

# Teacher Professional Development: *Current Status and Way Forward for Professionalization of Teachers in Sri Lanka*



**NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**

1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR, BLOCK 5,

BANDARANAIKE MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HALL,

BAUDDHALOKA MAWATHA, COLOMBO 07, SRI LANKA

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## Preface

The National Education Commission (NEC), established by the National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991 is a body corporate with the primary mandate to function as the apex policy formulation body of the education sector, and to engage in policy analysis and research, review the ongoing programme and plans with respect to education and undertake research on issues of importance as a prelude to formulation of national education policy and plans at periodic intervals. Going along with the mandate, the NEC has embarked on a series of research studies addressing the some of the current issues faced by the education sector.

This volume deals with the professional development of teachers in Sri Lanka. The educational reform initiatives undertaken by all countries across the globe have recognized the professional development of teachers as an important approach for improving the quality of teaching and learning within schools, thereby to enhance student learning outcomes. In general, it is the common knowledge among the many educationists and researchers, the quality of teachers in the education sector in Sri Lanka appear to be less than at the desired level. Thus, it is imperative, if Sri Lanka to achieve high quality and standards of general education system, determined efforts supported by national policies and strategic activities are required to enhance teacher professional development and promote teacher professionalism.

Against this background, the NEC going along with its mandate, has initiated a study to assess the current status of teacher professional development with the view to propose the way forward for professionalization of teachers in Sri Lanka. This report is the outcome of that study, and it provides details of global trends in teacher professional development, past policy proposals made for improving quality of teacher education in Sri Lanka, and current status of pre-service and in-service teacher education including gaps and short comings and the possible way forward.

Prof. Harischandra Abeygunawardena  
Chairman  
National Education Commission  
December 2023

## List of Abbreviations

- CPD - Continuing Professional Development
- MoE - Ministry of Education
- NCoEs - National Colleges of Education
- NIE - National Institute of Education
- PDES - Provincial Departments of Education
- SLTC - Sri Lanka Teacher Council
- TTCs - Teacher Training Colleges
- TCs - Teacher Centers
- TIMS - Teachers' Instructional Manuals

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

It is universally accepted that the teacher is the most important element in any educational programme. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at every stage of education. In today's context, the teachers' role has gone far beyond teaching. Their role in addition to teaching, involves counselling and mentoring students, and guiding them to become cultured, law-abiding, productive citizens.

In general, a teacher is prepared for this noble role in two distinct but inter-linked stages; pre-service or initial training and in-service training. Initial teacher training is commonly defined as preparation for professional practice usually through formal courses at colleges or universities leading to an educational qualification with which the holders of such qualifications could obtain registration from a professional or accrediting body which would serve as a license to practice as a professional teacher. On the other hand, in-service teacher training refers to continuing engagement in professional development by those who are already in professional practice for continuing improvement their competencies and professionalism.

The development of teachers beyond their initial training serves a number of objectives namely<sup>1</sup>:

- to update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;
- to update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and new educational research;
- to enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice;
- to enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice;
- to exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, e.g. academics, industrialists; and
- to help weaker teachers become more effective.

### 1.1 Definitions of Teacher Professional Development and Teacher Professionalism

The literature provides various definitions of teacher professional development and teacher professionalism. UNESCO/UIS<sup>2</sup> define teacher professional development as '*activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher*', and this definition has also been adopted by OECD (2009). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017)<sup>3</sup> define effective professional development as '*improving teacher practices and students' learning outcomes*'. In addition, Scher & O'Reilly (2009)<sup>4</sup> define professional development having three levels of outcomes: "*immediate outcomes – improvement of teachers' knowledge and beliefs, intermediate outcomes-changes in*

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2009). The Professional Development of Teachers. In: Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS. <https://www.oecd.org/berlin/43541636.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/teachers-professional-development>.

<sup>3</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda; Hyster, Maria E.; Gardner, Madelyn (2017). Effective Teacher Professional Development. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED606743>.

<sup>4</sup> Scher, L. & O'Reilly, F. (2009) Professional Development for K–12 Math and Science Teachers: What Do We Really Know?, *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 2:3, 209 - 249, DOI: 10.1080 / 19345740802641527



*teacher instruction, and long-term - improvements in student achievements*". On the other hand, the term "teacher professionalism" is interpreted in many ways, and having reviewed many literature on this theme, Demrkasimoglu (2010)<sup>5</sup> has defined it as *"the commitment of teachers to the continuing improvement of their competencies and professional standings"*.

As highlighted above, it is imperative, that the teachers must keep on investing in continuous updating of their competencies, particularly in the light of the need for transforming the current teacher-centred, knowledge-imparting paradigm towards a student-centred, activity-based education system to impart knowledge as well as to facilitate acquiring skills and virtues needed to succeed in 21<sup>st</sup>-century society. Based on these definitions, one can state that teacher professional development is aimed to support teachers in improving their competencies related to their work as teachers, and to achieve this goal, the teachers must be having a craving, commitments well as obligation to continue invest on updating of their competencies.

## **1.2 International Literature on Teacher Professional Development**

Teacher professional development aims to improve teacher competencies by adopting a holistic approach to developing the teacher as a professional practitioner. It is a continuing process that supports continuous improvement of teachers' competencies throughout the career of a teacher<sup>6</sup>. Recognizing the value of general education across the globe in preparing students for higher level of education as well for imparting whole array of employability skills (*which are commonly referred to as 21<sup>st</sup> - century skills*) on them, all countries have placed more emphasis to improve their teachers' competencies both in the discipline of their specialization, and in the application of modern teaching-learning, assessment strategies and techniques and tools to improve quality of teaching-learning and learning outcomes<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, teachers' professional development has been drawing much attention from governments, educators, and researchers in almost all countries. The governments of almost all countries have adopted and implemented well-planned policies and strategies to support initial teacher education as well as teachers' engagement and participation while in the service in teacher professional development programmes<sup>8</sup>. As of the policies and norms adopted, the teachers in most developed countries such as the United States, UK, Germany, etc., the teachers are required, and hence obliged to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) activities for their career progression<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Demrkasimoglu, N. 2010. Defining "Teacher Professionalism" from different perspectives. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 2047-2051.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251713243\\_Defining\\_Teacher\\_Professionalism\\_from\\_different\\_perspectives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251713243_Defining_Teacher_Professionalism_from_different_perspectives)

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge Assessments –International Education (2021). Education Brief: Teacher professional development. <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/621009-teacher-professional-development-facsheet.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Kedzior, M. & Fifield, S. (2004). Education Policy Brief -Teacher Professional Development. University of Delaware Education Research and Development Center.

[file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/Teacher\\_Professional\\_Development%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/Teacher_Professional_Development%20(2).pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Desimone, L.M. (2009) Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development: Toward Better Conceptualizations and Measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 181 - 199.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X08331140>

<sup>9</sup> JAQUITH, A., MINDICH, D., WEI, R. C. & DARLING-HAMMOND, L.(2010). Teacher professional learning in the United States: Case Studies of State Policies and Strategies.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265246387\\_Teacher\\_Professional\\_Learning\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Case\\_Studies\\_of\\_State\\_Policies\\_and\\_Strategies\\_Technical\\_Report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265246387_Teacher_Professional_Learning_in_the_United_States_Case_Studies_of_State_Policies_and_Strategies_Technical_Report)

The need for professionalization of teachers has also been increasingly recognized by developing countries as well. Very recently, the Government of India has formulated their National Education Policy 2020<sup>10</sup>, and this document states that a *'common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022 by the National Council for Teacher Education which will be restructured to form as a Professional Standard Setting Body (PSSB) under the General Education Council (GEC). The standards would cover expectations of the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stages, and the competencies required for the respective stages. The professional standards will be reviewed and revised in 2030, and thereafter every ten years, on the basis of rigorous empirical analysis of the efficacy of the system'*.

Nonetheless, a study commissioned by the Asian Development Bank<sup>11</sup> on teacher professional development in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, concluded that teachers' professionalism should be improved in all 3 countries for promoting further improvements in teaching and learning processes. Further, the report stated that *"in Sri Lanka, teachers are not considered "professionals" and improvement of teacher quality requires new thinking on how to prepare the next generation of teachers to act in the role of facilitator while exhibiting the professional standards required to meet the requirements of the global trends and qualities expected of professionals"*.

### **1.3 Sri Lankan Literature on Teacher Professional Development**

In Sri Lanka, the adopted definition of teacher professional development encompasses two components, namely pre-service and in-service development<sup>12</sup>. Pre-service teacher education in Sri Lanka is provided primarily by two types of institutions - Departments/ Faculties of Education in Universities, and the National Colleges of Education (NCoEs). However, in the absence of a strict adherence to the need of specialized training leading to a professional qualification to become a teacher, applicants with diverse academic qualifications which have no relevance to education or teaching such as Bachelors' degrees (in discipline such as Science, Social Science and Humanities, Science, Agriculture, etc.), Higher National Diplomas, and even G.C.E. (A/L) and G.C. E. (O/L) certificate holders have continuously been recruited into to the teacher cadre in Sri Lanka<sup>13</sup>.

In-service teacher training includes both at institution-based, post-recruitment long-term training leading to diploma, degrees and masters and above, and in-service, short-term continuing education programmes. The post-recruitment training programmes leading to diploma, degrees and masters and above are offered by several institutes such as the Departments/Faculties of Education in Universities

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<sup>10</sup> National Education Policy. (2020), Ministry of Human Resource Development, India. [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/).

<sup>11</sup> Asian Development Bank Report (2017). Innovative Strategies for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia: Teacher Professional Development—Special Focus on Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. <https://www.adb.org/publications/innovative-strategies-teacher-professional-development-bangladesh-nepal-sri-lanka>

<sup>12</sup> Sethunga, P., Wijesundera, S., Kalamany, T. & Karunanayake, S. (2014). Study on the professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Sri Lanka. National Education Commission. [www.nec.lk](http://www.nec.lk).

<sup>13</sup> Karunartne, S. & Peiris, K.S.K. (2023). Teachers in Sri Lanka: Situational Analysis of Teacher Establishment and Deployment. NEC Research Series (2023) – Volume 1, National Education Commission. [www.nec.lk](http://www.nec.lk)

and the National Institute of Education (NIE) while the in-service continuing education programmes are provided by multitude of institutions; NIE, Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and Teacher Centers (TCs) coming under the purview of the Ministry of Education. In additions, in-service training for teachers are also provided with continuing professionals training at school level, through School-Based Professional Teacher Development (SBPTD) programmes with the participation of In-service Teacher Advisors (ISAs) and resource persons drawn from the same schools and also from nearby schools.

In Sri Lanka, as stated elsewhere, a professional qualification is not a compulsory requirement for recruitment into teacher cadres unlike what is practiced in most other countries, particularly in advanced countries where applicants need to have a professional degree in education or a post-graduate diploma in education as an entry requirement for the teaching profession. Though the teacher recruitment and promotion system is based on the Teacher Service Minute of 1995 (as amended in March 1997, May 2005, October 2014, and April 2019)<sup>14</sup>, which prescribe the requirements for recruitment and promotion - such as academic and professional qualification in a field related to education, participation in in-service training, number of years of service, results of professional review, etc., the degree of adherence to the prescribed requirements in practice is questionable. As stated elsewhere, applicants with diverse qualifications with no relevance to education and with no expertise in education are recruited as teachers. In granting promotions, the number of years of service and results of professional review are given the precedence over the other criteria for promotions. In reviewing the practices relating teacher recruitment and promotion, Sethunga et al. (2014)<sup>15</sup> argued that the professional review is limited only to the completion and attestation of the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) Form by the principal, and thus stressed the need of a teacher recruitment and promotion system that relies on well laid down criteria and assessment tools which are adhered and implemented in rigorous manner.

Going along with its continuing interest and focus on the teacher professional development, the National Education Commission in its policy recommendations made since early 2000 had highlighted the need for promoting professionalization of teachers in Sri Lanka. The National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri Lanka (2003)<sup>16</sup> highlighted the need of a consistent teacher education policy coupled with streamlining the governance and management of teacher training institutions and improving educational programmes (i.e. curricula, syllabi and delivery), and quality assurance and staff development procedures. In addition to that it suggested the need for the establishment of a professional body, the Teacher Development Board for overseeing the academic and professional advancement of teachers. A study commissioned by the NEC in 2014<sup>17</sup> on professional development of Teachers and Teacher Educators in Sri Lanka has made 12 rational recommendations in this regards. Among those recommendations, the need for the establishment of a professional body was reiterated

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Education (1995). Sri Lanka Teachers' Service Minute (1885/38 dated 2014-10-23).

<sup>15</sup> Sethunga, P., Wijesundera, S., Kalamany, T. & Karunanayake, S. (2014). Study on the professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Sri Lanka. National Education Commission. [www.nec.lk](http://www.nec.lk).

<sup>16</sup> Proposal for a National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri Lanka, (2003), National Education Commission, Sri Lanka

<sup>17</sup> National Education Commission (2014). Sethunga, P., Wijesundera, S., Kalamany, T. & Karunanayake, S. (2014). Study on the professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Sri Lanka. [www.nec.lk](http://www.nec.lk).

and a proposal was made to establish the National Council for Regulation and Control of the Teaching Profession (NCRCTP) to uphold the dignity of teacher profession by defining and establishing a set of teacher standards for both appraising teacher quality, and for regular monitoring and modernizing teacher education programmes. The NEC again in 2016, through its “National Policy on General Education in Sri Lanka (2016)”<sup>18</sup> has made 35 recommendations on promoting professional development of teachers, including those of 2014 recommendations. It further explained what a teacher as a professional has to perform in the classroom – he/she not only has to be thorough in the contents of subjects and well versed in educational theory and practice, but also act as a mentor guiding students while upholding moral and ethical standards.

The NEC in 2022, through its most recent national education policy proposal document titled the National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030)-Volume II – Policy Proposals and Recommended Strategic Activities for General Education<sup>19</sup>, highlighted that poor teacher quality and standards emanating from inadequacies in pre-service and in-service teacher training is an issue that require urgent attention. It has made several proposals and accompanying recommended strategic activities to address the gaps and shortcomings. It reiterated the previous policy recommendations made and re-emphasized the need for establishing institutional mechanism to maintain quality and standards of teaching profession. It emphatically stated that only through such mechanism, the teacher education programmes both initial and in-service teacher training could be formalized and assured of quality and standards.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Having recognized the importance of fostering teacher professionalism, as a part of the continuing policy analysis and research agenda, the NEC has decided to conduct a study to assess the current status with regard to the teacher professional development, with emphasis on in-service professional development opportunities provided to teachers in State service to advance their professional competencies. The outcome of this research study is expected to exemplify the real picture of the current status of teacher professional development, particularly the strengths and weaknesses of the continuing professional development opportunities offered to the teachers in-service and guide in proposing the way forward to promote teacher professional development and teacher professionalism in Sri Lanka.

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<sup>18</sup> Proposals for a National Policy on General Education in Sri Lanka (2016). National Education Commission, Sri Lanka

<sup>19</sup> National Education Commission. (2022). National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030). In National Education Commission. Department of Government Printing. <https://nec.gov.lk/national-education-policy-framework-2020-2030/>

## Chapter 2: Research Approach

### 2.1 Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted with a specific focus on assessing the current status of the professional development of teachers in Sri Lanka with primary emphasis on finding out the availability of in-service teacher professional development programmes, respondents' perceptions on available programmes and their quality and relevance, availability of resources to implement what is learned at school level, and ascertaining the views, and suggestions and recommendations from respondents with the aim of providing recommendations for the development of a strategic framework for teacher professional development in line with the national needs and the global trends.

### 2.2 Methodology

To achieve the objective of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing teacher professional development programmes and practices to provide recommendations for a National Strategic Framework for Teacher Professionalization, the descriptive research approach adopting mixed method research where used for the study to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study<sup>20,21</sup>. The questionnaire survey was conducted to collect the data from the teachers from a selected sample of schools representing all types of schools across all nine provinces in Sri Lanka. In addition, field visits were conducted to selected teacher training institutions to conduct documentary reviews and focus group discussions, and to observe facilities. Thus, this study was executed over two consecutive phases; Phase I: Primary Data Collection and Phase II: Field Visits to selected teacher training institutions to conduct documentary reviews and focus group discussions and to observe facilities.

#### Phase I: Primary Data Collection

**Sampling procedure:** The teacher population serving in all the government schools in Sri Lanka was considered as the population of the study. Using a stratified random sampling method, a sample of 2000 teachers was selected representing all types of school categories (1AB, 1C, Type 2, and Type 3) and all levels of education - primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and upper senior secondary or collegiate levels. Annual School Census Data<sup>22</sup> was used as a base to select a representative sample.

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<sup>20</sup> Shorten, A., & Smith, J. (2017). Mixed methods research: expanding the evidence base. <https://ebn.bmj.com/content/ebnurs/early/2017/06/13/eb-2017-102699.full.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Glass, G. V., & Hopkins, K. D. (1984). *statistical methods in education and psychology*. (2nd ed.). Prentice-hall.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education (2020). Annual School Census of Sri Lanka [Review of Annual School Census of Sri Lanka]. In Ministry of Education. <https://moe.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/School-Census-Report-2020-V3.pdf>



Table 2.1 : Sample selection for questionnaire survey

School type	Population Size	Sample Size	Percentage %
1AB	82,244	660	0.8
1C	67,837	543	0.8
Type 2	61,728	494	0.8
Type 3	37,683	303	0.8
Total	<b>249,494</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>0.8</b>

**Data collection procedure:** The main primary data collection tool for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was drafted by conducting several rounds of discussions with experts to determine its content validity. Initially, a pilot survey was conducted by administering the draft questionnaire on a sample of 10 teachers. Thereafter, based on the feedback from the respondents, the final questionnaire was prepared and translated into Sinhala and Tamil languages. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value and the value is 0.898 which is considered acceptable. The response format of the questionnaire included forced choices coupled with a Likert Scale rating and open-ended questions. Questions of the questionnaire were formulated under four themes namely; basic demographic information of respondents, availability of professional development programmes, availability of physical resources to support teacher professional development, and suggestions and recommendations of the respondents. The questionnaire survey was commenced by sending questionnaires via registered post including self-stamped envelopes to the principals of randomly selected schools to return filled questionnaires by normal post to the National Education Commission.

## Phase II: Field visits

Field visits were made to selected pre-service and in-service teacher development institutes to conduct discussions with the heads of the institutions and focus group discussions with academic staff and students, observe physical and human resources, and examine the documents relating to curricula, teaching-learning process, assessment and evaluation procedures, etc.

**Sampling Procedure:** A purposive sample of institutions was selected from the different categories to collect more qualitative data on strengths and weaknesses of existing teacher education and professionalization programs and practices. The sample of teacher training institutions (TTIs) visited are listed in the table below. Researchers were compelled to curtail the field visits due to the pandemic situation prevailing in the country at the time.



Table 2.2: Details of sample of TTIs covered by the field visits

No.	Institutes	No. of Institutes	No. of Respondents
1	National Colleges of Education (NCosE)	03	2 Presidents 3 20 Academic Staff 60 Students
2	Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs)	01	1 Principal 6 Academic Staff 50 Students
3	Teacher Training Centres (TCs)	05	5 Centre Managers 3 Academic Staff
4	Provincial Departments of Education (PDEs)	03	30 Directors of Education

**Data collection procedure:** Field visits were made to three (03) National Colleges of Education, one (01) Teacher Training College, five (05) Teacher Training Centres and three (03) Provincial Departments of Education. The purpose of the visits for the first three types of teacher training establishments was to observe on physical and human resources, curricula and syllabi, teaching-learning process, assessment, etc., while the visit to the Provincial Departments of Education was made to make inquiries about their involvement in facilitating in-service teacher professional development programmes.

### 2.3 Data analysis

Data were fed to the SPSS 22.0 software and analysis was done using percentages, descriptive statistics, and correlations. The correlation between received professional development programmes with selected variables such as province, teacher category, and teacher service were measured using Spearman Rank-order Correlation.

## Chapter 3: Results

In the Phase I of the study, 650 teachers out of the targeted number of 2,000 responded to the questionnaire administered through the post and their responses were used for this analysis. In Phase II of the study, 9 teacher training institutions (3 NCoEs, 1 TTCs and 5 TCs) and 3 Provincial Departments of Educations (PDEs) were visited to hold discussions with heads of Institutions and staff and observe/examine the facilities and documents and processes. The results are presented under two sub-headings: 3.1. Phase I: Findings from Sample Survey of Teachers and 3.2. Phase II: Findings of Field Visits.

### 3.1 Findings of Sample Survey of Teachers

Results are presented under the following headings: a) Demographic information of respondents, b) Qualification profile of the respondents, c) Availability and teacher perception of professional development programmes, d) Availability of required physical resources to support teacher professional development, e) Recommendations and suggestions of respondents to improve existing professional development programmes.

#### 3.1.1 Demographic information of the respondents

The demographic profile analysis of 650 teachers is presented in Table 3.1. The majority of respondents (78.3%) were females. The majority of the respondents (69.4%) were in the age group 30-49 years and belong to service category of Class 1 (28.7%) and Class 2 (53.2%). Similarly, the majority of the respondents were graduate-trained teachers (41.5%) and another 40.3% were trained teachers. Further, the results showed, even though the percentage was low (< 5%), there was a category of untrained or other category teachers. The highest rate of responses was received from teachers from 1AB schools (35.2%) while the lowest response rate was from Type 3 schools (14.8%). Further, as shown in Figure 3.1, the majority of graduate-trained teachers (122) and trained teachers (66) were distributed in 1AB schools.

Table 3.1 : Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic of Respondent	Respondent	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Males	141	21.7
	Females	509	78.3
Age	Less than 30	53	8.2
	30-39	224	34.5
	40-49	227	34.9
	50 or above	146	22.5
Grade of teacher service	Class 1	187	28.7
	Class 2 – Grade I	151	23.2

	Class 2 – Grade II	195	30.0
	Class 3 – Grade I	93	14.3
	Class 3 – Grade II	18	2.8
	Other	6	0.9
Teacher category	Untrained	14	2.2
	Trained	262	40.3
	Graduate untrained	87	13.4
	Graduate trained	270	41.5
	Other	17	2.6
Type of school	1AB	229	35.2
	1C	168	25.8
	Type 2	157	24.2
	Type 3	96	14.8

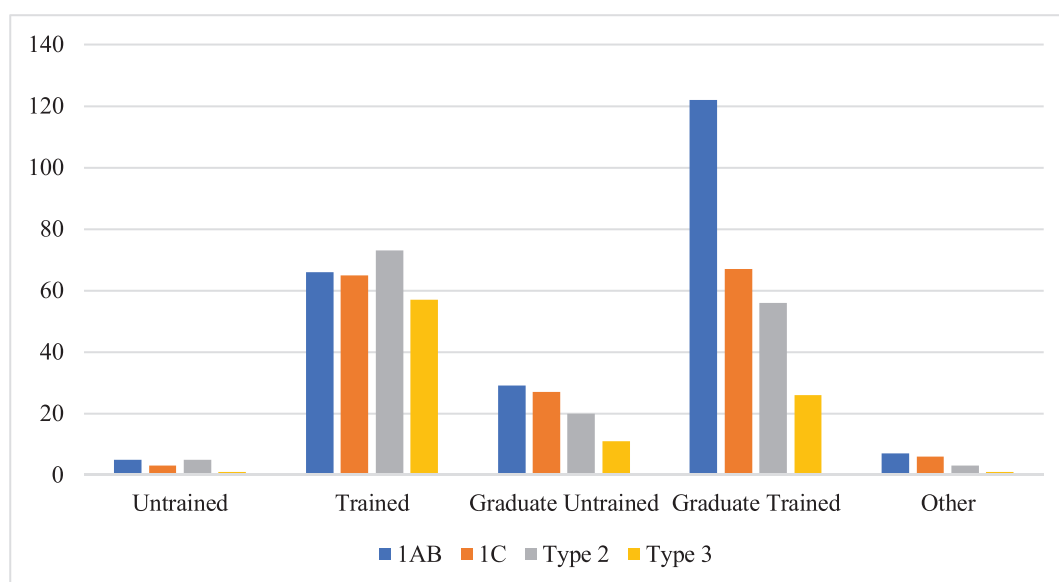


Figure 3.1 Distribution of different teacher categories in different types of schools

### 3.1.2 Qualification profile of the respondents

As shown in Table 3.2, the majority of the respondents (48.5%) were with bachelors' level qualifications (BA- 33.2%; BEd - 3.8%; & BSc -11.5%). Surprisingly, 41.7% were having only the G. C. E. (A/L) or G. C. E. (O/L) as their highest educational qualification. When it comes to professional qualifications, 504 respondents have acquired the required professional qualification: B.Ed. (3.8%), National Diploma in Teaching (NDT - 21.7%), and certificate in teacher training (15.8%). In addition, a significant number of respondents (36.2%) have completed Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). However, a considerable number of teachers (134; 20.6%) have not completed any kind of post-recruitment, professional development programme.

Table 3.2: Educational and Professional Qualifications of the respondents

		Frequency	Percentage %
Highest education qualification	M.Phil.	5	0.8
	M.A.	25	3.8
	M.Sc.	12	1.8
	M. Ed.	17	2.6
	B. A.	216	33.2
	B.Ed	25	3.8
	B. Sc.	75	11.5
	G. C. E. (A/L)	213	32.8
	G. C. E. (O/L)	58	8.9
	Other	04	0.6
Professional Qualification	B. Ed.	25	3.8
	National Diploma in Teaching (NDT)	141	21.7
	Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	235	36.2
	Certificate in teacher training	103	15.8
	No professional qualifications	134	20.6
	Other	12	1.8

### 3.1.3 Availability of professional development programmes

During the period of 2018/2019, 61.1% of the teachers of the sample population participated in teacher professional development programmes. As shown in Figure 3.2, 77.5% of teachers in Uva Province participated in teacher professional development programmes while only 29.8% and 48.4% of respondents from Northern and Eastern Provinces, respectively participated in teacher professional development programmes. This shows a disparity in the availability of teacher professional development programmes across provinces.

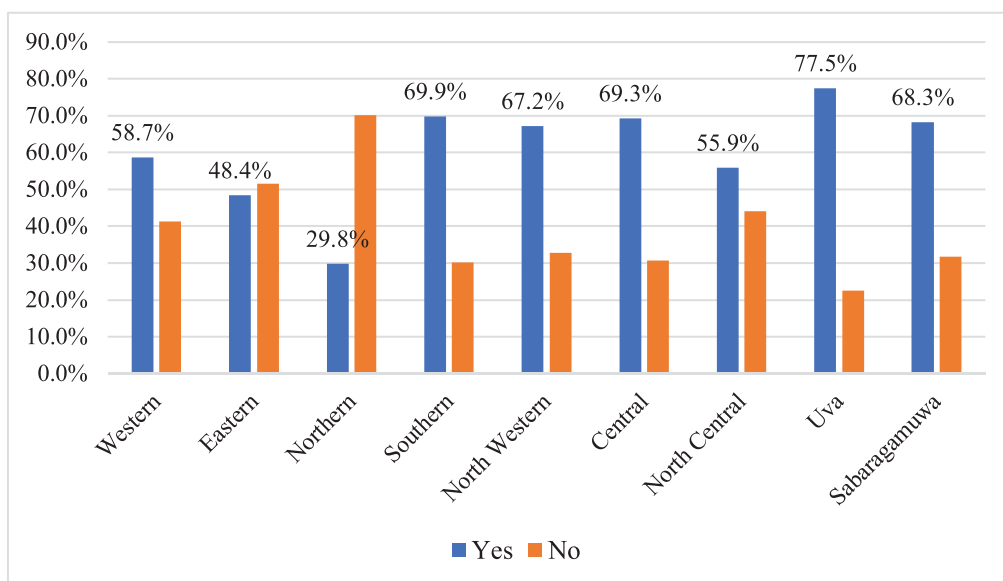


Figure 3.2: Availability/received of professional development programmes in different provinces

As shown in Table 3.3, the participation in teacher professional development programmes significantly correlated with the Province (-0.129,  $P < 0.01$ ), teacher category (0.088,  $P < 0.05$ ), and teacher service (0.110,  $P < 0.01$ ).

Table 3.3: Correlation of Participation in Professional Development Programmes with Province, Teacher Category and Teacher Service

	Spearman rank-order correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Province	-0.129**	0.001
Teacher category	0.088*	0.025
Teacher Service	0.110**	0.005

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 3.1.4 Source of Training

As regards the source of training, as depicted in Figure 3.3, 38% of the respondents received teacher professional development through more than one institution such as NIE, MoE, TCs, etc. Though the School-Based Professional Teacher Development (SBPTD) programmes are considered a vital component in teacher professional development, it has reached only 8% of the respondents. The results of the analysis show the available opportunities through zonal, provincial and national levels opportunities are few.

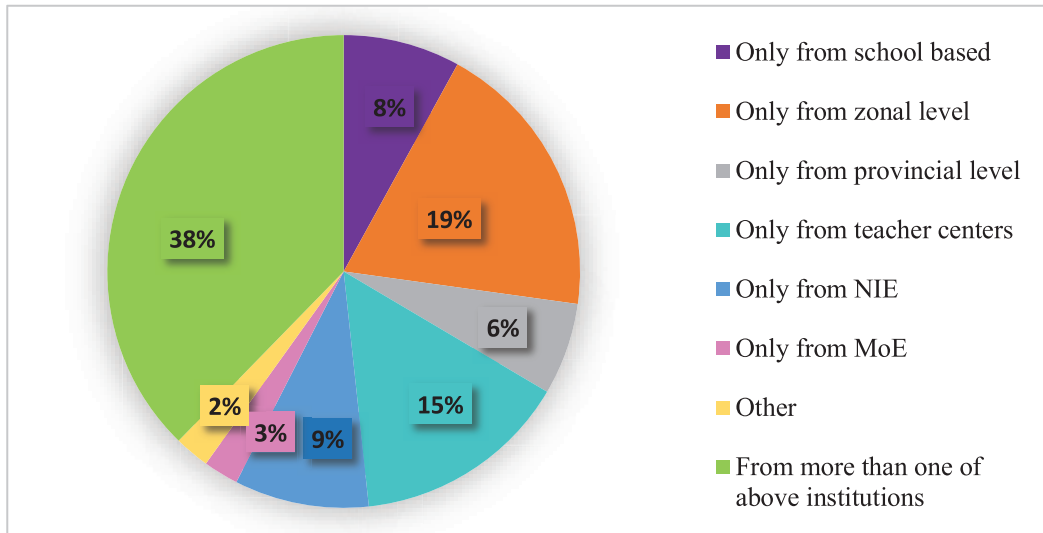


Figure 3.3: Institutions Providing Teacher Professional Development Programmes

### 3.1.5 Training themes/topics covered by available teacher professional development programmes

The responses of teachers on most commonly offered continuing professional development training programmes are presented in Table 3.4. The programme in which most of the teachers participated were related to “training to improve knowledge on subject content development” (68.3%), “training on student-centred teaching-learning methods” (62.5%), “teacher training on assessment aids preparation” (50.5%), “training on the preparation of teaching aids” (49.7%), “training on new educational trends and reforms” (46.0%) and “training on examination paper setting and moderation” (35.2%). Only one-third of the respondents had undergone training programmes on ICT-related topics; such as training on topics related to ICT skills such as training on multimedia usage for teaching and learning (34.5%), training on online teaching (29.1%), and use of ICT technologies in teaching (26.5%). In addition, nearly one-third of the respondents had undergone “training on effective implementation of quality circles” (28.5%) and a quarter of respondents had gone through “training on research methodologies” (23.8%). Only a few respondents had undergone training on “training in teaching students with special needs” (14.2%).

Table 3.4: Training Areas/Themes Covered by Available Teacher Professional Development Programmes

Training Areas/Themes	Agreed %	Neutral %	Not agreed %	Not Responded %
Received training to improve knowledge on subject content development	68.3	22.2	8.3	1.2
Received training on student-centred teaching-learning methods	62.5	23.2	11.4	2.9



Received teacher training on assessment aids preparation	<b>50.5</b>	28.8	18.0	2.8
Received training on the preparation of teaching aids	<b>49.7</b>	29.1	18.0	3.2
Received training on new educational trends and reforms	<b>46.0</b>	26.8	24.2	3.1
Received training on examination paper setting and moderation	<b>35.2</b>	26.8	34.0	4.0
Received training on multimedia usage for teaching and assessments	34.5	30.6	33.5	1.4
Received training on online teaching	29.1	21.5	<b>45.2</b>	4.2
Received training on effective implementation of quality circles	28.5	<b>35.1</b>	32.8	3.7
Received training on the utilization of ICT technologies	26.5	30.9	<b>38.2</b>	4.5
Received training on research methodologies	23.8	24.9	<b>45.4</b>	5.8
Received training in teaching students with special needs	14.2	15.5	<b>67.2</b>	3.1

### 3.1.6 Respondents' perceptions on the training received

According to the responses received, the majority have highlighted they were benefitted by the training received as those training programmes have updated their knowledge and skills. The strengths they have highlighted are; (a) updating knowledge, (b) helping to improve their confidence and personality, (c) improving their ability to understand students, (d) gaining knowledge regarding activity-based, student-centered learning methodologies, (e) improving knowledge on administrative procedures, (f) creating linkages among teachers and schools, and (g) improving attitudes and outlook as teachers. Even though most of the respondents were appreciating the opportunities provided through continuing professional development programmes, they highlighted several weaknesses and constraints that need to be addressed; these include, (a) presence of stereotyped less attractive programmes, (b) lack of proper coordination between organizing agency and resource persons, (c) poor quality of resource persons, (d) poorly designed training programmes where objectives are not matching with the content of the programme, (e) weakness of resource persons in time management, (f) inadequate use of modern technologies, and (g) inadequacy of facilities to participate in programmes such as transport, leave and covering work.

### 3.1.7 Respondents' satisfaction on the support received for the continuing professional development from different stakeholders

Respondents' perceptions, the support received from stakeholders at different levels to complete professional development programmes are shown in Table 3.5. According to the results of the analysis, respondents agreed that they received enough support to engage in continuing professional development programmes from school management ( $3.89 \pm 0.72$ ), colleagues ( $3.88 \pm 0.69$ ), senior teachers ( $3.99 \pm 0.70$ ), relevant Subject Directors ( $3.56 \pm 0.92$ ), and In-service Advisors (ISA) ( $3.72 \pm 0.97$ ).

Table 3.5: Support Received for Professional Development from Different Stakeholders

	Mean $\pm$ SD Level of agreement
Received enough support from school management	3.89 $\pm$ 0.72
Received enough support from colleagues	3.88 $\pm$ 0.69
Received enough support from senior teachers	3.99 $\pm$ 0.70
Received enough support from Subject Directors	3.56 $\pm$ 0.92
Received enough support from ISAs	3.72 $\pm$ 0.97

Likert scale: 5 –fully agreed, 4- agreed, 3- moderate, 2- not agreed, 1- completely not agreed

### 3.1.8 Respondents’ interest in competency building through professional development programmes

As shown in the Figure 3.4, 33.5% of the respondents wish to improve their confidence as teachers and improve their skills in promoting creative team work (49.5%), problem solving (42.6%), verbal communication s (34%), and writing (30.7%). They are also interested in learning about the application of modern technology in teaching and learning, updating knowledge on subject matters, leadership skills, etc.

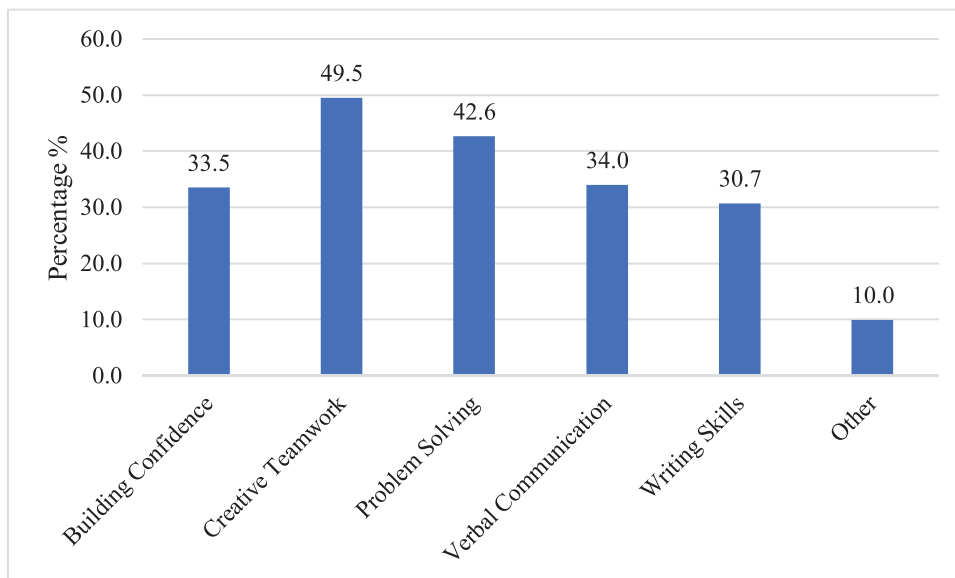


Figure 3.4: Respondents’ Interests in Competency Building through Professional Development Programmes

### 3.1.9 Respondents’ perception on teacher professional development programmes

As shown in Table 3.6, the majority of teachers (3.97 $\pm$ 0.72) were aware of the value of professional development programmes and showed their interest to participate in teacher professional development programmes. Similarly, they are moderately satisfied with the teacher professional development opportunities provided by the responsible institutions (3.03 $\pm$ 0.79). Further, they highly agreed with the statement “Professional development is

important for the performance improvement of students and teachers and helps in improvement of teaching skills” (3.67±0.81). Respondents were having moderate impression on provision of adequate resources required for the teacher professional development programmes by responsible institutes (2.99±0.83) and time allocation for teacher professional development programmes (2.97±0.86). Similar response was observed for the statement “Follow-up programmes are present to monitor the application of knowledge and skills acquired from teacher professional development programmes” (2.92±0.86). Further, respondents were not agreed on both statements “Adequate financial support is provided to teachers to engage in professional development programmes” (2.38±0.84) and “Adequate financial support is provided to schools for teacher professional development programmes” (2.34±0.85).

Table 3.6: Respondents’ Perception of Teacher Professional Development Programmes

	Mean ±SD Level of agreement
I value the importance of professional development programmes for improving my competencies as a teacher and look forward to participate in such programmes	3.97±0.72
Adequate teacher professional development opportunities are provided by the responsible institutions	3.03±0.79
Teacher professional development is important for the performance improvement of students and teachers	4.35±0.62
Current professional development programmes improve my teaching skills.	3.67±0.81
Adequate resources required for the teacher professional development programmes provided by responsible institutions	2.99±0.83
Time allocation for teacher professional development programmes is adequate	2.97±0.86
Follow-up programmes are present to monitor the application of knowledge and skills acquired from teacher professional development programmes	2.92±0.86
Adequate financial support is provided to teachers to engage in teacher professional development programmes	2.38±0.84
Adequate financial support is provided to schools for teacher professional development programmes	2.34±0.85

*Likert Scale: 5-fully agreed, 4-agreed, 3-moderate, 2-not agreed, 1-Not agreed fully*

### 3.1.10 Frequency of participating in workshops and meetings

The analysis of the regularity of participation in workshops revealed that 34.5% of the respondents have not at all participated in module planning and re-preparation workshops. Only 12.6% of respondents have responded that they are always take part in module planning and re-preparation workshops. Only 12.0% of the respondents very often participate in those workshops. However, the majority of the respondents sometimes (28.8%), very often (22.0%), and always (26.5%) participate in training programmes in teaching methodologies. Similarly,

respondents participate sometimes (21.2%), very often (17.4%), and always (28.8%) in module coordinating meetings related to their teaching subjects.

### 3.1.11 Frequency of using skills and knowledge gained through teacher professional development programmes to improve the teaching-learning process

As shown in Table 3.7, only 26.5% of the respondents always shared experiences and teaching resources with their colleagues and a considerable portion of the respondents (39.5%) very often share their experiences and teaching resources. A similar result was observed with the statement “I do reflection studies with my teaching” showing 38.5% of the respondents very often and another 39.2% always do the reflection studies. Similarly, a considerable part of the respondents (31.5%) always improve their lessons by assessing them according to what they have learned through teacher professional development programmes. However, the majority (not at all – 24.9% and seldom – 18.9%) of the respondents do not maintain a journal to record their experiences and recall them. Besides, that a majority of the respondents use knowledge and experience gained from the professional development programmes in a variety professional activities; in peer review process (19.4%), examination paper setting (34.9%), reflection studies to get an idea on student success in exams, students’ assimilation of subject contents and reaching learning outcomes (43.8%), and in experimenting with problems in teaching subject contents (34.6%).

Table 3.7: How often teachers used skills and knowledge gained through teacher professional development programmes to improve teaching-learning process

Agreement on how often	Not at all %	Seldom %	Sometime %	Very Often %	Always %	Not Responded %
I share my experience and teaching resources with my colleagues	0.9	4.8	26.2	39.5	26.5	2.2
I do reflection studies with my teaching	0.3	4.2	14.9	38.5	39.2	2.9
I asses my lessons to further improvements	3.1	4.9	19.8	37.7	31.5	2.9
I maintain a journal to record my experiences and to recall them	24.9	18.9	27.1	14.3	9.2	5.5
I actively engage in peer review	5.8	9.8	31.1	29.4	19.4	4.5
I work together with colleagues for paper setting	6.2	9.1	22.3	24.6	34.9	2.9

I do reflection studies to get an idea on student success in exams, content assimilation and reaching learning outcomes	1.2	1.2	10.6	39.8	43.8	3.2
I use teaching methodologies to experiment problems in teaching content	0.6	3.4	16	42	34.6	3.4

### 3.1.12 Availability of required physical resources to support teacher professional development

The responses of the survey participants on the availability of physical resources to support teacher professional development are given in Table 3.8. As regards to class room facilities, nearly half of the respondents (44.1%) stated that they have adequate classroom facilities, while nearly a third (29.4%) indicated the shortcomings with respect to classroom facilities. As regards to other facilities nearly half of the respondents indicated inadequacies - laboratory (47.4%), computer labs (43.5%), equipment for labs (46.5%), activity rooms (49.5%), staffroom (65.7%), and internet (57.1%). Out of 650 respondents, around half of the respondents that they have adequate learning aids (agreed 16.7% and moderately agreed 44.0%). However, most of the respondents agreed that they have adequate electricity (agreed - 59.3%; moderately agreed 23.7%) and library (agreed- 42.9%; moderately agreed -25.8%) facilities.

Table 3.8: Availability of required physical resources to support teacher professional development

Available physical resources	Agreed %	Moderate %	Disagree %	Not responded %
Adequate Classrooms	<b>44.1</b>	23.8	29.4	2.6
Laboratory	23.0	23.8	<b>47.4</b>	5.7
Computer labs	26.3	25.7	<b>43.5</b>	4.5
Equipment for labs	17.1	29.4	<b>46.5</b>	7.1
Adequate activity rooms	16.1	29.7	<b>49.5</b>	4.6
Adequate space in the staffroom	10.3	20.3	<b>65.7</b>	3.7
Separate staffroom facilities	27.0	23.0	<b>45.7</b>	4.0
Library	<b>42.9</b>	25.8	27.7	3.5
Learning aids	16.7	44.0	36.9	2.5
Internet	18.8	21.4	<b>57.1</b>	2.8
Electricity	<b>59.3</b>	23.7	13.1	4.0

As illustrated in Table 3.9, the majority of respondents agreed they have adequate textbooks (78.0%), TIMS (76.5%), and syllabi (75.8%) required for teacher professional development. Further, as a result of the analysis, only 18.9% of respondents agreed that they have adequate

electronic material required for their professional development and 40% disagreed with that. When considering the availability of adequate quality circle material and the opportunity available to purchase QCM for professional development only 26% and 23% agreed with them respectively. Similarly, a considerable portion (22.7%) agreed that they are having adequate resources in libraries and another 27.4% of respondents were disagreed.

Table 3.9: Availability of learning aids for the teaching-learning process

<b>Availability of learning aids</b>	<b>Agreed %</b>	<b>Moderate %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Not respondent %</b>
Adequate Availability of Textbooks	78.0	11.2	7.0	3.8
Adequate Availability of TIMS	76.5	14.8	6.3	2.5
Adequate Availability of Syllabi	75.8	14.3	5.2	4.6
Adequate Availability of Electronic Material	18.9	38.0	40.0	3.1
Adequate Availability of Quality Circle Material	26.0	39.2	30.4	4.3
Adequate Opportunities to Purchase QCM	23.0	39.4	33.7	3.8
Adequate Library Resources	22.7	46.6	27.4	3.2

### **3.1.13 Recommendations and suggestions of respondents to improve existing professional development programmes**

The respondents' suggestions and recommendations to improve existing professional development programmes are listed in Table 3.10. As they have mentioned 77.1% of them agreed teacher professional development programmes are required to update their knowledge and improve their competencies as a teacher. Similarly, respondents agreed that they need CPDs to upgrade their knowledge and skills in many areas relevant to their jobs; such as, communication skills to facilitate greater interaction with students (76.4%), assessment skills (72.0%), online teaching skills (67.5%), class management skills (74.5%), and positive attitudes and outlook (74.6%).



Table 3.10: Suggestions and recommendations of respondents

	Agreed %	Moderate %	Disagree %	Not responded %
Require CPD programmes to update teachers' knowledge and competencies	77.1%	15.7%	3.1%	4.2%
Require to improve communication skills to facilitate interaction with students and peers	76.4%	17.7%	2.2%	3.8%
Require to improve assessment Skills	72.0%	21.1%	2.0%	4.9%
Require to improve skills on application of online teaching methodologies	67.5%	18.6%	9.5%	4.3%
Require to improve class management skills	74.5%	18.8%	2.8%	4.0%
Need to develop positive attitudes and outlook through professional development	74.6%	16.8%	5.0%	3.7%

### 3.2 Findings of the Field Visits

The purpose of the field visits is to get first-hand information on the extent of availability of physical and human resources, curricula and syllabi of teacher training, teaching-learning process, assessment and evaluations, etc., at the teacher training establishments and seek stakeholder views on the current teacher development programmes with respect to facilities, resources, curricula and syllabi and learner welfare.

As shown in Table 2.2, the field visits covered four key types of institutions; National Colleges of Education (03), Teacher Training Colleges (01), Teacher Training Centres (05) and Provincial Departments of Education (03). The first 3 types of institutions directly deal with teacher training while the Provincial Departments of Education plays an important role as a key facilitator in teacher development by providing funds and other logistic support. These institutions were selected purposively to allow the NEC team to visit the places with its limited human and physical capacity. Further, the efforts were made as far as possible to include the relevant institutes with teacher development representing the different categories of institutions. Though the number of visits made were rather limited, the findings below nevertheless give a glimpse at the current status of the teacher training institutions.

#### **a) National Colleges of Education (NCoEs):**

The primary purpose of the NCoEs is to provide initial training for candidates who have opted to become teachers. At present there are 19 NCoEs located throughout the island. Though, the 3 NCoEs visited are located in strategic locations and on relatively large land premises, the facilities were not well-maintained. The buildings and teaching and learning facilities and resources (i.e. lecture halls/auditoriums, laboratories, IT related equipment) and common amenities such as hostels, canteen, etc., were indeed in need of better up-keep. As revealed by the higher management and staff this shortcoming appears to be due to lack of adequate financial allocations provided for facility maintenance. As highlighted at the stakeholder discussions, the higher management and staff, despite many constraints, appear to be determined to put their full efforts to maintain the quality teaching learning process and student welfare to best of their abilities. Nonetheless, they have highlighted many other shortcomings.

The most critical issue highlighted by the higher management and academic staff was the staff shortage. It appears that the staff strength has been depleted over the years, and as a result the workload of the existing staff has increased substantially, most often reaching at a critical level. Moreover, the teaching of many subjects depends on the availability of visiting lecturers, and again this high dependency on visiting staff create many administrative and logistical issues. They highlighted the need for attracting qualified staff into the permanent staff of the colleges. In addition, many academic staff complained about inadequacies of opportunities provided to them to engage in in-service professional development training programmes to update the knowledge in their respective fields and facilitate their career advancement.

Another major shortcoming highlighted was the outdated curricula and syllabi. As highlighted, the curricula of the academic training programme have not been revised since 2010. Further, the current curricula appear to be overloaded with subject contents without giving adequate coverage on practical applications, and this is even same for the practical disciplines such as agriculture and aesthetics. Teaching appears to be more towards teacher-centric, with primary focus on preparing students for exam-oriented outcomes.

Another complaint made by teachers was the lack of opportunities given to the teachers to take part in the preparation for the final assessments of the students that they have taught. As of the current system, the academic staff of the colleges are not being given enough opportunities to take part in setting question papers for the subjects they teach. As stated by the teachers, this system appears to lead to many inconsistencies between the taught syllabi and the scope and focus of the final question papers.

Higher management and academic staff have also complained about the defects in current student selection process for NCoEs. As explained by them, the admission criteria were changed from the Z-score based pre-selection followed by conducting aptitude test to a Z-score-based quota system tagged to divisional secretariat levels without administering an

apptitude test. Selected students through the new method appear to be less endowed academically compared to those students who were admitted on z-score cum aptitude test-based results. This appears to have badly affected to the quality of the trainee students as well as of quality of outputs from the system.

Another issue highlighted by the higher management and academic staff as well as by the trainee students was the monthly allowance paid to trainee students. Presently, Rs. 5000/= per month given as a training allowance which appears to be hardly adequate to meet their needs in the light of increasing cost of living. This appears have badly affected their welfare and moral and commitment to engage in the teaching learning process.

Another lingering issue highlighted by the higher management, academic staff as well as students was the need for upgrading the 3-year diploma level academic programmes to 4-year degree-level study programmes with concurrent upgrading of the status of the NCoEs to university status. As emphasized by them, this will not only improve the quality and standards of pre-service teacher training but also allows the pre-service qualified teachers to enter into teacher service as graduate teachers.

In addition, many suggestions were made by the heads of the institutions, academic staff and students. These suggestions were related to improvements/reforms related many areas, such as: need for improving the governance and management of the NCoEs including the institutionalizing a performance monitoring and reward system for staff; need for regular updating curricula of study programmes offered to trainees and its delivery and assessments systems; increasing opportunities for the academic staff for continuing professional development and career advancement; expediting the staff vacancy filling process; introducing reforms into the selection process of students into NCoEs and deployment diploma holders; introducing quality assurance system for regular monitoring of all aspects of NCoEs to promote continuous improvement governance and management of the institutions and quality and standards academic programmes; enhancing the trainee allowance and improvement of welfare; and promoting linkages and interaction with the Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education.

#### **b) Teacher Training Colleges**

The primary purpose of the TTCs is to provide in-service training for trainee teachers to become trained teachers. At present there are eight (8) TTCs located throughout the island. The status, issues and shortcomings noted and reported were more less same as those of NCoEs. Though, the research team was able to visit only one TTC, as learned from the higher management and staff, the status of all 8 TTCs appear be the same. As observed, the TTC visited by the research staff, is located in relatively resourceful premises in terms of land and buildings, the training facility appear to be in need of a better upkeep. As revealed by the higher management and staff the poor facility management appears to be due to lack of adequate financial allocations. As highlighted at the stakeholder discussions, the higher

management and staff, despite many constraints, appear to be determined to put their full efforts to maintain the quality teaching learning process and student welfare to best of their abilities.

However, they have highlighted many shortcomings. The staff strength has been depleted, and as a result the workload of the existing depleted staff has increased. Further, many academic staff complained about inadequacies of opportunities provided to them to engage in in-service continuous professional development training to update their knowledge in their respective disciplines/specializations as well for their career advancement. The curricula and syllabi of the academic training programmes appear to in need of updating. Current syllabi appear to be overloaded with subject contents with less emphasis on practical applications.

For an example, the subjects of psychology and counselling are taught as separate subjects in National Colleges of Education while in TTCs it is taught as one subject. Teaching appears to be more towards teacher centric, with focus on preparing students for exam-oriented outcomes. As highlighted by the staff, the teachers are not being given opportunities to contribute to setting question papers for the subjects they teach. So, there are many inconsistencies can be seen between taught syllabi of courses and the structure of the final question papers for the internal subjects prepared by the NIE.

Further, they highlighted the need for attracting qualified staff on permanent basis into the academic staff of the colleges. Most of the institutions have to depend on services/contributions of external resources persons/institutions for the conduct of the academic programme. Further the annual financial allocations are not usually matching with requirements, and even the allocated funds are disbursed in time and hence often get delayed. Further, the monthly salary paid for these untrained teachers is does not appear to be insufficient, considering the increasing cost of living to fulfil their basic requirements at the college and as well as for meeting family requirements, and this too has badly affected their moral and commitment to engage in the teaching learning process.

In addition, many suggestions were made by the heads of the institutions, academic staff and students. These suggestions were related to improvements needed in many areas such as: governance and management of the TTCs; curricula and syllabi of study programme offered to trainees and its delivery and assessments systems; opportunities for the academic staff for continuing professional development; vacancy filling; and linkages and interaction with the Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education.

### **c) Teacher Centres**

At present there are 112 TCs located throughout the island, and they come under the administrative purview of the MoE but function in close liaison with zonal offices of each province. The primary purpose of the TCs, which are is to provide continuing teacher training for the teachers in the system. Many of TCs are located in school premises, and they are

usually provided with relatively small premises to operate. Due to inadequate financial allocations and human resources, the facilities are not well-maintained; physical resources, including buildings and teaching and learning facilities and resources (i.e. lecture halls, laboratories, IT related equipment) indeed need of better up-keep. Centre managers and staff, despite many constraints appear to be determined to put their full efforts to maintain the quality teaching learning process. Well-planned teacher training modules has been provided by the Teacher Training Division of the MoE to the centre managers to conduct the module training at the centre. Ministry of Education conducts awareness programmes for these centre managers once a year. However, they have highlighted many shortcomings; the staff strength has been depleted, and as a result the workload of the existing depleted staff has increased. Further, as highlighted by centre managers, the funds allocations are not adequate for conducting programmes and even the allocated funds for the training are not disbursed in time. They highlighted the need for attracting qualified staff into the academic staff of the centres. In the absence of enough experienced and qualified staff internally, most of the TCs depend on external resource persons drawn mostly from NCoEs and a pool of retired Directors of Education for conducting CPD programmes.

#### **d) Provincial Departments of Educations**

The primary purpose of the Provincial Departments of Education, adopt the national education policies and programmes suit their provincial needs. At present there are nine PDEs located throughout the island. Besides many functions assigned, one of the key mandate is to facilitate teacher training. All the Directors of Education of PDEs in the sample have indicated that they give a high priority to teacher training, and allocate sufficient funds from the annual budgets for conducting in-service teacher training for identified training requirements of teachers. Besides that, as stated, they directly facilitate the conduct of School-Based Teacher Professional Development (SBTPD) programmes. Further, they stated that PDEs appoint pool of qualified resource persons to conduct teacher training under the SBTPD programmes. The school principals too are expected to identify training needs and priorities for the SBTPD programmes by interviewing teachers, and making inquiries through teachers. Nevertheless, many higher officers of PDEs complain that most principals and teachers have a misconception that the training offered through SBTPD programmes must always be conducted by external resource persons despite most schools having competent and experienced teachers to function as resource persons.



## Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion

As stated previously, the UNESCO defines the teacher professional development programmes as *'activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher'*. It encompasses two interwoven elements; pre-service or initial teacher training followed by continues in-services professional development training that help to build professional competency throughout the career of a professional teacher.

In Sri Lanka, the pre-service teacher training is primarily provided by two types of training institutions – by the universities leading to bachelor's degree level qualifications and by the NCoEs leading to National Diploma in Teaching. Results of the study show, nearly half of the teachers ((48.5%) of the sample population have had bachelors level qualification and vast majority teachers (approximately 80%) have acquired at the pre- or post-recruitment level, teacher professional qualifications, such as BEd. (3.8%), National Diploma in Teaching (NDT) (21.7%), certificate in teacher training (15.8%), and nearly one third of the respondents (36.2%). had earned Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Surprisingly, a considerable number of teachers (20.6%) have not completed any kind of post-recruitment, professional development programme which are considered as much desired to become a competent teacher. This is in contrast to what is prevailing in most developed countries such as Finland<sup>23</sup>, Australia<sup>24</sup>, USA<sup>25</sup>, etc., where pre-and post-recruitment training and qualifications is a must for the teacher license renewal and/or for promotion and salary advancement requirements.

In-service training for teachers in service is provided by several institutions such as NIE, TTCs and TCs, which are primarily maned by the MoE as well through School-Based Teacher Professional Development (SBTPD) programmes. As shown by the results of the present study, all these institutions appear to be active in offering CPD training opportunities. As regards to focus of training, most of the commonly offered training were aimed to provide training to improve knowledge on subject content development, student-centred teaching-learning methods, assessment aids preparation and the preparation of teaching aids, new educational trends and reforms, and examination paper setting and moderation. However, the training programmes focusing on providing in ICT-based application in teaching- and learning appear to be rather limited as only one-third of the respondents had undergone training programmes on ICT-related topics such as training on topics related to ICT skills such as training on multimedia usage for teaching and learning, training on online teaching, and use of ICT technologies in teaching. Further, the training programmes aiming to impart competencies in teaching students with special needs appear to be very rare.

As revealed by the results of the study, teachers show high enthusiasm to participate in continuing professional development programmes to update their knowledge and skills. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the support received from the school management

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<sup>23</sup> Niemi, H. (2015). Teacher professional development in Finland: Towards a more holistic approach. *Psychology, Society and Education*, 7(3), 278-294.

<sup>24</sup> Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures (2011).. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.modelteaching.com/professional-development-requirements>

and other stakeholders. Though a vast majority of teachers showed their interest to participate in teacher professional development programmes, only less than 50% sample population appear to have gone such programmes. Results also suggest the availability of CPD programmes is not uniform across Provinces, media of instruction and school categories. Some Provinces such as Northern (29.8%) and Eastern (48.4%) Provinces showed lower levels of availability of teacher professional development programmes. Similarly, this disparity was also shown by the teacher category and years of service with a significant positive correlation between the number of training programmes participated with both the length of service and the service category.

The causes for disparity of availability and participation in CPD programmes might be multifactorial such as lack of compulsion on teachers to take part in CPD programmes, shortcomings in administration, lack of interest of teachers to participate in those programmes and lack of national policy and strategy on teacher professional development. Though the teacher recruitment and promotion system is based on the Teacher Service Minute of 1995 (as amended in March 1997, May 2005, October 2014, and April 2019)<sup>26</sup>, which prescribe the requirements for recruitment and promotion - such as academic and professional qualification in a field related to education, participation in in-service training, number of years of service, results of professional review, etc., the degree of adherence to the prescribed requirements in practice is questionable. In reviewing the practices relating teacher recruitment and promotion, As highlighted by Sethunga et al. (2014) the professional review is limited only to the completion and attestation of the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) Form by the principal, and thus stressed the need of a teacher recruitment and promotion system that relies on well laid down criteria and assessment tools which are adhered and implemented in rigorous manner. Therefore, national-level policy and strategy coupled with a requirement to participate in a minimum number of CPD programmes as fulfilment for confirmation, increments and promotion should be implemented to ensure teachers are well-equipped updated with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality education for students. Further, the policy must be geared to ensure all teachers irrespective of where they work, which medium they teach, which category they serve or number of years of service to participate in CPD programmes and hence provide them the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills on continuous basis.

Nevertheless, those respondents who attended CPD programmes were satisfied with the available opportunities, and highlighted the benefits they have accrued through existing teacher professional development programmes as they have helped in various ways to improve their professional competencies as teachers. The multiple benefits they accrued through the current teacher professional development programmes includes: i) update their knowledge, ii) improve their confidence, iii) improve their understanding of children, iv) improve their ability to develop a suitable environment for students, v) improve their

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Education (1995). Sri Lanka Teachers' Service Minute (1885/38 dated 2014-10-23).



understanding on student-centred teaching-learning approach, vi) improve administration capacity among teachers, vii) improve interrelationships among teachers, and viii) help to build a positive attitude.

While highlighting positive aspects of CPD programmes, they have also identified several weaknesses of those programmes such as i) the presence of stereotyped, less attractive programmes, ii) lack of proper coordination between organizing agents and resource persons, iii) ineffective resource persons who are not updated with required competencies, iv) mismatch between the stated objectives and the content of the CPD programme, v) lack of proper time management by trainers, and vi) inadequate emphasis given on the use of modern technologies. Further, they stated that the lack of facilities to participate in programmes such as transport, and leave and covering arrangements has also hampered their participation. Further, most respondents highlighted a lack of adequate financial provisions and time to engage in CPD programmes.

Further, the respondents highlighted the gaps in the current programmes as citing the need for more training on the application of ICT-based methods and tools for teaching-learning and assessments, research methodologies, examination paper setting and moderation, and dealing with students with special needs. They also emphasized the need for effective implementation of quality circles and promoting greater utilization of ICT technologies for teaching and learning and assessments. Similarly, as regards to the availability of facilities required to adopt or successfully implement what was learned and acquired, most of the respondents indicated that they do not have enough facilities - such as laboratory facilities (47.4%), computer rooms/laboratories (43.5%), required equipment for laboratories (46.5%), adequate activity rooms (49.5%), adequate space in the staffroom (65.7%), and internet facilities (57.1%). Most of them indicated inadequacies of facilities have hindered their efforts to put into practice what they had acquired. Limitations as regards to learning aids and resources were also highlighted by the most of respondents. This suggests the need for upgrading the teaching-learning facilities such as laboratory facilities, computer rooms and computers at school level at school level, if the full benefit are to be accrued through CPD programmes.

As revealed during the field visits conducted 3 types of institutions (NCoEs, TTCs and TCs) which are directly linked to provision of initial and/or in-services teacher training, all institutions appear to be saddled with many shortcomings. Though, the coverage was limited, the findings give a glimpse at the current status of teacher training institutions. Most of the infrastructure facilities including teaching and learning facilities of all three types of institutions were dilapidated and/or in need of upgrading. Almost all training institutions were faced with short supply of academic staff and as a result the existing staff, even though they may not have the required expertise are compelled to do the cover up work. Moreover, teaching of many subjects depend on the availability of visiting lecturers. The curricula and syllabi of programmes and courses need revisions to align with current day needs. Many academic staff complained about inadequacies of opportunities provided to them in

continuous teacher training to update their knowledge in their respective fields as well for facilitating their career advancement. Further, they stated that the current syllabi appear to be outdated and overloaded with subject contents without giving adequate coverage on practical applications.

Higher management and academic staff of the NCoEs have also complained about the current student selection process. The recruitment criteria were changed recently from the Z-score based pre-selection and aptitude test to a Z-score based quota system tagged to divisional secretariat levels without administering an aptitude test. Selected students appear to be less endowed academically compared to those students who were admitted on z-score cum aptitude test-based results. This appears to have badly affected to the quality of the trainee students as well as of outputs from the system. Further, as stated by the staff and trainees at NCoEs, the monthly allowance paid to students; i.e. Rs. 5000/= per month does not appear to be sufficient to fulfil their basic requirements, particularly in the face of escalating cost of living, and this too has badly affected their moral and commitment to engage in the teaching learning process. They further stressed the need for improving the level and quality and standards of the 3-year diploma level academic programmes to 4-year degree level programmes while upgrading the governance and management of the NCoEs to university status to upgrade their acceptance as graduate teachers. Further, they highlighted the need for attracting qualified staff into the academic staff of the colleges.

Another, glaring problem highlighted by the academic staff of NCoEs as well as TTCs was that, though they teach the courses, they are not being given opportunities to contribute to setting question papers for the subjects they teach. According to them, there are many inconsistencies between taught syllabus and the structure and contents of the final question papers which appears to have badly affected on students' performances.

As revealed by the findings, the Teacher Centres too appear be saddled with two major issues such as staff shortages and underfunding. Because of staff shortages, the workload of the depleted staff has further been increased and most of the centres have to rely on external resource persons, mostly drawn from NCoEs and from the pool of retired directors of Education. Because of financial limitations, the upkeep of the facilities appears to have been compromised. Further, even the allocated funds appear to inadequate to undertake the mandatory functions, and even the provision of allocated funds for the training often get delayed. The staff of TCs, as highlighted by the higher management of NCoEs and TTCs too have highlighted the need for attracting qualified staff into the academic staff of the centres.

**In conclusion,** the finding of the study highlights the strengths, weaknesses, shortcomings and gaps in the teacher professional development programmes - both at initial and in-service teacher training levels. The key institution, responsible for providing initial teacher training, the NCoEs appear to saddled with many shortcomings, in terms of physical, human resources and governance and management, particularly the academic programme development and delivery. The primary training institutions responsible for provision of in-service training,

namely the TTCs and TCs too are not geared to perform the assigned role owing to inherent shortcomings, particularly those related to human resources and funds. At the school level, there were a significant number of participants without any initial training who have become teachers while there was a sizable proportion of teachers who haven't gone through post-recruitment institution-based professional training or regular continuing in-service training. Further the current CPD programmes need to be strengthened in terms of availability, coverage, scope, and quality. In addition, if the full benefit of CPD programmes to be accrued, parallel improvements must also be made in school infrastructure and teaching-learning facilities.

## Chapter 5: Way Forward

The finding of the study highlights the weaknesses, shortcomings and gaps in the teacher professional development programmes - both at initial and in-service teacher training levels. This reinforces the existing common knowledge among the many educationists and researchers, the quality of teacher professional development both at the pre-service /initial training and in-service level is less than at the desired level. As cited elsewhere, a study commissioned by the Asian Development Bank <sup>27</sup> on teacher professional development in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, concluded that teachers' professionalism should be improved for promoting further improvements in teaching and learning processes. Further, the report stated that *"in Sri Lanka, teachers are not considered "professionals" and improvement of teacher quality requires new thinking on how to prepare the next generation of teachers to act in the role of facilitator while exhibiting the professional standards required to meet the requirements of the global trends and qualities expected of professionals"*. The issues and gaps faced by teacher establishment, including teacher training were highlighted by most recent review study conducted for the NEC by Karunaratne & Peiris ( 2023)<sup>28</sup>. The results of the current study too have shown that the current teacher professional development, both the initial training programmes that are particularly offered by NCoEs and the CPD programmes offered by multitude of training institutions need to be improved in terms of scope, quality and standards.

As highlighted by Karunaratne & Peiris (2023), the current shortcomings in teacher establishment appears to stem from many factors, deficiencies, and shortcomings. The deficiencies and gaps identified are: i) absence of well-formulated national policy and framework on teacher education and development; ii) inadequacies of existing teacher development programmes that do not take into consideration of attributes such as annual attrition, future needs, student enrolment projections, teaching subjects at school levels and curricular changes introduced to the school system, etc.; iii) inability to upgrade the quality of the teacher cadre by creating an all graduate teaching profession; iv) absence of measures for quality assurance, standardization and programme accreditation of teacher education programmes; and v) lack of an adequate mechanism for identification of professional development gaps and providing continuing professional development programmes while in service.

It is well-documented, that the educational reform initiatives that have taken cross the globe have recognized the value of professional development of teachers for improving the quality

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<sup>27</sup> Asian Development Bank Report (2017). Innovative Strategies for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia: Teacher Professional Development—Special Focus on Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. <https://www.adb.org/publications/innovative-strategies-teacher-professional-development-bangladesh-nepal-sri-lanka>

<sup>28</sup> Karunartne, S. & Peiris, K.S.K. (2023). Teachers in Sri Lanka: Situational Analysis of Teacher Establishment and Deployment. NEC Research Series (2023) – Volume 1, National Education Commission. [www.nec.lk](http://www.nec.lk)

of teaching and learning in schools and thereby the learning outcomes. Studies in countries such as Finland showed a high success rate of education is achieved through the teacher professional development; such as continuous improvement teacher competencies through both at pre-service and in-service training levels, and teacher professionalism (Niemi, 2015)<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, the way forward to develop high-quality professional teachers in Sri Lanka, is to adopt a clear policy and strategies coupled with regulations to prepare and empower teachers to act as the change agents to prepare the young people to meet the demand and the needs of the changing society and world of work.

In this regard, many seemingly rational and practicable the policy recommendations have been made by the NEC since early 2000. The National Education Commission in its recent policy document - National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030)-Volume II – Policy Proposals and Recommended Strategic Activities for General Education<sup>30</sup>, while giving due consideration to the policies and strategies made in its previous policy proposals and to the current issues and gaps, has made several key policy recommendations in this regard.

The first, and foremost policy recommendation in this regard (Policy-GE 11.1), state that *“Quality and standards of teaching professions must be upgraded by enacting required national policies and establishing institutional mechanisms”*. The key recommended strategic activities in this regard include; i) formulation of a national policy on teacher education in consultation with relevant institutions and organizations and take steps to implement the policies and strategies through appropriate authorities and ii) establishment of a regulatory body for the teaching profession, designated as the Sri Lanka Teacher Council (SLTC) through a new Act or as a part of the proposed Education Act. It has further stated that as the mandate of the SLTC should be to maintain the quality and standards of teaching professions and to uphold and safeguard the rights of teachers and allied categories. This shall be achieved by prescribing Teacher Standards and Codes of Practice and by undertaking teacher registration, and also through maintaining the standards of teacher education programmes both at pre-service/initial and in-service levels conducted by the diverse teacher training Institutions. The other recommended strategic activities under this policy include; i) making amendments to the Sri Lanka Teacher Service Minute to make registration with the SLTC mandatory; and ii) establishment of quality assurance and accreditation mechanism coupled with adoption of common qualification framework to ensure all institutions engaged in teacher education (pre-service and in-service) adopt the prescribed best practices for all elements of academic training process to archive the recommended standards and all professionally trained teachers by different institution reach the same quality and standards.

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<sup>29</sup> Niemi, H. (2015). Teacher professional development in Finland: Towards a more holistic approach. *Psychology, Society and Education*, 7(3), 278-294.

<sup>30</sup> National Education Commission. (2022). National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030). In National Education Commission. Department of Government Printing. <https://nec.gov.lk/national-education-policy-framework-2020-2030/>



Going along with the principles of the previously cited policy, the NEF (2020-2030) made another policy recommendation that the *“Teacher education programmes should be formalized and linked to different categories of SLTC registration”* (Policy-GE 11.2), and the recommended strategic activities in this regards include the following:

- The MoE and the SLTC in liaison with respective teacher training institutions (*Universities, NIE, and NCoE*) shall rationalize and consolidate teacher education programmes provided by them in the following manner:
  - University Departments and Faculties of Education and the NIE should continue to offer Degree (B.Ed.) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education programmes to meet current and emerging needs and for pre-service/initial and in-service teacher education programmes.
  - The MoE and NCoEs in liaison with NIE shall work towards upgrading their diploma level programmes to degree level programmes leading to the B.Ed. Degree qualification coupled with concurrent upgrading the NCoEs to university status.
  - MoE together with the teacher training institutions shall decide the entry qualifications and other personal attributes needed to enroll in pre-service/initial teacher education programmes.
  - SLTC shall prescribe minimum standards to teacher training institutions on design, content, teaching-learning process, and assessments to develop pre-service/initial teacher training programmes.
  - SLTC shall continuously monitor and maintain the quality and effectiveness of the curricula of teacher education and development programmes for ensuring the teacher education is relevant to the current and future human resource needs of the general education system and the country.
  - MoE shall take steps to ensure that all teacher education institutions coming under its purview will have an appropriately governed and managed academic environment – academic staff with postgraduate qualifications and experience, physical resources, teaching/learning resources including, internet connectivity and ICT-based tools and aids, common amenities, etc.
  - All national-level teacher training institutions shall prepare and implement a staff development plan including succession plans that will ensure the availability of the required number of qualified staff for all disciplines.
  - MoE shall take steps in liaison with a donor-assisted project to provide a scheme of fellowships, scholarships, and attachments for teacher educators.

As regards to in-service continuing professional development programmes, the NEPF (2020-2030)- also made a policy recommendation that the *“Continuing professional development programmes should be provided to all teachers in service to update their professional competencies and fulfil their professional aspirations”* (Policy-GE 11.3). The recommended strategic activities in this regards include the following;

- Universities, NIE, and other Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) such as Teacher Training Centres (TTCs) and Teacher Centres (TCs) shall take the responsibility for providing continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers and allied categories of staff. All these institutions must ensure that the curricula of such programmes should focus more on advanced training to cater to the emerging needs of teachers in service who have received pre-service/ initial teacher education training.
- The MoE and Provincial Authorities shall ensure in-service, continuing professional development are compulsory for all teachers, and satisfactory completion of a minimum number of CPD programmes are compulsory for their annual increments.
- The MoE and Provincial Authorities shall further strengthen the school-based teacher professional development system managed and administered by the Zonal and Divisional Education Authorities together with the principals of respective schools.

The final word in this context - there are no short cuts to achieve the desired goal. If Sri Lanka wishes to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools and thereby the students' learning outcomes, the root causes of issues saddled with teacher professional development must be addressed. In this regard, it is pertinent to reiterate the conclusion drawn by the study commissioned by the Asian Development Bank (2017) which stated that *“in Sri Lanka, teachers are not considered “professionals” and improvement of teacher quality requires new thinking on how to prepare the next generation of teachers to act in the role of facilitator while exhibiting the professional standards required to meet the requirements of the global trends and qualities expected of professionals”*.



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