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Teacher Education and Professional Development Programs in Pakistan

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Abstract

Teacher education focuses on the professional and personal development of teachers' abilities and communication skills. These abilities and skills make teachers capable enough to perform their duties effectively. Recent insights into teacher education in Pakistan has contributed a lot and increased awareness among teachers as researchers and practitioners. For this study, Data were collected using questionnaire with close and open ended items. A questionnaire was developed keeping in view of previous studies on teacher education. This study ventures to explore theoretical framework of pedagogy of teacher education. It is suggested that teacher education is basically teacher development that is conceptualized as ongoing process of leaning practical skills and reflecting on them. The findings of this study indicate that teachers have positive attitude towards trainings and professional programs which are run to enhance the capacity building.

Keywords: Teacher education, Pakistani teachers, long term and short term trainings, pedagogical implications.

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Introduction

Teacher education and teachers play a pivotal role in educational world depends on both for change and development (Rehmani, 2006). The role of teacher as an agent of change and development has never been credited much today (Delores et al., 1996). However, Darling Hammond (2006) states, that a significance of meaningful teaching is increasing rapidly in modern world and higher are the standards of education and learning than they have ever been before. This implies a change in education system in general, teaching pedagogy in particular.

Standard of education is essential for any country and teacher education plays a significant role in standardizing it. In Pakistan, it is estimated that around two hundred three (203) teacher trainings institutes are established and run systematically and effectively. In addition, almost three hundred (300) teacher resource centres have been established by the government of Pakistan. Along with government institutes, there are also private teacher trainings centres. These centres train teachers equip them with some pedagogical skills and provide them professional certificates. Research shows that around 40,000 teachers are trained yearly under these short term programs (Aly, 2007). On the other hand, the reports of National Educational Policy 1998-2010 suggest that these programs suffer quality consideration and do not meet standard education. A variety of these programs run to train teachers need to focus content and pedagogy of education (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

A large body of research shows that these training programs are not without any criticism. And there are many reasons highlighted in disfavour of established programs for teachers. And these reasons are stated in the study of Khan (2011).

1. Knowledge based not application based
2. Interest to pass exams for certification
3. Memorization to qualify the examination
4. No extra qualification for trainer

These reasons are some somewhat logical but on the other hand, as a master trainer from HEC, the researcher has conducted a number of workshops and teacher trainings as a resource person at parental university as well as other public and private institutes in Pakistan. These statements are very controversial that trainings are not practical. They are because teachers are engaged in pair and group works to practically produce what was theoretically delivered. Furthermore, the application of learned skills is observed in classroom where teachers practically use and transform to their students. In the HEC held teacher training programs there is no memorization to pass the exam. Participants' performance is practically judged through activities, presentations, making portfolio and micro teaching. This is researcher's observation as a master trainer. It may be subject to criticism.

It is the responsibility of provincial government to organize trainings for teachers from primary to higher level. In this regard, the role of Higher Education Commission is very important. It keeps on organizing trainings programs collaboratively with different institutes of Pakistan for professional development of teachers. And these programs are arranged on various subjects. With these, English language teaching reform programs have been initiated by the HEC in order to train English language teachers around the

country. However, the object behind it is to meet international standards and improve English language pedagogy (National Curriculum Document, 2002; National Education Policy, 2009).

Moreover, it is not sufficient for professional development of teachers. Despite a number of pedagogical issues, a body of research is required in the domain of English language teaching pedagogy to make it more advanced and standardized in Pakistan. Through teacher training programs, teachers gain insights learning in the perspectives of learners and try to transform these teaching skills to students (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2001, 2005).

Professional trainings are designed or conducted to prepare teachers for more adaptive, knowledge-based practice, while simultaneously tackling the redesign of schools and teaching.

The above idea implies that training for teachers is the way they equip themselves with professional skills and development. These programs are almost activity based in which teachers actively participate. Teaching requires flexibility, knowledge of subject, and understanding of learners' needs. This is a very productive process of learning for students, who learn differently with differing styles, and teachers assess how and what students are learning, and modify teaching instructions to various approaches of learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Moreover, in the research, there has been a debate on knowledge v/s skills. Subject knowledge of teachers is deemed as a significant construct in teaching effectiveness. Besides this knowledge, Ashton and Crocker (1986) state measures of pedagogical knowledge and this knowledge are summed up as follows:

1. Knowledge of learning
2. Teaching methods
3. Curriculum design

These are very lucrative components in teacher education because they have greater influence on teaching performance than subject matter knowledge. However, performance can be effective if these all components are integrated in teaching. In this regard, Byrne (1983, p. 14) suggests as follows:

Insofar as a teachers' knowledge provides the basis for his or her effectiveness, the most relevant knowledge will be that which concerns the particular topic being taught and the relevant pedagogical strategies for teaching it to the particular types of pupils to whom it will be taught (Byrne, 1983, p. 14).

Without trainings, teachers are faced with greater difficulties which hinder them in designing curriculum, planning syllabi, teaching courses, organizing classrooms and analysing learners' specific needs. In addition, to promote students learning there is a need to adapt instruction which is likely developed through teacher education programs/trainings (Darling-Hammond, 1999a).

Long term and short term teacher education programs

The teaching programs of 4 year for teachers introduced in schools to prepare teachers for teaching in America worked well. With it, there were 5 year undergraduate degree programs for prospective teachers who enter teacher education during their

undergraduate years (Hammond, 2000). Research has proved that the latter program has created much satisfaction compared to the former one. Students are happy with teachers educated in the extended program because they stand cooperative, effective and better prepared than their fellows trained in traditional 4 year program (Andrew & Schwab, 1995). However, Hammond, (1999) also favours the short terms teacher education programs. These have some advantages such economical, career teachers, less time consuming. This idea is also supported by Hammond (2000) who interprets that these programs actually involve prospective teachers in doing research and reflecting on their teachings by using action research, exploratory practice. So the prime object of teacher education is to strengthen teachers' abilities to inquire perfectly into the nature of learning and teaching.

Training in inquiry is supportive for teachers because it assists them to learn the ways of looking at the world from multiple perspectives and experiences of their students with diverse nature. This creates understanding of developing pedagogies which can reach diverse learners. To reach students, there is need of ability and knowledge to understand difficult as well as simple students. This is very realistic approach in teacher education programs. Darling-Hammond (2006) reports that research has shown a number of things expected from teachers that they should do in their profession. And these are as follows

1. Understanding effectively
2. Teaching effectively
3. Pedagogical content
4. Knowledge of language, culture, and community
5. Understand learner's spirit
6. Nurturing that spirit
7. Classroom management
8. Communicating effectively
9. Using technology

These are some of the standards that teachers have to consider if they enter teaching profession. But in 21st century, the demands are wider in scope from teachers. They are not only supposed to be able to transform knowledge to students but they need to enable a diverse group of students to learn more complex material as limited to few students in past. On the other hand, teachers are now supposed to maintain homogenous approach to prepare all students equally for critical thinking and skills of performance (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This implies that teachers' responsibilities of teaching have increased with the passage of time and of course these are extended directions introduced to be incorporated in teaching profession. A variety of teacher education goals suggests that teachers are supposed to be framed in all requirements lying in the way of teaching profession.

Form these standards, it is understood that teaching as a profession carries some moral and ethical and technical expectations of learners and their colleagues. It requires teachers to strengthen relations, become cooperative, and work collaboratively. Furthermore, an important object of it is to render services for democratic purposes. Trainings build strong network among teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

1. Strong relations are built
2. Action research, academic performance
3. Content knowledge of different courses
4. Good teaching experiences
5. Exchanging ideas
6. Sharing personal experiences
7. Gaining expertise in some skills
8. Professional and personal growth
9. Personality development
10. Affective and cognitive skills

Since it is clear that learning is ongoing process and this process goes with teaching profession which needs to be developed and strengthened through some teacher education programs. All above features of the program suggest that teachers have to continue learning throughout life. As it was mentioned earlier that teaching must be meaningful and effective.

Effective Teaching

According to Lockheed and Verspoor (1991), teachers' teaching skills and their knowledge of content explore effective teaching and this teaching lays a great impact on the attainment of students. The impact is positive because it helps students achieve the desired target (Moore 2000, 2004; Rehmani. 2000). Effective teaching is viewed as a framework covering all aspects of teaching. In this regard, Levin and Lockheed (1993) describe effective teaching containing some aspects suggested in their study. Effective teaching involves:

1. Presenting authentic material logically and systematically
2. Ensuring students' active participation
3. Developing students' abilities practically and pragmatically and focusing on application and practice
4. Providing quick feedback on students' assigned tasks and their performance

These features are interpreted to be main part of effective teaching. However, presentation, participation, application and practice including feedback are essentials of teaching. Whether to teach students or train teachers for professional development, teaching becomes effective and works effectively on participants. Furthermore, effective teaching happens in the classroom when students are involved and engaged in different activities based on learning. Thus, this process of learning favours student dominated organized classroom. It means students not passive learner but they are co-contributors in learning and teaching. Teachers help students to connect their previous knowledge with existing to see if significant difference is made in learning. With it, students keep improving and moving to ahead. This idea is maintained by Watkins (2003, p. 43) as "learning about learning".

Dissatisfaction with traditional approaches of teacher education

Research shows that not only teachers but also parents who are not satisfied with traditional approaches of teaching. This sense of dissatisfaction has generated new and novel approaches. In this regard, Godlad (1990) states, that traditional program for teacher have not succeeded in making prospective teachers for classroom management and organization. Because it is now known from the study that a great deal of teacher education takes place in the framework of “training on the job” Korthagen, 2001). This is happening in Pakistan.

However, the question of teachers’ development has been posed in all genres that whether teachers develop or people develop teachers. This is very much described by McIntyre and Hagger (1992, p. 271) that “teachers should develop, not that other people should develop teachers.” They also state that

Development’ takes what is there as a valuable starting point, not as something to be replaced, but a useful platform on which to build. To do so is to recognize not only that teachers do have valuable existing expertise but also that, if teachers are forced to choose, they will usually revert to their secure established ways of doing things. The metaphor of ‘building on what is already there’ is not, however, satisfactory because it suggests adding on something separate to what is there, something extra on top. The concept of development, in contrast, implies that whatever is added, whatever is new, will be integrated with what is there already, and will indeed grow from what is there. (McIntyre &Hagger, 1992, p. 271)

This statement shows that only teachers develop and they have valuable existing expertise and standard ways of doing things. It suggests that teaches build and establish which is highly required of them. Moreover, the concept of development is interpreted systematically that if it is something new introduced or practiced, then it should not be a separate formula but it must integrate the existed one. So the results are surely effective.

Training and Change in education

It is mistaken that people expect change or innovations in teacher education from external sources coming towards them. Change desired from other sources which do not reach needs and concerns of the teachers and the environment and situations they serve, is not possible (Korthagen, 2001). In the context of change, Fullan (1998) states “if we know anything we know that change cannot be ‘managed.’” (p. 211). Furthermore, McLaughlin (1998) concludes that “it is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice (p. 70). This idea is extended by Korthagen, (2001) that it is very for teachers and educators as well. These different views tend to develop understanding that change is seen from different perspectives. However, McLaughlin (1998, p. 72) is very familiar with the fact that “the presence of the will or motivation to embrace policy objectives or strategies is essential to generate the effort and energy necessary to a successful project”. This is another way to see change from perspective of the outsider who wish to bring about changes in teachers’ teaching skills.

Teachers’ collaboration and team work covering their needs is very important for change. Training teachers should be organized to meet teachers’ needs. According to Holmes (1998, p. 254) “there is an admitted problem in trying to train teachers like seals, but there is little chance of their implementing the desired changes if left alone”.

But the third approach known as realistic developed at the IVLOS Institute of Education at Utrecht University, for teacher training suggests that, teachers' concerns should be taken into account if it is to train them some skills in teaching. It implies that it is not to teach or train them line seals or to leave them alone at their own mercy. But it refers to keeping in mind teachers' moral purposes (Day, 1999).

More importantly, the focus here is laid on character development or change compared to technical expertise. This means that professional development and change itself are main components of teacher trainings organized for teachers. This idea has now been focused in trainings as previously it was kept aside. However, Desforges (1995, p. 388) interprets that, "there is almost a complete lack of account of how the changes come about". This is a significant deficit for those interested in teacher education because programs need to be based on an understanding of the mechanism of change, rather than milestones.

Above literature review throws light on teacher education, professional development, dissatisfaction with past pedagogy, and effect of change in teacher education. The present study is conducted in Pakistani context to analyse teachers' responses regarding teacher education trainings and the pedagogy used in the designed courses for teachers. The study also presents changes in teaching pedagogy brought about by teachers.

Methodology

The study employs a questionnaire based on close ended and open ended questions. The mixed approach was used to report results statistically and thematically. Questionnaires are popular because they are simple to structure and capable to gather information quickly. They are definitely the most often data collection devices in statistical work (Dornyei, 2010). Keeping this in view as a guide, the present study uses a questionnaire for data collection.

Sampling and participants

The participants were 25 teachers from different disciplines at Lasbela University, Baluchistan. All respondents contributed in the study showing their interest and willingness. They were randomly selected from different departments and faculties. Their age ranged from 20-35 years.

3Data analysis

The data collected from participants were analysed statistically to draw mean score and standard deviation showing the results of the responses given in the questionnaire. Second, open ended data was thematically analysed and discussed following up close ended items. A questionnaire was five point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are discussed in two parts. First it is presented in statistical analysis of close ended items. Second, responses of open ended items are discussed thematically and some participants' (Pseudonyms) are used in the discussion. The following table shows mean and standard deviation of attempted items.

A table of Descriptive Statistics

		Mean	SD
1	I am interested to participate in teacher trainings	2.	1.44
2	I learn new teaching methods in teacher trainings	2.6	1.37
3	Teacher training is a big change in Pakistan	2.8	1.36
4	As a teacher, I feel I am an agent of change in education	2.0	1.41
5	I transform the effects of teacher trainings to my students in order to make them better citizen	3.0	1.29
6	I am motivated to play active role in academic trainings	2.6	1.52
7	As a teacher, I feel pedagogy of teacher education is improved through trainings	3.1	1.33
8	I try to promote higher education in academic institutes of the country	2.8	1.43
9	I focus on quality in higher education in Pakistan	3.0	1.25

The result of first item with means score of 2.3 shows that teachers are interested to take part in teacher trainings. This preference for trainings indicates that teachers wish to attend the programs organized for their professional development and growth. However, it is obvious that teachers have kept in mind some reservations regarding participating the teacher education programs based on short term policy. Therefore, their liking for the program is not high but of medium standard. Teachers are educated not only technically but they are also trained for moral purposes. So this rational behind covers teachers' affective factors during these programs. Whereas the result of second item reveals that it is with a bit difference than that of first with mean score of 2.6. Here, it refers that teachers attend trainings with the hope of learning new trends and teaching methods expected to be bettered in trainings. This sort of learning makes teachers more aware of what they teach and how students learning take place. Teachers come to attend workshops/ seminars with their own teaching methods. As a result, they go with some new teaching skills and techniques which they assume to transfer to their students.

Participants' response to statement "teacher training is a big change in Pakistan" shows that they assume trainings as a positive change in the country. The respondent's attitude towards change implies that they wish to bring change in academic institutes where they teach and the problems they face. However, it seems that change is not easy but the result of responses given by participants advocate that it is possible. The possibility of change let us know that designed programs must be continued and consistently arranged to make change possible in teacher education. Teachers have attempted item 4. "As a teacher, I feel I am an agent of change in education" very carefully because it suggests the lowest mean score of 2.0 among the other items. It may be drawn from the result that teachers are less satisfied with themselves as agents of change in the academic world. This less satisfaction has stored some aspects. First, to become an agent of change is very difficult but it is also easy. Difficult it is because teachers are not facilitated. There is a lack of resources to work properly. Second, it is easy because working conditions for teachers are conducive therefore they work effectively. These two aspects derived from analysis show that teachers are not highly satisfied. They are

improving and making changes through conducted teacher training programs is justified from their responses.

Furthermore, learned skills and teaching methodology in trainings demand teachers to promote quality in education. However, they have shown their responsibility in variable 5 “I transform the effects of teacher trainings to my students in order to make them better citizen” with high mean score of 3.0. It suggests that teachers are skilfully equipped to transform those skills to their colleagues and students. This implies that teachers come with objectives to participate in the trainings and these objectives are reflected in their cascading. Generally speaking, it is moral duty of teacher to build better world of their students which is justified that they play an active role in making students not breaking them. In addition, the result of this statement suggests that teachers are enthusiastic to transform the effects of taught skills to their students with the purpose to better them morally, spiritually and technically. Teachers are motivated to play an active part in trainings. This is important because in that part teachers share their own experiences and exchange ideas with other participants. Motivation is important for teachers because they must be motivated or reinforced to take part actively in held programs aimed at professional and personal development. If teachers are motivated their performance stays different than those with lack of motivation. It means motivation activates all those who teach and learn.

Importantly, teachers viewed teacher pedagogy as a significant change in Pakistani institutes. They assume that it was ignored in the past, but now it is focused and made common to the access of all teachers. Teacher training programs are arranged almost all institutes in Pakistan. And this shows a drastic change in educational world of the country. It is reported that teachers are happy with the renewed pedagogy and they also wish to keep it updated. They appreciate the role of master trainers who make teaching as a cooperative learning. It is based on team work which teaches teachers who are expected to employ same pedagogy in their institutes. This process develops teachers’ abilities and their professional skills required in the field of teaching. Teachers promote quality of education. They are considered as the only source of improving educational system from primary level up to university. And this is true because teachers are supposed to be making things happen inside and outside classrooms. They plan and design curriculum, syllabi, and these are taken as a standard document followed in all institute of the country. The object of training teachers is also to encourage them to work for quality not quantity. Furthermore, a focus needs to be laid on quality in education. And who can make it possible? The answer is teachers unless they are empowered. The problem of teachers’ empowerment is very complex. It is complex in the sense that teachers are hindered by external sources. And these external sources play a role and encounter teachers’ duties. However, policy makers and administrations are among those factors which interfere in teachers’ job.

The findings suggest that teachers view trainings as a positive change in Pakistan. Their efforts are still continued mover from better to the best. And their responses are meaningful because they have suggested many things for teacher education programs. First, time duration should be increased. Second, subject matter knowledge should be focused. Third, access to use of authentic material for classroom should be provided. Fourth, cognitive, affective and technical factors should be integrated in teacher trainings. These are of some significant changes teachers wish to make in the designed programs for their trainings.

This analysis of the data is followed up open ended questions which are discussed and analysed keeping in view of above presented results.

1. *How do you view teacher training in Pakistan?*

Respondents have stated a number of reasons for which they review teacher trainings in Pakistan. Trainings are productive and meaningful. As Asia (pseudonym) stated:

The true teachers are developed through such trainings. And these programs can increase knowledge of teachers regarding subject matter and general teaching skills. Teachers should be facilitated with these programs not only in Pakistan but also in abroad. Since, HEC has taken steps to promote teacher education. Many short programs are organized jointly by HEC and other countries in order to familiar teachers with global systematized programs. The purpose is to cascade the effects of such program locally in own context.

This interpretation shows that teacher trainings increase teaching skills of trainees. The credit goes to HEC for making these programs possible in the country. However this idea is supported by Sadia (pseudonym) who affirmed that professional development is somewhat done in trainings.

Professional development in the form of workshops, seminars and trainings courses help teachers stay up to date with new trends and learn from strategies/ techniques and methods of teaching. The covering idea behind professional development is that increased knowledge help teachers improve students achievement.

The purpose of these programs is to increase knowledge, transform techniques and innovative trends in teacher pedagogy. On the other hand, Sonya stated dissatisfaction with these organized programs for teachers.

I am dissatisfied with teacher training programs in Pakistan. There is a lack of practicability and communication skills. Trainers are not well trained nor are they highly qualified.

Her insight about trainings shows that application and practical work are less focused. Regarding qualification of trainers, she is not happy. The statement carries meaning and this meaning is also found in the words of Salam. He suggested

Trainings should not be taken as the only source sufficient for teacher education and making them adaptive and knowledgeable and skilful in the profession. There is a proper evaluation system of teacher programs because with these, things will be systematized and proportioned effectively

Both teachers have shown their reservations about teacher education programs. Thematically, they wish to make things better than the existing ones.

2. *What are the changes these training programs bring about in teaching?*

Now this question addresses the change expected in trainings. There are various responses noted. Teachers assume a change in different ways. Thematically analysis of answers suggests that teachers are positive about outcome of conducted programs. In this regard, Zahid maintained that:

No doubt, teacher training can impart a change in conveying message to students through teaching methodology and effective presentations. As the result, after

trainings, teachers in fact stand as agents of change globally then locally. Because they receive global principled and systematic educating programs enriching experiences of teachers worldwide

Trainings promote knowledge and skills. The above response shows that teachers improve their pedagogy and are considered as agents of change in the society because they learn worldwide used techniques and implement them in their own context. As Allwright (2005) states think globally, act locally. Moreover, learned skills from here and abroad are materialized in own context. However, Aslam supports an idea in the following answer to the question:

To teach is to learn in return. It is good to conduct teacher program in which most probably skills are focused rather than subject matter knowledge. Transformation of skills from one to others is a good job which is enacted systematically. Most importantly, discipline, time management, creativity and collegiality are principles trainers offer teachers and as a result teachers transform these to their young chips.

There is an important thing noted that skills need to be focused. Most probably, in past knowledge was dominant factor and less focus was on improving skills. Logically, both are central components of any program so these may be integrated in all educational programs arranged for learning and teaching purposes.

3. *What do you suggest to further teacher education in Pakistan?*

The respondents suggested that teacher education should be furthered to meet international standards. Things may be renewed in the educational system. And the criteria for organization of the programs may be unbiased. These are some suggestions given by participants. Among them, Habib stated:

Our education system must be upgraded as to meet international standards. No doubt, efforts are being made to reach international level. But as a teacher, I am positive to say that it is not too late to be internationally recognized teachers. And in this regard, I appreciate the efforts of HEC which has burned the midnight oil to provide international standard curriculum and syllabi.

Importantly, the role of HEC is important as stated above. Another participant conveyed his message as follows:

Higher education plays an essential role for the development of the country, however, the criteria for opening academic institutes/ universities and their accreditation which must be revised keeping in view of the norms and nomenclatures and educational background of the region.

These both responses indicated that teachers admire the role of HEC in raising the standard of education on one hand. On the other hand, it is also suggested to renew the system of teacher education. It must be monitored properly. For this there should be check and balance to monitor cascading of skills and strategies. But, there is of course a problem of resources for arranging programs. And however, lack of facilities should be considered as a big problem, sometimes teachers do not find things feasible they can work out with. Teacher education can be furthered more if unanimous decisions are made by policy makers and educationalists.

4. *How do you view pedagogy of teacher education in Pakistan?*

Pedagogy of teacher education is a matter of great concern in Pakistan. Interestingly enough, a variety in responses is noticed and marked. It is responded by Anita in saying that:

Pedagogy of teacher education is somehow encouraging in Pakistan. It makes teachers more creative and critic and offers them a number of opportunities to reflect their teaching ways and work for the effective change. It needs planning, action to implement in the taught courses. This gives birth to professionalism and creativity. The other side is also discouraging because all teachers and institutes are not facilitated to avail opportunities. A lack of qualified trainers and teachers is also a big issue.

However, there are two sides discussed by participants. They appreciated pedagogy of teacher education as a change. On the other hand they also observed the lack of trainers who do not fall the set criteria of the participants. These concerns need to be communicated effectively to reach the desired target in teacher education as a global change in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest that teachers are satisfied with pedagogy implemented in teacher education programs. The study also reports that pedagogy of teacher education is a matter of great significance. It is viewed in the study as a source of professional development. Furthermore, the study also suggests that teacher education program as short trainings are very meaningful because these tend to enhance teachers' quality of teaching and better their communication skills. In addition, the role of Higher Education Commission is appreciated in trying to make things up to international standards. Above all, statistically and thematically analysed data advocate that pedagogy of teacher education is a positive change towards better change in Pakistan.

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