

EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA, FINLAND, INDIA AND SINGAPORE

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The paper attempts to provide a snapshot of the current practices in the Professional Development of Teachers (PDoT) in four selected countries namely, Ethiopia, Finland, India and Singapore. PDoT has been analysed in the form of a continuum of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Induction and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The survey of literature revealed that for ITE in two countries, i.e. Ethiopia and India, the system was unable to attract competent applicants, as a result of which the professional competence of teachers suffered. On the other hand, Finland and Singapore were the epitomes of having effective ITE system. The ability to attract candidates with high potential into ITE, right amount of emphasis on theory and practice in ITE programmes, the existence of effective CPD and rigorous professional development community involving the ministry of education, universities of teacher education and schools, and high prestige for the teaching profession enabled Finland and Singapore to be the star performers in PDoT. In Finland, the provision of one-year CPD training on special needs education to all teachers and professional autonomy to teachers were the salient features whereas in Singapore, a monthly stipend for student teachers during initial teacher education and multifarious career tracks for the teacher were a few additional features. This survey of literature has presented significant lessons drawn from each respective country regarding practices in PDoT.

KEYWORDS: Professional Development, Teacher Education, Induction and Continuous Professional Development.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is rapidly changing with increasing social disruptions. Societies are facing unprecedented challenges – economic, environmental, and social – driven by accelerating technological change and globalization (Asia Society, 2018). European Union (2008) notes that a firm initial foundation is essential to equip new teachers with the knowledge, competences, skills, attitudes, awareness and confidence required to teach, to be pro-active and to manage change as professionals in a rapidly evolving environment. Teachers are the most determinant factors in influencing education system in general and to ensure quality education in particular (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Singapore National Institute of Education, n. d.).

Unlike a distinct approach—where Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Induction and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers are treated separately, Professional Development of Teachers (PDoT) in a continuum, is an integrated approach to conceptualize the whole teacher professional development phases— ITE, Induction and CPD. (Council of European Union, 2014; European Commission, 2010; European Committee for Education Trade Union, 2008).

Goh (2016) stresses that teachers' professional development can directly influence students' learning. High-performing education systems in the world, such as Singapore, that produce sustained performance among its students have rigorous policies and plans to professionalize teaching (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). The main purpose of this review of literature was to explore the recent experiences of professional development of teachers in Ethiopia, India, Finland and Singapore, and draw lessons from them, if found.

This survey of literature focuses mainly on professional development of teachers such as Initial Teacher Education Programmes (ITE), Induction and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes. The analysis has been done on the basis of literature accessed online as well as offline (official documents) to enrich empirical data from each country.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is the second most populous African country, next to Nigeria. So far, the education system in Ethiopia has been governed by the Education and Training Policy (1994). According to this policy, the education system encompasses kindergarten, eight years primary education and four years secondary education (two years general secondary education i.e. 9-10 grades and 2 years higher education preparation education i.e. 11-12 grades). In 2018, however, a comprehensive national study on Ethiopia education system was

conducted. In response to the recommendations from the findings of this national study, the ministry of education introduced a new education configuration i.e. 6-2-4, wherein six years is primary, two years of lower secondary and four years of upper secondary respectively i.e. 6+2+4 structure (SHE, 2019).

The ETP (1994) has given greater emphasis for teacher professional development. Since then teacher professional development in Ethiopia has been in a state of enormous changes driven by continuous policy reforms in teacher development. The changes that have been made so far can be predominantly described as changes in qualification level of teachers, reforms in teacher education programmes, establishment of continuous professional development system and development of standards for teachers. Recently, ministry of education has revised the thresholds regarding the qualification of teachers: Master's degree is a requirement for higher education school teachers (grades 11-12), Bachelor's degree for grades 5-10 school teachers, two years diploma for pre-primary and three years diploma for grades 1-4 school teachers (MoE, 2018c).

Similarly, reforms in teacher education programmes (curricula) have been carried out to accord with reforms made to upgrade the qualification levels of teachers. Currently, Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and diploma are the routes of ITE programmes in Ethiopia. Since 2011, those who have had bachelor's degree in school subjects enrol in PGDT, which lasts for one year. Before the introduction of PGDT, from 2003 to 2010, a three years Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree was offered for secondary school teachers. The curriculum of PGDT mainly embodies general pedagogical courses, subject methodology/ didactic courses and practicum. The practicum accounts for 4 credit hours out of 40 credit hours (MoE, 2009).

In 2018, B.Ed. has been resuscitated to be ITE programme for grades 5-10 school teachers, which is configured as B.Ed. for grades 5-8 school teachers and B.Ed. for grades 7-10 school teachers. The courses that make the major knowledge bases in these B.Ed. programmes are subject areas in the form of major and minor courses, foundation course, general pedagogical courses, subject didactic (pedagogical content knowledge) courses, practicum courses and general or common courses. Subject didactic courses and practicum courses account for 6.2% each in B.Ed. for grades 5-8 schools (MoE, 2018b), and 5.5% each in B.Ed. for grades 7-10 school teachers (MoE, 2018a). The diploma programme for pre-primary school prepares general teachers who can teach all subjects while diploma for grades 1-4 prepares general teachers who can teach at least three clustered curricula. Diploma programme of pre-primary school comprises 14.4% didactic courses and 6.48% practicum courses (MoE, 2014),

and primary school diploma accounts for 7-16.5% didactic courses and 12-16% practicum courses (MoE, 2013). Since 2013, higher education preparatory school teachers have a chance to pursue master's degree which is offered through an in-service mode. Once teachers have had bachelor's degree in secondary school subjects and provide at least two years teaching service, they can pursue a master's degree in teaching. In Ethiopia, since 2007 early career support/ induction programme for newly minted teachers has been in place as an integral part of PDoT. Each teacher is required to engage in induction courses within the first two years of teaching service.

Continuous professional development (CPD) can be categorized as upgrading and lifelong learning. Upgrading has benefited a large number of teachers raising their qualification level from certificate to diploma or diploma to B.Ed. / PGDT or B.Ed./ PGDT to M.Ed. Lifelong continuous professional development has officially been effective since 2007. Lifelong learning entails teachers to engage in 60 hours of professional development tasks every year. Ministry of Education has set an overambitious goal to transform teaching into a profession of choice and to recruit abled and interested applicants to teacher education (MoE, 2015 and MoE, 2018c). Though MoE has attempted stringent efforts to advance PDoT, research findings show that there is a need to give due attention. Research by Animaw, Enguday, Yohannes, Esuyawukal, and Siyum (2016), for instance, showed discouraging results that pre-primary and primary teacher education programmes grapple with the attraction of less potential and less interested applicants. Concept and practice of mentoring, management and leadership, a central and top-down approach, low wages for teachers and the lack of fringe benefits negatively affect CPD (Tynjala, 2015). PGDT has often received criticisms from educational fraternity in a sense that it is less effective to prepare quality teachers mainly attributed with intractable challenges such as under-representation in pedagogical skills, subject matter and professional commitment (Dejene, 2015; Koye & Yonas, 2013); applicants fail to score 50% minimum requirements in the entrance examination for PGDT (Awoke, Eyasu, Kassa, Mulugeta, and Yenealem, 2017); and the programme is worrisome as it cannot guarantee recruitment of the best teacher candidates into the profession (Wakgari, Teklu, Genene, Asnake, and Begna, 2018).

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN FINLAND

In Finland, pre-service teacher education has successfully generated high quality teachers for the educational system. Finland has been reported as one of the top-performing countries in teacher education in many international comparisons by OECD conducted in 2003, 2010 and 2014 (Neimi, 2015). Asia Society (2018) mentioned that the secret to Finland's success is believed to be in

its excellent teachers, of whom Finns are justifiably proud.

Advanced teacher qualifications (Master's degree) in all education levels, professional autonomy and full devolution of teacher education system such as decision making about curriculum, teaching methods and student assessment, and high value of teaching profession make Finland amongst best-performing countries in teacher professional development (Asia Society, 2018). Finland runs different teacher education categories: e.g., elementary teachers (grade levels 1-6), subject matter teachers for lower secondary schools (grade levels 7-9) and upper secondary schools (grade levels 10-12), special needs teachers, study counsellors for schools, and adult and vocational teachers (Neimi, 2015). Asia Society (2018) reported that teaching is a greatly admired profession in Finland and is considered at par with other professions. Only one in ten applicants is accepted into the programme to become a primary school teacher. Applicants go through two rounds of selection by the university: the first is based on their high school record and out of school accomplishments; the second, on a written examination on assigned pedagogical books, an observed clinical activity, and interviews on teaching as a profession. As Neimi (2015) observed that elementary teachers' programs accept 5% to 10% of all high quality applicants, and in subject teacher education programs (secondary school teacher programme), acceptance is 20% to 40% depending on the subject matter. In mathematics, acceptance has been between 20% and 25% (FNBE, 2013 as cited in Neimi, 2015, p.283).

Intensive theory-practice nexus throughout the programme, rigorous clinical experience and research-oriented approach is the hallmark of initial teacher education in Finland (Asia Society, 2018; Neimi, 2015). Student teachers can select their study programme either elementary or secondary or both given that teachers must fulfil basic competences in the amount and quality of pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers are prepared on subject specific, pedagogical and multidisciplinary knowledge bases. The teacher education is flexible in such a way that elementary school teachers can extend their qualification to secondary school while secondary school teachers can study multidisciplinary modules to become elementary school teacher. All primary and secondary school teachers are taking one-year additional special needs training, which is of an exception in Finland (Neimi, 2015). There has been a strong collaboration of work between local employers, schools, and the Finnish National Board of Education and universities to enhance both initial education and continuous professional development (Asia society, n.d.; Neimi, 2015).

As reported in Asia Society (2018), individual schools in Finland take

responsibility for new teacher induction and professional development, which leads to noticeable differences among schools. Different models of peer group mentoring are being tried with “tutor” teachers, who will have reduced teaching loads in order to focus on creating professional learning opportunities within and between schools.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

According to Malek and Mishra (2016), India has made considerable progress in school education since independence with reference to overall literacy, infrastructure and universal access and enrolment in schools. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has worked in close collaboration with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to foster quality assurance and sustenance, with Distance Education Council (DEC) to ensure integrated development of in-service teacher education under the Open and Distance Learning (ODL), and with Rehabilitation Council of India to develop curriculum on inclusive education and make it a part of general teacher education programmes (Malek & Mishra, 2016; Verma, 2018).

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has persevered its function to maintain the quality of education, including teacher education, by setting standards in curricular; teaching-learning and evaluation; research, consultancy and extension; infrastructure and learning resources; student support and progression; governance and leadership and innovative practices aspects (Verma, 2018).

Teacher education for pre-primary, elementary and secondary are offered both in face to face and distance and open learning modes of programmes (Malek & Mishra, 2016; Singh, 2016). Table 1 shows the model of teacher education in India (Singh, 2016).

Table 1
Model of Teacher Education.

Stage/Level	Entry Qualification	Duration of Professional Education
ECCE	10+2 with II division	2 years
Elementary	10+2 with II division or	3 years
	Graduate with II division	2 years
Secondary	Post-Graduate with II division	2 years
B.P.Ed.	Graduate with II division	2 years
Integrated B.A./ B.Ed./ B.Sc.	10+2 with II division	5 years
M.Ed. / M.P.Ed.	After Integrated B.Ed./ B.P.Ed.	2 years

In India's initial teacher education system a notable exception is removal of micro-teaching. Micro-teaching is a pedagogical simulation which helps student teachers practice on the pedagogical teaching and learning strategies such that they acquaint basic practical pedagogical skills such as lesson study, lesson planning and presentation, classroom management, assessment, etc. (Singh, 2016). Teacher education has received criticism in its professional development austerity. For example, Malek and Mishra (2016) argued that the larger reality of school teaching not being a preferred option among students (Rana, 2019) and the dilution of emphasis on public investment in initial teacher education has occurred since the year 1990 with the large scale recruitment of unqualified and under qualified persons in the formal school system.

Research by Selvaraj, Alagukanna, and Suganya (2015) summarized three categories of problems that greatly overwhelm teacher professional development in India. These include (1) psychological barriers including teachers lacking positive attitudes, teachers lacking motivation, teachers lacking interest, teacher lacking confidence, teacher having stress, teacher having frustration, teacher lacking awareness, and inability to learn new technology; (2) administrative barriers such as poor administration, government policy, lack of physical facilities, lack of financial facilities, inadequate time, inadequate funding; and (3) material barriers like time commitments, energy demands, working environment and family environment.

Many educators suggested that initial teacher education programmes in India, seems to be carefully examined, and revisiting the existing programmes is of paramount importance to imparting changes in the competencies of teachers (Singh, 2016; Ministry of Human Resource Development, Draft National Policy Committee Report Summary, 2019), and continuous professional development also needs to be enhanced to the level of 50 hours of engagement each year (Ministry of Human Resource, Development Draft National Policy Committee report summary, 2019). National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is the statutory body to regulate the teacher education programmes in India.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SINGAPORE

Singapore has become one of the international models in the education system as indicated by its students' result on international assessments including the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Tan, 2018; Low, Goodwin, &

Snyder, 2017; Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME), n.d.), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

Candidates of initial teacher education are selected from the top third of high school graduates (ACME, n.d.; Asia Society, 2018; & Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017). Low, Goodwin, & Snyder (2017) noted that this competitiveness of recruitment can be attributed as teaching is a highly regarded profession; teachers receive comparable salaries to other professions with similar educational requirements, low attrition and subsidized preparation.

The National Institute of Education, Singapore (NIE) offers both concurrent and consecutive types of initial teacher education programmes to cater to the different entry points for prospective teachers. Students who already have university degrees will enrol in the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme and fresh school passouts will enrol in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) program. In these two initial teacher education programmes, prospective teachers' study in subject specialization model for both primary and secondary schools, and primary teachers are prepared to teach three subjects while secondary teachers are prepared to teach two subjects (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

Initial teacher education programmes are grounded in research-based to prepare teachers to use and conduct research; and well-defined supported and mentored clinical experiences embedded in schools and classrooms that support the development of essential professional capacities, knowledge, and skills (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017). For instance, pre-service teachers in the PGDE programme have one 4-week observation in school and a 10-week practicum in schools at the end of their course. Pre-service teachers in the degree programme has a 1-week observation in schools in year 2, a 5-week practicum in year 3 and a 10-week final practicum in year 4 (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

Low, Goodwin and Snyder (2017) present that around 85% of Singapore's teachers hold undergraduate degrees and the system's long-term goal is to have an all-university graduate teaching force. They stress that teacher education is underpinned by values, skills, and knowledge considered integral to teaching and emphasizes a learner-centered approach to teaching with strong content specialization as well as pedagogical training.

Induction is an integral part of professional development in Singapore. All teachers receive a yearlong formal induction programme in their first position, and they continue mentoring or coaching activities. Beginning teachers have the smallest classroom teaching load (10.0 hours/week) because they are in

their induction period and are in the process of gaining professional expertise; experienced teachers have a classroom teaching load of 14 hours/week, and senior teachers have smaller classroom teaching load (12.0 hours/week) than experienced teachers to create time for their roles in organizing and facilitating professional learning/mentoring programs in the school. The beginning teacher induction programme essentially commences prior to entry into pre-service preparation with the Teachers' Compass Ceremony, when prospective teachers who have been hired by the ministry are initiated into the moral and ethical mission they have undertaken (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

Continuous professional development has gained a growing importance to create opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their subject mastery and pedagogical repertoires. Every teacher is guaranteed 100 hours for professional development each year (Asia Society, 2018; ACME, n.d.). A tripartite collaboration between MoE, NIE and schools is a hallmark of teachers' professional development in Singapore, and NIE provides need-based continuous professional development trainings to school teachers to continuously update pedagogical competences of teachers (Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

Goh (2016) elaborates that support for teachers' professional development is given through four enhanced measures of the Ministry of Education that builds on existing professional development efforts so as to focus on high impact learning and developmental activities: (a) providing existing primary school teachers with more opportunities for deeper specialization in order to develop greater content and pedagogy mastery, (b) strengthening support for mentoring of teachers and the recognition of teacher mentors, (c) growing communities of practitioners in schools and in larger networks (e.g., Academia of Singapore Teachers (AST) and Professional learning communities (PLCs), and (d) deepening whole school support and culture of professional development. Continuous professional development in Singapore can prepare teachers for multifaceted career tracks of professional progression. For instance, teachers can grow into three professional progression trajectories: the teaching track, the leadership track, and the senior specialist track (Asia Society, 2018; Goh, 2016; Low, Goodwin, & Snyder, 2017).

LESSONS DRAWN

Through the survey of literature, it has been possible to draw the viable current practices in PDoT which are given as follows:

- In all countries continuous efforts are being made to upgrade the qualification level of teachers which can provide positive impact both on

the quality of teachers and their motivation,

- In all countries, professional development of teacher has been in place as a continuum of ITE, induction and CPD despite discrepancies existing, in terms of the duration, approach and effectiveness.
- In India, apart from field engagement, ICT is integrated in ITE programmes which can benefit student teachers to practice on pedagogical skills using classroom simulation.
- In Finland, professional autonomy and full deployment of responsibility to school community raised teachers' participation in decision making.
- Both in Finland and Singapore, ITE programmes are offered in a research-oriented and an intensive clinical practice approach that are able to prepare reflective practitioner teachers who are able to facilitate the 21st learners' competency.
- In Finland and Singapore, teaching has become a prestigious profession so that it competes with other professions to attract academically potential applicants.
- In Finland and Singapore, there exists a steadfast collaboration between ministry of education, teacher education universities and schools to epitomize professional development of teachers (i.e., ITE, Induction and CPD).
- All teachers take one-year training on special needs education in Finland, which is an immense commitment to provide equitable quality education to all learners by addressing the issues of diversity and inclusion in classroom settings.
- In Singapore, after completing induction period, classroom teachers have three career tracks of professional progressions (teaching track, leadership track and senior specialist track). In addition, student teachers are paid monthly stipend while they are taught during initial teacher education.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The 21st century world is rapidly changing at a breakneck speed. Ways of thinking, ways of life, tools for working and living in the world are variably changing as a result of accelerating technological changes and globalization. Schools are facing increasing demands to prepare students for rapid social and economic disruptions, for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve social problems that have not yet

been anticipated (Asia Society, 2018) and our expectations from teachers are therefore, high and rising. Practices in best performing countries show that they are looking to attract better abled applicants for making teaching a competitive profession and rigorous professional development programmes (ITE, induction and CPD) to enhance the content and pedagogy mastery of teachers looking to develop 21st century learners competencies which are of paramount importance.

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