



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.124>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHERS

Dr. Shahanaz Begum

Assistant Professor

University College of Education, Osmania University

Hyderabad, Telangana State, India

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to elaborate the need and importance of professional development among social science teachers at secondary level with special reference to India in general and State of Telangana in specific. Any nation needs quality teachers to promote quality education and to attain its educational aims. Which intern reflect in achieving the national goals of that country. Social sciences are given least importance at school level, as it is not a difficult subject to understand the concepts. The teaching strategies also not up to the mark. Many social science teachers are passive in adopting innovative teaching techniques to make the learning interesting. Hence social science teachers need to update their subject knowledge, improve their professional skills to meet the needs of the students of present era. It is time for them to have continuous professional development.

Keywords: Professional Development, Continuous Professional Development, Social Science Teachers Qualities of Good Teachers, Specific Skills in Social Science Teachers.

1. Introduction

Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. Only the very best and most learned became teachers. Society gave teachers, or gurus, what they needed to pass on their knowledge, skills, and ethics optimally to students (National Education Policy (NEP)-2020).

Any nation needs quality teachers to promote quality education and to attain educational aims. Which intern reflect in national goals of that country. The teachers should strive for improving their quality of teaching as well as quality of learning. A teacher is always be a good learner.

Teachers must be given constant opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their profession. Teachers: The Torchbearers of Change (Draft NEP-2019).

A Profession is a Theory based Practice. Professional Development is improving the theoretical knowledge and enhancing practical skills as well as competencies related to that particular profession. Professional development is a continuous process of improving the capabilities of the employees through access to education and training opportunities in the workplace or through outsourcing or through watching others perform in the job.

A profession is characterized by a sufficiently long period of academic training, an organized body of knowledge on which the undertaking is based, an appropriate duration of formal and rigorous professional training in tandem with practical experience in the field and a code of professional ethics that binds its members into a fraternity (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)-2009).

Professional development is to be based on a modular approach. A range of opportunities must be made available to the members of professional communities where they share their experiences, practices and insights, and opportunities to update their knowledge, as stated in Draft NEP (2019) about continuous professional development.

NEP-2020 has believed in improving the status of teachers, and expressed that the teacher must be at the center of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens.

Professional development in teachers is a kind of continuing and life-long education. If teachers improve their skills, in turn, boost the students' outcomes. Learning can take place in formal or informal settings. Participating in Refresher courses, Orientation programs, Conferences, Seminars, Workshops etc., are the opportunities for learning in a formal setting. Professional development for teachers takes place on a number of different levels: National –level, State-level, District-level, or even at school level. As State



Cover Page



Curriculum Framework (SCF)-2011 stated, Teachers need to realize that they are continuous learners. To overcome the problems and the challenges of teaching profession and for professional development, trainings are the best sources.

Informal opportunities for professional development include independent research or investigation, peer learning initiatives or even discussions with colleagues in the staff room.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) issued its first policy statement on What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do. NBPTS developed standards in 27 fields for advancing the quality of teaching and learning. These standards define accomplished teaching based on five propositions: 1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning. 2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students. 3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning. 4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience. 5) Teachers are members of learning communities. Demonstration of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitment in teachers are reflected in the five core propositions (NBPTS, 2011).

India, from the beginning, periodically reviewing the status of education through constituting various educational committees and commissions. The recommendations proposed by these committees are tried to be implemented at centre and state levels. National Education Policies are being implemented. National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is providing National Curriculum Frameworks to follow the principles for revising the curriculum at school level. The major aims are quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of school education. According to NCF-2005, the role of teacher is shifted, from knowledge provider to facilitator for learners to explore the knowledge in the constructivist approach. Hence the teachers should improve their professional competencies accordingly.

As per NCFTE (2009), the importance of competent teachers to the nation's school system can in no way be overemphasized. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievements are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. It is common knowledge too that the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals.

NCFTE (2009) has formulated the broad aims of continuing professional development programmes for teachers: Explore, reflect on and develop one's own practice; Deepen one's knowledge and update 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, both teachers and academics working in the area of specific disciplines as well as intellectuals in the immediate and wider society.

Keeping in mind the aims of in-service programmes for professional development, there is a need to recognize the variety of types of in-service programmes and experiences that can contribute towards and sustain professional development of teachers. Such as short- and long-term courses on specific skills or areas of interest could be developed for the enrichment of content and get acquaintance with newer pedagogical approaches.

Teachers should attend meetings and conferences connected to the profession. And they could be permitted to avail duty leave. Some funding support to travel to and attend such meetings could also be provided. Distance Media can be utilized. ICT including TV, radio, telephone and internet are useful as resources and providing access to ideas or for the wider spread of information.

Sabbatical for Study and Research should be provided. Professional Fora, Resource Rooms and Materials can be designed by creating collaborative learning environment. Teachers can share and discuss with other teachers at cluster and block level. There should be scope for Faculty Exchange Visits and Fellowships so that the teachers enthusiastically work for their professional development.

2. Social Science Teacher

Social science teachers have the social and moral responsibility of protecting, preserving and promoting the values and cultural heritage of a nation. Though the social sciences are the bases for many disciplines, it was not taught as a school subject till the beginning of twentieth century. In India Social Studies is introduced in basic education curriculum as one of the core subjects at school level, in late 1930s. The term Social Science is synonymously used as social studies at school level in many places.



Cover Page



Social sciences deal with the man and his relationships with physical and social environment. Social Sciences focus on society and its various socio-political institutions in the past and present context. Position papers on social science of NCF as well as SCF have critically discussed the nature of the subject, guiding principles of social science curriculum and the role of the social science teachers at school level. It includes primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary stages.

The social sciences encompass diverse concerns of society and include a wide range of content, drawn from the disciplines of history, geography, political science, economics and sociology. The selection and organisation of material into a meaningful social science curriculum, enabling students to develop a critical understanding of society, is therefore a challenging task. The possibilities of including new dimensions and concerns are immense especially in view of the student’s own life experiences. Social science teaching needs to be revitalized towards helping the learner acquire knowledge and skills in an interactive environment. The teaching of social sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics, and critical perspectives, and enable children to draw relationships between past and present, to understand changes taking place in society (Position Paper on Social Sciences, NCERT, 2006).

And the teaching of social science has not been very effective partly due to the lack of an adequate emphasis on teacher’s training programmes. Indeed, many problems like low self-esteem, curricular load, cramming, and rote learning can be addressed more effectively by an empowered teacher whose capabilities have been enhanced through teacher training. The outcome of social science research studies could be made accessible to the vast numbers of teachers through serious and effective training both at the pre-service and the in-service levels.

The “essential characteristics of powerful social studies” as described by National Council for Social Studies (NCSS-2002) consist of five principles and each principle has direct implications for what teachers should know and be able to do and what dispositions they should possess. The five principles are as follows: 1. Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are meaningful. 2. Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative. 3. Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are values-based. 4. Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are challenging. 5. Social studies teaching and learning are powerful when the learning is active.

SCF (2011) states that Social Sciences study different aspects of human life to understand social phenomena and also to help us determining normative priorities and policies. It has formulated the Objectives of Social Science Teaching as: 1. Develop skills of reasoning and exploring causation in social context. 2. Relate the immediate social developments to broader global trends and the vice versa. 3. Understand variety of human experiences across time and space. 4. Understand multiple perspectives of looking at social world. 5. Understand the differential impact of social phenomenon on different sections of people. 6. Develop the ability of critically evaluating received information, hypotheses and images. 7. Develop abilities to handle text, data, illustration i.e., different modes of representing/interpreting/visualizing information and knowledge. 8. Critically engage with social and constitutional values.

3. Qualities of a Good Social Science Teacher

Every teacher, irrespective of the subject handling is expected to have certain general as well as subject related specific qualities. It is true that the educational standards of any nation depend upon the standards of its teachers.

A good teacher is one who knows her subject well, understands the potential of the child and the teaching-learning process, appreciates the role of collaborative and peer-group learning, facilitates and scaffolds children when they need help. It is difficult to define a good teacher with a definite set of qualities. SCF- 2011 mentioned a few qualities of a good teacher in terms of his personality and work culture. A good teacher should possess the following set of qualities.

- Teacher is a facilitator, collaborative learner and reflective practitioner.
- Teacher provides opportunities to the children to construct knowledge and reflect critically on it.
- Teacher reconceptualises his/her conceptual framework of assumptions and beliefs about the child, learning and relations with the community from time to time.
- Teacher believes in self – learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas; developing capacities for self-directed learning and the ability to think, be self-critical and to work collaboratively in groups.
- Teacher will have cordial relations with colleagues, school authorities, parents and the community. Understands the strength of interpersonal relations.
- -Teacher should have positive attitudes and respect towards the diversified background of the students and takes responsibility for the development of all children.



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.124>

- Teacher participates in continuous professional development programmes and implements all these inputs in the class room for better teaching learning process.
- To observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children.
- Encourage self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas; developing capacities for self-directed learning and the ability to think, be self-critical and to work collaboratively in groups.
- For content enrichment, efforts should be made to generate understanding and knowledge, examine disciplinary knowledge and social realities, relate subject matter with the social milieu and develop critical thinking.
- To develop professional skills in pedagogy - observation, documentation, analysis, drama, craft, story-telling and reflective inquiry.

The quality is in terms of their professionalism, professional attitude and professional commitment towards children’s learning achievement and their professional improvement. For this to occur, teachers must understand the nature of learning and of the learner.

Social sciences deal with the study of the society and human relationships. Society is ever-changing in its nature. It is not static. The teachers who deal this subject should update their subject knowledge according to the changes in the society. As stated by Bining and Bining (1952) teaching is a progressive occupation, and the teacher must ever be a student. Although this is true for all teachers, it is especially true for the one who teaches the social studies. It is he who interprets the present, ever-changing complex world to the pupil. To do this, however, the teacher must understand the present, with its multitudinous perplexing problems.

The teacher's own role in children’s cognition could be enhanced if they assume a more active role in relation to the process of knowledge construction in which children are engaged. A child constructs her/his knowledge while engaged in the process of learning. In this context, the role of the teacher is a facilitator who encourages learners to reflect, analyse and interpret in the process of knowledge construction. The major shift is in the teacher’s role where he/she assumes a position centre stage as a source of knowledge, as custodian and manager of all teaching learning processes (NCF-2005).

4. Specific Skills in Social Science Teachers

Social science teacher is expected to be acquainted with certain general and specific skills and strategies. Such as pre-teaching skills, teaching skills and post-teaching skills. Pre-teaching skills include formulating learning objectives, selection of content, teaching learning strategies, lesson planning, planning as well as preparation of appropriate teaching aids, exploring the knowledge by utilising varied printed sources like subject books, reference books, journals, news-papers etc., digital sources like utilising internet for surfing the information online.

Teaching skills related to interactive phase of teaching such as good communication skills, black-board writing, presentation skills, appropriate utilization of teaching learning material, creating meaningful learning experiences, class room management, adopting varied teaching strategies, using of ICT, interacting with the students, questioning, responding, reflecting etc. Post-teaching skills include diversified assessment techniques, assigning projects, assignments, evaluating etc.

Along with the above skills the social science teacher has to improve social competencies, such as initiating and organising of quizzes, debates, elocution and essay writing competitions, youth parliament, role-play, field trips, surveys, community participation programmes, celebration of national festivals. Improving information skills, mapping skills, laboratory skills are the part of professional development of social science teachers in present context.

Social sciences deal with the study of the society and human relationships. Society is ever-changing in its nature. It is not static. The teachers who deal this subject should update their subject knowledge according to the changes in the society.



Fig.1. An effective Social Science Teacher in the class

5. Need for Continuous Professional Development in Social Science Teacher

Professional Development is a systematic process of acquiring and improving the professional skills and competencies. It should be a continuous process. Every teacher should update his / her subject knowledge as well as teaching techniques and strategies in their field.

Learning to learn and the willingness to unlearn and relearn are important as means of responding to new situations in a flexible and creative manner. The curriculum needs to emphasize the processes of constructing knowledge (NCF-2005).

Teachers' in-service education can play a significant role in the professional growth of teachers. It helps teachers gain confidence by engaging with their practices and reaffirming their experiences. It provides opportunities to engage with other teachers professionally and to update knowledge. Sharing of teaching experiences and diverse classroom practices to generate new ideas and facilitate innovation and experimentation. There are a few questions for all the social science teachers to think about. The following questions are for self-assessment of the teachers.

- Whether they have mastery on their subject?
- Are they updating their knowledge as per the need?
- How much time do they spend on exploring relevant knowledge every day? (Through books/Internet)
- What are their present activities for Professional Development?
- Whether he/she has created personal e-portfolio?
- Are they updating their Resumes/CV.

Academic improvement is part of Professional Development. It includes three major aspects: Reading, Reflection and Research.

- Reading - whether they read books, articles, current affairs etc.
- Reflection – do they make reflections.
- Research – whether they are involved in research. Research creates new knowledge.

There are a few methods that teachers can follow to improve their Professionalism. Such as improving punctuality, meeting the deadlines within time, paying attention to and meet the objectives, improving efficiency in teaching, showing respect for colleagues and students, refraining from negativity and office gossip, volunteering for extra assignments and committee work, engaging in continuing education.

Professional development refers to the competence of personal maturity, professional commitment, and professional ethics. It is a higher level of requirement for teachers, not just the performance of regular teaching behaviors. They should focus on three dimensions which are: self-development, professional growth, and professional attitudes.

The basic requirements for self-development are; maintaining mature and stable emotional state, reflecting self, accepting self, and being willing to collaborate with others.



Cover Page



There are three indicators for professional growth. They are: pursuing professional growth - for individual development, sharing professional knowledge with colleagues - for the development of professional community and responding to educational changes.

Professional attitudes, which cover ethical and moral aspects are an important characteristic of educational profession. Two indicators in the dimension of professional attitudes are: willing to devote time and energy, and stick on to professional codes or professional ethics.

NEP-2020 is more particular about Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers. It states that, teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions. These will be offered in multiple modes, including in the form of local, regional, state, national, and international workshops as well as online teacher development modules. Platforms (especially online platforms) will be developed so that teachers may share ideas and best practices. Each teacher will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own interests.

In the present scenario social science teacher is expected to be a multi-task master. The impact of fast changing technological innovations is very high on socio-cultural aspects of life of people. He or she cannot remain as a traditional teacher who follow mostly rote methods of teaching. It is high time for the teachers to enhance their pedagogic skills. Hence it is an immense need for social science teachers to have continuous professional development. Then only he or she can become an effective teacher in social science.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

Learning is a life-long and continuous process. There is no age-limit. The students at school level are young and dynamic, with full of potentiality. Their potentialities, energies and talents must be properly channelized for their own benefit and for nation's benefit. The students should be allowed to explore, question and reflect. The society expects much from teaching community. The teachers, especially who deal social sciences, should be in a position to withstand the expectations of parents as well as students. For that they should always re-fresh and re-orient their professional competencies. They should update their subject knowledge and teaching skills. They must be fluent in using ICT in the class room. They should be familiar with properly utilising Online platforms for teaching and learning, such as Google-meet, ZOOM etc., as it is order of the day.

Many in-service programmes are being conducted successfully to uplift the professional growth among the school teachers at national level by NCERT, and at state levels by SCERTs. For example, DIKSHA (Online) - Digital Infrastructure for School Education, NISHTHA (Online) - Integrated Teacher Training for Change, e-Pathashala Learning on The Go provides access to e-Text books, teaching instructions, e-Resources, Curricular Resources etc.

Under Samagra Shiksha, NISHTHA, online, is being implemented successfully all over India. Under this, National Resource Group of 120 members train State Resource Group, Key Resource Persons and State Resource Persons Leadership of the states and union territories. State Resource Group of 33,000 trained personnel from SCERTs, DIETs, CTEs, IASEs will train the school teachers and school principals who are the functionaries at District, Block and Cluster level. NISHTHA-1.0 is for Elementary education and NISHTHA-2.0 Secondary education. Website/Mobile App Tutorials for DIKSHA and NISHTHA are also available.

State Council of Educational Research and Training of Telangana has been conducting many subject specific professional development programmes for in-service social science teachers at elementary and secondary school level. Some of them are listed below, through which almost all the government teachers could be benefitted in the state of Telangana.

- Social Studies Text Books Development – Philosophical Principles
- Academic standards- activities to develop them
- C.C.E/Formative assessment in social studies
- Difficult concepts in social studies/subject enrichment/capacity building among social studies teachers
- Learning outcomes – classes 6th to 8th and classes 9th to 10th by APARD (Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development)
- Using digital technology in social sciences
- Online based pedagogic practices in social sciences
- Bridge course on how to fulfil the learning gaps – students doubt clarification
- Awareness on fear free examination preparation for teachers and students
- How to develop social science laboratory, projects and resources in social sciences for class 6th to 10th



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.124>

- Achievement of competencies/Learning Outcomes through filling the learning gaps in social sciences
- NISTHA – 1.0, 2.0 for Social Studies subject covered.

The above programmes indicate the importance of Professional development in social science teachers. It affects student learning. Students’ achievement should be the ultimate goal of any teacher professional development activities. It encourages the success of new teachers. Effective professional development helps teachers shape career-long learning. It promotes a growth mindset. It creates healthy learning environment. Hence all the social science teachers should have positive attitude towards continuous professional development.

REFERENCES

- Bining, Arthur C. and David H. Bining, (1952), Teaching the Social Studies in Secondary Schools, 3rdedn., New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Draft National Educational Policy (2019), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (2011), Michelle Exstrom, program principal in the Education Program at the National Conference of State Legislatures. National Conference of State Legislatures, ISBN 978-1-58024-628-6
- National Council for the Social Studies, (2002), 8555 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, www.socialstudies.org National Standards for Social Studies Teachers • Volume I.
- National Curriculum Framework (2005), Published by National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), New Delhi.
- National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009/10), Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher, NCTE Document, Published by Member-Secretary, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), New Delhi.
- National Education Policy – 2020, Ministry of education, Government of India.
- NCERT – www.ncert.nic.in.
- Position Paper 1.5 (2006), National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences, Published by NCERT, New Delhi.
- State Curriculum Framework (SCF)-2011, Executive Summaries (All position papers), 4.5 Social Studies, State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT), Telangana, Hyderabad.
- State Curriculum Framework (SCF)-2011, State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT), Telangana, Hyderabad. First Print 2011 Reprint 2019.
- SCERT – www.scert.telangana.gov.in