

AN EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCIENCE TEACHERS IN KANDY DISTRICT

R. P. Kalupahanage

Postgraduate institute of Science, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers has been seen as one of a key element to improve teacher quality and the quality of education in many countries, as well as in Sri Lanka. Teachers currently face many challenges in adapting to the dynamic changes in the field of education. Research findings show that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of science teachers is essential to improve teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to dynamic changes in the field of education and enhance the quality of science teaching. The purpose of this study is to recognize the type of existing CPD programmes, how they fulfill science teachers' professional needs and teachers' suggestions to enhance the quality of them.

Mixed methods approach was used in this study. Quantitative data was obtained by administrating a postal survey of randomly selected 100 science teachers. Based on the responses to the questionnaire 10 science teachers were purposely selected for the semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Interview data were transcribed and the emerging assertions were identified.

The findings of this study showed that most science teachers received many CPD opportunities. Ninety five percentage of respondents appreciated the benefits of CPD to them. 51.8% reported that even though they received different type of trainings under CPD programmes, they were still having issues in implementing them in schools. The lack of knowledge of effective teaching strategies, inadequate knowledge to conduct practical sessions effectively and time management problems were among them. Furthermore, they suggested that implementing activities to follow-up CPD programmes and more teacher supervisions with appropriate feedback should be included.

In conclusion, CPD programmes support the carrier development of science teachers. However, the quality of CPD programmes should be enhanced while considering the issues that teachers face during their day-to-day teaching.