

Status of Continuing Professional Development in Education Sector: A Global Study



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ABSTRACT: The art of learning, unlearning and relearning is the need of the hour, and these are indispensable in any field for professional growth. Especially in the educational sector, change leads to development initiatives and raising standards in teaching and learning. Interestingly, the existing opportunities provide more options for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities and programmes for teachers and professors. The present study analyses teachers and professors' responses to CPD activities and offers a wide range of information and opinions on CPD programmes and activities. A phenomenological approach was employed to study 257 participants' perspectives from 48 countries through a questionnaire. This research will also be a resource for teachers and professors seeking professional development in the field. The responses revealed that teachers and professors were eager to take responsibility for participating in CPD activities with mutual support and guidance from the management. The institutions are responsible for ensuring faculty opportunities, particularly for young teachers in their early stages of teaching, and they must be assisted in acquiring the necessary knowledge and exposure. This research paper presents the state of CPD activities, programmes, challenges and awareness across the world.

KEYWORDS: CPD activities, ICT tools, latest technology, advancement, writing and publishing research articles, professional body.

I. INTRODUCTION

The essential elements are the relationships between teacher quality and student accomplishment. In short, it is considered critical to promote the growth of teachers' teaching competency. Especially in the teaching profession, teachers have to update their knowledge and skills to meet their expertise. Guskey (2003) identified that the teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) had a progressive impact on students' and the teachers' achievements. Professional developments have no age or time limit, and even experienced teachers have to study continuously to face new-fangled challenges and demands in education. Once, professional development was the vital factor to being successful in any career. But today, Continuing Professional Development is the only option to stay in the profession comfortably. CPD activities of teachers are the only option to meet the high demands of Gen Z learners. Learners of the 21st century have more options for acquiring knowledge and skills as teachers are no longer only the owners of knowledge and skills. Binkley M. et al. (2012) argued that knowledge itself is an expanding exponent in acquiring information, sharing, problem-solving and transforming. Students are no longer looking for manual labour and routine classroom exercises; technological modalities have replaced the teaching pattern. Nevertheless, teachers' live presence cannot be replaced by technological tools if they invest in continuing professional development activities. Hence, CPD activities appear to be fostering educational performance and effectiveness in teaching.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Evers (2016) stated that professional development was required to implement solutions to young teachers' specific skills and enhance teachers' abilities. Guskey & Yoon (2009) pointed out that professional development must be collaborative, long-term, and content-driven to optimize classroom teaching. According to Richardson (2003), to be successful, teachers must engage in professional development, a continuous, rigorous initiative to improve the quality of education. Padwad (2008) discussed professional learning community membership, as it pays a good dividend to continuous professional development. It has been identified that active involvement in English Teachers' Clubs leads to increased productivity among employees concerning the issue of contextualization, critical approach to problems, belief in self-agency, and pragmatic approach to overall method.

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Teachers and principals do not enter CPD as empty vessels. They bring prior knowledge, strategies, insights, perspectives, and readily transferable anxieties about the work environment's highly complicated nature (Dadds (1997).

Teachers usually arrive at CPD courses brimming with ideas, concepts and implicit or explicit opinions regarding learning and their work in education. They bring with them dissimilarities, differences of opinion, basic assumptions, difficulties, and missions. All those are valuable resources that can be decrypted and analysed all through CPD mechanisms. Tabatabaee-Yazdi (2018) suggested that policymakers should consider the strategies and programmes that best meet teachers' needs when planning any CPD courses. The motivations of teachers in teamwork and reflection should be taken into account. Teachers should be given an appropriate authentic context and opportunities to put new teaching ideas and methodologies into practice.

Additionally, teachers should be promoted and supported to become better decision-makers in the field. Meanwhile, their decisions and perspectives should be valued and taken into account. Kaur (2019) discussed how individual, relational, and external influences influence teachers' well-being. Furthermore, it was reiterated that establishing a continual emphasis on teachers' well-being could be the most effective way to create a conducive environment for teachers' personal and professional growth. Willems (2015) reported that quality professional development could result in significant qualitative improvements such as forming a healthy school community, citizenship, progress of individual teacher qualifications, and the advancement of opportunities for peer learning. Badri et al. (2016) outlined the approach to developing cross-occupational competencies for future study, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) knowledge is the most suitable professional development needs.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study aims to study teachers' perception of CPD activities, their impact on teachers' career, and the challenges they are facing to implement in their classroom teaching.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the real impact of CPD activities on the teaching career?
- Whether all the CPD activities are really helpful to them?
- Are they able to implement what they have learnt in CPD activities?
- What are the suggestions to improve the CPD activities framework?

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study emphasizes the CPD activities for the teachers. Especially from the responses of the participants, the importance of the CPD activities was highlighted. So by taking responsibility for professional development unequivocally leads to the enhanced teaching-learning process. On the other hand, the CPD programmes may lead researchers, practitioners, policymakers to initiate and implement these research findings in practice.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study drew data by adopting a survey method. First, the researcher developed a questionnaire to gauge the teachers' input based on the research questions. Specifically, it took a phenomenological approach. Emphasizing the participants' perspective from the survey questionnaire is called the phenomenological approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Then, all the participants were instructed to respond to the questionnaire through the online source of Google Forms 2020. The survey included 12 topics and activities, as shown in Table 1. In addition, the teachers were asked to respond to the CPD activities.

Table 1. Continuing Professional Development Activities / Topics

S.No.	Continuing Professional Development Activities / Topics
1	When did you last present a paper at a national conference?
2	When did you last present a paper at an international conference?
3	When did you last publish a paper in a journal?
4	When did you last attend a workshop/FDP?
5	When did you last learn a new skill?
6	Are you a member of any professional body?
7	What are the ICT tools you have used so far?
8	What are the challenges you are facing for your professional development?
9	What is the percentage you are able to really apply what you learn from a conference and workshop in your classroom teaching?
10	What is the percentage you are able to really apply what you learn from a conference and workshop in your research?

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11	Do you know experts in your field, and have you read their work?
12	Do you know the latest improvement in your field across the world?

VII. SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE

A simple ratified random sampling method was used to collect samples for the present study. The respondents of the study are those who are working in tertiary level colleges around the world. The language educators were randomly selected. A total of 257 teachers from 48 countries were voluntarily participated in this study.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

There are many CPD activities to be developed beyond boundaries. However, within the structure of the institution, there are several opportunities for teachers and professors to be involved with several different CPD activities. The designed questionnaire for this study seeks to answer the participants' self-awareness, self-evaluation, and self-updation of the particular CPD activities. Educational institutions should have many initiatives to encourage teacher participation in learning and teaching.

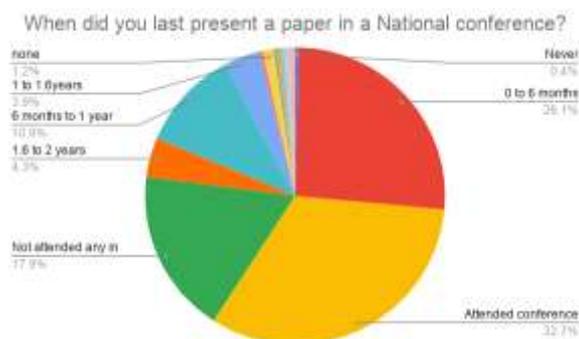


Fig. 1 National Conference

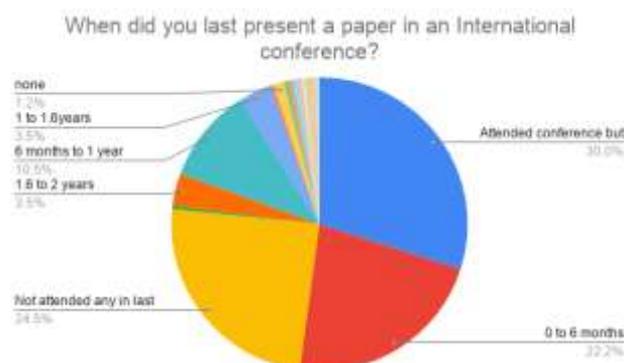


Fig. 2 International Conference

In response to the questionnaire, 84 (32%) and 77 (30%) participants attended national and international conferences, as shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, respectively. Though the participants have not presented any paper, they attended the conference to gain many insights from the experienced and trained speakers. Thus, attending academic conferences can play a pivotal role in shaping the knowledge of the individuals who engage.

Similarly, teachers and professors can broaden thinking and knowledge by listening to new ideas and theories and recent trends related to the field. Teachers and professors can also learn about new methods and tools that they may not have been aware of previously. These conferences also assist attendees in gathering information from listening to presentations from all over the world. Apart from the learning perspective of attending conferences, there are several benefits gained by the teachers. First, it provides opportunities to meet and interact with fellow attendees and experts. Second, attending the conference is a much-needed break from regular work and academic responsibilities. The teachers and professors feel energized and rejuvenated. Socialization illuminates the style of the thinking process.

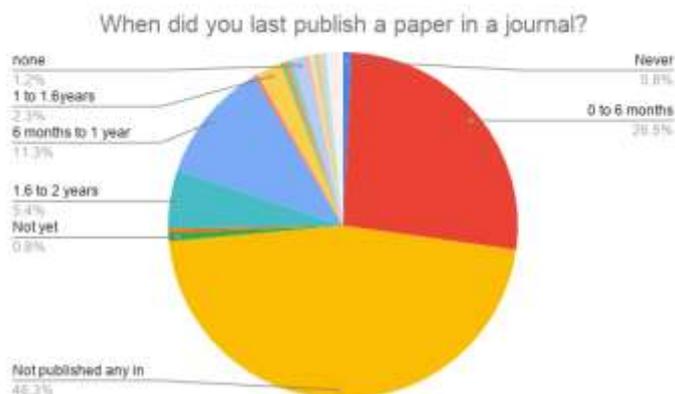


Fig. 3 Research Paper Publications

Research publications are vital to prove the teachers and professors' skills, knowledge and abilities. But from the responses, almost 119 (46.3%) participants had not published a single research paper in the last two years, as shown in Fig. 3. The response

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to this question shows the lack of awareness among the respondents about the importance of publishing research papers in reputed journals. Publishing research papers guarantees experience, exposure, expertise and recognition. With the growing competition in the field, it feels good to be acknowledged for a piece of research work that the individual has done. Through publication, researchers and practitioners with similar interests are aware of new knowledge in their field and help to advance knowledge. Apart from gaining knowledge, research papers also contribute to the students' future by guiding and helping them with research. These research papers are the world of knowledge. Through these papers, overall development is benefited by improving writing skills, helping knowledge up-gradation, keeping updated, and publicity to work, motivating research, and giving access to research work. Teachers and professors, in general, would come across many novel ideas and research advances when preparing to write a research paper.

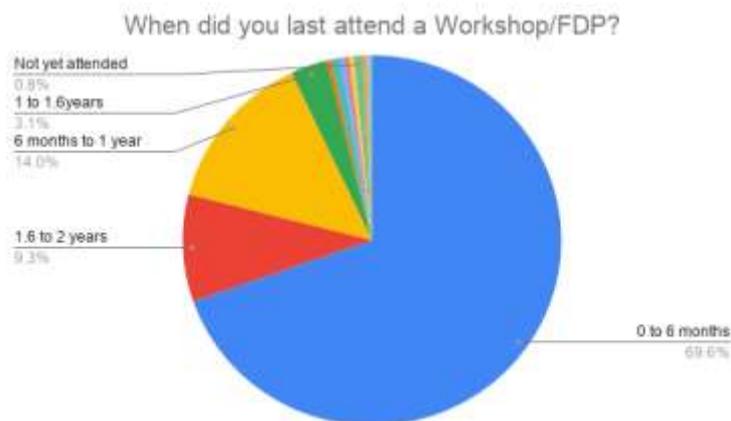


Fig. 4 Workshop and FDP Programmes

Learning is undoubtedly a continuous process, either for students or teachers. The necessity of continuous learning is so vital with the advent of technology. So, to enhance and update the education system, FDP and workshop were introduced. The response showed that more than 69.6% (179) of participants attended workshop and FDP in the last six months, as shown in Fig. 4. The findings revealed that many teachers and professors are eager to participate in such programs in order to learn research-based strategic teaching practices and to investigate classroom issues that impact students' success. FDPs and workshops improve the faculty's performance and make them aware of the emerging technologies and new enhancements in the respective fields. These programmes are being conducted practically rather than theoretically. When the teachers and professors are well trained, the training knowledge will help implement the new ideas in their classrooms. FDPs and workshops are conducted commonly with other similar institutions. Sharing a common issue or problem would help them learn more about learning patterns and implement the same teaching methods. The interactions would help in collaboration and exchanging ideas and opinions from the other faculty members.

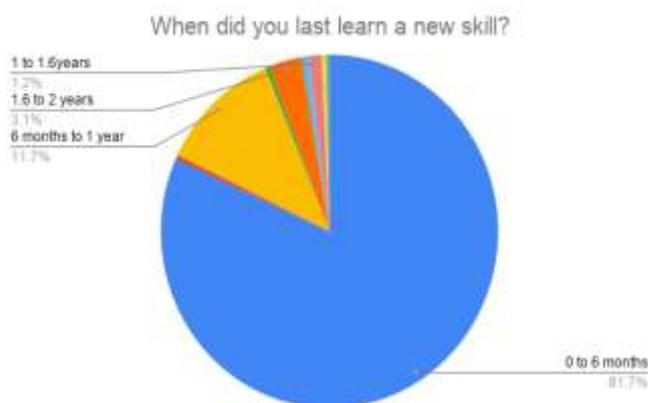


Fig. 5 Learning a new skill

Learning new skills is necessary for advancing CPD activities. Skills diversify and help to develop new ideas and techniques to keep up with the emerging changes. From the questionnaire, 210 (81.7%) participants learnt a new skill in the last six months, as shown in Fig. 5. The abilities would provide an avenue for learning new ideas. It also increases the teachers and professors' adaptability and also helps to grow confidence and willingness to change.

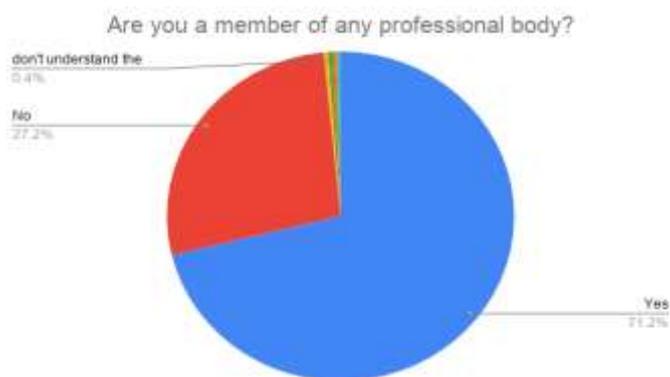


Fig. 6 Member in a Professional Body

Along with adaptability, new skills would increase teachers' likability to stay ahead of the competitors. Being a member of any professional body is an important CPD activity for teachers and professors. Almost 71.2% (183) participants are registered with a professional body, as shown in Fig. 6. It shows the teachers and professors' professional recognition to make new contacts, learn more about what is happening in the domain field, and offer excellent networking and research opportunities through national or international expos and conferences. In addition, many professional bodies offer magazines, journals, publications, career development, and online research facilities like surveys, reports, updates, and events for the benefit of their members.

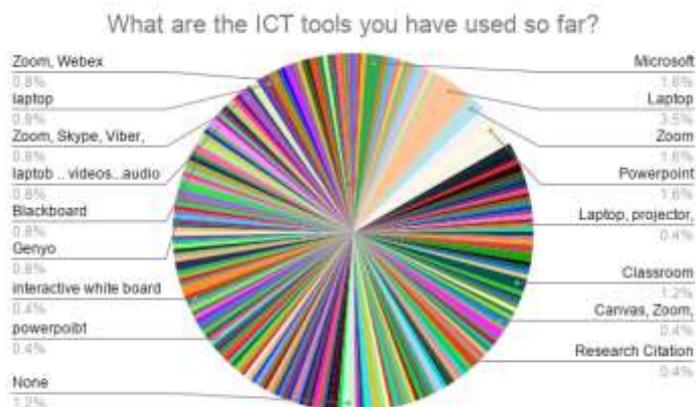


Fig. 7 ICT Tools

ICT has become integral to the teaching-learning process. The participants were asked to list some of the ICT tools they used during the teaching process. Laptop, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, PowerPoint Presentation, Interactive Whiteboard, Webex, Edmodo, Prezi, Moodle, Canvas, Research Citation Management, Nearpod, Padlet, Google Classroom, Aralinks, Podcast, and Social media networks are frequently used ICT tools by the 257 participants from 48 countries around the world approximately as shown in Fig. 7. The ICT planners must consider including computer-assisted technologies and other digital culture aspects to ensure students' higher-order thinking skills. ICT in education has enhanced the effectiveness of learning among students. It added a new perspective to learning that was not previously available for the students. The learners perceived that learning in an ICT-based environment was more interesting and engaging than learning in a typical classroom setting.

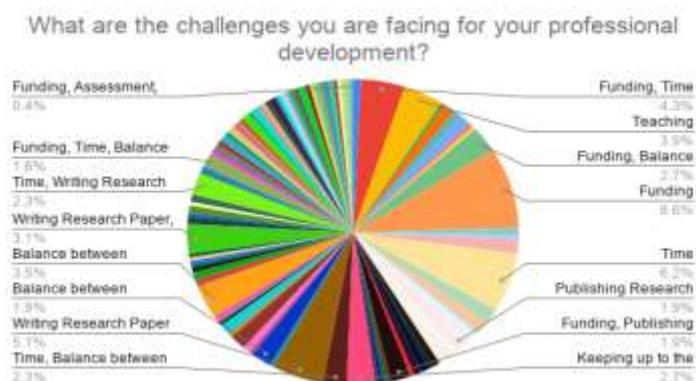


Fig. 8 Challenges for CPD activities

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Here are the challenges that teachers and professors face in order to maintain their participation in CPD activities. The participants listed nine barriers to their CPD activities from the questionnaire, as shown in Fig. 8. Funding is the main drawback of participation in CPD programmes (44.7%). Next is a lack of time to participate in CPD activities (41.6%). (36.6%) participants genuinely accepted that they could not balance personal and professional life. 93 (36.2%) participants spent most of the time writing research papers and could not regularly attend CPD programmes. Subsequently, 81 (31.5%) participants spent time publishing research papers. Ultimately, they should not focus only on those aspects. Apart from writing and publishing, they must explore more CPD activities to sharpen their knowledge.

Most of the time, teachers and professors were tightly packed with teaching routines. 61 (23.7%) participants engaged in keeping themselves up to the present day students' expectations. As a result, these faculty members failed to upgrade their CPD activities. Likely, 48 (18.7%) participants said they could not attend CPD programmes due to routine teaching preparation for the lecture. Hence, teaching itself is a barrier to CPD programmes for few teachers.

Furthermore, 34 (13.2%) participants admitted that they could not attend CPD programmes due to students' assessment work. Teachers and professors spend more time on students' assessments like correcting assignments, projects, and test papers. Lastly, in the challenges, 24 (9.3%) participants said because of the poor infrastructure, they failed to attend CPD programmes. Lack of infrastructure within the institution would not provide a conducive atmosphere to conduct CPD activities and programmes when the management does not allocate time and money for those activities, which results in a lack of ability to participate in CPD training.



Fig. 9 Applicability of learning in Classroom



Fig. 10 Applicability of learning in Research

One of the main aspects of attending workshops and conferences is seeing how new ideas and activities work with research and how students might feel doing the same activities in the classroom. In a nutshell, checking the reliability and applicability of the new learning from conferences and workshops to individual research and in the classroom environment. From the questionnaire, 101 teachers and professors said that they use 76 to 100% in classroom teaching. 91 teachers and professors use it in research. The participants assured that they use at least 25% from the conference and workshop in research and classroom teaching. Likely, 23 participants in both the categories reported that they use up to 25% in classroom teaching and research, as shown in Fig. 9 and Fig. 10. None of them reported that they do not use the learning activities either in research or in a classroom environment. Hence, conferences and workshops are considered impactful CPD activities for teachers and professors.

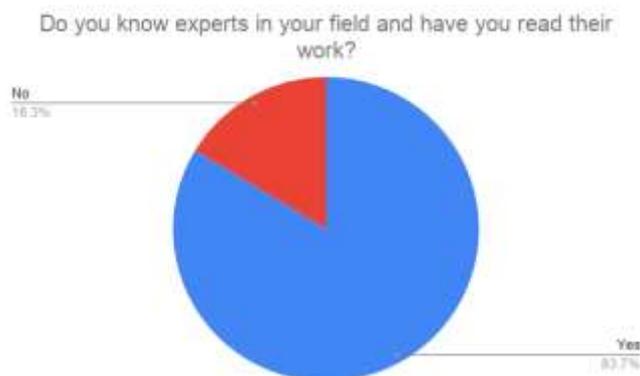


Fig. 11 Experts in the field

Teachers and professors must keep themselves updated in their respective fields. Importantly, they should know prominent experts and need to read a lot about the recently published works. Around 215 participants in this study have admitted that they know some field experts and have read their works, as shown in Fig. 11.

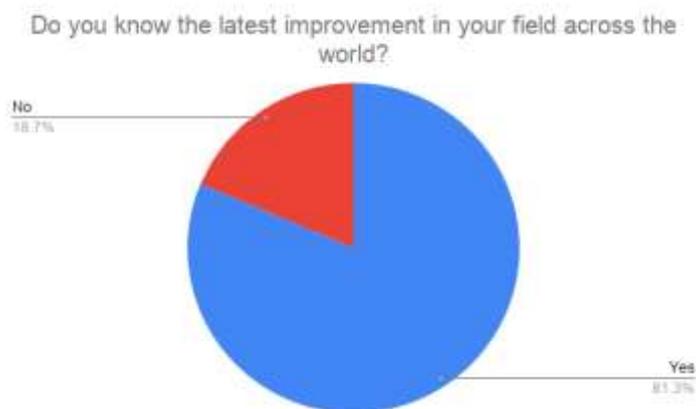


Fig. 12 Latest Improvement in the field

Subsequently, they could know the latest improvement in the field across the world. Nearly 209 participants again said that they are updating recent trends in the field, as shown in Fig. 12. It is evident from the questionnaire, keeping track of the field is a crucial CPD activity, especially in the teaching-learning process.

IX. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The collective responses of the participants from the questionnaire insist on the importance of CPD activities for the teachers and professors.

- 32% of participants have attended national conferences and not presented any papers.
- 30% of participants have attended international conferences and not presented any papers.
- 46% of participants have not published any research articles in the last two years.
- 70% of participants have attended workshops and FDPs in the last six months.
- 82% of participants have learnt a new skill in the last six months.
- 71% of participants have registered themselves in a professional body membership.
- Laptops, Microsoft Teams, Zooms and PowerPoint Presentation are frequently used ICT tools by the 257 teachers.
- 45% of participants confirmed that funding is the most challenging factor for teachers' continuing professional development.
- 40% of participants use 76 to 100% of learnt CPD activities in the classroom.
- 35% of participants use 76 to 100% of learnt CPD activities in the research.
- 84% of participants knew experts in the related field.
- 81% of participants knew the latest improvement in the field.

X. CONCLUSION

By promoting and integrating ICT tools into the teaching and learning process through CPD activities, teachers become more effective in the workplace. CPD activities help to increase the chance of career growth, where they can lead others. CPD encourages inclusive practices and also multilingual approaches to teaching. In particular, CPD programmes promote 21st-century skills for the teaching and learning fraternity. CPD programs, on the other hand, assist teachers and professors in understanding new educational policies and practices in order to improve future education.

The findings from this study provide insights into the importance of CPD programmes and activities. The result specifies that any CPD programmes should consider the needs of the faculty members. The CPD programmes should be provided with practical teaching ideas and methodologies for better implementation into the classroom environment. More importantly, the CPD programmes and activities are essential and have significant value, especially technology-oriented strategies. Through CPD activities, the importance of ICT based learning should be utilized to innovate learning and teaching experiences. Again, the institutions must organize and arrange the necessary resources and encourage teachers and professors to participate in effective CPD programmes and activities. The quality of the teaching and learning atmosphere would be enhanced through CPD activities and programmes.

XI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The current study is limited to the teachers' responses to the Continuing Professional Development in their teaching career. Therefore, this research constitutes a solution towards limited issues compared to the current issues prevailing in Continuing Professional Development activities.

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