

## **An Analysis of Teacher Professional Development Policy Provision in Nepal**

**Mahendra Basnet**

MPhil Scholar, GSE, TU

ORCID: 0009-0001-4069-8920

### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) policy provisions in Nepal, drawing on the data obtained from the policy review and interviews with teachers from three community schools in Nepal. Particularly, this article focuses on the policy text, teachers' understanding, and local practices. This is more concerned with how TPD affects teachers' professional life. For this, I adopted the qualitative research design to explore subjective experiences of selected teachers. I used an unstructured interview conducted with selected school teachers. Along with the TPD policy document, I also analysed the policy provision on teacher training. The findings indicate that the TPD framework focuses on competency-based training package in two phases to teachers, and teachers have positive responses to the training as it is motivating to them. However, the driving factor for them to be motivated is the promotion in profession, rather than learning for professional competencies. Although the TPD policy provision is conceptually sound, it couldn't achieve the expected outcomes due to ineffective implementation.

*Keywords:* Teacher professional development, teacher training, professional competencies and skills

### **Introduction**

Teacher professional development (TPD) refers to any forms of attempts made or supports provided for teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and experience in teaching fields (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). On one hand, by attending various workshops, professional meetings, and mentoring, teachers can develop their professional growth through formal experiences. On the other hand, there are several informal processes, such as reading professional publications and watching professional development-related television documentaries, by which they can grow their professional knowledge and skills (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Without TPD, teachers can't maintain the quality of education (Poudel, 2022). TPD is essential for teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and expertise in their subject areas. It is an essential aspect of quality education as it helps to reform traditional instructional practices and focuses on modern technological tools in classroom teaching and learning.

TPD is a prerequisite that plays a significant role in maintaining quality education. It focuses on improving the knowledge, skills, and instructional techniques for teaching and learning (McMurtrie et al., 2025). TPD can be considered a key element of teacher quality development and quality education. Therefore, TPD is essential for improving the quality of

community school education in Nepal. On one hand, as a main component of TPD, the teacher training program commenced formally in Nepal after the establishment of the Basic Teaching Centre in 2004 B.S. On the other hand, the National Teaching Centre was established in 2011 B.S. for the improvement of teachers' professional qualities. This effort is considered a milestone in the beginning of teacher training in Nepal. Meanwhile, among the trained teachers across the country, only one held an M.Ed., six had a B.A. or B.Ed., and twelve had received basic teacher training (Tamang, 2025). But the demand for trained primary teachers throughout the country was increasing day by day. For addressing these teachers' demands, a mobile teacher training centre was established outside the valley in 2013 B.S.

Keeping this thing in mind, the SSRP 2009-2015 has also kept teacher preparation and development as a priority. In the same way, the above-mentioned report proposes the minimum qualifications for teachers, too. In my opinion, as a researcher, the article analyses the policy provisions, understanding, and interpretation of TPD policies from the TPD-trained teachers' perspectives within the Nepalese TPD context.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The education policies issued at different times in the Nepalese context tried to address the TPD issues. However, the TPD policies could not do so. No proper implementation and monitoring of the TPD policies after their use are found in real practices. The TPD policies could not change the teachers' instructional activities in their day-to-day classroom, resulting in poor improvement in the quality of education. Policies seem to be only for formality, not for real classroom practices. Although several studies have been conducted in the field of TPD, no proper analysis of TPD policies has been done from the teachers' perspectives and understandings. There is a lack of studies on how teachers understand and interpret the TPD policies, even in the TPD framework -2072.

The present article seeks to address a significant gap within policy research. There are many challenges in developing quality teachers and quality education (Dhakal et al., 2024). Those challenges are due to a lack of relevant instructional skills, teachers' attitudes, and the unavailability of appropriate instructional materials to bring them into their day-to-day lives. Moreover, other scholars found the affecting factors in teacher motivation towards the teaching profession, whereas several factors play a significant role in affecting the teaching profession. Among them, policy-related factors also affect the teaching profession, viz., compensation and benefits, leave facility, upgrading, training, and pension (Phyak & Khanal, 2025). I studied several research articles, but these articles do not explore the teachers' understanding and interpretation of TPD policies. Therefore, this article will explore the teachers' understanding and interpretation of TPD provision policies in the Nepalese context.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this article is to explore TPD provision policies based on an analysis of teachers' understanding, interpretations, and local practices. Furthermore, the objectives of this article are to analyse the key policy provisions for teacher professional development in community schools. Teachers' understanding and interpretation of existing TPD policies, and how these policies work in the professional lives of the teachers, are also the objectives of this article.

## Methodology

This article is based on a qualitative research design and an interpretivist philosophical perspective. Interpretivism focuses on individuals' understanding and interpretations, and supports drawing the multiple subjective meanings and realities of the research phenomena (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). In my article, I collected the individual understanding, interpretations and experiences about the teacher professional development provision policy. For this, I used two methods for data collection and analysis. One is a document analysis, and the other is an unstructured interview with my participating teachers. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, either printed or electronic materials (Morgan, 2022). Initially, I collected, studied, and analysed the TPD-related printed and electronic materials. Thus, document analysis is also a key tool for analysing the TPD policies for this study. For understanding and interpreting the TPD policies, I selected three community secondary schools, namely Geetamata Ma. Vi., Dallu, Siddiganesh Ma. Vi., Sorhakutte and Tarun Ma. Vi., Balaju from Kathmandu valley through purposive sampling. The selection was based on my prior familiarity with the schools. I purposely selected one teacher from each school who had already taken TPD training. I used an unstructured interview schedule for data collection. An unstructured interview is informal, exploratory, and there are no pre-determined interview questions (Noor et al., 2025). This type of interview is based on open-ended questions. It is flexible in nature and explores the in-depth data from the participants. During the data collection, I recorded the data on my mobile phone after getting permission from the teacher participants. I maintained the ethical norms and values during data collection and analysis

After collecting the data, I transcribed the interviews into text, and the textual data was coded, categorised, and organised into themes and sub-themes based on the research questions and purpose of the article. Finally., I analysed the data using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021). From the available data, I wrote a paragraph using burger styles to interpret it.

**Policy Perspective: Anthropology of Policy.** In this article, I have adopted the anthropology of policy approach to analyse the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) policy. According to this approach, policy analysis involves examining how policies are constructed and implemented. How is policy experienced and interpreted by stakeholders? (Shore & Wright, 2004). This article focuses on key policy provisions and understanding the lived experiences and interpretations of community school teachers regarding the TPD policy. This approach emphasises the experiences, understandings, and interpretations of policy from the implementer's perspectives.

In particular, this approach claimed that how policies are practised, enacted, and understood and interpreted by the community and school staff, and administrators. The anthropology of policy emphasises how policy works and affects society (Wedel et al., 2005). For this purpose, using the ethnographic study method is most important while analysing policy from an anthropological policy perspective. It shows that this anthropology policy approach follows participatory observation, talking to and living with the community members in a natural setting (Wedel et al., 2005). Therefore, this approach explores how the community member understands and interprets the policy. The anthropology of policy

approach uses the macro and micro levels for analysing policy (Shore & Wright, 2004), which is cited in Khanal (2012). The micro level examines how policies are perceived, interpreted, and enacted by local stakeholders like teachers and administrators. In this article, I have explored how the TPD policy was constructed and implemented. How does the TPD policy understand and interpret from the community teachers' perspectives? Therefore, I have adopted the anthropology of policy approach for this article.

### **Results and Discussion**

In this article, I have analysed the data on the basis of the hierarchy of research questions, and aims by formulating theme and sub-theme accordingly obtained data from the documents and informants' teachers. In fact, it focuses on two main themes: One is TPD policy provision, understanding and interpretation of TPD policy, and the other is the works of TPD policy for the professional lives of teachers.

#### **Policy provisions for teacher professional development**

In Nepal, TPD has emerged as a central policy strategy for promoting the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of school education in this rapidly changing world. TPD reflects a structured and system-wide effort to strengthen teachers' professional competencies as stated by MOEST. Contemporary research focuses on the effective professional development that is not episodic but continuous, practice-based, and aligned with classroom realities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). In this context, Nepal's TPD framework aligns with global evidence that sustained, collaborative, and context-sensitive professional learning significantly improves both teaching practices and student outcomes, moving beyond traditional one-off training approaches (Salimi, 2025). This is why teachers' professional development is essential for students' learning.

The Teacher Professional Development Frame-2072 focuses on a two-phase training model that includes theoretical knowledge and practical application. Each phase has a 15-day duration, combining 10 days of centre-based training, which focuses on pedagogical theory, demonstration lessons, and collaborative learning, and the remaining 5 days of school-based practicum. This structure reflects principles of experiential and reflective learning, where teachers actively apply new knowledge in their real classroom teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). Moreover, the framework further categorises professional development into certification training, refresher training, and locally designed, need-based modular training. Certification training ensures subject-specific and pedagogical competence among permanent teachers in the Nepalese context while refresher training updates teachers on evolving curricula, pedagogical innovations, and technological integration. At the same time, local modular training, typically short-term and context-specific, reflects Nepal's decentralised governance structure by addressing local challenges such as multilingual classrooms, inclusive education, and ICT integration (Joshi et al., 2025). It was also found that professional development opportunities for teachers during their in-service period are limited and inadequate indicating that teachers need support in developing curricula, understanding them, and making an effective implementation in their respective contexts (Borg & Poudel, 2024). This is why teacher training is mandatory for teachers' professional development.

A remarkable strength of Nepal's TPD policy lies in its evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Teachers undergo formal assessment during institutional training, ensuring that

learning is outcome-oriented rather than merely participatory (Schön, 2017). In addition to this, components such as peer collaboration and action research empower teachers to become active problem-solvers in their own classrooms, enhancing their capacity to address issues like student engagement and learning diversity. Recent studies further highlight that collaborative professional learning communities and peer feedback mechanisms significantly contribute to sustained instructional improvement (Corcelles-Seuba et al., 2024). In fact, TPD strengthens the teachers' professional growth. That's why it is required for everyone.

In the Nepalese context, TPD plays an important role in supporting broader educational reforms. It is particularly the shift toward competency-based curricula that emphasise critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Teachers are increasingly expected to adopt learner-centred pedagogies and integrate digital technologies into teaching, especially in the post-COVID-19 educational landscape. TPD initiatives have thus incorporated ICT training and blended learning approaches to enhance teachers' digital competencies (Popova et al., 2018). However, despite strong policy provisions, implementation challenges persist in real practices. Training programs are often criticised for being overly theoretical, with limited contextual adaptation and insufficient follow-up support. Weak monitoring systems, misalignment with local needs, and varying levels of teacher motivation further constrain effectiveness. Such gaps are consistent with broader challenges observed in developing education systems, where policy design is often stronger than implementation capacity (Popova et al., 2018). Overall, the Teacher Professional Development Framework–2072 provides a comprehensive foundation for improving teacher quality in Nepal; however, its transformative potential depends on effective implementation, contextual responsiveness, and sustained institutional support across all levels of the education system (Tamang, 2025). For teachers to have a strong foundation, it is mandatory for all subject teachers.

### **Understanding and interpretation of TPD policy**

Teachers generally understand that TPD policies provide them with professional knowledge and skills for competency development in the profession. This knowledge and these skills bring a change in the professional skills of the teacher, which helps to improve students' learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). In this context, my participant T<sub>1</sub> said,

*The teacher professional development policy provides the opportunity to participate in the teacher training for teachers. In fact, this training supports the development of teacher professional knowledge and skills, but the teacher professional development policy could be effectively implemented to make it fruitful in everyday practice.*

This statement makes it clear that if the government effectively implemented the TPD policy in Nepal, teachers' professional knowledge and skills would be developed through teacher training. Again, T<sub>1</sub> interprets that *“There is no possibility to take teacher training simultaneously for all teachers; if it is possible, the quality of education and students' performance will be increased. In such a case, the demand for training of the teachers also increases.”*

This statement emphasises that the teacher professional development training should be provided to all teachers to improve the students' performance and the quality of education. Similarly, participants T<sub>2</sub> & T<sub>3</sub> argued,

*Teachers' professional development policies are fine and important for the development of teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and competency. If the TPD policies are effectively implemented, the teachers become professionally competent. As a result, there won't be any lack of students' learning achievement.*

This statement clarifies that TPD policies are necessary and important for developing the teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and competence. In this way, as my participants suggest, the teacher professional development policy is necessary and important for professional competence. Focus on Dissemination, Implementation, and Monitoring of TPD Policy. As the participant understands, the TPD policy requires effective dissemination, implementation, and monitoring of its activities regularly.

In this study, my participant T<sub>1</sub> said, *"TPD policy is well formulated for teacher professional knowledge and skills development. But it is impossible to provide the training to all the teachers at the same time. If it is possible, they will develop professional knowledge and skills. There is no proper dissemination and monitoring of the implementing TPD policies before and after their use."*

This shows that the TPD policy is well formulated, but there is a lack of dissemination and monitoring of effective implementation. If it is possible to provide the training to all teachers, it helps to develop their professional knowledge and skills.

On the other hand, participant T<sub>2</sub> said,

*TPD policies are well formulated and fine to implement. TPD policy has focused on developing professional competence and skills. But in everyday practice, teachers are interested in taking training for certificate and promotion purposes. It is essential to disseminate, implement, and monitor the TPD policy and training in the real classroom effectively.*

This opinion of participant T<sub>2</sub> indicates that TPD policies are well developed, fine, and emphasise developing the professional knowledge, skills, and competence of teachers. The teachers' priority is for certificates and promotion rather than the transformation of TPD knowledge and skills in the classroom. There is a lack of dissemination, effective implementation, and an evaluation mechanism of the implementation of TPD policies and training.

Similarly, participant T<sub>3</sub> said,

*TPD policy is necessary and important for the development of teachers' professional knowledge and skills. It improves professional competence in teachers, but there is a need to disseminate and monitor the policy implementation. Due to a lack of these activities, the TPD program is ineffective in real classroom practices.*

This opinion clearly depicts that the TPD policy is necessary and important for developing the professional knowledge, skills, and competence in teachers, but policy dissemination and implementation should be evaluated by the policy developer and implementer. The participants emphasise the dissemination of TPD policy, effective

implementation, and monitoring the implementation of TPD policy and training in the real classroom.

### **Promotion Tools for Teachers**

Teachers get TPD policy and training as promotion tools rather than professional growth. In this study, T<sub>1</sub> said, *“TPD policies provide opportunities to participate in training, but most of the teachers take teacher training only for promotion purposes. They are unwilling to bring the learned knowledge and skills into their classroom practices.”* Therefore, the government's effort is in vain in terms of these training matters.

This statement shows that the TPD policies provide opportunities to participate and learn professional skills, but most of the teachers do not implement the learned skills in real classroom teaching. Their training is only for promotional purposes in their teaching career.

Similarly, T<sub>2</sub> argued that *“If there is no value of teacher training in promotion purpose, there is no meaning of TPD policy and training, and they don't take these training for the betterment of their teaching career”*

This also focuses on teachers' promotion rather than quality education and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Similarly, participant T<sub>3</sub> argued that *“TPD policy is well formulated and this policy expects to develop the professional knowledge and skills of the human resources through teacher training, but generally, teachers have taken teacher training for promotion. They could not implement the knowledge and skills in real teaching.”*

This statement depicts that the TPD policy is formulated for the professional knowledge and skills growth of the teachers. Most of the teachers participate in teacher training and acquire professional knowledge and skills, but they generally do not apply them in real teaching, and they only focus on promotion.

In this way, in my study, most of the teachers focus on the TPD policy and teacher training as promotion tools only. TPD Policy works in teachers' professional lives. The TPD policy offers teachers opportunities for professional skill development through training. In this context, T<sub>1</sub> said, *“TPD policy provides opportunities to participate in teacher training. I have learned many skills, such as preparation of lesson plan, instructional materials, democratic practices in the learning process, and acquired the knowledge and skills for conducting action research.”*

This statement shows that the TPD policy works to support the teacher's professional skills development through different activities, such as the formulation of lesson plans, conducting action research, and creating a democratic classroom. Similarly, in the sense of professional skill development, T<sub>2</sub> said: *“TPD policy works in our professional lives by providing the opportunity to participate in training and developing the teacher's professional skills, like lesson plan, teaching method, materials, and preparing an action research report.”*

This statement justifies that the TPD policy works in the teacher's professional lives by providing opportunities to participate and gain professional skills through training. On the other hand, T<sub>3</sub> argued that *“TPD policy provides an opportunity to participate in training and gain professional knowledge and skills. It brought ease to the teaching-learning process. So,*

*TPD policy works by supporting the teacher's professional knowledge and skills development."*

This shows that the TPD policy works and supports the teachers' professional lives by developing the professional skills of teachers through training, and it has brought ease in teaching and learning activities. In this way, TPD policy enhances teachers' professional lives by developing their professional knowledge and skills.

### **Opportunity for Professional Promotion**

The TPD policy promotes teachers' professional lives by providing opportunities for professional growth and promotion. In this sense, T<sub>1</sub> said "*TPD policy offers certain marks who have completed the TPD training. This score is most valuable for their promotion. So, the teachers are interested in participating in teachers' professional development*"

This statement indicates that the TPD policy provisions a score for teachers who have completed professional development training. This score plays an important role in supporting their promotion. Similarly, T<sub>2</sub> argued that "*TPD policy provisions the teacher training for the permanent teacher, and after completing the training, the teacher gets the opportunity for promotion as their keen interest is to be promoted in their professional career.*"

This shows that the TPD policy enhances the professional promotion of teachers in their professional lives. Similarly, T<sub>3</sub> said, "*There are TPD policy provisions for upgrading the teachers. The training for teachers, and after completing the training, the teacher obtains a certain score, which helps enhance their professional promotion.*"

This statement depicts that the TPD policy helps teachers to participate in training and promotes professional development based on the training score. In this way, the TPD policy provides opportunities for teachers to participate in training and supports them in their professional careers.

### **Conclusion**

There is a policy provision to provide professional development for teachers as in-service training in the Nepalese context. For this, the teacher professional development framework-2072 prescribes the two phases of training to the teachers who are involved in teaching careers. In the teacher's perception, this training is essential to develop their professional skills as well as for refreshment. However, most of the teachers are taking this training for their promotion purposes rather than for professional skills development. Additionally, the majority of teachers are not unaware of the TPD training. They are not getting the chance to participate in this TPD training. Thus, the monitoring mechanism needs to be effective in this matter. To make it fruitful, teachers transfer the knowledge and skills learned from the TPD training into their real classroom practices. To make it effective in teachers' professional careers, they are encouraged to participate in such a program not only for promotion but also for skills transfer.

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