

THE IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON TEACHING QUALITY: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in improving the quality of teaching with special reference to higher education in India. CPD is a crucial tool for teachers to enhance skills, improve their methods and results, and adapt to changes in the teaching of subjects and the use of technology. This paper aims to identify obstacles and difficulties in the implementation of efficient professional development in India, such as the support system of institutions, the involvement of the faculty, and barriers at the level of the system. The study examines studies published between 2020 to 2025 that include both Indian and global studies. The main findings show that CPD does improve instructional practice, but it is not as effective when these programs are short, not in line with faculty needs, and do not have strong institutional support. It concludes with the need for a structured, ongoing, research-based CPD model that is strongly supported by institutional leadership that promotes ongoing professional growth and improved instructional practice in Indian university teaching. Future research should develop more inclusive and flexible CPD models for various teaching contexts.

Keywords: *Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Higher Education, Teaching Quality, Faculty Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a key aspect to improving practice and teaching in the context of higher education. Continuing professional development (CPD) is the ongoing process by which professionals seek to adopt new skills and practice and respond to their new educational and technological contexts. Supporting and holding institutions responsible for 'great teaching' has placed CPD to be an essential piece in higher education systems globally. The CPD model from the Higher Education Academy and UNESCO's Teacher Professionalization both underlines how teachers' CPD describes the gap between educational policies and classroom practices and helps them to grow, become leaders, and innovate (Belay & Melesse, 2024).

India's educational landscape and the focus on quality assurance in higher education have made continuing professional development (CPD) increasingly important. The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020), along with the suggestions of various bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) emphasize the need for faculty to engage in integrated learning modes across teaching, technology, and research (UGC, 2021). Faculty professional competence on

the global stage has thus become not only a crucial factor for the institutional reputation, which is the source of faculty pride, but also a key determinant of the student learning outcomes. As universities are moving towards student-centric, outcome-focused frameworks, CPD therefore becomes an essential link between teaching effectiveness and the innovative goals of educational policy and research (Aithal & Aithal, 2020).

Despite the growing global emphasis on continuing professional development (CPD) as a key factor for success in any field, India still showcases a pattern of disorganized learning and education. The majority of CPD initiatives in Indian higher education are focused on the short-term or transient phases of training and development, which consequently lack the pedagogy change (Luthra et al., 2024). The involvement of the academic staff in CPD is weakened by the local environment of faculty, insufficient institutional support and recognition, lack of incentive structures, administrative and managerial obstacles, and overload of teaching hours. Furthermore, the measurement of the standard of instruction is still limited in scope as it does not consider the general effectiveness of teaching, the incorporation of reflection, and wider aspects of pedagogy (Selvaraj et al., 2015). This indicates the combined research necessary to figure out the ways in which CPD initiatives could be used as a tool to bring about a radical change in the level of teaching provided.

The purpose of the study is to consolidate the existing literature on CPD in the educational sector of India, to review the basic problems related to the implementation of CPD, and to find the gaps between the theory and the practice in Indian higher education institutions. Besides, the study will analyze how CPD can be a source of faculty and school growth locally and worldwide.

1.1 Objectives

Obj1. To analyze the evolution and present landscape of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs within Indian higher education institutions.

Obj2. To describe the challenges faced in implementing CPD programs in Indian higher education and explore ways to improve their effectiveness in enhancing teaching quality.

Obj3. To identify best practices and Policies that shaping the effectiveness of CPD programs in Indian higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

➤ Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory was designed by Kolb (1984), highlights learning through work and reflection. The learning process consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. According to Kolb (1984), the most effective way to learn involves the following steps: having an experience, critically reflecting on that experience, developing theories based on reflection, and then applying those theories in practice. Teachers can engage as co-learners in this process by participating together in reflective practice through Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This concept underscores the significance of ongoing, reflective learning, particularly in higher education. The theory implies that CPD should be a never-ending journey rather than a single event, whereby teachers try out new methods, reflect on their practice, and apply learning for further professional development.

➤ **Reflective Practice Model**

Schön's (1983) Reflective Practice Model is based on the idea that educators should not stop reflecting on their own teaching. Thus, they should critically examine their instruction to improve their teaching. The model focuses on two main features: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. During the lessons, teachers can reflect in the moment and thus use that reflection to review practice later. The model implies that this reflective skill enables practitioners to modify and develop their teaching practice based on their experiences and ideas. Within the Indian context, there definitely can be a component of CPD programs which would be an indispensable part of educators whose main concern is to reflect and think about ways of improving their lessons or to become more responsive and adaptive educators.

➤ **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are teacher groups that collaborate for their professional development, which was an idea first presented by Hord (1997). A PLC is a group of educators who share, solve problems, and support each other's growth in a continuous way, and they do it regularly. The theory argued that authentic learning teachers who get through collaboration can help their teaching practice. In this way, PLCs become learning communities in which co-learning is promoted, and members are held responsible for each other's instructional practice. The structure of PLCs, which is supportive, is professional development that can lead to a situation where teachers learning from their colleagues can become a continuous process and they can deal with similar issues in their classrooms together.

2.2 Thematic Review

➤ **Global Perspectives on CPD and Teaching Quality**

The world's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) systems in education continue to develop differently in developing countries than in developed countries. The CPD systems of the developed countries have passed from formal profession-based systems to more dynamic learner-centered systems. Sherman and Chappell (2018) highlighted this point and explained that while some countries had undertaken innovative pathways for CPD, others were still adopting them to suit the present educational context. In the health profession, CPD systems were aimed at continuous development of professional status and competent service delivery. These systems were not only formal learning but also included informal learning. In the influential area of education, Bentall (2020) referred to education for sustainable development (ESD) as being seen as central to the CPD agenda, promoting ESD and the development of pedagogical engagement in relation to global issues. CPD in developing countries, in contrast, continues to experience challenges in regard to resourcing and institutional support. Xaso et al. (2017) identified the South African context, specifically, as CPD, despite national policy commitment, is not widespread or sustainable due to engagement and support challenges. International initiatives, for example, from UNESCO and the Higher Education Academy (HEA), offer global CPD framings which deal with global challenges in education such as sustainability and citizenship.

➤ **Review Related to Indian Context**

Several studies have delved into the implications of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the quality of education in the Indian context, including opportunities and barriers. While CPD in the context of teaching has positive implications for the quality of teaching practice and learning (in higher education), some factors inhibit the realization of CPD. Kumar et al. (2020) found that the potential impact of CPD on faculty competencies was

inhibited by barriers such as a lack of institutional support and a shortage of time to participate in CPD. Luthra et al. (2024) established that the advantages of CPD were often improved or undermined by the nature of administrative barriers, and in some instances, excess to teaching responsibilities. Similarly, Mathew (2024) suggested that although CPD initiatives are emerging in India, these initiatives are still highly fragmented and presented in short, isolated training sessions that do not accomplish any substantial improvement in the quality of teaching practice. In summary, all these studies have demonstrated a need for more cohesive / continuing CPD, aligned with institutional purposes and supported by institutional leadership, that is associated with faculty's professional needs. Leadership support from within the institution is crucial for overcoming obstacles to professional development and engaging in CPD that results in improved teaching quality.

➤ **Review Related to Challenges and Barriers**

In recent literature, barriers to better CPD or Continuous Professional Development have been identified and addressed. Hlubučková et al. (2025), indicated that lack of interest in CPD and institutional support were major barriers, with CPD perceived as a disengaging activity because of a lack of time, financial incentives, and topics that may not align with the context of CPD. Garcia et al. (2025) also identified a disconnect between CPD content and the needs of midwives and suggested dedicating time for school leadership to better tailor CPD. In rural sites, Shikuku et al. (2024) noted limited access to CPD and organizational support for midwives but also agree about the value of CPD for their professional practices. Furthermore, Mesuwini and Mokoena (2024) examined barriers to accessing online CPD, noting technological barriers such as a lack of digital literacy and spotty internet connectivity inhibited participation and, therefore, recommended trying to improve digital literacy and develop more interactive online learning settings. Collectively, these studies reveal a growing need for flexible, context-sensitive CPD programs provided within a stronger institutional infrastructure that can help address existing barriers to and improve CPD effectiveness.

Table 1: The criteria for determining what is included and excluded

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Type	Articles, Books & Book Chapter	Reviews, Editorials, Letters, Notes, Erratum, Editorial
Thematic Areas	All thematic areas relevant to "Teaching Quality" OR "Continuous Professional Development"	Irrelevant thematic areas
Geographical Scope	All countries/territories	None
Language	English	Non-English languages
Timeframe	The study considers research from January 2020 to November 2025	Before January 2020 and after November 2025
Document Type	Original research, Article, Book Chapter and Book	Grey literature, non-scientific publications, non-peer-reviewed reports and theoretical papers,

(Source: Author's Elaboration)

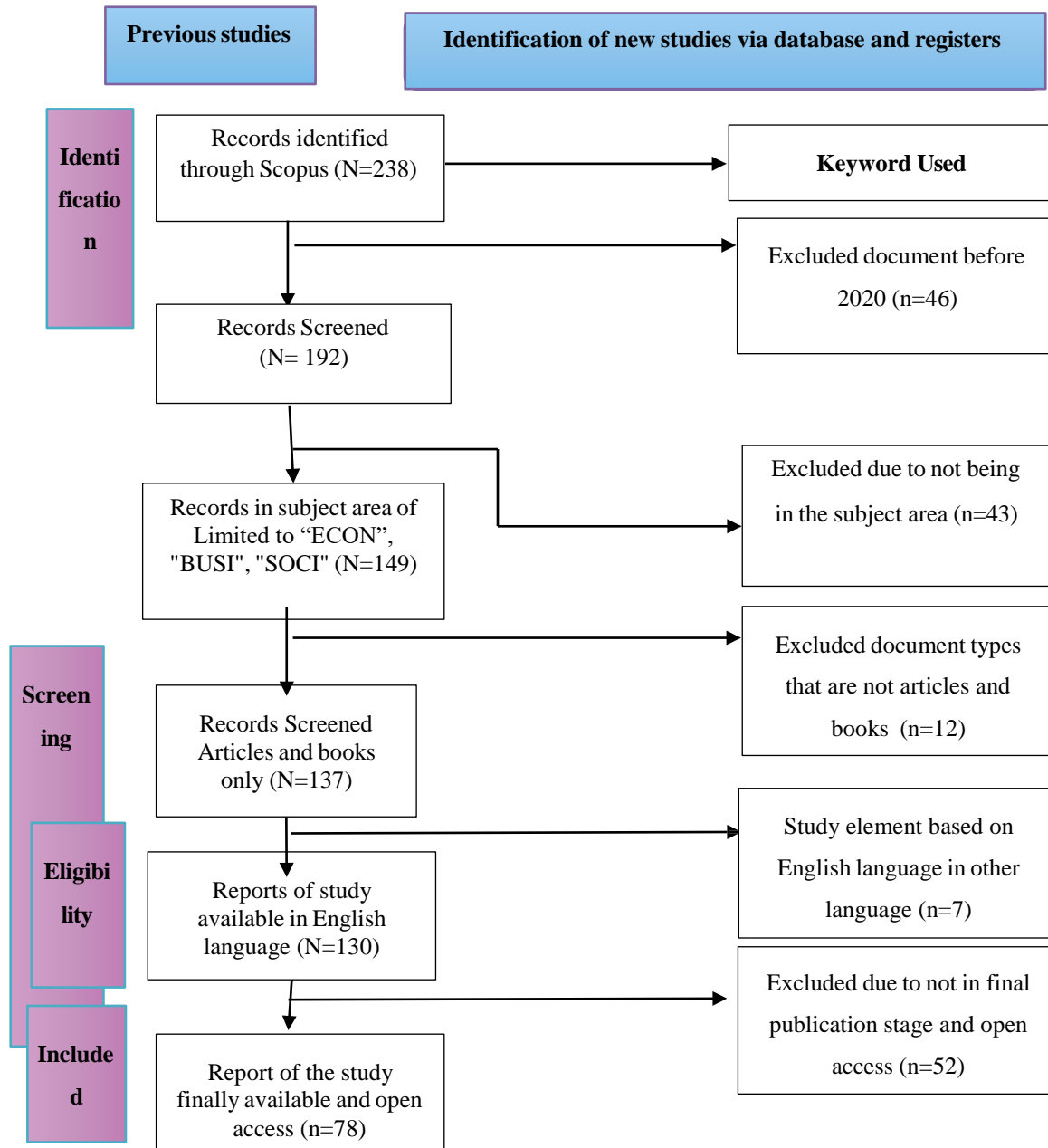


Figure 1: Flow Chart of Database

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a comprehensive strategy of search and selection through the Scopus database. Scopus was selected as a source due to its wide-ranging coverage of the peer-reviewed, high-quality publications in a variety of disciplines. The review included the publications of the period from January 2020 to November 2025 of the original research articles, empirical studies, and systematic reviews written in the English language. Strict inclusion criteria were set for the type of documents (articles and books) and the subject area (Social Sciences, Business Management, Accounting), as well as language (only English language publications). The initial screening recorded 238 records in total from Scopus and went through a structured process of filtering in four stages: date first (eliminating 46 records before 2020), then subject area (to 149 records), type of document (to 137 records), and finally, language (to a total of 130 records). Additional screening discarded 46 records that

were not available in open access. The final database consisted of 78 peer-reviewed articles that complied with the eligibility criteria. All the included studies were subjected to thematic analysis to recognize prominent CPD practices, obstacles to the implementation, and policy interventions/features related to teaching quality in the higher education context in India. The method used allows for reproduction and constitutes an evidence-informed thematic synthesis of the latest research concerning the influence of CPD on teaching practices.

4. DISCUSSION

➤ **To analyze the evolution and present landscape of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs within Indian higher education institutions.**

Continued professional development (CPD) programs have transformed and look different today due to the influence of various educational sectors and the changing needs of teachers. Shikuku et al., (2025) highlighted the deliberate role of national CPD frameworks in not only shaping medical education but also showing that facilitation of CPD through carefully organized policies would be straightforward. Shikuku et al., research found that a national policy plays a vital role in ensuring uniformity and high efficiency in educators' CPD in the medical field. Worku et al., (2025) examined different ways CPD was implemented in higher education, found a significant shift towards institution-specific professional development programs aligned with academic institutions' changing objectives. Another research by Nkundabakura et al., (2025) explored gender-related problems in continuous professional development (CPD) and how CPD programs influence female teachers' self-efficacy and engagement. Nkundabakura et al., pointed to the fact that how inclusively and with a gender focus professional learning is addressed can not only remove the participation barriers but also increase the effect of CPD programs. Further, Tambak et al., (2025).

broadened the research to address the growing demand for situational CPD programs in madrasas and illustrated that the religious education contexts require tailor-made professional development to the origins and the nature of the teachers' challenges in those contexts.

Lafferty et al. (2024) presented the change or shifts of leadership-focused CPD practices through the lens of leaders, who made their observations and statements. The authors pointed out that to achieve changes in institutions, CPD should not only improve the classroom skills of teachers but also develop their leadership skills. In fact, the meta-analyses of the issue announced the gradual transformation of CPD programs to reflect the professional development needs of single educators in different contexts. There was a strong emphasis on development opportunities that are well-tailored, engaging, and local. The meta-analyses argued that successful CPD remains a dynamic practice that also provides a certain level of institutional support while addressing the distinctive needs of various education contexts.

➤ **To describe the challenges faced in implementing CPD programs in Indian higher education and explore ways to improve their effectiveness in enhancing teaching quality.**

Hlubučková et al., (2025) recognized various challenges that teachers faced in self-directed CPD activities. One of the significant problems was the absence of interest and motivation, which led to the disengagement of teachers from CPD materials. Disengagement was also lessening due to the lack of institutional support, among other things, time, and financial support. Hlubučková et al., argued that CPD courses should offer more freedom and better institutional support to be able to handle this obstacle. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2025) found that many teachers feel that the CPD content was not relevant to their context, which results in reduced attendance and participation. Time constraints were also a key barrier to teachers

finding time to complete CPD if they had an excessive teaching load. Arranz-García et al. (2021) proposed that management in schools should be actively involved in implementing meaningful CPD programs; otherwise, CPD programs would only be able to address effectively a limited range of teacher-specific needs. Besides, Arranz-García et al., asserted that the development of CPD content was aimed at satisfying teacher needs and considering available time, and that, finally, they stressed the idea of management commitment most of all.

In the healthcare industry, Shikuku et al. (2024) examined obstacles that prevent midwives from participating in CPD (continuing professional development). Midwives indicated that they had limited access to CPD, particularly in remote areas, and that there was little support from their organizations. Shikuku et al. also identified CPD as an essential factor in their ongoing skill development, which, in the end, is the advantage of the people they serve. Shikuku et al. urged the provision of more funds for CPD of midwives in terms of access and organizational support for the continuation of education to provide professional development and service enhancement. Last but not least, Mesuwini and Mokoena (2024) conducted a study on what prevents people from participating in CPD programs that are held online. The barriers that they found were technological issues that involved limited digital literacy, bad internet connection, and lack of familiarity with online learning platforms. The participants reported that due to the impersonal nature of online learning situations, their level of engagement was low. Mesuwini and Mokoena proposed addressing issues of digital literacy, providing improved technical support and creating more interactive online learning experiences to create improved CPD experiences in online settings. Together, these studies highlight the vital need for customized, flexible CPD programs that respond to particular challenges faced in each sector of educators. Recommendations include improving institutional support, increased flexibility of learning, alignment with personal and professional goals, and addressing technological barriers to engagement and professional learning. Collaborative management, institutional supports, and contextual relevance are all critical to the success of CPD programs.

➤ **To identify best practices and Policies that shape the effectiveness of CPD programs in Indian higher education**

The policies, practices, and frameworks that influence the design and delivery of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs have impacted their effectiveness. Tekir (2022) considered how induction policies for teachers in two systems of education impacted the effectiveness of CPD. There was an important role of institutional policies in building supportive environments for new teachers. Policies in place early in a teacher's career made CPD more effective and established a foundation for a teacher's future professional learning. Similarly, Shikuku et al. (2025) investigated the influence of local Continuing Professional Development (CPD) structures on medical education. Shikuku et al. (2025) illustrated that the elaboration of not only the national policy but also the Frameworks at the strategic level was the key factor for the improvement of CPD results.

In a more focused field, Joseph and Jeganathan (2025) explored the use of concept mapping workshops as a best practice in CPD. Jeganathan discovered that concept mapping, as a practical and specific strategy, influenced the improvement of teaching quality because of the personalized process. The focus on practical and specific strategies was a major point of CPD that facilitated active learning and changed teaching practice. In a different study, Hidayati et al. (2025) recognized the significance of academic supervision models in CPD, pointing out that mentoring and guidance were the means to best practices. Hidayati et al. (2025) emphasized that when supervision models fit the school or institutional context, CPD could

be vibrant, especially in the teacher skills development department.

These studies together communicate that a CPD program will be elevated by a holistic approach to create an environment that connects institutional supports, instructional practices, and accountability frameworks. An inclusive CPD, i.e., one that is professional learning, is a tactical, targeted, and comprehensive approach that embraces the needs of the individual as well as the wider institutional or educational goals, and thus, it is a strong supporter of sustainable ongoing professional growth across multiple teaching contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

The study has explored the developments, issues, and successful practices for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs in higher education in India. CPD is an important factor in teaching quality, pedagogical change in teaching, and the overall effectiveness of the institution. With these challenges and opportunities, it appears we have not fully realized CPD due to a lack of institutional support, and some alignment with the evolving needs of educators, and it is disjointed from potential policies. There is increasing recognition of the value of CPD in India; however, much of the CPD on offer is short-term, disconnected from long-term teaching practice, and can often lack a fit with what is possible in the institution.

The status of CPD in Indian higher education continues to be transitional in nature. The national-level initiatives, such as the National Education Policy (NEP) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines that call for CPD, have not been matched by engagement from faculty or sufficiently resolved through bureaucracies. The absence of systematic and ongoing CPD programmes has stunted CPD and the possible wider changes to teaching practices in higher education institutions.

A structured, continuous, and evidence-based approach is necessary to be effective in CPD. Faculty development activities should be part of institutional policies that provide ongoing support, recognition, and incentives to participate in CPD. Faculty development programs should be in line with the individual and professional objectives of the teaching staff to be most effective and attractive. The management of the institution should also deeply involve itself in building a culture, or atmosphere, of professional development. Continuous Professional Development (CPD), as a collaborative, whole-institution approach, can be a vehicle for sustained change to raise the quality of teaching and learning in Indian higher education and to make institutions ready for the global market, if leadership demonstrates this throughout the institution.

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