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Status of teacher education in Pakistan- A problem centered approach

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to explore the status of teacher education in Pakistan with reference to challenges in the field of teacher education curriculum and teacher education institutions. The objectives of this study were to find out the challenges faced by the teacher education institutions and to highlight the factors responsible for the low performance of the teacher education institutions. It was a theoretical study in which available related literature was explored. Major findings inferred from review were that teachers educators are reluctant to change in curriculum or in teaching methods, the entry criteria into teacher education programmes is low, usually whoever does not get any other opportunity, his/her last choice becomes teaching, no national standards for entry qualification of teachers, lack of professionalism in teacher educators, isolated curriculum which has no connection with realities of classroom and school environment, lack of planning for teaching practice, political interference, lack of infrastructure and lack of research and innovations in the area of teacher education, lack of promotion structure of in-service teachers and lack of Incentives for teachers for appearing in continuous professional development programmes. The quality education is strongly related to the quality of teacher education in any education system. Today, teacher education institutions are facing multiple problems and confronted with number of challenges. In order to face these challenges we need complete renovation of our teacher education programmes. The status of teacher education in Pakistan can be raised by certain measures in order to meet the challenges in teacher education field offering incentives for educators for successful implementation of any innovative programmes of teacher education, raising the entry criteria /standards of into teaching profession, making teaching profession attractive, teachers' training for developing professionalism in teachers, course on professional ethics, courses may be redesigned to make it correlated with real practices and problems of classroom and school, teacher education curriculum may be made more practice-oriented rather merely theory-oriented, raising, budget for education, stopping political interference in teachers' selection and transfer, introducing separate teacher education cadre and a national commission for teacher education, conducting research for resolving teacher education problems and bringing innovations in teacher education programmes, relating in-service teacher education programmes to teachers' concern.

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Introduction

In every society teachers play a pivotal role and considered as the nation builders because the role of the teacher in any society both significant and valuable. Teachers are responsible for training and development of the students; they polish their personalities and make them responsible citizens. These are the only teachers who mould the minds of the students in order to make them self-confident, self-supportive and self-motivated individuals of the challenging world. In Islam the teacher's role is considerably more important and has been equalized with that of Prophets. This profession is so imperative and sacred that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) affirmed as it is a major part of his personality and Prophet Hood. If teacher realizes the significance of his Job the critical responsibility he is shouldering, the role he has in the future development of the nation and as therefore the accountability he will have to face in the henceforward he will at once quiver with the idea of facing the grave consequences of any negligence on his Part. Here researcher quotes the views of some great philosophers and

thinkers on the significance of the teacher and the teaching profession.

"Teachers who educate children deserve more honor than parents" (Aristotle, 384-322 BC).

"A good teacher is like a candle that consumes itself to light others" (Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1923).

"The mediocre teachers tell, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires" (William Arthur 1967).

Highly skilled teachers with having sound professional attitude and training are very important to raise the standards of Education, as Bob Talbert (1986) has truly said; "Good teachers are costly but bad teachers cost more".

Teaching is a bipolar process happens among teacher and the student which help to make effective change to develop emotional stability and maintain environment of the classroom. Number of groups takes teaching as a science this group stresses in scientific features of teaching and spotlights on those systematize ways that is possible through heedful choices and

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technological materials in order to make strong communications among the students and the teachers and accordingly dipping the option that wisdom takes place by chance frequently. Santoro (2011) affirmed that teaching is an academic and honorable practice encumbered with challenges and obstacles both regular and unexpected events. On the other hand other group holds teaching as an art. This group believes that "scientific teaching ends up in distinguished in many approaches that vigor student to achieve stimulus learning. Eisner (2001) acknowledges that teaching hold multifarious ends that get through the appropriate way of teaching and learning. Teachers must deal artistically with the arty aspects of teaching as an opus performer. So we can say teaching is an art and science as well; teaching is a trade and profession which outweigh the reality of what actually a "person" impart or teach to students scientifically and esthetically.

The target of quality Education cannot be achieved without ensuring quality of teacher education and without following above principles of good teaching. Just like other professions e.g. Medicine, Law, and architecture, the teaching profession also requires competent trained professionals who possess the knowledge attitudes behaviors and skills necessary for excelling in that profession and for effective teaching and learning process.

Teacher Education:

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures design to equipped teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they require performing their teaching tasks effectively. Specifically teacher education ascribes to the policies and processes which are planned to provide future trainers with the information, awareness, approach, conduct and skills they need to execute their tasks efficiently in the classroom, school and society. C.V. Good (1973) takes teacher education as the process of providing skills and knowledge to potential and confident teachers which is essential to educate successfully and efficiently in the classroom and wider community. Teacher Education as "All formal and informal activities and experience that help to qualify a person to assume the responsibility as a member of the educational profession are to discharge his responsibility most effectively"

Free Web dictionary defined Teacher education/ training as the professional preparation of teachers, generally through formal course work and teaching practice. The duration of the training varies from one programme to other

Teachers' training is must as it enables the potential persons to understand the student better. It also builds confidence among teachers to deal with odd situations confidently. Teacher training institute must construct teachers as competent and bravo personnel's, which is required and mandatory during teaching and learning process as defined by the Higher education commission (2004), Islamabad Pakistan for the teachers" in module under the heading of teacher's competencies:

- Competencies related to the subject area and subject area teaching
- Knowledge of subject area
- To demonstrate that he/she can inculcate subject specific theories, principles and concepts rationally in a clear manner
- To appraise himself/herself efficiently about subject knowledge which envisage in the program of study
- Knowledge of subject area teaching

- To be clued-up in relation to subject specialist teaching looms, teaching techniques and methods linked to the concerned subject
- To make use of ICT
- Competencies related to teaching and learning
- To plan those activities which will contribute to the individual, mental, ethical, social and cultural developments of the students
- To make use of methods and techniques appropriate to the ages, attachments and abilities of the students
- To Take necessary measures to prevent disruptions and inferences
- To maintain students interest and level of motivation during teaching and learning
- To keep records of activities and progress of students
- To consult experienced teachers to solve problems relating to unsuccessful students
- Other professional competencies
- To be aware of professional rights and responsibilities set by laws and regulations
- To be receptive to professional advice and criticism
- To be helpful in building a favorable attitude towards the teaching profession.

Teacher education institutions in Pakistan bear the great responsibility of preparing novice teachers for the system of education and enhance the competencies of in-service teachers, enabling them to transform the nation with dedication and devotion. In Pakistan there are a large number of institutions of Pre-service and In-service teacher Education. These institutions offer multiple programmes for the training of Pre-service teachers at various levels e.g. teaching certificate, diplomas, degree programmes and also conduct different In-service training programmes in many learning organizations. Educational reports indicate that there are 275 training institutions in Pakistan, providing Pre-service training to the teachers. Other than these Pre service institutions many institutions also conduct programs of professional development for the in service teachers. The table below shows the various types of pre-service teacher education programmes offered to prepare teachers for different levels of education.

The P.T.C and C.T programmes have been banned in Pakistan since 2002.

Important note: Although 4 years B. Ed program for elementary and secondary teachers with the assistance of US AID has been launched, however, it is still under pilot testing phase and has not been fully implemented in all universities and institution/ college of education offering B. Ed programs.

Types of teacher education:

The main functions and objective of teacher education is to familiarize the prospective teachers with the methodology of teaching and also to develop a favorable attitude towards the teaching profession. In that sense a sort of brain wash is done through teacher education. The teacher training programmes also make acquainted for the future teachers with all events which are latest in education. Teacher training is also must because it creates social insight among teachers and also raised the standards of quality of education. Through training those teachers could be produced who can teach with passion (Agarwall, 1995). Everyone is familiar with the present situation of education in Pakistan. And many agreed upon that any intrusion that anticipates changing the status of education in Pakistan has to concentrate on teachers as well. The teacher

education in Pakistan can be falls into following three categories:

- Initial Teacher Training/ Pre- Service Teacher Training
- In- Service Teacher Training/ Continuous Professional Development

Initial teacher training/ Pre- Service Teacher Training

First of all in initial teacher education a teacher secures an academic university degree and then studies further for obtaining an additional qualification in teaching.

In- Service Teacher Training /Continuous Professional development

Through continuous professional development the in-service teachers are provided with different opportunities of personal and professional growth.

Teachers training institutions in Pakistan

The list below comprises the teacher training institutions and the programmes offered by the

- Govt. colleges of Elementary teachers PTC/CT and B. Ed
- Govt. Colleges of Education B. Ed, BS. Ed, M. Ed, M.A Education
- Institutes/ departments at public universities B. Ed, BS .Ed, M. Ed, M.A Education and M. Phil/ PhD
- University of Education
- Extension centers/ IER's in-service training (Muhammad, Sheikh, 1990)

Research Questions

The present study was designed to find out answer of the following questions:

- What are the major challenges faced by the teacher education in Pakistan?
- Do current teacher education programs in Pakistan are following any standards of teacher education?

As teacher shapes students whole personality and the influence them sincerely, the lessons taught by the teachers remains with the students throughout their life. The teacher is a complete mark of respect for students because a teacher is the one who interested to polish, to nourish, to educate, to train, to mould their minds through knowledge and valuable guidance. The teacher could be able to perform and exhibit all of the under qualities if he/she is properly educated. The good teacher education could be ensured through systematic and dynamic programmes. If the teacher education system is not properly maintained and monitored, many issues and challenges make their way nuisance and decrease the efficiency and effectiveness of the system of education. So the need is to explore the ways to resolve these issues and challenges intellectually.

In Pakistan, many issues and challenges are involved in teacher education and teacher training programs. These issues and challenges appear to be a huge hindrance in the good performance of the institutions and also decrease the effectiveness of the programs offered by these institutions. In Pakistan, many of the teachers, even at the elementary school level, lack adequate content knowledge in many social and science subjects Rashid, (2004). Hunzai (2009) pointed out that any advancement and modification cannot be sustained if a state does not have capable and proficient teachers in its schools. Similarly Ganihar & Bhat, (2006) stated that the standard of teacher education can be enhanced by preparing skilled and valuable teacher education curriculum and training. Darling Hammond (2000) reports those Teachers who are more professional and have preparation for teaching are more confident and successful with students than those who have had

little or none. Additionally he indicates that programs with comprehensive scientific exercise are able to link with coursework on learning and teaching can produce teachers who are both more effective and more likely to enter and stay in teaching. Zaman, (2000) acknowledged that teacher education endeavor to reshape the attitude's, remodeled the way of life, and reconstitute the traits of the student-teacher. Likewise, Iqbal (2005) pointed out that the quality of teacher education is the most pivotal factor in determining the efficiency of an education system Research also reveals that quality of teacher education has seriously been neglected both in content and methodology in Pakistan Sheikh (2000). Accordingly, this study travel around in a purposeful way to build up future teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to endure and flourish in the classroom. However, this process of shaping, producing and reconstituting for the purpose of developing effective teachers is a challenging and complex one, and teacher education programs have engaged in spirited discussions as to how to define an effective teacher.

Statement of the problem

The research aims at to identify the major challenges faced in the area of Teacher Education in Pakistan and to suggest some practical solutions to raise the standard of teacher education in Pakistan”

Methodology

It was a theoretical type study in which the related literature available on the topic was discussed critically. In order to study the in depth challenges of teacher education in Pakistan, experts' scholars and teacher educator were also consulted regarding challenges of teacher education in Pakistan.

Challenges of Teacher Education

In Pakistan Pre-service and in service teacher training institutions are facing a number of general and specific problems and challenges. Some of the salient challenges that are present in the area of teacher education are discussed here below:

- Challenges in Pre-service programmes
- Problems in In-service programmes
- Quality of teacher training programs
- Teachers reluctant to accept change
- Low entry level requirements
- Performance of public sector teacher training institutions
- Lack of research and innovation
- Absence of coordination among teacher education institutions
- Lack of professionalism
- Political interference
- Isolated curriculum
- problems relating to Teaching practice
- Flaws in Physical infrastructure
- promotion structure of teachers
- lack of Incentives for teachers

Challenges in Pre-service programmes

According to Warwick and Reimers (1991) the content knowledge of pre-service and in-service teachers in Pakistan is very low. When teachers with or without pre-service training were tested on content knowledge, there was negligible difference between their performance (MSU-SAP 1995). These warily pointed out that the pre-service programs have added little value to teachers which directly reflect on the level of instruction and curriculum of the pre-service programs. Likewise Khan (2004) stated that 75 percent of teachers are provided outdated and irrelevant training through the induct programme of studies. Trainees just take teacher training just as

another degree or certificate to fulfill the criteria (a degree chasing exercise) rather than an outlook or chance to enhance one's pedagogical skills and gain deeper understanding of teaching profession.

Problems of In-service programme

In-service teacher training programs are not properly evaluated and lack adequate resources and delivery aids. Master trainers and training specialists often are not qualified, competent or provoked sufficiently to make much difference in improving the knowledge and capabilities of the trainees. Mostly courses are not designed according to the requirements of in-service teachers even no effort is made to modify and alter the program of study as per the requirements of both the class and the trainees. Furthermore subject knowledge is not coping with teaching skills. Likewise UNESCO and USAID (2005) reported that in Pakistani rural areas most of the teacher's especially female teachers are reluctant to attend the courses and rural teachers who have the greatest challenges in the form of access and mobility are unenthusiastic too.

Quality of teacher education programs

Since the inception of Pakistan we are having the problem of lack of specialized persons in the field of teaching and this thing has mainly affected the quality of education in the 8584country. The people having no knowledge of, how to diagnose the student's needs; how to manage the class room; how to make a choice for teaching methodologies among a number of strategies etc consequently, the quality of Education is compromised. In 1998 Agha Khan Foundation (AKF) reported that quality of teacher education and institutions extensively influence organization's improvement, and ultimately pupil learning. Literature according to quality of teacher education also suggests that the quality of a teacher is generally dependent on the quality of his/her education, training, and availability of post-training support.

Teachers reluctant to accept change

It is universal phenomena that teachers are considered to be conservative. This type of thinking is due to the reason that teachers generally are reluctant to any such change that may affect their used to work or routine. They have many reasons for being unwilling to change their change their approach. According to Cresdee, (2002) school structures need to become more flexible and teachers should be involved in innovative practices of the school in order to encourage them. Cresdee (2002) agrees that self-efficacy of teacher influences the way they perceive and cope with curriculum change.

However, research proves that but other characteristics relating to teachers like age their teaching experience do not prove as solid hurdle in their reluctance to change.

Low entry level requirements

Lack of merit and low entry level requirements also pose a big challenge. There is a right concern that the entry level qualification presently set for primary/elementary teachers is very low. Additionally there is no criterion for measuring aptitude and interest in this profession Andrabi (2002). These low level entry requirements particularly at the primary and middle level have developed the general idea of teaching as a low status profession. Sometimes this profession is considered as a 'part time' job. The entry qualification for teachers also varies from province to province, creating variations in the quality of teachers and in equal standards of measurements or assessment.

Vague role of public sector organizations

In Pakistan, in the public sector, the responsibility of the professional development of teachers is performed the bureaus of curriculum and extension centers and Provincial Institutes for Teachers Education (PITE) and Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) . However the responsibilities of these organizations are vague and differ from province to province. UNESCO and USAID (2006) scrutinized that in Baluchistan the PITE does not particularly perform those duties and so many other areas of other provinces as well; it is supposed to perform in this regard.

Lack of research and innovation

UNESCO and USAID (2006) research reports pointed out that the big issue which is faced by the teachers regarding teacher education in Pakistan is that no follow ups are made and no sustained research studies are even done mostly organizations have not improve their course content, methodology and pedagogical skills of teachers which is globally are used or being researched. The recommendations of research studies are not bothered and resultantly changes are not made. On the other hand sometimes the absence of professionals capable of producing presentable research studies may in part be responsible for this problem. Moreover, very little resources are set aside for follow-up, which is less exciting and more difficult and time-consuming than teacher training.

Lack of professionalism

The concept of professionalism may be described in the words of "Laurie" (1998) as "if a teacher has not an ideal aim he/she had better to take to shop keeping at once, he/she will their doubtless find an ideal within his capacity".

The teacher education institutes should feel the importance of their line of work, but in Pakistan many teaching training institutes lack the essential zeal required by the teacher education and profession. Without exclusive attention to their farm duties it can't be possible to bring a fine harvest of young men and women who are able to contribute their best for the welfare of mankind.

Political Interference

Since independence of Pakistan, in our society, all the institutions have become much politicized. Majority of the induction is on political grounds this negative impact of politics is immense that whoever wants to uphold merit is pushed severely a teacher is not liable to merit which inducted through this system but the political force has inducted the person and commits all kinds of blunders to favor them (Sultan, 2008). Another common problem observed at the time of selecting the political force employ those individuals who could promote their agendas and political motives. In that way, the system gets affected and could not perform independently and transparently well.

Hope and opportunities

Lack of hope and opportunities are the biggest challenger that teacher education has to face now a day's especially in Pakistan. Because no teacher training institute can hope to have a satisfactory understanding that, what kind of subjects should taught to a trainee which have a large scale of opportunities according to the modern era, whether a trainee get a good quality job or not after the completion of a course from our institute. In the Pakistani context it can happen because our system of education and other systems as well distressed the people because they lack the hope of structure being changed

and even they also lack the hope to get diverse chances after the completion of the course-work.

Absence of coordination among teacher's education institutions

In Pakistan BOC, EC's and PITE's organized professional training of teachers and each of them has its own plans and different programmes are carried out by them individually with No or very little coordination. The linkage between teacher education institutes is uncoordinated with each other there is a wide communication and collaboration gap between them (UNESCO and USAID 2005). Moreover the record of teachers who participate in different in-service programmes is not available. So there are conditions, where some teachers participate in large number of courses; while some remain totally deprived.

Isolated Curriculum

Our education system is mainly dependant on the theories imported from other countries. These theories might not be as appropriate and beneficial to teach in Pakistan as particularly in those contexts. The curriculum of teacher education programs largely seems theoretical rather than practical this mismatch creates many problems and lack of practice in teacher education makes it difficult for the teachers to translate the theory into practice. According to the draft of Situation analysis of teacher education in Pakistan (2006) the current curricula being taught does not focus on fostering a critical and creative thinking and learning environment.

We can say that curriculum of teacher education in Pakistan is isolated from realities of classroom. "Curriculum of teacher education emphasizes to a great extent only on theoretical knowledge about pedagogy that are generally not associated with the day to day teaching learning activities of class rooms" Malik (2005). Curriculum revision is not done on regular basis, and this thing takes us out of the way from development and progress with recent subject advances because in every two minutes new researches and developments take place of previous ones. There is no attempt to integrate subject knowledge with pedagogical skills.

Teaching practice problems

Teaching is an important element of teacher education programmes but there many problems associated with this activity. It has been seen that supervisors and future teachers do not give as much importance to student teaching practice. On the other hand the schools generally avoid inducting prospective teachers in their schools and considering this component an interruption in their daily routine matters. In that way trainee teachers adopt unfair means and start getting bogus certificates as a proof of teaching practice.

Flaws in Physical infrastructure

The teacher's education Institutions also lacking physical resources like laboratories and libraries. The schools are limited to provide proper and useful A.V aids in the classrooms which made student teacher more edgy and multifarious. The classrooms are also not fully equipped with modern equipment and materials. There is no separate allocated for pre-service and in-service training programmes. The working conditions in these institutions are also not conducive. Thus the teacher education institutions become non systematic.

Promotion structure of teachers

There are a very few opportunities and motivational factors available to teachers. The teachers at different levels are promoted on the basis of number of years they serve rather than

the professional competencies they possess. The inappropriate promotion structure of teachers prevents the teachers doing well in the profession.

Incentives for Teachers

The individuals who joins teaching profession with poor motivation and do not contribute to teaching anything significantly. Horace Mann (1999) rightly said: "A teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupils with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron".

Many researchers found that incentives can increase interest in workplaces of their poor motivated employees if they do so. Organizations that offer properly structured incentive programs can attract and retain higher quality workers than other organizations unfortunately in Pakistan many school organizations pay no attention to offer incentives to teachers in accordance to their need and the stage of their career UNESCO (2005). Such incentives (salary increase, allowances, and benefits) can be pecuniary. These organizations can also offer food, transportation facilities, subsidized housing, professional training, personal notebooks and recognition of performance and can also ensure provisions of it without any hindrances to provide them social security (Idara-e-Taleemo-Aagahi 2006).

Discussion and Conclusion

From the above - mentioned discussion it is clear that there are a lot of challenges in the area of teacher education in Pakistan. It is obvious that our teacher education programmes are facing a lot of challenges. These challenges are relating to pre as well as in-service teacher education programmes. The quality of these programmes suffers due to certain problems. For examples teachers educators are reluctant to any sort of change in curriculum or teaching methods, entry criteria into teacher education programmes is low, there are no specified aptitude tests for entry into teaching profession, generally, whoever does not get any other opportunity, his/her last choice becomes teaching. It is more applicable for male, although maximum female come to teaching profession by first choice. There are introduced no national standards regarding for entry qualification of teachers. It is further obvious from discussion that quality performance of teacher training institutions is suffering due to lack of professionalism in teacher educators. Furthermore curriculum of teacher education is isolated and has no connection with realities of classroom and school environment. There is lack of planning for teaching practice, infrastructure, promotion structure of in-service teachers and incentives offered for teachers for appearing in continuous professional development programmes and research and innovations in the area of teacher education. Then there is political interference in teachers' recruitment and transfer.

The quality education is strongly related to the quality of teacher education in any education system. Today, teacher education institutions are facing multiple problems and confronted with number of challenges.

In order to face these challenges we need complete renovation of our teacher education programmes.

Suggestions

After reviewing the literature regarding challenges of teacher education in generally, and especially in following suggestions are put forth for the purpose of meeting these challenges:

- Teachers may be offered special incentives for successful implementation of any innovative programmes of teacher education.

- There is dire need to raise the entry criteria of into teaching profession. For this purpose we need to develop entry standards for teaching profession. At the same time there is need to introduce specifically aptitude tests for entry into teaching profession and making teaching profession attractive for intelligent and talented people so that they may join this profession as their first choice and not as their last choice.
- Our teachers training courses lack our teachers' training in professionalism. Efforts may be carried out in shape of launching training programmes for development of professionalism in teachers. For this purpose we may include a course on professional ethics.
- It is further suggested that curriculum of teacher education courses may be redesigned to make it correlated with real practices and problems of classroom and school. There is need to make teacher education curriculum more practice-oriented rather merely theory- oriented.
- Political interference may be stopped from governmental level. Education may be considered as social service. Therefore the government can check any sort of political interference in appointment and training of teachers.
- Special budget funding may be reserved for promotion of teacher education programmes in the country. A special cadre and a national commission for teacher education may be launched that deals with teacher education programmes and conducts research for enhancing quality of teacher education programmes and for bringing innovations in teacher education.
- For making programmes of in-service successful, it is essential to conduct a research for finding out the problems that teacher face in in-service programmes and for exploring interest areas of teachers for further training and likewise for offering incentives for in-service programs of teacher education.
- In short in order to face challenges of teacher education, we need complete renovation and overhauling of our teacher education programmes through a systematic planning.
- Teacher education curriculum can be made more practical rather than theoretical
- Teacher education institutes may investigate about innovative and effective teaching practices and strategies for teachers' training.

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