

## **Teachers' Professional Learning Towards Inclusive Education In India- Eradicates Educational Barriers**

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### **Abstract**

Disable students are very much shy to mix with the other normal students. To nurture their value in inclusive setting teachers' professional role is very important. To upgrade teachers' professional knowledge continuous professional training is important and that's why the present researcher wants to see the scenario of teachers' professional learning towards inclusive education. Many national, international journals, government policies and supporting reports help to this study analytically for showing the scenario of teachers' professional learning towards inclusive education. After the study it is found that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is very much needed. Also government takes necessary steps regarding teachers' professional learning. ICSSR, UGC, SAP continuously organize seminars, workshops, refresher and orientation programmes for strengthening teachers' skills. The researcher also gives some suggestions for teachers' professional training improvement.

**Key Words:** Teachers' professional learning, inclusive education, CPD.

**Introduction:** Teachers are the key pillars for building up and maintenance the educational system through which country is developing day by day. Professional learning foster students as well as teachers for doing their job very sincerely. We all know that Inclusive education means children with and without disability come into the educational field and gather suitable knowledge under the same roof. But till now inclusive education can't reach up to its satisfaction level due to lack of professional nurture. Students belongs from different disabilities with their shyness can't get proper education. Besides, there are some problems have risen to connect to the disabled children due to lack of teachers' professional knowledge. Strong leadership in school management makes a pivotal role for enhancing and strengthens the inclusive education. Advancing inclusive practices is not just about what a teacher/s thinks about the inclusive practices rather it is the process of implementation of their thoughts. Effective inclusive practices involves a set of activities or behavior between different professionals, including principals and teachers in order to provide schools or classroom modification for the Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Investment in teacher training is another key portion for the success to the Inclusive Education. Both pre-service and in-service teacher training is important for building capacity of teachers for addressing Children With Special Needs (CWSN). While NCTE deals with general education

courses with an optional paper on special education. Basically, RCI deals with the special education courses. Extending access to education is an international agenda. The Education For All (EFA) comes from the United Nations is an important element in the millennium development goals just because education is a crucial agent for the human development and help to abolish social superstitions and also because of many children do not access education (UNESCO, 2005). Secondary and senior secondary school education are crucial stages for career development because at this stage students ponder about their right career after completing their schools stage. According to Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA) the vision for secondary and higher secondary education is to provides availability of good quality education, accessible and affordable to the students under the age group of 14-18 years (Bharti, 2013). RMSA realize that inclusion of children with and without disability is not only a human right but also it should provide a good education in the secondary and higher secondary schooling system. For the promotion of inclusive education the central government included its impact upon Sarva Siksha Mission (SSA). Teacher plays the key role for developing the children and for the proper guidance they must have the professional training.

**Objective:** To know the present scenario of teachers' professional learning towards inclusive education.

**Methodology:** This study is based on analytical study of different journals, government's policies and reports.

**Fundamentals for capacity building for Inclusive Education:** For the development of the human resource inclusive education is very much important issue. Here teachers' attitudinal changes make inclusive education at a successful level. To understand the philosophy behind the inclusive education, conducting healthy and conducive teaching learning environment in inclusive schools there are mainly three fundamentals for capacity building for inclusive education. Which are briefly discussed below:-

- a) **Increase awareness and teachers' attitudinal changes:** Attitude may contain cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics. Teachers' knowledge, self judgement and behavioural changes make the inclusion at an effective way. In spite of government policies educational institutions are not turned completely under inclusion. We know that under the inclusive setting all children under disability and non- disability are come to the educational institutions and gaining knowledge under a same roof but is this going smoothly? Here the main question is arrived. Because students under learning disabilities or under hearing and visual disabilities can't mixed with the normal children that's why they can't learn properly or teachers may not reach to the actual learning fulfilment of those disable children due to lack of proper professional knowledge. Increasing awareness to the disable help the teachers to change their attitudinal changes towards inclusive education. Through behavioural changes teachers can penetrate into the students mind. Also teachers' attitudinal

changes towards curriculum, society, parental thinking and administration is important for strengthening awareness towards inclusive education.

- b) Pre-service professional training:** Inclusive education should be compulsorily included in the teacher education curriculum. This training helps different types of teachers. Through this training teacher educators or student teachers are facing practical problems and gather lot of field experiences with reflective thinking which help them to identify the students' problems and have taken the necessary steps regarding this. The inclusion of appropriate content knowledge with essential qualities and practice of effective domain related traits in educational institutions for a long period of time could help the educational institutions in a successful way. Teacher education reforms in India has been a relevant topic taken by various educational commissions and committees since independence. The Educational Commission (1964-66) had discussed about the length on teacher education programme. This report recommended for the professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programmes, comprehensive college of education and internship. The national Commission On Teachers (1983-85) recommended for 5 year integrated courses and also felt its importance upon internship. NPE(1986) had recommended the overhaul of teacher education programmes to deliver it a professional orientation and also suggested for launch of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education with the establishment of DIETs, CTEs and IASEs. POA (1992) and The National Advisory Committee on Curriculum Load (1993) had also drawn its attention to the qualitative reform of teacher education programme and suggested various measures. According to NCF-2005 teachers must be a facilitator of students' learning which help them to construct knowledge and utilizing their individual experiences (Sharma, 2014). For development of inclusive education pre-service teachers should develop knowledge about different socio- cultural issues, different disabilities and its problems that can affect student's learning. It ensures knowledge is based on best teaching strategies that encourage the diverse students to learn. Pre-service teachers' training develops collaborative skills which help to provide opportunities for reflective practices. As a result responsive teachers are very much confident about collecting and analysing data about teaching and learning. This training organise and simultaneously support the practical experiences in a various schools and classrooms where inclusive practices are modelled well.
- c) In-service professional training:** it is the training programme which a person enters into a teaching profession and for the training s/he is going to the teachers' training institutions. It is a continuous process coextensive with the teaching. The Adiseshiah committee put emphasis upon in-service training programme for existing teachers in schools with addition to pre-service education. The needs of in-service teacher programme is given below-

- I. ***Every teacher is a student:*** Education is a life- long process. A teacher should learn continuously throughout his/her life.
- II. ***Life- long education:*** The International Commission on Education has strengthened the needs and importance of in-service training by giving the new concept life-long education.
- III. ***Professional growth:*** In-service teacher training is very much essential for teachers' professional growth. It can generate new thoughts, useful reflective thinking from the old ones.
- IV. ***Education is a dynamic concept:*** Educational concepts, theories are always changeable through different types of current researches. So, day- by- day new up-to date knowledge, new teaching strategies are going on and it also create sense of belongingness.

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993), Learning without Burden, stated that, the emphasis on in-service training programmes should be on enabling trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking. Continuing professional learning is gratefully grounded in the teachers' context which develops teachers' existing knowledge about different types of learners and necessary needs provide relevant, timely information for best teaching practices and skills and prepare a framework to reflect on their teaching practices. In-service teachers' training develops professional learning and builds the pathways for the teachers at the different educational institutional level. This ongoing training fosters the teachers' new society and individual learners need based reflecting thinking and applying skills.

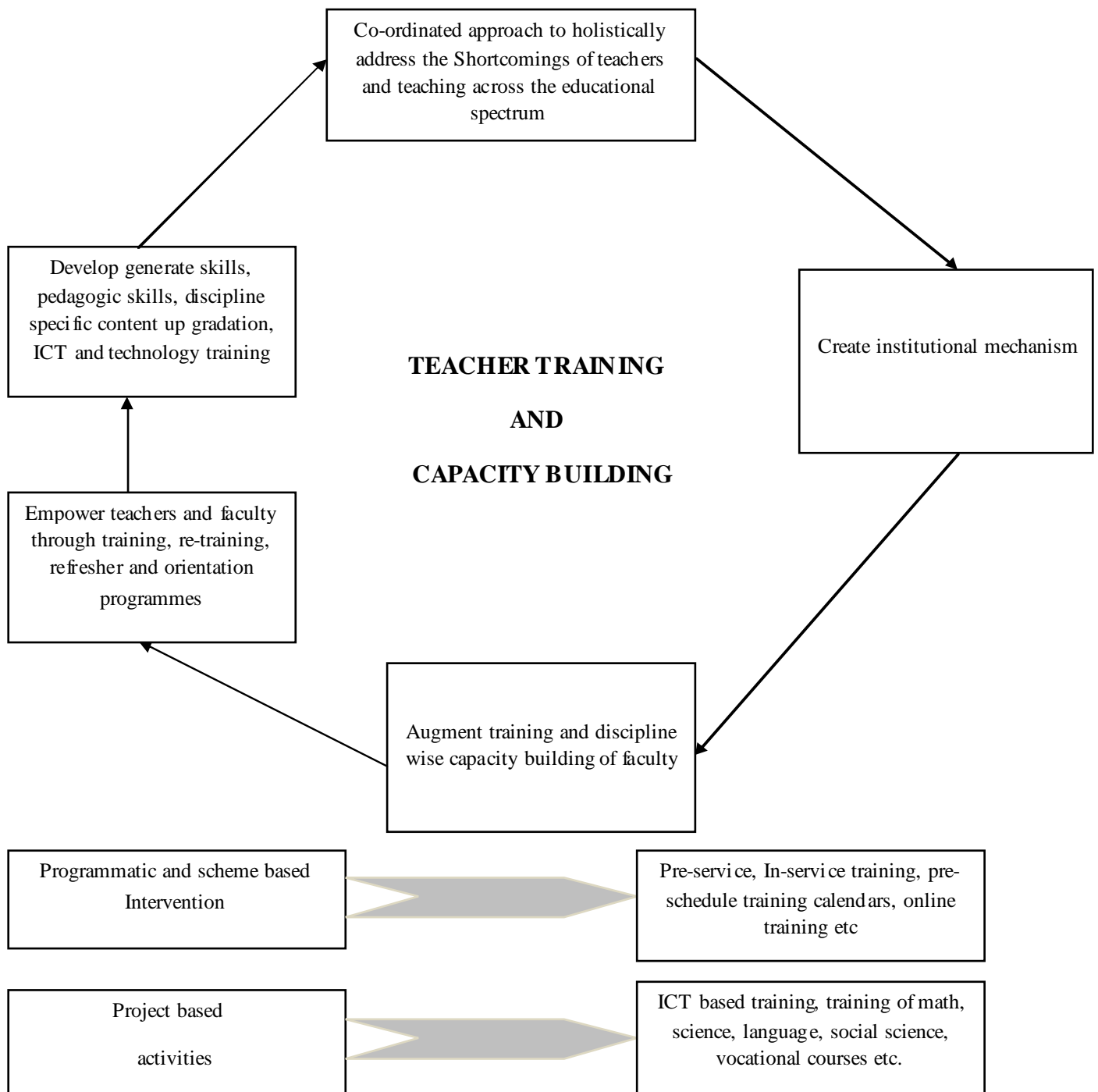


Figure 1: Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNTT) - Goals and Strategies

(Source: Teacher training and capacity building. GOI. MHRD. UGC publication)

**Inclusive teaching- learning strategy:** We all know that inclusive education means gaining common and society need based education for both the children with and without disability under a common roof. Here teachers' role is very important. Every teacher should have to provide good enough teaching for their students' needful learning. In early education when teachers are not properly trained as a result, students were faced lots of problems due to teachers in availability of professional knowledge. Inclusive education caters to all the children from the disadvantages group, linguistic, minorities, gender but mainly this is documented as the perspective of different kind of disabilities. One of the challenging aspects of Inclusive education is to understand the children from the social context; here teachers' role is very important (RCI, 2018). Teachers should have to facilitating for learning to nurture child development. Professional learning is very much important for the teachers' reflection and reflective practices helps to develop ones potentiality for effective teachers for inclusive education. Some good inclusive teaching- learning strategies are briefly discussed below:

- 1) **Planning:** Collaborative work with special education teacher. Co-teaching or team teaching are to be planed for provide better teaching. Here variety of co-teaching method are listed below:
  - a) *Interactive teaching:* Teachers are presenting their roles in an alternative way. Also reviewing and monitoring the class with interactive way of teaching.
  - b) *Alternative teaching:* One person teaches or enriches a concept for a small group while the other monitoring another section of that particular class.
  - c) *Parallel teaching:* All the students are divided into mixed- ability groups and each co-teaching partner teach the same learning materials to all of the groups.
  - d) *Station Teaching:* Small group of students rotate to various groups (stations) for instruction, review and practice.
  
- 2) **Useful Classroom management:** For useful classroom management some steps are listed below:
  - a) Build a structured classroom. It may prepare separate areas for groups and individual work and also centre for daily classroom.
  - b) Timely provide the opportunities for social movement.
  - c) Equip the classroom with all the necessary materials for best presentation.
  - d) Schedule the plan for transition times.
  - e) Use checklist for students' improvement.
  
- 3) **Universal Design for Learning:** It is a way of thinking about good teaching-learning process under inclusive education. This approach offers flexibility in a way in which students can access necessary learning materials. UDL is based upon Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence (Roy & Sengupta, 2019). It is important for curriculum planning.

- 4) **Individualized Education Program:** Provide individual needs education. It describes present level of performance and provides accommodation, service to the disable children.
- 5) **Community resource mapping:** It can help for child daily learning and provide mobility training and develop functional skills (Agrawal & Rao, 2007).

**Teachers' competence for inclusive education:** From the very beginning teachers' skills for conducting teaching were very low quality. Normal children were might be adjusted with that old teaching methods but disability students did not cope up with that method. As a result students with disabilities were getting nervous and did not accept their need based knowledge. Actually, without lacking of proper professional knowledge regular schools and other educational institutions facing lot of problems. The success is possible only when the teachers will effectively engages with the social needs of the disable children. The teachers are required to strengthen their competency level from the inclusive practices at schools and other educational institutional level to facilitate learning for children with various needs and disabilities and provide them the support through collaboration with special educators, parents and other stake holders (RCI, 2018). For fostering inclusive education some of teachers' competences are discussed below:

- I. **Sensitivity:** Sensitivity towards the disable students is an essential skill to understand the needs of the children with and without disability. The teacher should have the right attitude but also develop the interaction and social relationship towards the disable students. Teachers' effective understanding and teaching skills can enable them for learning according to their needs. Teachers should make a witty remark to sensitivity and include girl students in the classroom transaction. It is very important that teachers who teach and manage the classroom should have be sensitized and aware of the logic of inclusive education that schools have to maintain to its infrastructure, curriculum planning and teaching methods (NCFTE-2009, p. 13).
- II. **Inclusive classroom management:** First of all the teachers need to understand the problems of the disable children for the respective classes. A teacher is not only equipped with the proper subject knowledge but also understand the social context of the disable child with the normal ones. For the proper classroom management teachers should conduct the class according to the students' psychological needs. Conducting peer- tutoring, encourage to participate them in the co-curriculum activities- all these qualities should have to gather to become a good versatile teacher.
- III. **Collaboration:** Collaborative working is an interactive process that enables the students for having expertise in their work. In the collaboration process regular classroom teachers should work with the special education teachers, school psychologists, Para professionals (such as speech and language therapists,

physiotherapists etc), parents etc. to meet the need of the every children (RCI, 2018). So, collaboration process is very important competence for the teachers. Actually, they work as a catalyst between school management, disable children and their parents.

- IV. **Evaluation and Assessment:** Institutional teachers are required to exhibit the competency in assessment for better understanding of the differently able students. Using of test and other formal and non formal means of evaluation is necessary to make educational decisions for both categories of students under inclusive educational setting. Students’ assessment is to documenting their mastery knowledge, skills and competencies in order to make the decision for next option or stage in educational process. It implies students’ aptitude, attitude, learning styles, progression and outcome (UNESCO, 2017).

Table 1 : Inclusive Student Assessment

Traditional assessment	Authentic Assessment
Force choice, written measures	Free to choose, integration of various written and performance measure
Encourages memorizing of write answers	Encourages divergent thinking to generate possible answers
Goal is measured by acquisition of subject knowledge	Goal is measured by developing meaningful skills.
Emphasis on knowledge structure	Emphasis on proficiency of skills
Key word is “what”	Key word is “how”
Emphasis on completion	Emphasis on co-operation
Priority in summative outcome	Priority on the learning sequence or process

(Source: Inclusive student assessment, UNESDOC Digital Library. UNESCO, p. 14)

- V. **Encourage for self regulated learning:** It refers to understand one’s ability to control according to their own learning environment. It refers to a form of learning strategy through which students set their goal and make plan for next step for learning. It is one kind of plan which help students self learning interest. Teachers should have to meet every student for knowing them very well and motivate them for making for self learning habit. This learning is consist of *Cognition* (includes skills for encode, memorise and recall the

information), *Meta cognition* (includes skills that enable learners to understand and monitoring their cognitive process) and *Motivation* (includes believes and attitude that affect the use and Meta cognitive skills).

**Framework for professional development:** Professional development is the skill development learning activity which enables their up-to-date knowledge regarding teaching- learning process. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) associated with the different types of workshops, seminars and lot of training programmes which foster their skills for students' learning development. Quality of education is depended upon the quality of a teacher. Professional development is very essential for both the in-service and pre-service teachers. NPE- 1986 had proposed for organise orientation programme and refresher courses for all the teachers at least once in every five year (Hasan & Parvez, 2017).

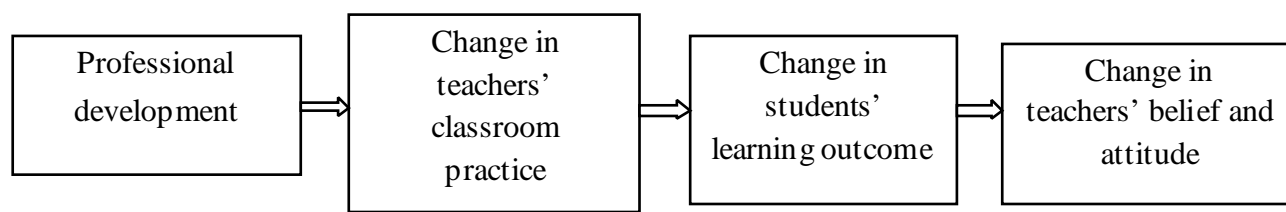


Figure 2: A model of teacher change

(Source: Jaiswal, 2017, p. 619)

7,638 teachers had been given training on ICT for Children With Special Need (CWSN) and over 67,537 teachers had been trained on curriculum adaptation at the upper primary level. For the year 2015, 33 teachers from country and abroad were awarded by CBSE for their classroom teaching. Tele- counselling and yoga teacher training is very useful professional developmental framework for teaching- learning development (MHRD annual report, 2016-2017). Teacher education needs urgent and comprehensive reform. It is needed for convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development (NCFTE-2009, p. 8). According to NPE-2019 some teacher developmental procedure are given below:

- I. TET will be strengthened to better test material developing for good teacher both in terms of content and pedagogy. It will be conduct across all the teacher recruitment stages of school education.
- II. Teachers will be given continuous professional opportunities for their self improvement. Online teacher development module will be available from which teachers can choose one of these from the module catalogue for their total development. Platform (online) will be developed so that everyone could share their experiences.

- III. Participate in say, fifty hours of CPD opportunities every year for their professional development.
- IV. Schools teachers should have same module from where they can choose their learning materials and also they can share their experience to the online platform.
- V. Teachers with good work should raise the salary.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) aims to develop joyful, child- centric, activity based teacher education programme (NCFTE-2009, P. 81).

### **Suggestions for strengthening teachers' professional learning towards Inclusive education:**

For strengthening teachers' professional learning towards inclusive education. The researcher suggests some remedies which are given below:

- I. Develop awareness for the value of diversity.
- II. Foster positive attitude towards inclusive education.
- III. Create guidance and counselling unit to each and every educational institution.
- IV. Ensure that school staff members have focused to their professional learning.
- V. Enable all the teachers for ICT learning.
- VI. Give importance upon teacher- parent meeting.
- VII. Organise more workshop, seminars and refresher courses.
- VIII. Government should employ a special education teacher to each and every normal school.

**Conclusion:** Teachers' professional learning is very essential for nurturing teaching-learning procedure. Today inclusive education is very burning educational issue. Continuous teachers' professional learning helps to diagnosis students' problems and teachers give the solution according their needs. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian education system is continuously upgrading through its quality maintenance. Swayam also provide online courses for the teacher development. In spite of ICSSR, UGC, SAP conducts many workshops, seminars and other refresher courses for the continuing teachers' professional learning. Students with disability are not burden to our society. They have the writes to live a burden free life in our society and they have also the writes to take admission in a normal educational institution with the general students. So, the teachers' professional training or learning is an important part to fulfil the needs of the disable children as well as a great support to the inclusive system. That's why Different government plans and policies are continuously published for which serve good professional training for improving teaching-learning process.

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