

## **Problems and Issues in Implementation of CPD Framework: Perception of District Teacher Educators and Teacher Educators**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers has gained much popularity across the globe. The teacher educators face a number of issues and problems in different dimensions. This study explored the issues faced by District Teacher Educators (DTEs) and Teacher Educators (TEs) in implementation of continuous professional development (CPD) framework in district Lahore, Pakistan. The study was qualitative in nature. Twelve DTEs and two TEs were purposively selected who were willing to participate in the study. Data were collected through a self-developed semi-structured interview protocol, one each for DTEs and TEs which were validated by the experts followed by two mock interviews for pilot testing, and documents related to CPD framework developed at Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) Punjab. Data were collected by using one to one approach to conduct interviews of the participants in February, 2016. The

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data were analyzed by using thematic analysis of the interviews. The findings revealed that DTEs and TEs face many problems in implementing the CPD framework. The key ones include: disobliging behavior of teachers and head teachers, lack of time and facilities, poor infrastructure, work load, poor management process, and absence of motivational strategies. The study suggests that the policy makers and managers should address these issues and problems by involving teachers and teacher educators engaged in this initiative in order to effectively implement CPD framework in public sector primary and lementary schools of Punjab province of Pakistan.

## Introduction

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a planned, continuous and lifelong process in which teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities. It helps teachers to improve their knowledge, skills and practices and empowers them to improve the conditions of their schools and pupils (Padwad & Dixit, 2011). The term CPD has been described as an ongoing education and training for the professionals (Earley & Bubb, 2004). The main function of CPD is to focus on fostering individual competence to enhance practice and facilitate self-motivated changes in education system (Blandford, 2000).

CPD of teachers is receiving a plenty of attentions from policy makers, school administrators, researchers and professionals throughout the world. The role of CPD is increasingly acknowledged as a key element in the process of teaching and learning. From many years, CPD has become very important for improving the quality of work and its outcomes, across the professions. In United Kingdom, CPD is compulsory part for professionals to engage in medicine, nursing, social work, health and education. In many other European countries and most of the states of USA, CPD is compulsory for teachers and their development in different aspects of teaching (Eurydice, 2003).

In Pakistan CPD framework for teachers is developed and implemented by the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) in the Punjab province to disclose several deficiencies of the earlier approach of teaching which involves a major paradigm shift in teacher education. District teacher educators (DTEs) and teacher educators (TEs) are the key persons who play a significant role in the education and training of primary school teachers. TEs' role is more or less administrative and managerial; however, DTEs' role is purely academic. DTEs serve as a bridge between the teachers and administration and mentor the primary school teachers to improve their professional competence by updating their subject knowledge and teaching

skills.

The current approach of DSD broadens the scope of teacher education by mere training to continuous professional development for quality teaching and learning. Teachers need to increase their knowledge and improve their skills over the course of their career. Need-based, classroom-based, school-based and mentoring of teachers are the main principles of this framework. This framework suggests that constant and continuous training is necessary to improve the quality of education. The quality of primary schooling cannot be improved if the teachers are not equipped with the latest knowledge of teaching and assessment skills. In consideration of the limited capacity and resources, DSD has established its priority to cater for the needs of all categories of teachers, focusing teachers teaching at grade 1-5. Therefore, at the first step, DSD established and operated a system of continuous professional development for more than 197,000 Primary School Teachers (PSTs). This is consistent with the policy of the Government of Punjab, which accords a very high priority to primary education (DSD, 2009).

School Education Department through DSD implemented the CPD framework for teachers in letter and spirit in 2006 to improve the quality of education. To know the exact state of affairs, after the completion of ten years, it was appropriate to explore the issues which DTEs and TEs have to face in implementation of CPD framework. So in the light of the findings of the study, the authorities may take several steps for the removal of hurdles in implementation of CPD. This study explored the issues faced in the implementation of the CPD framework and the solution of these problems. It may help to improve the quality of teaching and learning process in Punjab by addressing the issues faced at planning and implementation stage of CPD. Many CPD components are directly linked to classroom, so it will help to improve the classroom environment in the school.

The challenges of teachers' professional development come from different directions. According to Yitayew (2013), challenges of teachers' professional development refer to difficulties, complexities, barriers or hard situations against the expected outcomes of teachers' growth. The major challenges to be dealt with for the purpose of this study are which DTEs and TEs have to face while being in the field during implementation. Several studies are conducted in worldwide to improve the quality of teachers and their professional development. A study by Mathers, Mitchell and Hunn (2012) informed that lack of time i.e. having no time for reflection, commitment of the individuals, vision, lack of motivational strategies, no proper facilities and opportunities to implement learning were among the different barriers in the implementation of CPD. The findings of another similar study by Lombard (2012) reveal that finances and costs, workload, time, availability, accessibility and the affordability of CPD activities were among the challenges of CPD in South Africa. These are serious constraints,

and matters of concern in the successful implementation of CPD. These factors are intermingled with others in the workplace, which emphasize the crucial role of the employer in continuing professional development.

In Ethiopia different researches have been conducted on CPD. For instance, Grey (2005) studied about practice and challenges of school based CPD in Benishangul Gumuz regional state secondary schools from teacher's side. Ewnetu and Firdisa (2010) studied teachers' perception about school based CPD in selected schools. Hailu (2010) investigated the leadership role of principals in implementing CPD program and Yitayew (2013) studied the practices and challenges of CPD in primary schools.

A study was conducted on the perception of influential figures who were involved in implementing CPD activities for teachers in Scotland. Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) announced a CPD framework in 1999 for the capacity building of teachers, which was implemented in 2000. Like many other countries, Scotland is focusing upon the teachers' CPD from the last few years. The study examined the purpose, expected outcomes and obstacles of the CPD framework of Scotland (Purdon, 2004).

CPD framework is a resource intensive framework of DSD and being implemented through a multi layers process. It is generally perceived, at various levels of management hierarchy of the School Education Department that professional development is just a routine work and that claimed results are not being produced through it. Professional development is a purposeful activity and without it, the goals of developing the quality of education cannot be achieved. Therefore, there was need to explore the perceptions of DTEs and TEs about the problems and issues they face during the implementation of CPD framework. This study thus addressed this key question "what are the problems and challenges faced by DTEs and TEs during the implementation of CPD in district Lahore of Pakistan which are capable of influencing their performance?"

### **Methodology**

Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools from the TEs and DTEs of district Lahore of Pakistan about the problems and challenges that they faced during the implementation of CPD in the district.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study comprised of all the 93 DTEs (19 females and 74 males) and the 3 TEs (2 males and 1 female) of district Lahore. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample i.e. only the TEs and DTEs who were willing to participate in the study constituted the study sample. Thirty two participants were contacted through phone calls; twenty-seven of them were available at that time. Out of the 27 available participants, 16 showed willingness to participate in the study. Informed

consent of the interviewees was taken before conducting the study. One male TE and four DTEs withdrew their participation during the study; hence the final sample consisted of two TEs (one male and one female) and 12 DTEs (9 males and 3 females).

### **Instrumentation**

Semi-structured interviews, one for the TEs and other for the DTEs, were developed by the researchers. Along with that, documents relating to CPD were studied and relevant information was used as data for the study. First draft of the semi-structured interview for DTEs contained six questions which related to components of CPD framework i.e. planning, management, monitoring, mentoring, assessment, and reporting. For validation of the interview, it was shared with the formal class of PhD scholars. Some changes were made by considering the point of views of the PhD scholars and then the two experienced persons of the field validated the draft. After validation in February, 2016 mock interviews of two of the participants were taken. The final draft of the interview protocol consisted of eight questions and some probing questions. Interview was translated in Urdu language for the convenience of the participants. The final draft of the interview in Urdu and in English was reviewed twice by the researchers followed by an expert review having desired expertise in research and language.

Semi structured interview for TEs contained seven questions related to components of CPD framework i.e. planning, management, monitoring, mentoring, assessment, and reporting. The interview was validated by considering the suggestions of the PhD scholars and two experts of the field.

Instrument was validated in February, 2016 and for pilot testing, mock interviews of two TEs were conducted who were not later included in the actual data collection. After piloting and validating, the draft was finalized which consisted of eight main questions and some probing questions. Both interviews were translated into Urdu language for the convenience of the participants with the help of a language. The translated versions were validated through language experts.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

Data were collected through three sources i.e. semi-structured interviews from DTEs, semi-structured interviews from TEs and document analysis of CPD framework documents like Training manuals and resource books. Initial requirements of interviews were met before starting the interviews. The help of the facilitator was also taken for making key notes, interview recording and conveying the questions. After ensuring all the initial requirements interview was started and one to one interview approach was used for this. During interviews some probing questions were also asked to the participants. The approximate time of the interview was about 20-30

minutes. Complete opportunity was given to participants to express their views. All the participants were interviewed by using same technique in two weeks in February 2016.

### **Data Analysis**

A qualitative data analysis technique was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interviews. Interviews were transcribed word to word in English with the help of the facilitator and then cross checked by the language expert. Themes were identified from the data and the important comments of the participants were also quoted while interpreting. Findings were drawn by considering research questions and objectives. Triangulation of data was also used to test the authenticity of the data from documents. It checked what the researchers heard and observed by comparing one's source of information. The quality of data collection and accuracy of researcher's interpretations were improved by this method (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). All ethical considerations were kept in mind while conducting the research study.

### **Discussion of Results**

The findings of the study explored that DTEs and TEs are well aware of the continuous professional development framework and their roles and responsibilities in implementation of CPD framework. The main components of CPD are planning, management, assessment, mentoring, monitoring and reporting. DTEs and TEs play their key role in the implementation of CPD as bottom management and middle management respectively. While implementing they faced several problems and issues regarding each component except planning because it is done by software and provided each of them at the beginning of the month. While discussing the significance of CPD one male TE reported that *"In Pakistan, there is no follow up system better than CPD. It is the capacity building of teachers and such kind of development does not exist in any system since August 14, 1947."*

All the DTEs and TEs explored that they were well aware of the CPD framework and they responded that CPD is improving the quality of teaching in primary schools by doing capacity building of teachers in teaching areas and promote activity based learning and child friendly environment. On the other hand, the quality of assessment is also improved by diagnosing weak areas of students and by giving opportunity to them for improving the quality of learning and teaching. All the respondents were well aware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing the CPD activities. The main role of DTEs and TEs are to ensure quality education by mentoring and assessing on monthly basis and after the month they compile all the data in CTSC file which is given to them by DSD. They conduct

Professional Development (PD) day after every three months and manage different trainings related to professional development of teachers.

It was interesting and surprising for the researchers that in reply to the question “What problems do you face in planning your monthly activities?” almost all the DTEs and TEs mentioned that there is no problem in planning their monthly activities. All the planning was given to them by DSD. They mentioned that they had a plan for whole year in which all activities are mentioned, which they have to perform during the month, planned by given software. They indicated that their planning process is smooth but they faced so many hurdles in implementing the activities.

Major issues and problems reported by the interviewees were related to venue and seating arrangements at the training places. When they were asked about the specific issues and problems during the training process they said that the major problems were related to venue, improper seating arrangements, inactive participation and abuse of power etc. They mentioned that the seats for teachers are so uncomfortable that it de-motivates the teachers who are not even willing to attend the Professional Development (PD) day. One TE said about the seating arrangements that, “*Three seated desk benches are used for seating and it is very shameful and appears to be devaluing the teachers.*”

Other issues and problems which they have to face in trainings were related to absence and inactive participation of the teachers. Sometimes education management creates hurdles for teachers and not allows them to join trainings for their capacity building. Sometimes long distances towards venue create hurdles for teachers to ensure their on-time presence on the PD day.

In replying the issues about assessment the interviewees reported that the participants faced problems in assessment process which are related to poor management and distribution of the papers. Many of the respondents reported that the assessment paper has so many mistakes and not at the level of the students. Sometimes they do not devote enough time for the proof reading of the papers. In this situation they had to print the paper with mistakes and correct it manually at the time of assessment. Other issues and problems of assessment were related to teachers that they are graded on the basis of this assessment and they interfere in assessment process and use unfair means to get good grades, meanwhile they are exploiting the students by promoting dishonesty and other immoral deeds. Workload related to assessment is also a big hurdle for DTEs because they do not follow appropriate rules due to time and resource constraints. One female DTE reported that “*This process is so rapid that it produces meaningless results due to mismanagement. The management makes the assessment process as ambiguous as “hoch poch” and “choo choo kamuraba.*” Another male DTE reported that “*We don’t have autonomy to design assessment and DTEs have to suffer just because of it.*”

Issues explored related to mentoring were that participants face several problems due to non-availability of teachers as they are busy in extra activities which are assigned to them by the department. Non cooperative behavior and lack of facilities are the main problems in the mentoring process. Usually heads do not cooperate and feel reluctant when DTEs visit the school. Lack of motivation strategies are also a big hurdle in the process of mentoring. DTEs and TEs faced several problems related to reporting and not feel easy while reporting to higher authorities because of having no job safety and lack of coordination between upper and lower management. It demotivates them and they tried to solve their problems by their self. Another big hurdle in reporting is that the authorities are not well aware from the CPD and they don't understand the problems and issues which the field workers have to face while being in the field. They should consider the ground realities to make the framework effective. A male DTE reported *"They do not understand our issues because they do not know about the CPD framework, their trainings regarding this are mandatory to make a CPD a powerful tool."*

While mentioning about shortcomings of CPD, DTEs and TEs said that some motivational strategies are missing in the framework to make the progress of the system better. Workload is not properly defined according to the capacity of the employees and there is no specific criteria should be set for this purpose. A DTE reported that *"Tasks are increasing day by day. There is no work limit set in CPD for an employee. Management do not just rely on over work tasks; they assign some extra duties to us also like recently they force us to collect old books from private schools, which is not our duty at all."* CPD framework required too much paper work from the employees which is very hard to manage sometimes so they suggested that it should be minimized and adopt some other strategy as the alternate of paper work.

CPD is a long-term process involving opportunities and experiences planned and organized systematically to promote the professional development of primary school teachers through assessment and mentoring both individually and collectively so as to enhance the quality of child learning (DSD, 2009). The overall responsibilities of DTEs and TEs include promoting quality of student learning through on-site and on-going professional training and support (DSD, 2007).

DTEs and TEs were committed to implement the CPD in its true sense. This commitment cannot be divorced from several issues such as working conditions, finances and incentives. Respondents of the study were of the opinion that assessment results helps in improving the teaching competency of the teachers. On basis of it, they change their teaching strategies and try to cover their syllabus on time. This improves and creates a successive learning environment (Huba & Freed, 2000). During the process of conducting assessment they have to face several issues like finance, seating problems,



distribution of papers and poor quality paper. They stated that they have to suffer because of these issues. These issues should be minimized to implement the CPD in an effective way to get fruitful results from it.

Another component of CPD is mentoring. Each DTE mentors four teachers per day and they visit them in their parent schools. In mentoring they diagnose the weak areas of the teachers through mentoring visit form (MVF) and suggest them for further improvement in accordance to it. During mentoring process, accessibility and the affordability of CPD activities are serious constraints and a matter of concern in the implementation of the CPD effectively (Lombard, 2012). They should be managed by the educational officers or to allocate fund for each school for such kind of activities in successful implementation of CPD at primary level.

Other constituent of CPD is reporting; DTEs and TEs visit the field each day and have to face several problems. For this, they have to report to someone to get help to solve the issues. But the educational leaders and officers do not allow them to coordinate in a friendly environment to resolve the issue in a good manner. They do not support and coordinate in an active manner and de-motivate the employees indirectly which is the big hurdle in the implementation of CPD (Hailu, 2013). The main reason of this may be the unawareness from CPD framework. Yitayew (2013) also studied the challenges in the implementation of CPD and explores that non cooperative behavior of the leaders are a big challenge in the implementation of CPD framework.

Roodes and Beneicke (2003) studied practices and challenges of CPD framework and mentioned that poor infrastructure and lack of appropriate facilities are the challenges in implementation of CPD framework effectively. His findings support the findings of this study that poor infrastructure, poor seating arrangements, improper venue creates de-motivation among PSTs and they are not willing to share their ideas and to learn something innovative. On professional development day such kind of situations observed, which detracted PSTs and they create least participative behavior on that day. Venue should be fixed and properly decide for this purpose to make the professional development day a meaningful one.

Lack of commitment and lack of motivation is also a big issue explored by TEs and DTEs and the main reason behind this issue is their job security and absence of reward and punishment strategies as supported the findings of the study conducted by Mathers, Mitchell and Hunn, (2012). When an employee does not feel safe and does not get any reward on his/her good performance than how can he/she does work in an effective manner. It is very necessary to resolve this issue and made motivational strategies as the part of the CPD framework.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that DTEs and TEs are facing several problems in the implementation of assigned tasks related to CPD. The main issues related to assessment process are over work and mismanagement of assessment process which is badly needed to be managed for the proper implementation of the CPD. Wherever assessment is linked to the grading of teachers the teachers tries to involve in the assessment process by using unfair means so it should not be directly related to teachers' grading, although it should be related to students' grading which will help them to improve their performance. The findings also explored the issues related to mentoring and it is concluded that wherever the head supports the teachers they become relaxed and their behavior is non-cooperated. The main reason of this is that they do not have any penalty of such kind of behavior during their overall career, so they become brave. There should be some check and balance for such kind of behaviors of teachers. Likewise, on professional development day they also show such kind of behavior, they are not willing to attend PD day and some teachers also de-motivate others also by their behavior and it results in the failure of training.

Another issue drawn from the findings is the hurdles created by higher authorities. Most of the time they do not take interest in the problems of DTEs and TEs which they are facing and they are not willing to talk to them by making excuses. And DTEs mostly don't share their problems by their self because they have no job security and they are afraid of telling something to them. Fear should be minimized to make the CPD a fruitful and meaningful project. For this purpose, it is mandatory to minimize the hurdles which DTEs and TEs have to face while working in the field. Without improving and resolving the issues which they are facing in field we can't achieve our target of quality based education. Some major issues which they are facing should be minimized by structuring or reframing the network. Work load and unrelated assignments should be minimized to achieve the set targets of CPD. Financial support should be provide to DTEs to do their tasks smoothly.

Based on the above discussion and conclusion, following recommendations were made that may be considered by the concerned bodies to alleviate the challenges in implementation of continuous professional development.

1. The School Education Department should allocate adequate budget for the smooth implementation of CPD so that DSD may arrange more effective and frequent trainings of TEs and DTEs to really make effective the PD day activities. The material should also be provided to all the teachers who attend the PD day. DSD should think for the sustainable follow up and encouragement of their TEs and DTEs.
2. To make the assessment process effective it is suggested that

assessment papers should be of child's level and free from mistakes. A proper mechanism should be established for distribution and checking of papers.

3. Monthly meetings of DTEs and TEs should be arranged with higher bodies to resolve the field problems which emerge while implementing CPD. These meetings should be conducted in healthy environment by providing job safety to them.
4. Similar research may be replicated in other districts where CPD has been implemented. This may bring to light more issues and problems so that the policy makers and teacher education management at DSD may take necessary measures to overcome the problems and issues to make the implementation of CPD more effective.

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