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## Capacity Building: its exigency for teachers

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### Abstract

Various reforms are being proposed to improvise the education system to achieve holistic development of the learners. The axis of these transformations is the teacher. Consequently, a need to develop their skills is being felt, so they can stay updated with new technology and teaching methods that can be employed to help learners progress in a way that is envisioned. This article discusses the concept of capacity building & its need. It mentions how analysis need can be done to identify the areas for capacity building. The prevalent models of capacity building, areas and effectiveness have also been highlighted in the article.

**Keywords:** Capacity building, Analysis, Holistic, Effectiveness, Assessment

### Introduction

Teacher has been the torch bearer to mobilize desired changes in the society since time immemorial. It is the teacher who strives at grass root levels to give shape to the visions and aspirations of the nation. They form an integral and indispensable section of any community. Specific institutes have been established for teachers worldwide with the aim to equip them in content and pedagogy, so that they can apply the same in practice. In India, there are 16,917 TEIs (NCTE) which consistently work towards creating a pool of skilled teachers, churning out up to 9 lakh teachers annually. In order to bring uniformity in professional standards of teachers nationwide, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has released the National Professional Standard for Teachers (NPST) from time to time. Recently a draft of NPST has been released in the public domain for comment from all stakeholders involved in the field of education on November 17, 2021 in light of NEP-2020 Draft of NPST discusses the qualities and responsibilities of teachers at various levels, including beginning, proficient, expert, and lead teacher, with a focus on teacher preparation and performance enhancement.

Despite this, there is always a need for continuous professional development (CPD) due to a variety of circumstances, including shifting economic needs, technological breakthroughs, biological warfare, natural calamities etc. Several concerns, such as teachers' readiness to handle the realities of the classroom, aligning with an organization, familiarizing with the innovations in education & technology etc., are still open for discussion and are constantly evolving. The various challenges that teachers face necessitate the need for capacity building on a regular basis to ensure that our teachers grow in order to advance a sustainable future. Some of the challenges faced by the teachers which needs to be specifically addressed are:

**a) Pedagogical challenges:** Classrooms are a heterogeneous group and no individual learns in a similar way. An article of University of Bristol on "Pedagogical Issues", (2022) and Readers' Blog- Teachers Challenges (Parimala Tadas, 2019, By Times of India) mentions that addressing to the varying needs of students, to motivate and vitalize learners in various ways to bring about transformation and attaining learning outcomes is one of the greatest challenges faced by teachers.

**b) Aligning with the educational drifts:** With the speedy technological changes, it becomes challenging for teachers to find uncomplicated yet potent platforms, technological tools, broadcasting technologies etc. for aiding the teaching-learning process. One of the studies by Classcraft team, (2022) on "Teacher Interview: Top Classroom challenges" indicates that teachers also must put in extra time to

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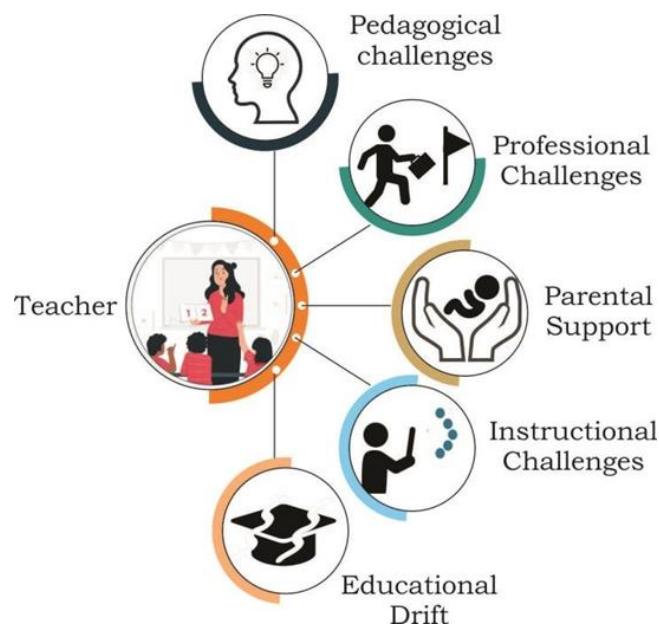
brainstorm ideas and make lesson plans for their online classes, a lot of effort goes in short-listing worksheets, appropriate videos so as to keep up the interest of the learners. Teachers often feel less connected to the students and vice-versa through virtual medium, yet the infusion of content pedagogy and technology is the new normal. Thus, use of simple yet effective educational technology which persuades both the teachers and the learners is in need.

- c) **Instructional challenges:** Proper flow of instructions/ thoughts between teachers, students, parents and authorities is critical. In-house loop holes can create a chaos and thereby effect the smooth working of an organization. Communication gaps are one of the major challenges being faced by new recruits.
- d) **Professional challenges:** new recruits often feel- lag in professional development, inability to manage individual and professional expectations, attitudinal problems in classrooms and mindset of the community

at large. Limited infrastructure also poses a major challenge may it be teaching aids or classroom infrastructure (blackboard, chalks etc). Fiona tap, in her study on Teacher burn-out mentions that, this “stress sometimes led to physical and emotional exhaustion of teachers.”

- e) **Parental Support:** Involvement of parents in child’s school activities is a catalyst for child’s growth and development. In absence of parental support in supervising child’s performances, in providing them with basic necessities such as books, stationery, uniforms etc. it becomes quite challenging for teachers to keep the students motivated and focused.

Capacity-building interventions are required to enable effective teaching-learning outcomes and the development of individuals' knowledge and skills as well as to address these challenges faced on field.



(Source: Author)

**Need Analysis for Capacity Building:**

The deficits which require intervention to improve the practice of teaching practitioners so as to address local as well as national needs can be identified by undertaking need analysis of them. This need analysis will aid in developing customized programmes. These in turn will be beneficial for the target areas.

According to the National Curriculum for Teacher Education (NCFTE), teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must become need-based and demand-driven. NEP-2020 also emphasizes the crucial need of capacity building programmes (Para 5.15) to provide teachers with opportunities for self- improvement and to become aware of the latest innovations and advancements in the profession. It also stresses that each teacher is expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD every year driven by their own interests. To bring an improvement in quality of learning, it is crucial to get an accurate picture of status of learning at that time and to get an idea of the set of goals to be achieved. Teachers’ needs analysis for capacity building can be carried out in following ways:

- i) **Assessment of pupils:** Evaluation and assessment forms an indispensable part of education system. Well-designed assessment helps not only the learners but also provides a data base to the teachers for analyzing their teaching, exploring better approaches to teach the subject matter resulting in better learning outcomes.
- ii) **Peer Assessment:** Many a time’s teachers need specific insights on how and where to improvise their approach for desired outcomes. This can best come from other teachers. They would identify the areas that need improvement and can also recommend relevant interventions.
- iii) **Group Meetings:** Meetings can be organized with students, teachers, parents and management to identify areas for capacity building. Such meetings can be beneficial as they provide holistic data with regard to areas in need of capacity building.

Once the area is identified, the question arises which type of teacher requires intervention and in which domain/s. The need analysis for the same can be done by taking up various methods encompassing various domains. Some of these are listed below in the table:

**Table:** Need analysis on basis of duration and domain. (Source: Author).

Domains	Types of Teachers		
	Beginners	Proficient	Lead Teacher
Knowledge	Questionnaire, written reflections	Interviews, Questionnaire	Interviews, Questionnaire
Understanding	Questionnaire, Problem solving	Questionnaire, Problem solving	Questionnaire, Problem solving
Skills	Assessment of learning outcomes of students & Interviews, Student feedback (on use of ICT)	Assessment of learning outcomes of students, Interviews, Student feedback (on use of ICT)	Assessment of learning outcomes of students, Interviews, Student feedback (on use of ICT)
Application	Interviews and Student reviews	Interviews and Student reviews	Interviews and Student reviews
Changes in policies and practices	Questionnaire and interviews	Questionnaire and interviews	Questionnaire and interviews

**Note:** The types of teachers taken up in the above table are on the basis of the duration of their service in the field. These domains and types are subject to modifications as per requirements.

### Prevalent Models of Capacity Building:

- a) **The training Model:** This CPD model promotes a skill-based technocratic view of teaching and enables teachers to update their skills and demonstrate their competence. It is typically "delivered" to the teacher by an "expert," with the deliverer setting the agenda and the participant playing a passive role. According to Day (1999), one of the major challenges is that such training events fail to "connect with the essential moral purposes that are at the heart of their (teacher) professionalism" (p 49). It is effective in perpetuating a limited view of teaching and education in which the standardization of training opportunities overshadows the need for teachers to be proactive in identifying and meeting their own development needs. The model is acknowledged as an effective means of introducing new knowledge; however, it has no significant impact on how this new knowledge is used in practice.
- b) **The Award bearing model:** This model is based on or emphasizes the completion of award-bearing programmes of study, which are typically but not always validated by universities. There is an increasing push for award-winning courses to prioritize classroom practice over issues of values and beliefs (Solomon & Tresman, 1999).
- c) **The Deficit Model:** CPD under this model can be tailored to address a perceived deficit in teacher performance. This could be used in the context of performance management, which is debatable in terms of its fundamental purpose. While this model employs CPD to address perceived weaknesses in individual teachers, Rhodes and Beneicke (2003) contend that the root causes of poor teacher performance are related to organizational and management practices as well as individual teachers.
- d) **The Cascade Model:** In this model Individual teachers were required to attend "training events" before cascading or disseminating the information to colleagues. It is used in situations where resources are scarce. One of the model's drawbacks is that what is passed on in the cascading process is typically skill-focused, occasionally knowledge-focused, and rarely values-focused. It could be argued that the cascade supports a technocratic view of education, in which skills and knowledge take precedence over attitudes and values.
- e) **The Standards-based Model:** This model of CPD belittles the notion of teaching as a complex, context-specific political and moral endeavor, rather it represents a desire to create a system of teaching and teacher education that can generate and empirically validate connections between teacher effectiveness and student learning. Beyer (2002) criticizes the lack of attention given to central and contentious questions regarding the purpose of teaching, claiming that teacher education must be infused with the kind of critical scrutiny about social processes, future possibilities, economic realities and moral directions.
- f) **The Coaching/Mentoring Model:** The coaching/mentoring model covers a variety of CPD practices that are based on a range of philosophical premises. However, the defining characteristic of this model is the importance of the one-to-one relationship, generally between two teachers, which is designed to support CPD. The mentoring or coaching relationship can be collegiate, for example, 'peer coaching', but is probably more likely to be hierarchical. Teacher mentoring, it allows for the two teachers involved discussing possibilities, beliefs and hopes in a less hierarchically threatening manner. Interestingly, depending on the matching of those involved in the coaching/mentoring relationship, this model can support either a transmission view of professional development, where teachers are initiated into the status quo by their more experienced colleagues or a transformative view where the relationship provides a supportive, but challenging forum for both intellectual and effective interrogation of practice.
- g) **The Community of Practice Model:** A community of practice generally involves more than two people, and would not necessarily rely on confidentiality. However, the other form of the coaching/ mentoring model of CPD discussed above – the hierarchical, assessment driven model – is perhaps not as closely related to the communities of practice model. Central to Wenger's thesis is a social theory of learning, recognizing that learning within a community of

practice happens as a result of that community and its interactions, and not merely as a result of planned learning episodes such as courses. However, participants' awareness of the existence of the community is surely central to their internalization of such learning. It is argued that while communities of practice can potentially serve to perpetuate dominant discourses in an uncritical manner, under certain conditions they can also act as powerful sites of transformation, where the sum total of individual knowledge and experience is enhanced significantly through collective endeavor.

- h) **The Action Research Model:** 'The study of a social situation, involving the participants themselves as researchers, with a view to improving the quality of action within it'. The 'quality of action' can be perceived as the participants' understanding of the situation, as well as the practice within the situation. Advocates of the action research model (Weiner, 2002; Burbank & Kauchack, 2003) tend to suggest that it has a greater impact on practice when it is shared in communities of practice or enquiry, and indeed, many communities of practice will engage in action research. Action research as a model of CPD has been acknowledged as being successful in allowing teachers to ask critical questions of their practice. This model clearly has significant capacity for transformative practice and professional autonomy.
- i) **The Transformative Model:** 'Transformative model' of CPD involves the combination of a number of processes and conditions – aspects of which are drawn from other models outlined in this article. The central characteristic is the combination of practices and conditions that support a transformative agenda. The key characteristic of the transformative model is its effective integration of the range of models described above, together with a real sense of awareness of issues of power, i.e. whose agendas are being addressed through the process.

#### Areas for capacity building in teachers:

The process of CB involves improving a teacher's knowledge, abilities and competences in order to enhance their teaching methods and student outcomes. In order to assist teachers, become more effective educators, it entails offering them professional development opportunities, materials, and support. Based on our reading and analysis of the responses from in-service teachers we have identified a few domains which call for attention are:

- a) **Pedagogical and Content knowledge:** In this programme the focus would be on improving pedagogical abilities of a teacher, to use a range of methods and approaches in teaching. These methods accommodate various learning preferences (constructive *rather than rote learning*, NEP-2020, para 4.31), encourage student involvement, and aid in efficient knowledge transmission.
- b) **Technology integration:** The programme will target on developing expertise in the use of educational technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, learning management systems, digital resources, and educational apps, to improve teaching and learning experiences.
- c) **Cyber Security:** It is one of the concerned areas which

need attention. In today's digital environment, when technology is deeply ingrained in education, cyber security training for teachers is crucial. You can establish a safer online learning environment by providing teachers with the information and abilities to safeguard themselves and their students from cyber risks. The following are some key areas that should be covered in teacher cyber security training:

- i. Password security
- ii. Phishing Awareness
- iii. Data Privacy
- iv. Safe Internet Usage
- v. Securing question papers

While planning for such a course, we can collaborate with cyber security professionals or experts to develop and deliver training sessions tailored to the specific needs of teachers. Additionally, promoting a culture of cyber security awareness and responsibility within the educational institution will further reinforce the importance of these practices. (Pencheva et al., 2019)

- d) **Assessment and Feedback:** A capacity building programme to develop abilities in summative assessment methods (as recommended by NEP -2020, para4.34), effective assessment design and implementation (*progress card will be holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report, para 4.35*). This can include plan to develop in teachers an attitude of giving constructive feedback to support student learning and development.
- e) **Inclusive classrooms:** As per NEP- 2020 teachers will work to support students (gifted) in the classroom that have unique interests and/or abilities by providing them with added enrichment materials, guidance, and encouragement. They should discover, nurture, foster and aim to develop these innate abilities (para 4.34, 4.44). NEP-2020 also aims towards bridging the gap for Socio- Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), Children with Special Needs (CWSN) at all levels of school education thus encouraging inclusive classrooms. To incorporate such changes teachers are required to participate in initiatives that will improve their attitudes and prepare them in responding to these circumstances.
- f) **Self-reflection and Professional Development:** CB programme aiming to develop in teachers a habit of self-reflection, asking for feedback, and taking part in ongoing professional development opportunities can be designed. These will help them to keep up with new developments in educational trends and research.
- g) **Experiential Learning:** When it comes to capacity building for experiential learning, teachers can focus on developing the following skills and knowledge:
  - i. Designing Experiential Learning Activities: Teachers need to learn how to design and develop experiential learning activities that provide hands-on, real-world experiences for students. This involves creating authentic learning opportunities, designing meaningful tasks and challenges, and aligning activities with learning objectives. (Carpenter et al.,1989)

- ii. **Facilitating Reflection:** Reflection is a crucial component of experiential learning. Teachers should be trained in facilitating reflection sessions where students can process their experiences, make connections to theoretical concepts, and extract valuable insights. Teachers can learn techniques such as journaling, group discussions, and guided questioning to promote effective reflection. (Carpenter et. al., 1989)
  - iii. **Managing risk and Safety:** Since experiential learning activities may contain some element of risk, teachers ought to undergo training on risk management, safety procedures, and legal issues. This entails being aware of potential risks, putting safety precautions into practice, and ensuring students' safety while participating in experiential learning activities.
  - iv. **Assessing experiential learning:** The learning outcomes of experiential learning activities can't be completely captured by conventional assessment techniques. The use of performance-based assessments, portfolios, self-reflections, and feedback from external experts or community partners are just a few of the assessment tools that teachers should build to fit the nature of experiential learning. (Gentry, 1990)
- h) **Attitudinal Changes:** Capacity building of teachers with respect to attitudinal changes is a crucial aspect. Teachers' attitude can significantly impact their effectiveness in the classroom and influence students' learning experiences. Here are some strategies for capacity building aimed at fostering positive attitudinal changes among teachers:
- i. Professional Development Workshops: Self-Reflection and Awareness
  - ii. Peer Learning
  - iii. Modeling Positive Attitudes
  - iv. Incorporating Emotional Intelligence Training
  - v. Addressing Burnout and Stress
  - vi. Feedback and Evaluation
  - vii. Engaging in Community Outreach (Module 6, UNESCO, N.D.)

Capacity building interventions can take in many forms including technical guidance, virtual and in-person training sessions, in-depth consultations, e-learning options, guiding materials in the form of product innovations, skill-based courses, and others like coaching and mentoring. In turn a need for comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of these interventions arises. It is needed to assess whether the desired goal have been achieved after the intervention or to evaluate the level of efficacy of the programme conducted, some methods need to be devised to decide further course of action. There appears to be a scarcity of research on the efficacy of capacity building interventions for individual and organizational capacity building as well. One of the systemic reviews done by Watson et. al, (2018) on *Effectiveness of capacity building interventions relevant to public health practice* mentions in detail a range of

outcomes and methods of assessment. The study mentions types of research designs to evaluate the interventions: systemic review (meta- analysis), mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative methods represented by simple before-after evaluations. In one other descriptive study, the researcher employed the survey approach to examine the effects of various themes and areas covered via structured teleconference programmes organized under Distance Education Programme (DEP) of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

### **Effectiveness of Capacity Building programmes:**

The effectiveness of capacity building programs for teachers can vary depending on various factors such as the program's design, implementation, duration, content, and the context in which it is delivered. Generally, well-structured and properly executed capacity building programs can have significant positive impacts on teachers' professional development and, consequently, on student learning outcomes. Here are some key points to consider while planning capacity building programmes, so as to make them effective:

- i. **Professional Growth:** Capacity building programmes provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and pedagogical approaches. When teachers acquire new teaching strategies and techniques, they are more likely to create engaging and effective learning experiences for their students. These programmes help teachers stay abreast of the latest educational research, technology, and best practices. As the field of education is continuously evolving, it's crucial for teachers to have access to current information. Capacity building programs often focus on evidence-based teaching practices that have been proven to be effective. As teachers implement these practices in the classroom, they can positively impact student learning and engagement. (Ejekw, 2022; Osuji, 2014)
- ii. **Supportive Learning Environment:** By participating in professional development opportunities, teachers can feel more supported and valued in their roles. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and retention.
- iii. **Collaboration and Networking:** Capacity building programs often provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with their peers, share experiences, and exchange ideas. This collaborative environment can foster a sense of community among teachers and promote a culture of continuous improvement. (Osuji, 2014)
- iv. **Enhanced Student Performance:** When teachers improve their instructional practices through capacity building, student performance tends to improve as well. Effective teaching methods, tailored to individual student needs, can lead to better academic outcomes. Capacity building programs may help teachers find innovative ways to engage students in the learning process, making education more meaningful and enjoyable for students. (Osuji, 2014)
- v. **Increased Confidence:** As teachers acquire new skills and knowledge, they often gain confidence in their abilities. This increased self-assurance can positively impact their teaching effectiveness.

- vi. Alignment with School Goals: When capacity building programs are aligned with school improvement goals, they can lead to more cohesive and coordinated efforts to enhance teaching and learning throughout the entire institution.
- vii. Long-term Impact: For capacity building programs to have a lasting effect, they need to be part of a sustained and ongoing professional development plan. One-time workshops or short-term interventions may have limited impact compared to continuous, comprehensive programs.

Leithwood (1992) quoted by Villegas-Reimers advice that programmes which promote capacity building should also focus on the following points:

- Developing survival skills
- Becoming competent in the basic skills of teaching
- Expanding one's instructional flexibility
- Acquiring instructional expertise
- Contributing to the professional growth of colleagues, and
- Exercising leadership and participating in decision-making

CB programmes must be carefully created and organised in order to accomplish the policy's vision and make the education system more efficient in terms of learning outcomes.

### Conclusion

Investing in teachers' development is a fundamental aspect of building a strong and successful education system. Capacity building programmes are crucial for teachers' ongoing professional development, to learn improved teaching techniques for enhanced student learning outcomes. The effectiveness of capacity building programs for teachers is contingent on thoughtful planning, a focus on evidence-based practices, ongoing support, and integration with the broader school improvement strategies (Bain et.al., 2011). When these elements are present, teachers can grow professionally and positively impact student learning outcomes.

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