

Practice of School Based Continuous Professional Development In Government Secondary Schools Of Arbaminch City Adiministration

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to assess the practices and challenges of school based teachers' continuous professional development in government secondary schools of Arbaminch city administration in GamoGofa Zone. The study was both descriptive survey and explanatory in nature. To conduct this study data were collected by using questionnaire, interview and documents. The sampling techniques used were both purposive and simple random sampling. The sample size was 83 teachers, 14 school principals, 3 city education office TDP experts, and 3 cluster supervisors with the total of 103 participants out of 286 study population. The participants of interview were city education office TDP experts and cluster supervisors. Questionnaire was administered to 83 teachers and 14 school principals, of which 78 teachers and 14 principals properly filled and returned. Then, the data gathered through closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using frequency, percentage, mean score and standard deviation while the data gathered through interview, open-ended questions and document were analyzed qualitatively. The finding of the study indicated that the extent to which teachers' participation in CPD activities such as action research, classroom management, mentoring, coaching, involving in induction and portfolio development were inadequately implemented. The school principals, cluster supervisors and city education office experts were providing insufficient support for the teachers. The major challenges identified were unwillingness to participate in CPD activities, lack of training, lack of trained CPD coordinator in schools, inadequacy of supports provided for teachers growth, insufficient allocation of budget, lack of motivation, absence of systematic follow up, lack of giving feedback and evaluating the overall successes and failures of CPD activities, shortage of time. The findings implied that CPD was not implemented successfully due to lack of stakeholders support and follow up activities and many more affecting factors. It has been recommended that city education office should work closely with the schools, allocate the necessary budget for training, motivate teachers to willingly take more responsibilities in the implementation process of CPD and schools should assign well trained CPD facilitators to minimize the effect of challenges affecting CPD implementation.

Key words: Continuous Professional Development, CPD Coordinator, CPD facilitators

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I. BACKGROUNDS OF THE STUDY

In this era of education, improving teachers' pedagogical and subject matter knowledge is found to be a key for quality of education. Teachers' development is a never ending cycle of teacher learning that begins with initial teacher training and continues for as long as a teacher remains in the profession. While the world is growing rapidly from day to day, like most other professional groups, teachers' initial training will not fit them throughout the rest of their lives. They need to up-date and improve their own knowledge and techniques throughout their lifetime (MoE, 2010). As a result there will be increased focus on continuing professional development/CPD/ for teachers worldwide. This is because; CPD is continuously viewed as a means of improving learner performance and the production of required skills. CPD is, therefore, vital for quality education, and teacher development service. It is a never ending cycle of teacher learning that begins with initial teacher training and continuous for long as a teacher remains in the profession. Hence, teaching is valued profession and it helps teachers to improve students' learning (Saches, 2004).

CPD refers to any professional development activities involved with in a view to enhancing their knowledge and skills that will enable them to consider their attitudes and approaches to the education of children to improve their quality of teaching and learning (Bubb & Early, 2004). Further, they explain that CPD is an ongoing process building upon initial teacher training and induction, including development and training chances throughout career. Professional development means a formal process such as conference, seminar, or

workshop; collaborative learning among members of a work team; or a course at a college or university. Also, it can occur in informal contexts such as discussions among work colleagues, independent reading and research, observations of a colleague's work, or other learning from a peer. CPD is a means of improving learner's performance and development of required skills. Through CPD individuals aim for the improvement of their professional skills and acquisition of knowledge beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job (Gray, 2005).

Day (1999) also explains that professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those continuous and planned activities which are intended to be direct or indirect benefit to an individual, group or school, and which contribute to the quality of education. The definitions and concepts described above end with common view; that is, continuous professional development activities are mainly concerned with the improvement of individual teacher and the school community as a whole. CPD is put into practice to enable teachers to update themselves with new outlooks, approaches, and policy directions. It can involve both formal experiences in the class room, and informal experiences out of class room. The need for school based continuous professional development is not restricted for education as CPD is related to all professional fields that require well educated workers.

According to the national strategy of the Ministry of Education MoE (2009), CPD program is intended to all school teachers, leaders, and supervisors in all regions of Ethiopia so as to engage them in high quality and effective CPD which impacts classroom practices to ensure improved learning. It allows all teachers to improve their knowledge, skill and attitudes in order that they became more effective classroom practitioners and contribute positively. School based continuous professional development is the technique of supporting teachers to improve the quality of their teaching in the class room and designed based on the specific context and problems of the school. The rationale for this is that CPD is more effective if it is designed and practiced in a situation where the actual problem exists.

Currently, schools are running their own CPD programs. As the nationally designed modules are already completed, schools are now in charge of designing, implementing and evaluating the CPD programs which are designed to their particular needs. To support this, MoE has also developed a CPD framework and toolkit that could guide the school based CPD program and distributed them to all the schools. However, different government reports are showing that the performance of the schools so far in this regard is not satisfactory. The CPD programs in the schools are not achieving the desired objectives of helping the professional development of the school teachers and consequently improving student's achievement (Haromaya University 2007; MoE, 2013; 2014).

From the above discussion one can conclude that teachers are always learners, no matter how extensive or excellent their formal education and preparation might be. Hence, teachers tried to practice CPD program in Arbaminch City Administration government secondary schools; in SNNPRs. Regardless of the attempts, the genuine implementation of CPD program is far short from being fully realized and it does not practically improve the students' academic performance.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers are expected to continuously develop and improve their skills, techniques, and knowledge in order to best utilize new curricula and support continuous education reform initiatives. MoE (2005) in its Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III) document reported that teachers do not continuously update their competencies and skills. This indicates that in rapidly changing world being certified in pre-service training is not the only guarantee to become a well informed and effective teacher. Thus, teachers must continuously teach themselves like they are teaching their students. The government pays attention to CPD to improve the teaching-learning system as a national policy. Yet, this is not sufficient in to achieve the desired goal unless it is practiced at school level. Consequently, investing money and resources to run this program is wastage for any country if it does not bring a change on the achievement of student learning.

In case, the MoE has launched CPD program as a new reform of reaction that intended to solve the problems of education quality by updating teachers. Accordingly, it has been reported that ultimate objective of CPD is to improve the teaching learning process in Ethiopian schools. However, it is not known whether the intended objective of CPD is attained or not. Tussisa, (2006) and Gizaw (2006) cited in Alemayehu (2011) stated that there is a doubt whether the CPD program is actually practiced at school/cluster levels like other responsibilities of schools and teachers. This implies that there might be a gap between what has been intended and what is going on in actuality of the CPD practices though teachers CPD has been started in Ethiopia at all levels and career stages of teachers to link the gap of the pre-service training.

Literature indicates that teachers' education institutions might have little impact on teachers' knowledge and skills development during pre-service training. For this reason, many countries have developed in-service professional development strategies to manage those challenges (Khan & Begum, 2012). The 2008 TDP-1 CPD Impact Study which was carried out by Haromaya University cited in MoE (2009) had confirmed

the following three major findings (1)The study generally revealed that in nearly four out of five schools the structure of CPD is either absent or inadequate (2) Nearly all (29 of 31) cluster resource centers sampled were not adequately prepared to run well organized, inspiring and transforming CPD activities (3) Where CPD has begun in schools, teachers are able to demonstrate a reasonable mastery of the contents of the CPD courses they covered before and up to the time of the study(Hailu, 2009; Jenber, 2010).

Research conducted by Gosa (2012) in some selected secondary schools of Jimma Zone stated that lack of teachers' positive attitude towards the program and lack of support from Woreda education experts and supervisors were the major hindering factors of CPD program implementation, and Chemir (2013) conducted research in Secondary Schools of Gurage Zone which indicated that lack of willingness of teachers to participate in the training, lack of support from school leaders and lack of collaboration with teachers and school leaders were the factors that affected the implementation of CPD program. Similarly, research conducted by Alemayehu (2011) in government secondary schools of Bale Zone revealed that lack of well-organized concerned body, lack of commitment/motivation, lack of coordination among schools, WEO, ZED and REB, lack of reliable support, lack of follow up, and lack of knowledge are the major factors which affected the implementation of CPD program.

In addition to the above, research conducted by Ashebir (2014).in secondary schools of Kemashi Zone revealed that teacher's participation in professional development activities such as mentoring, portfolio development, conducting action research, peer observations was low. A study conducted by Etana(2009) in secondary schools of West Wollega Zone indicated that school based CPD activities are less relevant to influence teacher's classroom practice due to lack of quality training, lower commitment of teachers and principals. And also, research conducted by Melkie (2010), in general secondary schools of South Gonder Zone indicated that the majority of the teachers know the purpose of teachers' CPD and perceive the program positively; yet, there are also some teachers having negative perception. The study showed that, the initial trainings to aware the program's objective; on how to implement CPD, preparation of portfolio, planning CPD, and the role of facilitators were not given sufficiently to all teachers.

All the above researches conducted in different parts of Ethiopia show that there were problems in implementing CPD program. As aforementioned findings revealed, the practice of school based CPD program seem facing tremendous problems. Thus, this study has tempted to examine the practice of school based CPD program in government secondary schools of Arbaminch city administration which was guided by the following basic research questions.

- (1) How are teachers practicing CPD activities in government secondary schools of Arbaminch city?
- (2) What kind of supports is provided to practice CPD in secondary schools of Arbaminch city?
- (3) What are the challenges in CPD implementation in secondary schools of Arbaminch city?

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

For this study purpose, the researchers have used both descriptive survey and explanatory design to interpret the findings."Descriptive research is concerned with the present and attempts to determine the status of the phenomenon under investigation" (Singh, 2006). As the study demands a lot of information; the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools, i.e., both closed and open-ended questionnaire, interview, and document analysis which would help to secure, reliable, and adequate information. The sample size was 83(30%) of teachers from 266 which were selected by simple random sampling, 14 (100%) of school principals by selected by available sampling, 3(100%)of city education office TDP experts, and 3(100%)of cluster supervisors which were selected by purposive sampling. A total of 103 participants out of 286 study populations were used. The questionnaire had the reliability estimate of the Cronbach alpha of 0.792(79.2%). George and Mallery (2003) stated that Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranges between 0 and 1. They provide the following rules of > 0.9 Excellent, > 0.8 Good, > 0.7 Acceptable, > 0.6 Questionable, > 0.5 Poor, and < 0.5 unacceptable. Corresponding quantitative values were given as 5 for highest degree of agreement and 1 for the lowest degree of agreement. The cutoff point at intervals of length is $4/5=0.8$ because there are 5 categories and the range of the data is 4 (i.e., $5-1=4$). Therefore, the mean scores 1.00-1.80 considered as strongly disagree/very low, 1.81-2.60 as disagree/low, 2.61-3.40 as undecided/medium, 3.41-4.20 as agree /high, and 4.21-5.00 as strongly agree/very high.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

4.1 Teachers Practice on CPD

Respondents were asked to rate their practice of CPD program. Accordingly, the study revealed the following results.

Table.1. Teachers Practice on CPD

Activities	Mean value of mean	St. D
Action Research	2.80	1.15
Class room management	3.19	1.12
Mentoring	3.42	0.99
Coaching	3.34	0.95
Induction	2.57	1.23
Portfolio	4.33	0.98

Respondents were asked to rate the practice of their CPD program in their school. Accordingly, as portrayed in Table.1, respondents reported significantly high practicing on class room management, mentoring, coaching, and portfolio organization with mean value of 3.19, 3.42, 3.34, and 4.33 respectively. Whereas the engagement of teachers in action research to improve the day-to-day problems and giving support for newly deployed teachers, i.e., giving induction course was found to be inadequate with mean value of 2.80 and 2.57 respectively.

However, the finding of this study is not similar with findings of other researches. Research conducted by Ashebir (2014) in secondary schools of Kemashi Zone revealed that teachers' participation in professional development activities such as mentoring, portfolio development, conducting action research, and peer observations was low. Whereas, in this study only conducting action research and giving induction for newly deployed teachers were low and others were practiced at high level. May be the possible reason for difference of this finding is that most respondents in the study area have served for 23 years and above as a teacher or a principal. From this, they perceive themselves as more experienced and know all activities of CPD.

4.2. Available support from concerned bodies

Table.2. Available support from concerned bodies

Support from	Mean value of mean	Mean St.D
School principals	2.47	1.19
Cluster supervisors	2.08	1.07
City edu. office TDP experts	1.98	0.98

Systematic support and follow up strategies should be designed to implement CPD program effectively. It is obvious that enhancing teachers' professional development is one of the most important tasks carried out in school by principals, cluster supervisors, and education experts. Respondents were asked to rate their level of contribution for CPD practice. The findings of the study showed that the support; which was provided by principals, supervisors and city education TDP experts for implementation of CPD was insufficient with mean value of 2.47, 2.08, and 1.98 (St.D 1.19, 1.07, and 0.98) respectively.

4.3 Challenges Affecting CPD Practice

The following figure describes challenges affecting the CPD practice in the schools.

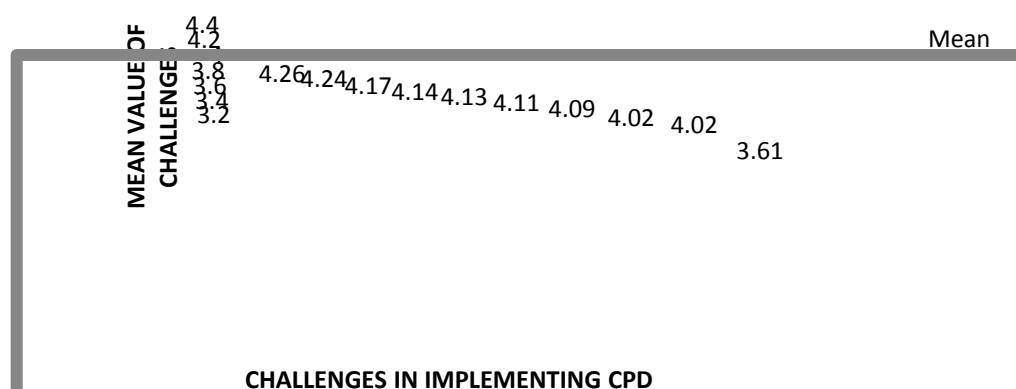


Figure.1. Challenges in CPD Practice

Respondents were asked to rate the factors that hinder to practice CPD program in school, all listed items above were scored the mean value greater than 3.0, which was expected i.e. (3.61-4.26). This showed that, the above listed items were significantly hindering factors for CPD practice in school.

The findings of the study confirmed that the findings of the following researchers. Ashebir (2014) stated that lack of teachers' positive attitude towards the program and lack of support from Woreda education experts and supervisors, lack of training, lack of CPD materials, lack of trained facilitators, insufficient allocation of budget, absence of systematic follow up and evaluation were the major blocking factors of CPD program implementation and Alemayehu (2011) indicated that lack of willingness of teachers to participate in the training, lack of support from concerned body, lack of motivation, and lack of adequate budget were the factors that affected the implementation of CPD program. Gosa (2012) stated that lack of teachers' positive attitude towards the program and lack of support from Woreda education experts and supervisors were the major hindering factors of CPD program implementation and Chemir (2013) indicated that lack of willingness of teachers to participate in the training, lack of support from school leaders and lack of collaboration with teachers and school leaders were the factors that affected the implementation of CPD program.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made. Teacher's engagement in all activities of CPD was mandatory in Ethiopian context. The effective implementation of teachers' CPD program needs substantial efforts of education stakeholders. If teachers' CPD program is implemented to its expected extent, it could have significant contribution for the quality of education by improving students' achievement, changing teachers' classroom pedagogical practices and enhancing teachers' professional competence (both subject matter and pedagogical). Conversely, teacher's engagement in problem-solving action research and induction was very poor. Significant contribution of CPD to students' achievement, classroom practices and professional competence will be sustained when teachers fully engaged in CPD.

Principals, Woreda education office experts and cluster supervisors and school CPD facilitators were found to be less helpful. There was failure in arranging training programs, intra and inter-group discussion forums, arranging for scaling up best practices; facilitating and enhancing induction programs; allocating sufficient budget, and encouraging peer evaluation opportunities followed by timely feedback regarding the real implementation of school based continuous professional development. Hence, there was none of sense of ownership and responsibility among continuous professional development stakeholders.

The effective implementation of CPD program in schools was highly challenged by unavailability of material, lack of financial resource, lack of support from concerned bodies i.e. city education TDP experts, principals and supervisors, and other similar problems like absence of motivation, lack of training, lack of well-trained school CPD coordinators were found to be significant inhibitor of CPD practice. Unless the concerned stakeholders tackle these problems, it is difficult to expect much improvement in day-to-day activities of teachers in general and in teaching learning process in particular.

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