

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE BENEFITS OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMME REGARDING IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING SKILLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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## Abstract

*The quality of teachers is closely related to the quality of instructions being imparted by them in the classroom. The effectiveness of teaching-learning process is interrelated with the teaching skills which are further dependent on professional training given to pre-service and in-service teachers. This study aimed at discussing the benefits of In-service training programme and highlighting the impact of In-service training programme on the teaching skills of the teachers. For this purpose, 30 in-service secondary school teachers were selected. They had gone through in-service training of four-week duration under the Science Education Project (Phase II), launched by the Government of Punjab in district Bahawalnagar. A questionnaire was developed and administered to the teachers. The collected data were statistically analyzed. The literature on In-service training stressed that In-service training programme was essential for quality instruction and the collected data showed that In-service training programme brought improvement in their teaching skills regarding the areas of methodology, content-mastery and the use of information and communication technologies.*

## Introduction

The role of the teacher in nation building is unique. Teacher is the person who is responsible for building the nascent minds of students who will ultimately turn to be the citizens of a nation. Progress of any nation depends on the youth, and the role of teacher in making youth responsible and useful for a nation is very crucial.

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Stones, Edgar and Sidney Morris S (1980, p.233) in their book on teaching practice-problems and prospects, have identified minimum abilities which a teacher should possess. These are as follows:

1. To perform stimulus-response operations (questions, structure, probe).
2. To manipulate different kinds of knowledge.
3. To perform reinforcement operations.
4. To diagnose student's needs and learning difficulty.
5. To communicate and empathize with student's parents and others.
6. To perform in and with small and large groups.

With the changing scenario, to cope with the changes in all fields, the training is needed. In recent years the need of training has been increased due to tough competition in the world. The Man Power Services Commission of the United Kingdom (1981) has defined training as: "A planned process to modify attitudes, knowledge and skill behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organization."

A teacher can impart knowledge in proper way if he/she has command over his/her subject. As Report of the Commission on National Education 1959 states:

"The teacher needs not only to deepen his knowledge of all the subjects he is to teach, he must also learn the techniques and methodology of teaching and have time of practice these as well as to acquire insights into child psychology and the nature of child growth (Report of the Commission on National Education 1959." p.261

The training provides people with an opportunity to increase their level of existing knowledge about something. Training covers the following areas:

*Attitude or personal development training, skill training and field training. (Jitendra, 1999).*

## Literature

A study done by Warick and Reimers (1995) about teacher education in Pakistan states that:

“Teacher’s certification, which is designed to improve the quality of instruction, has no relationship with three of the four achievement tests and a weak relationship with the fourth.”

The teachers should teach in the class rooms what they know themselves. It is noted that the curriculum of teacher training programmes does not meet the needs of the time and does not fulfill the demands of the learners. As the teachers learn that curriculum which has no relation with the actual phenomena, so the teaching learning process remains improper.

In report of the Commission on National Education 1959, the duty as what to teach is assigned to the teacher training institutions. It is described in the report in the following words:

“What to teach is as important as how to teach it and it is the responsibility of the training institution to ensure that graduating teachers are probably equipped with the ability to teach the subjects required at the level for which they are expecting to qualify”.

But it seems that these institutions fail to do their duty as it was expected from them. UNESCO report on Teacher Education (2006) describes that: The teacher education programmes currently being run by the government institutes are not of the caliber to significantly raise the level of knowledge and skills of teachers and to have any measurable impact on the students learning. The curriculum of these programmes fails to develop in the teachers the required pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, classroom delivery and questioning skills that would make these courses/programmes worthwhile.

When the teachers attend trainings with the aim to pass time there and earn some money in the form of travel allowance and daily allowance, and they come back in the classrooms after training they join their classes as they left, there seems no change in the teaching practice.

According to Mughal (2006):

“It is universally recognized that an instructor’s education does not finish at the end of his/her initial training period. Those who teach, must constantly seek opportunities that can help them acquire the knowledge and skills essential for tutelage... Teachers who attend training courses are unable to solve problems relating to teaching and learning in a systemic way. They are unable to reflect on their teaching. Teachers are unable to conduct action research. There is no doubt that action research is a way to improve classroom teaching through a cyclic process of planning, acting, reflecting and again re-planning.”

### **Key Issues and Problems in Teacher Education**

UNESCO (2006, pp.45-49) in its report Situation Analysis of Teacher Education: Towards a Strategic Framework for Teacher Education and Professional Development (2006), points out the following issues and problems related to teacher training in Pakistan:

1. **Lack of Policy and Standards:** To date, all teacher-training programmes are operating without a viable policy framework. The government is aware of this vacuum, yet it has not taken any concrete steps to implement a policy to bring all teaching programmes under a single umbrella. This has led teaching institutions to develop and implement teacher education programmes at their discretion leading to uneven and sometimes poor quality curriculum, teaching methods and practices. Hence, lack of standards and accreditation has led to varied and substandard training programmes.
2. **Lack of Linkage between the Institutions:** There exists a wide communication and collaboration gap between the provincial training institutes. Instead of working towards sharing good practices, research and experiences, they have more or less worked in isolation.
3. **Core Competencies:** Teachers have invariably lagged behind in developing core competencies fundamental to their profession. These core competencies are the pillars on which subsequent knowledge and skills are built upon.
4. **Curriculum:** The current curricula being taught does not focus on nurturing a creative and learning environment involving questioning and problem solving. Subject matter is not regularly updated to keep pace with recent subject advances. There is no attempt to integrate subject knowledge with pedagogical skills. For most programmes, teacher trainees employ rote learning to

pass the examinations. Not enough emphasis is given to learning practical teaching skills; instead the emphasis remains on theory. Also, there is hardly any focus on making teachers efficient in improvising and creating low cost learning aids. Familiarity with the use of modern information and communication technologies is also not given due importance.

5. **Teacher Educators:** The various levels of teacher, educators themselves are caught in the same cycle of poor teacher quality and delivery. They administer their classes in the traditional teaching style of lecture giving, dictation and notes. Trainers fail to cultivate any creative thinking, inquiry and problem solving among their trainees.
6. **Pre-Service Program MEs:** According to two independent research studies, the content knowledge of pre-service and in-service teachers in Pakistan is low (MSU-SAP 1995; Warwick and Reimers 1991). The trainees do not get high motivation from the practical teaching environment of the training institutions in which they are attaining pre-service teaching training.
7. **In-Service Programmes:** Courses are not designed according to the requirements of in-service teachers. No effort is made to modify and tailor the syllabus as per requirements of the class/trainees. Subject knowledge is not integrated with teaching skills. Training programmes for various levels of teachers are not properly assessed and lack adequate materials and delivery aids. Training specialists and master trainers often are not qualified, competent or motivated enough to make much difference in improving the knowledge and capabilities of the trainees. Many master trainers are usually ex-heads of high schools who have been transferred and other teacher educators as a sort of punishment. Therefore, they are less serious towards their jobs and their chief priority is to finish their tenure so that they can eventually return as administrative heads of a school.

### **Why an In-Service Training**

When teachers join teaching profession, they just have a degree of completion of their pre-service training. They do not know anything about the actual classrooms. Sometimes they have no idea about the problems which they are going to meet in future while teaching the class. In the training institutions, they just learn the curriculum handed to them and try their best to rote it and get through the examination. The system of training institutions does not equip them with those techniques or methods which help them while facing the

classrooms. In-service teacher training is provided so that the teachers can be made more competent and their professional development can be enhanced. A planned training activity is launched for people who are usually already trained for and employed in the job. It is also called Training for Employees (Zahra, N 2008).

Zahra, N (2008) describes the needs of in-service training as:

- A gap has been recognized in the worker's knowledge or skills, either by the supervisor or the worker himself.
- The worker's job description or responsibilities have changed for which he/she does not have previous training.
- New information / Techniques / equipment have arrived or new systems are introduced in a work situation for which new knowledge and skills are required.

Niazi, H and Awan, M (2005) describe in-service training as under:

“In-service training is mainly concerned with the improvement of the teacher's performance. This training may be provided with the form of on-the-job-training, or refresher courses. It may also be provided through orientation, workshops, seminars and conferences.”

### **Reasons for ineffectiveness of in-service training programmes**

In-service training programmes are designed to refresh the knowledge of the teachers. One of the aims is to introduce the teachers with new trends and techniques in the field of education. The in-service programmes which are implemented for the improvement of the quality of education and to enable the teachers with new techniques, do not produce the desired results. This happens due to some reasons.

#### **I. Trainers**

The most important reason is the appointment of the trainers. Teachers who have some approach to the appointing authorities or have links with the concerned department get themselves appointed as trainers and even they themselves do not have proper training.

Siddique (2007) narrates in his book *Rethinking Education in Pakistan: Perceptions, Practices, and Possibilities* as:

“Unfortunately there have been no serious attempts at government level for Teacher Training to improve the quality of education in our country. A myriad of so called “Crash Courses” are launched in which thousands of teachers are forcibly ‘trained’ in one go. The ultimate aim of such courses seems to produce the inflated number of “trained teachers” to higher ups and get the letter of appreciation.”

## **2. Trainees**

When the schedule of the training courses is sent to schools and heads of the schools, they are asked to send their teachers for workshop. The heads should send those teachers who have no relation with the subject for which they are going to take training. Behind this there are many reasons. Sometimes, heads give no importance to the workshops and send irrelevant teachers. If workshops are held out of the station, some teachers want to join workshop just to visit the other cities and will enjoy the trip with attractive earning. When these teachers come back after training, they do not seem to have anything valuable in their hands. Their training proves useless and futile not only for them but also for the institution because these teachers do not know the basic roots of the subjects.

## **3. Training methods**

In the workshops, arranged for in-service teachers to enhance their knowledge in their respective subjects, no modern techniques or material is used. The trainers teach them those articles which can be found in the books of different classes. No new advance things are added. Even in science subjects, like mathematics or physics, only chalk and board are used. At Federal level some training workshops produce very better results which arranged in collaboration with other countries or with the help of international organization. At provincial level, the situation is more problematic and grave.

## **Objectives of this Study**

This study aimed at investigating the impact of in-service training programme on the teaching skills of secondary school teachers. The following objectives were made for the study:

1. To discuss the need of in-service training programme for the teachers.
2. To highlight the impact of in-service training programme on teaching skills of secondary school teachers.

## Methodology

The study was descriptive as well as quantitative in nature. The sample of the study consisted of a total of 30 in-service secondary school teachers who completed four weeks training in mathematics under the Science Education Project (Phase II) by the Government of Punjab in District Bahawalnagar. Hence the study was delimited to district Bahawalnagar in the Province of Punjab and only those in-service secondary school teachers were included in the study who completed four weeks training in mathematics under the Science Education Project (Phase II). A questionnaire comprising of eight items was developed on Likert Scale for the teachers to collect their opinion about the impact of in-service training on their teaching in the classrooms. For each statement, teachers were to respond to one option against the given five according to their choice.

## Results

The following results are presented after the data were analyzed statistically:

**Statistical Display of Data**

S. No.	Statement	N	Mini	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1.	You learn new methodologies of teaching through in-service training programme	30	1	5	4.37	1.098	1.206
2.	You learn the use of easily available material for presentation of ideas.	30	1	5	4.43	.971	.944
3.	You learn activity based learning and teaching skills	30	1	5	4.53	.973	.947
4.	You learn techniques of arrangement of class for effective learning.	30	1	5	4.47	.973	.947
5.	In-service training helps you prepare yourself for future teaching	30	1	5	4.00	1.259	1.586
6.	You Relate curriculum with daily life after getting In-service training.	30	1	5	4.50	.974	.948
7.	You learn new techniques of developing questions	30	1	5	4.23	1.223	1.495
8.	You learn the use of information communication technologies (ICT)	30	1	5	3.37	1.520	2.309

## Discussion

The response of the respondents on statements at serial number 3 and 6 was in the category of strongly agreed with means 4.53 and 4.50 respectively, while the response on the statements at serial number 1,2,4,5 and 7 were into the column "agree". In response of statement: "You learn the use of information communication technologies (ICT)", the respondents were undecided. There are some reasons for this; they join training with poor knowledge. During this short period, they remain in conflict, what they have understood and what not. When they go back in their schools there they face different situation. Mostly schools are without computers and other ICTs. Since they remain without practice so they forget all the things.

## Conclusion

1. The purpose of the in-service training is to enhance the knowledge of the teachers. The study reveals that during training teachers learn new methodologies of teaching.
2. Practice through Inset makes learning process more effective and easily available material can help in making teaching process more effective. The teachers confirm that they learn use of easily available material for presentation of ideas.
3. Activities play an important role in the teaching process. Students can make their concepts clear by doing. During study teachers confirm that they learn how to make their teaching process more attractive with the help of activities.
4. Arrangement of class plays an important role in the learning. The teachers agree that they learn techniques of arrangement of class for learning.
5. With the changing atmosphere the teaching process is also changing rapidly. The future of teaching is far different from past. The main aim of the training is to prepare teachers for future teaching.
6. In our system of education, teachers fail to relate the curriculum of different subjects with the daily life. Training provides chances to teachers how to relate the curriculum with the daily life. During this study teachers confirm that they learn to create a relationship between daily life and the curriculum.
7. With the changing scenario the use of information communication technologies (ICT) is increasing day by day. ICTs make teaching more effective and more reliable, in the advance countries the use of ICTs in education field is growing very rapidly. The participants

confirm that in our institutions the use of ICT is not at large scale and during training they do not learn the use of ICT in the classes.

### **Recommendations**

1. Training must be organized for subject teachers keeping in mind their needs and the needs of the time.
2. Teachers must be trained so as to conduct action research in the classrooms.
3. They must follow up those teachers who have completed their training, so that they can be checked and properly guided.
4. In-service trainings may be arranged during the summer vacation so that teachers can utilize their time.
5. Training of information and communication technologies should be provided to the teachers of all levels so that they can enhance their teaching with the help of ICTs
6. Curriculum of teacher training programmes may be revised and arranged in the light of home environment.
7. Content of the teacher training programmes should be flexible and new techniques might be introduced for the teachers.

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