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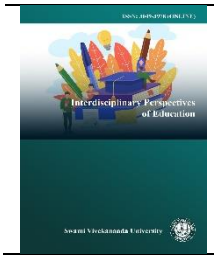

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FROM PEDAGOGY TO PROFESSIONALISM: A REVIEW OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN INDIA

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Abstract

The quality of higher education is intrinsically linked to the quality of its faculty members, who serve not only as knowledge providers but also as mentors, researchers, leaders, and administrators. Historically, in India as well as in many other countries, the assumption prevailed that a subject matter expert alone was a sufficient qualification for teaching at the tertiary level. This perspective underestimated the multifaceted nature of teaching, which combines both art and science, and requires competencies in curriculum design, communication, assessment, and leadership. Over the past few decades, this perception has evolved significantly, with increasing recognition that effective teaching demands structured professional development opportunities rather than reliance on tradition or intuition alone. In India, faculty development programs have progressed from a narrow focus on classroom pedagogy to encompass broader domains, including research skills, administrative and leadership capacity, digital literacy, ethical orientation, and humanistic values. Initiatives such as the establishment of Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) in 1987, later renamed Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs), signified a shift in viewing faculty not as instructors but as institutional assets requiring holistic development. The recent establishment of Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centres (MMTTCs) marks a new phase, emphasizing large-scale, structured, and systematic training to create socially conscious and innovative educators. This study explores the historical evolution of faculty development programs in India, examines policy initiatives that shaped their path, and assesses their impact on teaching practices and institutional quality. Methodologically, it adopts a document analysis and synthesis approach, drawing from secondary sources such as journal articles, books, policy documents, and open-access government reports. By situating these programs within their social and policy contexts, the study highlights the transformative potential of sustained faculty development.

Keywords: *FDPs in India, Professionalism, ASCs, HRDCs, MMTTCs*

1. Introduction

The quality of any higher education institution is closely related to the quality of its faculty members. Teachers at colleges and universities are more than just information providers, they are leaders who help bring about social change, researchers who expand our understanding, mentors who help students to grow intellectually, and administrators who make sure that academic institutions run smoothly. The various responsibilities that faculty members have demonstrate the importance of their professional training. However, the higher education system in India and many countries long believed in the idea that a subject matter expert was enough to qualify a teacher without realizing that teaching is both an art and a science that requires specific abilities in curriculum design, communication, and assessment. This view has changed significantly in the last few decades. Effective teaching requires structured support and professional development opportunities, it cannot be left to tradition or intuition alone (Benor, 2020). Similarly, Guskey (2003) argued that faculty development, also known as professional development or staff development that offers a methodical way for instructors in higher education to gain knowledge and learn the skills required to satisfy the changing demands of their profession. Beyond mastery of their discipline, teachers need skills in planning lessons, preparing institutional materials, conducting group and individual teaching, and assessing progress. They also require diagnostic and evaluative abilities to understand student behavior, design appropriate tools for assessment, and interpret findings objectively (e-Gyan Kosh, n.d.). The 20th century brought a major conceptual revolution, replacing modernist ideas of stability, order, and linear thinking with post-modern views of unpredictability, interdependence, and socially constructed perspectives (Scott, 2003). This shift, accelerated by the information revolution and global mobility, and in this context, teaching is seen as transformative rather than fundamental, where learning becomes an ongoing process, educators and institutions must engage in continuous learning, collaboration, and foster innovation (Collionson et al., 2009).

In India, the faculty development program has expanded far beyond the limited domain of pedagogy. At first, the main goal of the training programs was to improve classroom effectiveness and teaching abilities, but nowadays it includes research training, administrative and leadership skills, digital literacy, ethics, and humanistic aspects of education. There are notable turning points in India's faculty development history. An important turning point was the creation of Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) in 1987, which established official

institutions where instructors could take introductory and continuing education courses to improve their efficacy as educators. These ASCs eventually changed their names to Human Resource Development Centers (HRDCs), indicating a change in perspective from seeing faculty as instructors to seeing them a institutional assets in need of comprehensive development. The establishment of the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centers (MMTTCs) has introduced a new era of structured, large-scale, and systematic faculty training. These centers represent the government's commitment to building a pool of highly qualified, creative, and socially conscious educators. Table 1 shows some related literature that describes the studies from worldwide, which elaborate on the importance of faculty development programs.

Table 1: FDP Related Literatures

Authors	Study Highlights
Salajegheh et al. (2020)	Identified innovation, collaboration, sustainability, leadership, and scholarship as key domains of effective FDPs.
Noah et al. (2018)	Demonstrated how structured mentoring and transparent promotion systems enhanced faculty satisfaction and career progression.
Burgess et al. (2019)	Found that structured fellowship programs improved teaching effectiveness for early-career educators.
Peleman et al. (2015)	Highlighted the importance of reflective and collaborative approaches.
Herman (2012)	Stressed the need for online teaching competencies and institutional support.
McLean et al. (2008) and Steinert & Mann (2006)	Argue that FDPs must be diverse, flexible, and sustained, addressing the multiple roles of modern academics.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the historical evolution of faculty development programs in India.
- To examine the policy initiatives in shaping faculty development.

- To assess the impact of faculty development programs on teaching and institutional quality.

3. Methodology of the Study

The study adopted a document analysis and synthesis method. Document analysis is viewed as discourse analysis, where documents are treated as products that construct and reflect their own social realities; thus, it considers the context in which a document is produced, implemented, and interpreted (Zeegers & Barron, 2025). In this study, there are some inclusion and exclusion criteria for adopting the useful materials, those criteria are described below:

Inclusion Criteria:

- The study is based on published materials that are readily available in the public domain.
- Only secondary sources are included, such as journal articles, books, policy documents, government reports, UGC/AICTE guidelines, and research papers related to faculty development.
- Preferences are given to open-access resources.
- Documents are included if they are directly relevant to the evolution of faculty development programs in India.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Primary sources such as interviews, surveys, and first-hand data are not included in the study.
- Restricted or subscription needed documents that are not openly accessible are excluded from the study.
- Documents that are not related to higher education and faculty development are excluded.

4. Evolution of Faculty Development Program

The concept of the faculty development program has evolved from being occasional training opportunities to becoming a central pillar of higher education quality. Initially, the focus of faculty development was limited to subject matter experts, and assumed that it was sufficient

for effective teaching. Over time, the realization emerged that teachers also need training in pedagogy, research, professional ethics, leadership, and digital skills.

4.1 Faculty Development in the Pre-Independence Era

There were no official colleges for teacher training during the Sutra Age or the Rig Vedic era. A teacher was usually an outstanding student who learned from their master. As they gained more information. The learned society eventually recognized them as capable of teaching. In ancient India, teacher education was informal, relying on knowledge exchange, debates, hermitage learning, and scholarly gatherings, evolving through Vedic, epic, and Buddhist periods. After training, monks could guide others, but only some achieved the status of Acharya, with assignments based on their academic progress. Not all monks attained the status of Acharya. Students were grouped by their academic progress, the lowest class chanted Suttantas, the next mastered Vinaya through discussion, and the higher classes trained as Dhamma teachers by engaging in discussions before preaching (Bhatia, n.d). In medieval India, there were no formal teacher training colleges. Scholars and theologians, renowned for their contributions, served as teachers in madrasahs and maktabs. Figure like Minaj-i-Siraj are often cited in historical texts. Lectures and sermons by scholars, whether commissioned by rulers of self-initiated, greatly benefited teachers. Potential symposiums, or mushairas, were also common and enriched educators (Balwaria & Gupta, 2014).

4.2 Faculty Development in the Post-Independence Era

After 1947, India's higher education system expanded rapidly to meet the developmental needs of the newly independent nation. Universities and colleges require qualified and professional teachers. The government and regulatory bodies gradually recognized that higher education required not just expansion but also quality assurance through structured faculty development.

Early Initiatives: 1970s-1980s

Several initiatives were launched during this period:

- **Quality Improvement Programs (1970, AICTE):**

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) introduced the "Quality Improvement Programme" in 1970. One of its main goals is to improve the knowledge and skills of instructors at postsecondary educational institutions nationwide. All India Council for Technical Education is in charge of the program administration. In the "Quality Improvement Programme," only instructors who have been funded are allowed to enroll in master's and doctoral degree programs. By exposing teachers to the atmosphere of educational institutions,

the goal is to help them obtain Master's and Doctoral degrees and to foster in them a culture of research and enhanced instruction.

- **Reorientation of Medical Education (ROME, 1977):**

In 1977, the Srivastava Committee introduced the Reorientation of Medical Education (ROME) program in India. The goals of the scheme are- give medical students the knowledge and skills to deliver quality community health care and enhance and encourage medical students to provide quality community health care in their formative years (Konduru et al., 2018). Although the ROME program was essentially abandoned by 1984, MGIMS, Sevagram, is still running the Rome camp.

- **National Teacher Training Centre (NTTC, 1975):**

In 1974, the Government of India formed a working group on continued medical education, leading to the establishment of the first National Teacher Training Centre (NTTC) at JIPMER, Pondicherry, in 1975. NTTC conducts bi-annual educational science courses and publishes the NTTC Bulletin in Medical Education. Inspired by its success, three additional centres were established at PGIMER Chandigarh, BHU Varanasi, and MAMC New Delhi. Conferences by the MCI in 1994 and 1996 recommended setting up Medical Education Units in all medical colleges (Zodpey et al, 2016; Burdick, 2012).

- **Academic Staff College (ASC, 1990):**

The National Policy on Education 1986 highlights the critical relationship between teacher motivation and education quality. It emphasizes improving teaching standards and providing opportunities for teachers' professional and career development through systematic training in pedagogy, methodologies, and subject-specific skills. Table 2, adopted from the guidelines for Academic Staff Colleges 2007-2012, shows the key features and objectives of ASCs.

Table 2: Features of ASC

Key Proposals	Objectives of ASC
➢ Orientation Programs ➢ Refresher Courses ➢ IT Training ➢ Professional Engagement	• Understand the importance of education in global and Indian contexts. • Recognize education's role in socio-economic and cultural development, emphasizing democracy, secularism, and equity. • Enhance teaching skills to align with higher education goals. • Stay updated on advancements in higher education goals.

	• Stay updated on advancements in their subjects. • Learn about college/university organization and management, and the teacher's role within the system. • Foster personality development, creativity, and initiative. • Promote computer literacy and ICT use in teaching and learning

- **Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC):**

With more than 950 universities, 42,000 colleges, and nearly 31 million students, India's higher education system has achieved a gross enrollment ratio of 25.2%, compared to a target of 30%. However, issues with low graduation rates, employability, and reliance on traditional teaching methods still exist. Education is a major force behind social and economic change. By increasing access to quality education through MOOCs, hybrid classes, and adaptive learning, providing blended, outcome-focused orientation and refresher courses for teachers, encouraging Ed-Tech incubation by involving faculty in mentoring educational startups, and hosting thematic programs on leadership, technology-enhanced learning, gender sensitization, and ICT skills integrated with value-based practices, Human Resource Development Centers (HRDCs) play a crucial role in addressing these issues and moving towards outcome-based education that is in line with international standards. The goals of their faculty development program are to empower newly appointed Assistant Professors in particular to understand the importance of education on a national and international level, relate it to India's socioeconomic and cultural development, enhance their teaching abilities, stay current in their fields, understand institutional dynamics, foster initiative and creativity, and implement structured teaching and evaluation methods. Together, these programs seek to make Indian higher education a creative, inclusive, and globally competitive engine for the country's advancement (UGC-HRDC website, n.d.).

- **Malaviya Mission Teachers Training Programme (MMTTP):**

The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes the importance of motivated, capable, and skilled faculty in transforming higher education. To address this need, the Malaviya Mission Teachers Training Programme (MMTTP) has been restructured to enhance teacher capacity and professional development. Building on the existing UGC-Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs) and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching Centres (PMMMNMTT), the program aligns with NEP

2020 by fostering continuous professional growth to meet the dynamic demands of education. Below is a detailed description of MMTTC's vision, objectives, key features, and proposed outcomes, which was adopted from the UGC-MMTTC website.

Vision**:** The MMTTP envisions equipping educators with the competencies necessary for effective teaching, research, academic leadership, and societal contribution, while integrating Indian values, ethos, and sustainable practices into education.

Objectives: Aligned with the vision of NEP 2020, the objectives of the programme focus on enhancing the overall quality of education by promoting teacher excellence and holistic development. It emphasizes the integration of ethics, human values, and the Indian Knowledge System (Bharatiya Gyan Parampara) into teaching and learning, while also encouraging sustainability, respect for biodiversity, and ecological balance. At the same time, the programme seeks to empower faculty as lifelong learners, enabling them to actively contribute to institutional growth and national development.

Key Features: The initiative establishes 116 Malviya Mission Teachers Training Centres (MMTTCc) to strengthen the integration of HRDCs and PMMMNMTT Centres, focusing on quality teaching, equity, online education, Indian languages, vocational training, and multidisciplinary approaches.

Proposed Outcome: The proposed outcomes of the programme highlight its transformative vision for Indian higher education. Faculty will be sensitized to the goals of NEP 2020, enabling them to contribute to India’s emergence as a global knowledge leader through holistic education rooted in Indian values. Teachers and students will incorporate the Indian Knowledge System into curricula, ensuring its application in real-life contexts and fostering the growth of Bharatiya languages. Learners will be equipped with 21st-century skills, innovative thinking, and a strong commitment to sustainability and biodiversity. Research initiatives will increasingly address contemporary challenges through innovation and entrepreneurship, while faculty will integrate ICT tools into teaching, embrace lifelong learning, and actively contribute to institution-building and nation-building efforts.

5. Concluding Remarks

The journey of faculty development in India from the informal and holistic learning practices of ancient gurukuls to the structured initiatives of (ASCs), the expanded instruction of HRDCs, and the current comprehensive vision of MMTTCs, represents a remarkable story of

professionalization in higher education. Each stage of this evolution reflects the changing needs of teachers and the broader role of higher education in rapidly transforming society. Faculty are now envisioned as multidimensional professionals who guide students, generate new knowledge, manage institutions, and engage with community and national priorities. The transition from pedagogy to professionalism signals a recognition that teachers are not conveyors of subject content, but institution builders, social reformers, and leaders in the emerging knowledge economy. Their work extends beyond the classroom into the domains of research innovation, policy engagement, curriculum reform, and nurturing of value among students.

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