

EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER CENTERS ON TEACHERS' CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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This study tries to identify how far Teachers' Centres (TCs) effectively contribute to the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in this study within a framework of a survey research design. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Teacher Centers' activities on teachers' CPD. The teachers who follow the Master of Education programme conducted by the Faculty of Education of The Open University of Sri Lanka were selected as a sample. Out of the 98 teachers registered, 70 teachers physically attending the Day School representing various districts of Sri Lanka, on the day the researcher visited were selected as a convenient sample. Primary data for this study was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was of the structured type and focused on collecting data on four identified key areas: (1) training opportunities organized by the TCs for teachers CPD (2) identify teachers' expectations from TCs for their CPD (3) teachers' perceptions on the services rendered by TCs in relation to their CPD (4) Teachers' suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the Teacher Centers. All seventy (70) respondents are graduate teachers and they have completed their initial teacher education programme for their professional development. Of the 70 respondents 82.9 % of the teachers mentioned that TCs are not functioning effectively. Findings revealed that TCs are not functioning in an effective way in relation to teachers' CPD and that they do not effectively organize the workshops for teachers' CPD. But teachers have high expectations from TCs to develop their professional competencies to meet the demand of the modern professional world. Further, Tamil medium teachers expect that TCs should conduct the workshops in their mother tongue and enable them to obtain a clear understanding and also derive the maximum benefits from the training. Overall, the analysis appears to suggest that teachers have various expectations from TCs for their CPD. Therefore, Ministry of Education and other relevant authorities involved in policy making and educational decision making have to consider the importance of the effective functioning of the TCs and have to take necessary measures to monitor the effectiveness of the TCs.

Keywords: Teachers' Centres, Continuous Professional Development and Teacher Development.

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