



IN-SERVICE EDUCATION OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN INDIA: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

India is one of the largest producers of trained teachers in the world, and with 1.3 million recognized schools and 7.1 million teachers it also has one of the largest pool of employed school teachers. So to maintain the quality of Indian educational system, keeping this large population of school teachers professionally up-to-date is a challenging task. This challenge becomes even more challenging considering the socio-cultural, geographical, economical and linguistic diversity of India. Considering the role and importance of in-service teacher education for professional development of teachers, it seems a fitting case to critically review and reflect about in-service education of school teachers in India that is an interesting mix of ideologies, expectations and conflicts.

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INTRODUCTION

The teacher is the key agent in any education system. The National Knowledge Commission of India (GOI, 2007) observed that the teacher is the single most important element of the school system. Echoing the same sentiments an OECD report observes that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers since student learning is ultimately the product of what goes on in classroom (OECD, 2010). Similarly another report from Scotland suggests, "We know that it is the commitment and skill of individual teachers which makes the biggest difference to children's progress and achievement" (HMIE, 2009, p.3). Teachers, researchers, policy analysts and politicians across the globe often argue and suggest that meaningful and relevant enhancement of teachers' professional capabilities and commitment to education is essential to improve education as a whole (Misra, 2014). Emphasizing the need of meaningful and relevant continuous professional development of teachers, a review of teacher education in Scotland suggests, "Long-term and sustained improvement which has a real impact on the quality of

children's learning will be better achieved through determined efforts to build the capacity of teachers themselves to take responsibility for their own professional development, building their pedagogical expertise, engaging with the need for change, undertaking well-thought through development and always evaluating impact in relation to improvement in the quality of children's learning. That is the message from successful education systems across the world....." (Donaldson, 2011, p.84). Considering all these observations and recommendations, the improvement of training and development of teachers on continuing basis is high on both national and local educational agendas (Earley & Bubb, 2004). In comparison to these international observations, notion of CPD for teachers in India appears to be restricted and narrow in-service training with limited opportunities. Commenting on present scenario of CPD provisions for school teachers in India, Bolitho and Padwad (2011, p.7) argues, "Professional preparation consists of short pre-service teacher education courses with limited field exposure and practical relevance. There is no formalized system of induction and normally a teacher is required to handle responsibility independently and autonomously right from their first day in the profession. Ongoing professional development, i.e. CPD, can be seen in a very restricted, narrow sense and there are limited opportunities and support for the CPD of serving

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teachers.” Usually CPD of teachers in India is equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes. A report from National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) observes that despite the diversity of individual teachers’ CPD needs and interests, the only available avenue for thousands of teachers remains INSET training (NCTE, 2009, pp. 6-7). Extending this argument, the present research attempts to deliberate upon:

- Development of in-service education of teachers in India
- Ideological rifts about in-service education of school teachers
- Types of in-service trainings offered to school teachers
- Providers of in-service education to school teachers
- Expectations from in-service education programmes for school teachers
- Main challenges regarding in-service education of school teachers

This study is mainly based on the review and analysis of policy documents, available related literature and statistics related to in-service teacher education in India and other countries. The researchers would also like to state that only a limited work about in-service education of schoolteachers is available in India and present research attempts to void this gap.

Development of in-service education of teachers in India

Originally the concept of in-service teacher education is not new in India (earlier known as *Bharat*). Its roots are grounded in ancient Indian literature. Talking about the qualities of a teacher, a *Sanskrit shloka* from Ancient Indian literature

(Malvikagnimr. 1.1.16.) emphasizes:
 Shliṣṭā kriyā kasyacid ātmasaṁsthā
 Sankrāntir anyasya viśeṣayuktā |
 Yasyobhayam sādhusa śikṣakāṇām
 Dhuri pratiṣṭhāpayitavya eva ||

The gist of *shloka* is that somebody has the learning (knowledge or expertise) in contained in himself fine (but not capable of transferring it to others). Some other has specialized skill of transferring (teaching the knowledge whatever he has got)(but he need not have accumulated knowledge like the other). One who has got both of them (the qualifications- skill in learning himself and in teaching others), is to be placed first among the teachers (He/she is the first rate teacher). In other words, a teacher has to keep learning about subject as well competencies to teach to become a successful teacher.

Whereas, another *Sanskrit shloka*, explains that from whom and how one learns:

Aachaaryat paadma adutte paadam shishya swamedhya
 Sabr aham chaaribhya paadam paadam kaal kramaincha

The meaning is that people learn one fourth from the teacher, one fourth from own intelligence, one fourth from classmates, and one fourth only with time. This is a clear testimony that in ancient India people were aware that besides formal learning one has to also learn through passage of time and self-learning. In other words, teachers were supposed to substantiate their

formal learning by practicing self-learning throughout their career. This tradition of self-learning by teachers continued until the India came under British rule. During British rule in India, first glimpse of in-service teacher education was seen in Lord Curzon’s Resolution on Education Policy (1904) which stated, “The trained students whom the college has sent out should be occasionally brought together again and inspecting staff should co-operate with the training college authorities in seeing that the influence of the college makes itself felt in the schools” (p.36). Then Educational Policy formulated in year 1913 (as cited in NCERT, n.d.) came as a second landmark in field of in-service teacher education as it advocated for training of primary school teachers during school vacations in form of special improvement courses. In continuation to this, Hartog committee (1929) and Sargent Report (1944) visualized in-service education in terms of refresher courses and recommended that these refresher courses should be organized on a continuing basis. In post independent India, Secondary Education Commission (GOI, 1952-53) paid considerable attention to teachers’ in-service training and recommended that refresher courses, short courses in special subjects, particular training in workshops and professional conferences should be a normal part of teacher training colleges’ work. It also recommended for establishment of extension services departments as a result of which the decades of 50 and 60’s witnessed about one hundred extension service departments in teacher training colleges. To monitor the activities of these departments, All India Council for Secondary Education (AICSE) was established. In 1961 National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) came into existence to guide and assist these extension service departments and to improve school education through research and training. The other major responsibility of NCERT was to organize in-service teacher education in form of seminars, workshops, summer institutes and summer school-cum-correspondence courses.

Education Commission (GOI, 1966) also known as Kothari Commission, came with the recommendation that in-service teacher education programs should be organized on twelve months basis, in form of refresher courses, seminars and workshops by universities, training institutes and teacher organizers. The Commission suggested that these programs should be organized on a large scale so that every teacher should be able to receive two or three months of in-service education once in every five years. In order to widen the training network and to ensure universal coverage, the Commission recommended establishment of ‘school complexes’ with a nodal school shouldering the responsibility for continuing professional development of all teachers working in the schools included in the complexes. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Education Commission, the State Institutes of Education (SIEs) were set up in different states of India. In spite of these valuable recommendations given by different education commissions, in-service education of school teachers could not get much recognition in India during first four decades of independence. It got tremendous impetus when the National Commission on Teachers, 1985 (also known as Chattopadhyay Commission) in its report entitled “Teacher and Society” recommended that every teacher must attend in-service training of three weeks duration once in a block of five years and it should be linked with career promotion (GOI, 1985). Some states implemented this recommendation but had to subsequently withdraw it under pressure from teachers’ unions. Lack of institutional

capacity to provide training to all teachers was an added reason for an unenthusiastic response to periodic in-service education of teachers. The year 1986 marked a strong step in field of in-service education of school teachers. National Policy on Education-1986 having observed in-service and pre-service education of teachers two inseparable sides of the same coin made a decisive intervention for the establishment of strong institutional networks for imparting in-service education to teachers at all levels (MHRD, 1986). It recommended the establishment of a District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in each district, upgradation of 250 colleges of education as Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and strengthening 50 of them as Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs). These institutions were conceptualized for imparting in-service education not only to school teachers but also to teacher educators. On the recommendations of National Policy on Education, the decade of 90s witnessed establishment of several institutional bodies like DIETs, CTEs and IASEs. Afterwards, Acharya Ramamurti Review Committee (MHRD, 1990) made a broad recommendation for in-service education of teachers.

It stated "In-service and refresher courses are to be specific and they should be related to the specific needs of the teachers. In-service programs should take due care of the future needs of teacher growth, evaluation and follow up should be part of the scheme" (MHRD, 1990, p. 268). The committee suggested that research should support better management of the delivery system of the program. The effectiveness of the program should be enhanced by employing innovative strategies and significant activities on an experimental basis. The committee further recommended development of a strong distance education system of in-service education using television, radio and print media strengthened by occasional contact programs. The review committee was followed by a Plan of Action that called for the overhaul of teacher education as the immediate step towards the reorganization of teacher education and emphasized that State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) will plan, sponsor, monitor and evaluate in-service education programs for all instructors and other educational personnel at school level. It was also decided that (SCERTs) would also work as a resource support system for in-service education of teachers (MHRD, 1992).

In subsequent years, the District Primary Education Program (MHRD, 1995) across the country set up the structures of the block and cluster resource centers with the explicit mandate to provide in-service training to primary school teachers in new child centered pedagogic methods and to provide school based support to teachers. The implementation of District Primary Education Program was an important initiative in journey towards the universal elementary education. However the program did not have universal approach as all the districts of the country were not covered. Although this programme was also blamed on the count that instead of strengthening the existing structures the program preferred to establish new structural bodies. And in this process, the institutions like SCERTs and DIETs did not get a nurturing environment. Eventually the program got subsumed under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA, Education for All). SSA-2001 emphasized on continuous in-service teacher education requiring each school teacher to receive 20 days of training every year. This training is provided through face-to-face mode at the Block Resource Centers (BRC) or at DIETs or at some other suitable institutions having the requisite facilities (MHRD, 2001). The

year 2005 marked a tremendous change in this ideology of in-service education of teachers. National Curriculum Framework-2005 (NCERT, 2005) for the very first time declared in-service education of teachers as a process. The framework stated "In-service education cannot be an event but rather is a process, which includes knowledge development and changes in attitudes, skills, disposition and practice through interactions both in workshop settings and in the school" (NCERT, 2005, p.112). The framework emphasized on in-service education as experiential learning incorporating teachers as active learners and suggested that self-reflection should be acknowledged as a vital component of in-service programs, that school clusters should be identified for providing in-service training to teachers invited from each school of the cluster and that a link should be made between theory and practice. National Curriculum Framework also recommended that mandatory days for in-service training of teachers should be split up over the course of the year to include onsite work of teachers in their classrooms as well (NCERT, 2005).

With the passage of time, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) was introduced in year 2009. The NCFTE came up with a different ideology about the beneficiaries of in-service teacher education. Up to the end of 20th century all the policy documents for teacher education focused on professional development of only government school teachers. And, professional development of private school teachers was considered as the responsibility of schools (NCTE, 2009). Taking notice of this unjustified practice, a universal coverage of all educational personnel including school heads, education supervisors, and library staff as well as all the educational personnel of private schools was called under the centrally sponsored schemes for in-service teacher education (NCTE, 2009). Here it is noteworthy that so many suggestions and recommendations regarding in-service teacher education have been given by different commissions and committees but none has spoken about how these recommendations should be implemented. Justice J.S. Verma Commission (MHRD, 2012) noted this missing link and emphasized on the development of a new policy framework as well National Action Plan for proper implementation of INSET. The Commission further recommended that in developing a policy framework for INSET, due consideration must be given to the suggestions given by different national and state level institutions as well as teacher organizations, as the policy is ultimately for educational personnel after all (MHRD, 2012).

On the recommendation of Justice J.S. Verma Commission, Government of India set a mission 'Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMNMTT) for the duration 2014 to 2017 (MHRD, 2014). This mission has focused on each level and sector of education with a long term goal to build a strong cadre of teachers. To realize this goal, developing high performance standards and creating top class institutional facilities was focused. The mission accepted faculty development as a compulsory feature of a top class institution. For faculty development the mission covers four types of developments: personal, instructional, organizational and professional. Here professional development refers to the ways that support faculty members to fulfill their multiple roles of teaching, research and service. The mission intended to create some new institutional structures i.e. Schools of Education, Centers of

Excellence, and Institutions of Academic Leadership and Management, and Inter University Centers. One of the side aims of these institutions is the faculty development. There is a provision of different national and international training programmes, seminars, conferences, internship programmes summer schools and exchange programmes for this purpose.

As conclusion, we can say that in its journey from ancient India to pre independence and from dependence to today, the importance of in-service education of teachers was recognized and a number of recommendations and suggestions were made. But on the other side, these policy documents seems to be failed to establish a cohesive and complete mechanism to cater the in-service education needs of teachers. The other notable failure of these policy documents was that by and large they stuck to the philosophy and terminology of 'in-service education', whereas, world moved from 'in-service' to continuing professional development (CPD) and from CPD to Continuing Lifelong Professional Learning (CLPL). Let's discuss this and other ideological rifts of in-service education of school teachers in India.

Ideological rifts of in-service education of school teachers

Notion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in India still appears in terms of in-service teacher education or training. Barring National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education, all other major policy documents preferred to use the term in-service teacher education (NCTE, 2009). In fact, CPD of teachers in India is usually equated with in-service training (INSET) programmes. The basic difference between both these terms is that CPD encompasses all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their own practice while INSET mainly focuses on occupational development of person (Earley & Bubb, 2004). NCTE (the apex body of teacher education in India) can be credited for use of term CPD in place of INSET in its National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009. Although, this document often interchanges INSET and CPD (NCTE, 2009, pp. 63-74). According to this framework, the broad aims of Continuing Professional Development Programmes (NCTE, 2009) are:

- Explore, reflect on and develop one's own practice
- Deepen one's knowledge of and update oneself about one's academic discipline or other areas of school curriculum
- Research and reflect on learners and their education
- Understand and update oneself on educational and social issues
- Prepare for other roles professionally linked to education/teaching, such as teacher education, curriculum development or counselling
- Break out of intellectual isolation and share experiences and insights with others in the field

Instead of this welcome shift of approach from NCTE, the term CPD is still not accepted in principle and spirits in teacher education in India. This argument is based on the fact that, JVC recommendations on teacher education which came after four years of NCFTE document still used the term in-service training in place of CPD (MHRD, 2012). Talking about this dilemma, Bolitho and Padwad (2011, p. 7) observes, "The problems begin with perceptions about CPD. Different agencies and stakeholders seem to hold different or narrow views of CPD. It is very common to see CPD equated with in-

service training (INSET) programmes." The second ideological rift is who has to take the responsibility for in-service education of teachers, institution or teacher themselves. Padwad and Dixit (2011) conducted a study to find-out the answer of this question and ended with quite contradictory views. According to head teachers, education authorities and management members, CPD of teachers is their personal responsibility; they can't help them in it. They do not want that school routine or students' should be a little affected negatively whenever a teacher decide to take an initiative for his professional growth. They were satisfied with their teachers if they were able to complete their syllabus in time and the result of their students was satisfactory. They did not show their consent regarding organization of any kind of professional development activity in their schools as it disturbs the routine of their schools. Teachers on the other hand do accept that CPD is useful for them but are not ready to give extra time to professional development activities. Besides, teachers also demand that school administration support for their CPD.

The third ideological rift is that in-service education is meant for what types of teachers. In India, usually there are two types of teachers, one who are working in government or government supported institutions and second one are those working in educational institutions that did not receive any grant from government. Usually, INSET programs are being offered to teachers working in government or government supported institutions. Further these mandatory in-service teacher education programmes are for government teachers. Teachers teaching in private sector remain out of its orbit. In-service education of teachers teaching in private school depends on the will of management of their schools. This is one other contradictory issue which needs to be taken care of as every teacher whether he/she teaches in government school or in private school is entitled for CPD. Whether in-service education is mandatory or optional, is another unanswered question. For example, in SSA 2001 (Education for All Programme) it has been made mandatory for every teacher of primary and junior primary schools to receive twenty days of training every year. At the same time, there is no such provision for secondary and senior secondary school teachers. It is still voluntary for these teachers to receive in-service education. Although, Secondary and senior secondary school teachers of *Kendriya Vidyalayas* (Central Schools) and *Navodaya Vidyalayas* (Navodaya Schools) are exceptional in this regard as teachers of these schools have to attend some kind of in-service training in a given year. On the basis of these observations, it can be argued that in-service education of school teachers is facing a number of rifts and that needs to be sorted out for benefit of teachers in particular and education in general.

Types of in-service education are being offered to school teachers

Generally in-service education to school teachers in India is offered in three modes i.e. face-to-face, online and blended mode. The most prevalent mode is face-to-face. Face-to-face mode refers to a situation in which teachers and resource persons sit with each other and communicate on selected educational issues or problems. Face-to-face mode of in-service education usually encompass: Seminar, workshop, symposium, conference and short-term courses. Orientation programs are also available for school teachers and teacher

educators of District Institute of Education and Training (DIET). Apart from these types of in-service trainings in face-to-face mode, HBCSE conduct contact program each year with a total of 100 teacher educators and teachers – two groups of 50 each, from two states, Bihar and West Bengal (HBCSE & TIFR, 2011). While, under the Education for All Scheme (SSA), 60 days refresher course for untrained teachers and 30 days orientation for freshly trained recruits is also mandatory (MHRD, n.d.). As other initiative, online in-service education of school teachers has also started. In online in-service education, computer network technologies are being used to organize, develop, manage and administer training for teachers (Jung, 2001). Since 2008, British Council has been working with different states governments of India with an aim to build the capacity of teachers, to improve language teaching and English language confidence, and to support their ongoing professional development through its different online moderated in-service teacher training courses (Prince & Barrett, 2014). The blended mode of in-service teacher training where teachers are provided learning material online with the help of internet and from time to time they are gathered to contact face-to-face with the resource persons is also becoming popular.

Intel Teach Program offers both face-to-face and online instruction to help classroom teachers to integrate technology into their classroom. It covers teachers from schools of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of School Examination (ICSE), State Education Boards and Project and Support organization under the administrative control of Union Department of Education. Besides, these face-to-face and online training programs, a series of radio programs has also been broadcasted in different parts of the country with a view to provide teachers with an opportunity to listen to other Indian teachers discussing the same challenges they face, and finding solutions. These radio programs comprise interviews with teachers and teacher educators, recordings of classroom teaching and discussions on varying aspects of pedagogy (Prince & Barrett, 2014). These observations reveal that different types of in-service education programmes are available to school teachers in India. Although, majority of these programmes are of routine in nature and mainly focuses to teachers of government or government aided schools. The situation demands that variety of need based programmes must be started to cater the ever growing CPD needs of both government and private school teachers.

Providers of in-service education to school teachers

As far as the question of in-service training providers is concerned, there is a large network of government-owned teacher training institutions (TTIs). These TTIs provide in-service training to the school teachers both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, the responsibility of providing in-service teacher training is divided in central and state governments. At the National Level, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and National University on Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) are two national level autonomous bodies. NCERT along with its six Regional Institutes of Education (REIs) undertakes specific programs for training of teachers and teacher educators as well as prepares a host of modules for various teacher training courses while institutional support is provided by NUEPA. Besides, CTEs and IASEs also provide

in-service training to secondary and senior secondary school teachers. At the state level, SCERTs are responsible for preparing modules and providing specialized courses for school teachers. At the district level, in-service training is provided by DIETs. The lowest rung of institutions in the vertical hierarchy for providing in-service training to school teachers is the BRCs and CRCs (MHRD, n.d.). Apart from these, in-service training is also imparted with active role of the civil society, private schools and other establishments. For example, Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBSCE) is actively involved in organizing various training programs and workshops all over India. It supports and helps various institutions and organizations to design and conduct teacher training programs. British Council has also done and is still doing a lot of work in the field of in-service teacher training with the help of different state universities (Prince & Barrett, 2014). But, these types of initiatives are limited in number and reach. As other initiative, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has signed a pact to provide in-service education to school teachers through Intel Teach Program. This program aims to ensure professional development of school teachers whether of primary, secondary or senior secondary sector (India Education Review, 2011).

Expectations from in-service education of teachers in India

The expectations from existing in-service education programmes for school teachers are many. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is of the opinion that teachers' professional development programmes must be comprehensive and continuous rather than one off trainings or a serial of unlinked trainings (MHRD, 2010). While, academic community expects much more from in-service education of teachers. For example, in an international conference on "Issues in In-service development of elementary teachers" organized in 2010 at Bhubaneswar, a comprehensive framework of teacher professional development was defined as a large canvas covering a number of elements like; enhancement of discipline knowledge including its conceptual understanding as well as appraisal for its nature; engagement with contemporary issues and opportunities for continuous skill development that enable use of emerging technologies to enhance professional ability; continuous engagement with evolving pedagogical theories and methods and ways to correlate them with one's practice in critical and reflective framework.

Whereas, teachers expect that an in-service teacher education programme will provide them opportunities to put their learning in teaching practices and in related context (Geer & Sweeney, 2012). It is expected that a teacher professional development programme should create a motivational and learning environment. The programmes are supposed to help every participant to set and work for his/her own goals of increasing competence, skills, knowledge and self-confidence. It is also expected that through these programmes, opportunities should be provided to teachers to fulfill the set goals and to visualize the next stage of achievement. The other expectations is that programmes will create a dynamic and open system where teachers' professional development programmes should not be restricted to rigid and specific goals instead should be open for multiple entries, diverse trajectories of growth and a multiplicity of self-assessment procedures. Above all, the ultimate expectation is that through these

programmes, teachers should get the sense that their work is important and is being observed and analyzed (MHRD, 2010).

Main challenges regarding in-service education of school teachers

There are a number of challenges regarding in-service education of school teachers in India. First major challenge regarding in-service education of teachers is availability of infrastructure and facilities. National Policy on Education-1986 emphasized need for a decentralized system of teacher education and this was put in action by the establishment of DIETs, CTEs and IASEs under centrally sponsored scheme. Further decentralization has been done by the establishment of BRCs and CRCs at block level. According to MHRD (2012), Government of India has sanctioned five hundred seventy one DIETs, one hundred six CTEs and thirty-two IASEs for the implementation of scheme. But this number of sanctioned institutions is not sufficient to fulfill the needs and demands of such a large community of school teachers. The other irony is that many of these sanctioned institutes are not functional. Even the functional DIETs, CTEs and IASEs failed to fulfill the guidelines of MHRD at a satisfactory level. As far as the basic physical and academic facilities for in-service education of teachers is concerned, the situation is not heartening, as observed by a report of NCERT,

“The existing basic facilities in IASEs were found adequate only for the pre-service programmes run in the institutions. The IASEs do not have proper infrastructure in terms of physical space and other facilities for conducting in-service training programmes, research and extension activities keeping in view of the future needs. Even a room for in-service education is not available in nearly thirty-six percent of IASEs (NCERT, 2009, p. 39)”. IASE is just an example. The case is the same with other institutions. Even there is a shortage of mandatory staff both academic and non-academic in these institutions. A large number of sanctioned posts are still vacant. There are intra and inter-state variations in organization of in-service teacher education programmes among the recognized in-service teacher education providers. Most of these institutions have been unable to conduct mandatory number of in-service programmes in an academic year. The duration of in-service programmes is also not as per the guidelines (NCERT, 2009). Lack of a uniform policy framework for in-service teacher education is another challenge. Absence of a holistic policy framework on in-service teacher education covering different aspects of in-service teacher education like its nature, content, duration, periodicity, modality, institutional responsibility and incentives for participation is adversely affecting the cause of CPD of school teachers (MHRD, 2012).

The third challenge is that majority of teachers remain out of the orbit of in-service education/ training. Previous discussion has proved that in India teachers continuing professional development is still equated with in-service training, which, neglecting all the initiatives taken on behalf of the teacher him/herself, gives the whole responsibility of organizing in-service training programmes to government in-service providers (NCEET, SCERTs, IASEs, CTEs, DIETs, BRCs and CRCs). But all these set ups arrange in-service activities only for teachers teaching in government or government aided schools leaving all teachers of private schools out of the orbit (NCTE, 2009). As resultant, teachers working in private or

unaided schools are deprived of the benefits of these government initiated INSET activities (MHRD, 2012). Besides, there is a vast population of trained but unemployed teachers in India. This population has completed its pre-service teacher education and is waiting to get into a teaching career. It is expected that after some time this population will be a working class of teachers. But the matter of concern here is that during this period of their non-performance state these unemployed teachers remain out of INSET activities orbit which results in wastage of not only their potential but also of the resources invested in their pre-service education. There is no provision of any kind of follow-up training to these unemployed teachers. Lack of any proper mechanism for the follow-up of gains by in-service education activities to school teachers is the other major challenge. It is reported that most of the in-service activities are irrelevant to the needs of teachers and does not care to know about how a teacher implement his/her enhanced knowledge and skills in the classroom. Due to absence of proper follow up programmes as reported by NCERT (2009) most of “the in-service programmes seemed to be usually very sporadic, without any direction or a purpose” (p. 24). Khan (2015) also supports this view that in India quality teaching fails with ineffective episodic in-service teacher education programmes of limited duration further characterized by non-existent of follow-up programmes. All these observations lead us to conclude that in-service education of school teachers in India is facing a number of challenges. The need of the hour is that policy planners and providers of in-service education must come forward to find potential solutions to overcome these challenges.

Conclusion

This is a proven fact that continuing professional development of in-service teachers is vital to quality education. Countries world over are adopting different policies, strategies, methods, techniques, and modalities to help their teachers to engage in fruitful CPD experiences. In comparison, in-service education of school teachers is still not on priority on educational agenda in India. India still lacks a comprehensive policy regarding in-service education of school teachers spread across different types of schools and educational boards. Unlike other countries where certain amount of CPD in an academic year is a must, in-service education is more or less voluntary for school teachers in India. Above all, Indian policy documents are still woven around the term in-service education while world moved to continuing lifelong professional learning of teachers. This paper highlighted these and many more issues with a hope that policy planners, teacher education providers and Ministry of Human Resource Development of India will take note of these critical reflections and will come with a comprehensive CPD policy, plans and provisions to help school teachers to excel in their professional lives.

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