

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR THE PROFESSIONAL  
TRAINING OF UNTRAINED GRADUATE TEACHERS IN  
SRI LANKA - A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BY

REFERENCE ONLY

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher education for the professional training of untrained graduate teachers in Sri Lanka - A Needs Assessment.

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Those concerned with improving the quality of education pay much attention to teacher education because teacher education is largely responsible for improving the quality of education in a system. It is assumed that teachers acquire and develop competencies in knowledge, skills and qualities which they need in their professional activities through teacher education and therefore teacher education is a must for every teacher. Teachers too perceive that they need teacher education to acquire and develop competencies they need in carrying out their professional activities efficiently and effectively.

Teacher education programmes are normally designed by educationists, policy planners, administrators and others concerned with teacher education except the teachers themselves. The content, structure and methodology needs in teacher education are decided by others for teachers and teachers have no way of registering their perceived needs to be incorporated in teacher education programmes. This is so with most of the teacher education programmes available for the professional training of graduate teachers in Sri Lanka.

The literature reveals that teacher education programmes which incorporate the needs perceived by teachers as important for them would be more effective than other types of programmes. In order to consider the incorporation of training needs perceived by teachers in teacher education programmes, these have to be surveyed, identified and assessed.

This study therefore attempted to survey, identify and assess the training needs of untrained graduate teachers, as perceived by them.

The literature on the subject was reviewed and it was the basis for the construction of the questionnaire for teachers. This questionnaire was the main instrument in collecting data for the study.

A sample of teachers representing the population of untrained graduate teachers in Sri Lanka was selected on a stratified random sampling basis from five educational districts. The sample included male and female teachers, teachers at primary and secondary levels and teachers from rural and urban areas. The questionnaire was administered to the sample of teachers and 370 teachers responded to the questionnaire correctly. The responses of these 370 teachers were tabulated and analyzed.

The competencies in knowledge, skills and qualities indicated by the teachers as important and necessary were considered as their perceived needs in content in initial teacher education programmes. These needs were grouped into seven need categories. In order to identify the priority basis of these need categories, they were ranked according to the frequency of responses indicated by the sample of teachers.

The teachers perceive that professional skill development is more important to them than the development of knowledge in subjects on theory of education. Practical training through experience by participating in all the activities of the school is emphasized. According to the indicated needs graduate teachers require in their initial professional training, a broad type of teacher education which will develop competency to teach at both primary and secondary levels and also to contribute efficiently and effectively to all other activities in the school.

A case for innovative programme structure is seen, where teachers perceive that different types of programmes for the provision of initial teacher education to graduate teachers need to be made available so that teachers could select a programme according to their convenience.

According to the perception of the teachers, different methods also need to be adopted in the provision of initial teacher training.

In considering the needs perceived by the untrained graduate teachers, provision of Post Graduate Diploma in Education programmes through regional centres by using a mix of methods including the use of mass media could be emphasized. Such programmes can provide more opportunities to teachers to enrol and follow a programme, which is convenient to them. Thereby, maximum use of available resources could be obtained. Therefore such type of programmes should be considered important in the provision of initial teacher education to untrained graduate teachers at least until the backlog of untrained graduate teachers is cleared.

Mode of evaluation preferred by a majority of teachers in the sample is by continuous assessment and final written examination, and this needs to be considered in redesigning teacher education programmes.

Another aspect teachers have highlighted is the need for obtaining guidance and advice from an experienced teacher. This too is worthy of consideration in the provision of teacher education to graduate teachers.

If and when the training needs perceived by the untrained graduate teachers are to be considered in improving and innovating teacher education programmes for the initial professional training of untrained graduate teachers in Sri Lanka, this study would be useful as a data base and also as one which provides guide lines for improvement and innovation.