

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

Teaching is said to be a nation building activity and the teacher is the architect of the future. The teacher acts as the pivot for the transmission of intellectual traditions and technical skills from generation to generation and helps to keep the lamp of civilization burning. Since the teachers are constant learners, they are expected to update their knowledge and skills in the profession. In-service training programmes play a significant role in developing content and pedagogical skills among school teachers. The teachers should have a positive attitude and right perceptions towards in-service training being offered by different organizations in order to equip themselves with the necessary skills in content as well as pedagogy. The present study is intended to explore the factors that affect the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards in-service training programmes in relation to the demographic variables - gender, age and teaching experience. The researchers used descriptive survey method for the present investigation. The sample consisting of 400 teachers (250 male and 150 female) from 40 secondary schools in Vizianagaram district has been selected using Stratified Random Sampling method. The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire developed and standardized by the researchers. The data were analyzed using different statistical techniques like means, standard deviations and t-tests. The findings of the study revealed that the variables – gender, age and teaching experience of secondary school teachers have no influence on their perceptions towards in-service training programmes. The study suggested that the National Academic Bodies like NCERT, NCTE, RCI, NUEPA and State-level organizations like SCERTs, DIETs and Departments of Education should take initiative in providing in-service training for school teachers at regular intervals of time with a view to develop in them the necessary competencies for quality improvement in teaching. Further, the study suggested that there should be regular monitoring of these in-service training programmes by the authorities of the School Education Department.

Key Words: education, Orientation, Refresher courses, Conferences, Workshops and seminars

Introduction

Education is an effective means of social reconstruction. It is the process of facilitating learning. Education system has a tremendous responsibility to transform a child into a fully developed individual. It helps in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits necessary for the human living. It is the most powerful instruments of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals (**Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1964-66**). The quality and extent of learner achievement is determined primarily by teacher competence. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teachers' proficiency and competence that would enable and empower them to meet the requirements of teaching profession and face the challenges courageously. Teacher education is a comprehensive, dynamic and ever changing process as per the demand of the changing society. National Education Policy (NEP) -2020 recognizes the importance of quality in teacher education; and emphasizes that 'Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values; and development of practice under the best mentors' (**MHRD, 2020**).

In-service Education of Teachers has received considerable attention during the post-independent period, as it was perceived as an essential input to achieve the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education of children in the age group 6–14 years; and to ensure overall improvement in the quality of school education. It is designed for the manpower development of the school system and the educational enterprise as a whole.

In-service training programmes play a significant role in developing content and pedagogical skills among school teachers. If teachers are to perform their functions effectively and efficiently, it becomes imperative that they should undergo some kind of a training or the other in acquiring new skills and modern methodologies. **The Indian Education Commission (1964-66)**, after reviewing the status and service conditions of teachers, remarked: 'Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant'. To achieve this, the teachers of high quality are to be recruited, providing them with the best possible professional preparation and creating satisfactory conditions of work in which they may be fully effective. To meet the growing needs of education in a global economy, it becomes imperative to provide adequate in-service education for teachers to update their skills, knowledge and experience.

The concept of 'In-service Education'

According to the **Report of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66)**, a teacher, who, unlike an ordinary worker, acts as a master, craftsman, an artist, a strategist and a powerful motivator. The environment of the classroom should be enlivened by the inspiring, dynamic, enthusiastic, encouraging, skillful and dedicated teacher. It is he who shapes the destiny of students and that of the future citizens who eventually shape the destiny of the nation. Such a teacher alone can successfully cultivate among children right values that strengthen the ideals of social justice, equity, secularism and pluralism. By its very definition, a professional, including a teacher is a lifelong learner because of his association with scientific knowledge which keeps growing and so opportunities have to be afforded to ensure that he keeps learning and developing throughout his professional life. This is precisely the responsibility of teacher education system which is more than a mere combination of two of its major components, viz., pre-service teacher preparation and in-service education.

In-service education is concerned basically with the courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate to improve his professional abilities, skills and interests, beyond the initial training. So, it covers all types of education and training given to a teacher who is already in the job in teaching profession. An 'in-service teacher education programme' is any training offered to teachers who are already engaged in schools or higher education institutions. It is done in order to improve and sustain the efficacy of teachers' instruction by upgrading and renewing their knowledge, teaching skills and so on. In-service education is a deliberate and continuous process involving the identification and discussion of current and anticipated needs of individual staff for furthering their job performance and career prospects; and for supporting the academic work and plans of the institution.

In the words of M. B. Buch, 'In-service education is a programme of activities aimed at continuing growth of teachers and educational personnel in-service' (**Panchbhai, P.V., 1990**). It is the sponsorship and pursuit of activities that provide fresh insight, growth, understanding, and co-operative practices to members of the teaching profession and arouses them to action to enhance them in any way feasible. It covers all of the educational, social, and other programmes in which the teacher participates virtually, as well as all of the extra education that he obtains at other institutions as a refresher and other professional courses, as well as all of the tours and visits that he conducts. It includes all activities in which the educational personnel have participated during the period of their services in the

educational institutions. These activities are planned and organized by various agencies to help the educators improve their professional competencies in teaching.

Types of In-service training programmes for school teachers

The following are some of the important types of in-service training programmes commonly provided to school teachers for their professional development and improving teaching methodologies:

- (i) **Pedagogical Workshops:** These workshops focus on teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, lesson planning and instructional methodologies tailored to specific subjects or grade levels.
- (ii) **Technology Integration Training:** With the increasing use of technology in education, training programs are designed to help teachers integrate technology tools and digital resources effectively into their teaching practices.
- (iii) **Special Education Training:** Teachers may receive training on inclusive education practices, differentiated instruction and strategies for supporting students with special needs or learning disabilities.
- (iv) **Assessment and Evaluation Workshops:** These workshops provide teachers with training on designing assessments, interpreting assessment data and using assessment results to inform instruction and student learning.
- (v) **Language Acquisition and Literacy Training:** Teachers receive training on literacy development, language acquisition strategies, and techniques for promoting reading and writing skills across different subjects and grade levels.
- (vi) **Cultural Competency Training:** In diverse educational settings, teachers may undergo training to develop cultural competency skills, understand cultural differences, and create inclusive learning environments.
- (vii) **Professional Development Seminars:** These seminars cover a wide range of topics relevant to teaching profession such as classroom management, student engagement, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and teacher well-being.
- (viii) **Subject-Specific Training:** Teachers receive specialized training focused on specific subject areas such as mathematics, science, languages, arts or social studies. These programmes aim at enhancing content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers.
- (ix) **Leadership and Management Training:** Some teachers may undergo training to develop leadership skills, mentorship abilities, and instructional coaching techniques to take on leadership roles within their schools or districts.
- (x) **Collaborative Learning Communities:** Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities or professional learning communities (PLCs) where they engage in peer collaboration, share best practices, and collectively solve instructional challenges.
- (xi) **Educational Research and Inquiry:** Training programs may focus on helping teachers understand educational research, inquiry-based learning approaches, and how to apply research findings to improve teaching practices and student outcomes.
- (xii) **Wellness and Self-care Workshops:** Recognizing the importance of teacher well-being, training programs may include sessions on stress management, work-life balance, mindfulness techniques, and strategies for maintaining emotional resilience.

These in-service training programmes can be delivered through workshops, seminars, conferences, online courses, peer mentoring, coaching or a combination of these methods. The effectiveness of these programmes often depends on their relevance to teachers' needs, active engagement of participants and ongoing support and follow-up activity.

Role of In-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching

In-service training programmes play a crucial role in quality improvement in teaching within the field of education. Here are some key aspects of their role:

- (i) **Professional Development:** In-service training programs provide teachers with opportunities for continuous professional development. They help educators stay updated with the latest teaching methodologies, technologies, and pedagogical approaches. This ensures that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high-quality instruction.
- (ii) **Enhanced Pedagogical Skills:** Through in-service training programmes, teachers can enhance their pedagogical skills. They learn about effective instructional strategies, classroom management techniques; and methods of assessment and evaluation. This enables them to cater to the diverse learning needs of their students and create engaging learning experiences.
- (iii) **Adaptation to Changing Educational Landscape:** The education landscape is constantly evolving with new curriculum standards, educational policies and advancements in technology. In-service training programmes help teachers adapt to these changes and align their teaching practices with current educational trends and requirements.
- (iv) **Improvement in Student Learning Outcomes:** Quality teaching is directly linked to improved student learning outcomes. In-service training programmes focus on enhancing teaching effectiveness, which ultimately leads to better academic achievement among students. Teachers learn how to identify learning goals, design effective lesson plans, and employ assessment strategies to monitor student progress and provide timely feedback.
- (v) **Promotion of Reflective Practices:** In-service training programmes often encourage reflective practices among teachers. Through self-assessment, peer collaboration, and feedback from mentors or supervisors, educators can critically evaluate their teaching practices and identify areas for improvement. This reflective approach fosters continuous growth and professional excellence.
- (vi) **Building a Professional Learning Community:** In-service training programmes provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and build a professional learning community of their own. Sharing experiences, exchanging ideas and engaging in collaborative problem-solving contribute to a supportive and conducive learning environment within schools or educational institutions.
- (vii) **Addressing Specific Needs:** In-service training programmes can be tailored to address specific needs or challenges faced by teachers or educational institutions. Whether it's implementing new teaching methodologies, integrating technology into the curriculum, or supporting students with special needs, targeted training programmes can provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to address these challenges effectively.

Thus, in-service training programmes play a vital role in promoting continuous improvement and excellence in teaching, benefiting ultimately both the teachers and the students alike.

Review of Related Studies

The studies carried out earlier by the other researchers that aim at finding out the perceptions of teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching have been examined; and a brief review of the same is provided in the following paragraphs.

Shalini Singh & Abha Rani Sinha (2021) conducted a study on the impact of in-service teachers' training for developing teaching attitude among teachers. The sample consists of 400 teachers of Vaishali district in Bihar. The researchers collected data through 15 statements of the observation schedule

prepared for the purpose by the investigators themselves. Percentage analysis method was used to analyze data. The results showed that these training programmes had positive impact in certain areas of teaching/classroom transaction; but had no influence in the areas, viz., methods of teaching and proper handling of audio-visual aids in classroom instruction.

Harun Şahin & Muhammed Akinci (2020) conducted a study to determine the trends of the studies about in-service teacher training in Turkey. It is a descriptive study using document analysis based on qualitative research method. Various databases were searched and 56 articles about in-service teacher training between 2012 and 2019 were used and included in the study. The data of the study was collected by “Article Classification Form”, conceptualized and analyzed in terms of its various characteristics. The findings revealed that there is a decreasing trend in the number of studies between the years of 2012-2019 related to in-service teacher training in Turkey. The studies were mostly carried out in descriptive structures in an unplanned manner hurriedly by making urgent decisions. Further, the number of comprehensive and planned studies using mixed designs with different participants and multiple data collection and analysis processes is not sufficient. In this context, the study suggested that more emphasis should be given to the studies on in-service teacher training, numbers of which have been decreasing as of 2019, and the possible studies to be carried out should be planned in a comprehensive manner considering the real needs of working teachers.

Nikhat & Zebun Nisa Khan (2017) conducted a study to find out the attitude of teachers towards in-service training for the improvement in quality of teaching at school level of Aligarh district. The study was conducted with the objectives to determine the training methodologies and their impact on improvement in quality of teaching. The sample comprising of 112 teachers of Aligarh of both central and state schools were selected through purposive sampling procedure based on the availability of school teachers who have attended in-service training programmes, especially refresher courses. A self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect the necessary data. The finding of the study showed that in-service training programmes, especially refresher courses, are responsible for the improvement in quality of teaching among senior secondary school teachers of Aligarh district.

Need and Importance of the study

Education is a dynamic process. It depends upon the society that is fast changing. Due to the advancement in the field of science and technology, there is explosion of knowledge. Accordingly, the curriculum and syllabus are also being changed at a tremendous speed. This necessitated for the continuous in-service education of the teachers to update their knowledge and skills in the profession to meet the changing needs of the learners.

The teachers should develop a positive attitude towards in-service training programmes for purpose of improving quality in their teaching. This ultimately results in improving standards in education. The investigators thought it desirable to explore the perceptions of teachers towards in-service education for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the perceptions of teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level
2. To examine the influence of demographic variables - gender, age and teaching experience on the perceptions of teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

Hypotheses of the study

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

Delimitations of the study

The study is limited to find out the perceptions of 400 teachers (250 male and 150 female) from 40 secondary schools located in rural as well as urban areas in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level. Further, the study is confined to find out the influence of three demographic variables, viz., gender, age and teaching experience on the perceptions of teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

Design of the study

(a) Method of Research

The researchers followed the Survey Method of the descriptive research for the present investigation.

(b) Sample

The sample of the study consists of 400 teachers (250 male and 150 female) from 40 secondary schools located in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

(c) Research Tool

The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire to collect data for the present investigation.

(d) Administration of the Tool

The tool was initially administered to 40 teachers (20 male and 20 female) working in the secondary schools located in Vizianagaram town under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 32 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and is found negative in respect of 2 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 30 items which are pool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 400 teachers (250 male and 150 female) working in 40 Secondary Schools located in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh.

(e) Data Analysis and Interpretation

The investigators used different statistical techniques such as Mean Score values, Standard Deviations and t- tests for data analysis and interpretation.

Table showing Mean, SD and t-values on the perceptions of teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level

S. No.	Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result	
1	Gender	Male	250	100.98	29.06	0.47*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	150	102.37	27.94		
2	Age	Below 40 years	280	101.29	28.95	0.35*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		40 years & above	120	102.33	26.58		
3	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 years	240	101.50	28.44	0.26*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 years & above	160	100.75	28.72		

Findings of the study

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level
3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that gender, age and experience of teachers have no influence on their perceptions towards in-service training programmes for quality improvement in teaching at secondary level.

Recommendations

The study has suggested that the teachers should realize the need and importance of in-service training programmes for their professional growth and development; and should develop a favorable positive attitude towards these programmes with a view to improve quality in teaching at secondary level.

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