiveness of professional development program which subsequently as a teacher educator, learner, a researcher raises curiosity on are they effectively supporting the varied spectrum of teachers' requirement? For which considerable studies have provided numerous results on the effectiveness of teacher professional development, leading to reasonable inquisitiveness of if there are some setbacks how can that be dealt with? Concerning which though there are many critical studies conducted pursuing and suggesting ways for effectiveness of teacher professional development yet through this review study concern for in-depth, intensive and critical research is proposed to uncover any root cause that hinders in attaining framed teacher professional goals, also through this review it was found out that selection criteria of instructors and master trainers, selection of training components, materials are one of the major factors that falls under effectiveness of any teacher training program and ought to be selected very judiciously and critically for

both urban and rural teachers but specifically for rural zone thus, overall keeping in view the prior knowledge, experience and cognitive level of the teacher participants, also future policies for long-term impact of learning can emphasize on sustainable and flexible instructional approaches. However, to conclude teacher professional development must be well structured, strategic, inclusive and process-oriented approach that aligns with the current educational trends and demands. A comprehensive and holistic teacher professional development will ultimately lead towards holistic learning of a student.

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