

Relevance of In-Service Teacher Training Programmes in the Present Scenario

Dr. Nancy Grover

ABSTRACT

In-service teacher training programmes are essential in the present scenario to provide quality education to students. These programmes are necessary to keep teachers updated with the latest teaching tools and techniques, enhance their classroom teaching practices, provide opportunities for personal and professional growth, improve student outcomes, and facilitate career advancement. In the present study the relevance of in-service teacher training programmes conducted by District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in the state of Himachal Pradesh comes to the surface through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among in-service teachers. A sample of 84 in-service teachers of upper primary schools from four Districts namely, Shimla, Solan, Bilaspur and Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh was selected purposively who were present at the time of discussion in their respective DIETs which comprised the sample of the study. Self-developed questionnaire was used for the present study. It has been found in the present study that training programmes are very much relevant in the present scenario as these programmes helped in building the professional capacities, competencies, teaching efficiencies and skills of the in-service teachers which helped in refreshing and grooming them so as to place them in a better place as teachers.

Keywords: District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Professional Capacities and Competencies, Teaching efficiencies.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In-service teacher training programmes are crucial for the professional development of in-service teachers. These programmes provide opportunities for in-service teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, which in turn helps them to be more effective in their work. In-service training programmes are significant for in-service teachers in the following ways:

- ❖ Keeping up with changing educational trends and technology: In-service training programmes help in-service teachers to keep up with changing educational trends and the latest technology. This helps them to be more effective in their teaching and enable them to give best to their students.
- ❖ Improving teaching skills and methods: In-service training programmes can help in-service teachers improve their teaching skills and methods which lead to increased student engagement and improved learning outcomes.
- ❖ Enhancing subject knowledge: In-service training programmes can provide in-service teachers with a deeper understanding of their subject area. This enables them to deliver more accurate and effective instruction and to answer student questions more confidently.
- ❖ Promoting professional growth: In-service training programmes help in-service teachers to develop new skills and knowledge, enabling them to progress in their careers which further leads to increased job satisfaction and motivation.
- ❖ Building teacher confidence: In-service training programmes can help in-service teachers develop greater confidence in their ability to teach effectively. This can lead to increased student confidence in their teachers and can improve the overall classroom environment.

Therefore, it is imperative that governments, education institutions, and other stakeholders invest in in-service teacher training programmes to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality education to students and DIETs is playing a major role in this field.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Yazdani (2016) in a critical study on professionalism among teacher educators of District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) in Delhi found that most of the teacher educators and principals agreed that the teacher educators attended the training programmes related to their subjects organized by different organizations which helped in the upgradation and development of teaching methodology of different subjects. Teacher

Educators of District Institute of Education and Training, played a very essential role in elementary education at District level by training pre-service as well in-service and for the quality development of elementary education and it was suggested that the professionalism of teacher educators of DIETs should be very high.

Akhtar (2017) conducted a study on the opportunities and challenges of in-service teacher training of Science at upper primary level in the State of Uttarakhand and found that: (i) the major challenge faced was that the training need analysis compiled by DIETs were non-uniform, which made analysis difficult. When a teacher completed training at block level, one day follow up was planned for five months at their cluster resource centre. But at a cluster level, a smaller number of science teachers were placed. As a consequence, sometimes, only one teacher attended follow up training; (ii) resource persons did not possess thorough content knowledge and preparation before facilitation and objectives of the training were not fulfilled with due sensitivity and; (iii) training was not connected with day-to-day life experiences and there was no excursion to scientific laboratories and institutions to observe and understand various scientific tools and processes.

Longchar (2017) conducted a study on the effectiveness of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in Nagaland and found that: (i) the trainees participated in different programmes conducted at the institution like- seminars, workshops, work experience, life skills, community work, field trips and other activities like short term training, projects, research work, survey, test, content enrichment program etc. It was found that all the activities were conducted frequently; (ii) the assessment and evaluation were mostly done by the principals, colleagues, student-teachers and external experts; (iii) during training programmes sincere and hardworking teachers were awarded in the form of certificates and verbal appreciation and; (iv) it was observed that power point presentation (PPT) was utilized by few teachers and teaching-aids were available in different institutes such as charts, maps, globes, audio-visual aids and models were used by only few teachers.

Tyagi and Mishra (2017) conducted a study on in-service education of school teachers in India and found the following challenges: (i) non-availability of infrastructure and facilities; (ii) lack of a uniform policy framework for in-service teacher education; (iii) majority of teachers remain out of the orbit of in-service education/training and; (iv) most of the in-service activities are irrelevant to the needs of teachers and does not care to know about how a teacher implements his/her enhanced knowledge and skills in the classroom.

Singh et al. (2019) in their study on professional development of in-service teachers in India found that: (i) professional development programme of in-service teachers was important and needed; (ii) most importantly, there was need to have a well-planned in-service education programme with clearly defined objectives of growth and improvement of instruction and leadership skills; (iii) in-service education should be recognized as a part of institutional or organizational activities designed by government for staff development and motivation; (iv) organizers of in-service education should focus on job related tasks that were real, practical oriented and relevant to the participants and; (v) deliberate efforts should be made by the various institutions to provide adequate tables and chairs, classrooms, laboratories and boarding facilities for participants to facilitate effective instruction.

Siddiqui and Mughal (2021) in a study on teacher training in Pakistan found that teacher training is an integral part of teacher education. There are some serious problems with teacher training like attracting suitable individuals for teaching, equipping them with adequate and correct skills, lack of resources in teacher training institutions, demotivation among teachers to carry out their work effectively, unequal distribution of skilled and productive teachers, dual training system etc. However, pragmatic steps such as investment, eradication of corruption, strengthening institutes will help revamp teacher training.

Singh and Sinha (2022) in a study on the impact of in-service teachers training on school teachers found that there is a positive impact of in-service teachers training in developing knowledge, understanding and skills of teachers for managing classroom environment, maintaining discipline, interacting students by asking questions and getting prompt replies and evaluating students through class tests. Hence, training programmes had positive impact in certain areas of teaching/ classroom transaction but in certain areas as viz. method of teaching and handling of audio-visual aids are still out of this positive impact.

Mugarura et al. (2022) in their study on the role of in-service teacher training as a tool for the student's performance in selected public secondary schools in Kisoro district found that: (i) in-service training faces a number of challenges such as: limited budget which limits the number of participants, limited time allocated to run in-service programmes compared to the content to be covered and lack of mastery of the subject matter/content by the facilitators; (ii) in-service training contributes positively in academic performance of the students through improved teaching-learning process by the proper training programmes and; (iii) when training programmes are introduced through best strategies and competent trainers the results are positive.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In-service teacher training programmes have become increasingly relevant in today's world due to the constantly evolving education system. Teachers need to stay updated on new teaching methodologies, technology and pedagogical approaches to provide quality education to students. Hence, this study was an attempt to study the relevance of training programmes in the present scenario so as to cope up with the challenges coming up on the path and progress of training programmes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

❖ To conduct focus group discussion among upper primary in-service teachers regarding the relevance of in-service teacher training programmes conducted by DIETs.

III. METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the objective as mentioned above, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted in the present study.

Sample

A sample of eighty-four teachers of upper primary schools who had attended the in-service teacher training programmes were selected purposefully for this study from the four Districts viz. Shimla, Solan, Bilaspur and Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh for Focus Group Discussion. The District wise selection of teachers is shown in table 1

Table 1
District-wise Selection of Upper Primary In-service Teachers for Focus Group Discussion

Sr. No.	Districts	Upper Primary In-service Teachers
1	Shimla	24
2	Solan	22
3	Bilaspur	20
4	Kinnaur	18
	Total	84

Research Tool

An open-ended questionnaire was prepared for conducting focus group discussion of upper primary in-service teachers of selected four DIETs viz. Shimla, Solan, Bilaspur and Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh. A questionnaire was framed with the help of the experts of Education regarding in-service teacher training programmes in Himachal Pradesh. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was also assured before administering it. One of the topics from the questionnaire on relevance of training programmes is dealt in the present paper.

Procedure

For conducting Focus Group Discussion, the investigator contacted one of the teacher educators of DIETs Shimla, Solan, Bilaspur and Kinnaur and confirmed about the training schedule of upper primary in-service teachers which was to be held and requested to give time to the investigator to conduct focus group discussion with them regarding training programmes. The investigator visited DIET Shimla, Solan, Bilaspur and Kinnaur on the set schedules for conducting discussion. For conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the investigator introduced the topic for discussion and helped the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves. The topic on the relevance of training programmes was open for discussion to the group of upper primary in-service teachers. They were motivated to give the responses honestly. Their views, opinions and thoughts were noted down by the investigator in a sequence to get an essence of their ideas about the training programmes. With due permission, their photographs were clicked and video recording was also done. Thereafter, the investigator thanked the respondents for their co-operation during data collection. Finally, all the responses of upper primary in-service teachers were later analyzed and interpreted to deduce conclusions.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For the present study, the obtained information was tabulated, organized and further analysed as follows.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE RESULTS

Discussion Regarding Relevance of In-service Teacher Training Programmes in the Present Scenario.

The teachers were asked about the relevance of in-service teacher training programmes in the present scenario. The views of the teachers are presented in table 2

Table 2
Views of Teachers on Relevance of In-service Teacher Training Programmes in the Present Scenario

Names of DIETs and Total Number of In-service Teachers (N=84)	Relevance of the Training Programmes in the Present Scenario
DIET Shimla (24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the in-service teachers stated that the in-service teacher training programmes are very much relevant in the present scenario. • Majority of in-service teachers highlighted that these programmes helped in building the professional capacities and competencies.
DIET Solan (22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the in-service teachers responded that in-service teacher training programmes are very much important in the present scenario. • Majority of in-service teachers emphasised that these programmes helped in grooming the teaching efficiencies and skills of in-service teachers.
DIET Bilaspur (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the in-service teachers clarified that in-service teacher training programmes are of utmost significance for the in-service teachers. • Most of the in-service teachers stressed that these programmes are refreshing and gave them opportunities to learn various aspects of teaching-learning process like methods of teaching, different skills of teaching, latest techniques of teaching, preparation of Teaching Learning Material (TLM).
DIET Kinnaur (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the in-service teachers were of the opinion that these programmes are very much relevant for them and these programmes helped to improve their weaknesses so that they may cope up with the difficult situations more effectively.

Table 2 shows that after discussion it was found that all in-service teachers present in their respective DIETs were of the view that in-service teacher training programmes are very much relevant in the present scenario. Majority of in-service teachers who were present in DIET Shimla and Solan emphasised that these programmes helped in building their professional capacities and competencies which helped in grooming their teaching efficiencies and skills so as to place them in a better place as teachers. Further, most of the in-service teachers who attended focus group discussion at DIET Bilaspur expressed that these programmes were refreshing for their knowledge and gave them opportunities to learn various aspects of teaching-learning process like methods of teaching, different skills of teaching, latest techniques of teaching, preparation of Teaching Learning Material (TLM) and so on. Therefore, the relevance of training programmes for the in-service teachers is of utmost significance. Lastly, all the in-service teachers present at DIET Kinnaur for discussion were of the opinion that these programmes helped to improve their weaknesses so that they may cope up with the difficult situations more effectively.

Focus Group Discussion Among In-service Teachers at DIET Shimla



IV. CONCLUSION

Training programmes are very much relevant in the present scenario as these programmes helped in building the professional capacities, competencies, teaching efficiencies and skills of the in-service teachers which helped in refreshing and grooming them so as to place them in a better place as teachers. Training programmes help the teachers to cope up with the challenges coming up in the path and progress of training programmes.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Following are the major educational implications of the training programmes:

- ❖ **Keep Teachers Updated:** In-service teacher training programmes are essential for keeping teachers updated with the latest teaching techniques and methodologies. With advancements in technology and the ever-changing education system, teachers need to be equipped with the latest teaching tools and techniques to cater to the diverse learning needs of students.
- ❖ **Improved Classroom Teaching:** In-service teacher training programmes provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their classroom teaching practices. These programmes help teachers develop new teaching strategies, lesson plans, and activities that can enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes.
- ❖ **Personal and Professional Growth:** In-service teacher training programmes provide opportunities for personal and professional growth. These programmes help teachers develop leadership skills, enhance critical thinking abilities, and provide opportunities to network and collaborate with other teachers. Moreover, these programmes offer opportunities for teachers to pursue higher education or specialized courses to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- ❖ **Better Student Outcomes:** The effectiveness of in-service teacher training programmes is reflected in improved student outcomes. Teachers who undergo training programmes are better equipped to cater to the diverse learning needs of students, which leads to better academic performance, higher student retention rates, and improved overall school performance.
- ❖ **Career Advancement:** In-service teacher training programmes are essential for career advancement. Teachers who undergo training programmes are better positioned for leadership roles, promotions, and higher salaries. These programmes provide opportunities for teachers to pursue higher education or specialized courses, which can help them acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for career advancement.

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