

Identification of Problems Faced by Heads of Teacher Education Institutions in Achieving New Millennium Goals

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Abstract

Teacher education institutions play an important role in the personal and professional development of teachers and in the improvement of institutions. The role of head is very important in teacher education institution. The purpose of this study was to identify the problems of heads of teacher education institutes to achieve the goals of new millennium. The study was qualitative in nature. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to identify the problems of heads of teacher education institutions. All the heads of teachers' education institutes of Punjab was targeted population of the study. A sample of twenty (20) heads of teacher education institutes was selected through convenient sampling technique. The questions of interview were validated through five experienced professors of the corresponding field. The collected data was analyzed by descriptive coding technique. The results of the study revealed that, in order to achieve the goals of new millennium, heads of teacher education institutes were facing problems like shortage of funds, political pressure, teaching aid material and parents' attitude.

Keywords: *Teacher Education Institutes, Goals, New Millennium*

Introduction

Education is essential for the overall personality developments of human beings. It plays an important role to change the attitude and behavior of the individual. In the process of education, people learn how they can better survive in the fast progressing world. Innovations and new discoveries in the fast changing world demand the human to develop themselves in order to meet the challenges of the future. Education is one of the most powerful instruments that can bring out changes in community, society and particularly in the future dusting of nation (Shami, 1999).

In education, academics play a very important role in all the civilized societies of the world. They are the people who tear down myths and solve the mysteries that stand in the way of the development of the society (Shrivastava, 2005). In education, teacher is a person who provides education for others. A teacher who facilitates individuals in education may also be

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430 teacher education institutions (public and private) in Pakistan. Out of which 133 (public=88 and private=45) institutions are working in the province of Punjab (<http://www.nacte.org.pk>).

It is widely acknowledged that the quality and performance of teachers in Pakistan has been poor. This shortcoming was highlighted as far back as 1959 by the Report of the National Commission on Education, Government of Pakistan. However, challenges persist and issues have worsened over the years with Government of Pakistan focusing on systems rather than the root of the problem (Hatfield, 2006).

The quality of education provided by the public sector in Pakistan has been poor due to low levels of teacher competence, lack of classroom-based support for teachers, poor quality of textbooks and learning materials, lack of systems to assess student-learning outcomes, uneven supervision, insufficient resources for critical teaching and learning materials, and weak sector of governance and management (World Bank, "Third Punjab Education" 2006).

In order to bring qualitative reform in teacher education in Pakistan, at present a number of initiatives are being taken from various bodies including HEC, Quality Assurance Division and National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. To improve the declining standard of teacher education, the Higher Education Commission has established the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) which looks after the matters regarding the accreditation of institutions and their departments, faculties and disciplines by giving them appropriate ratings and defining organization's objectives, functions and duties to be performed. The Rules of NACTE state that all the existing teacher education degree and postgraduate diploma programs shall be within the jurisdiction of the Council. Any new program in teacher education shall also be referred to the Council for the grant of accreditation. Moreover, accreditation shall be mandatory for all relevant education academic programs offered by public and private sector institutions (<http://www.nacte.org.pk>).

It is clear that pre-service training of teachers in Pakistan is sorely (greatly / truly) lacking at the time when education for a nation in a globalized world is more important than ever before. In terms of in-service training, this is the responsibility of the Curriculum Boards and Extension Centres. The provinces have given in-service responsibilities to one or more GCETs. There are three different types of in-service training:

- Training of untrained staff in full-time crash programs that last three months;
- Refresher courses that last for a short period of time;

- A few private institutions such as Ali Institute of Education in Lahore and the Teachers' Resource Centre in Karachi (http://www.yespakistan.com/education/teacher_training.asp).

Every province has an Education Extension Centre responsible that is in charge of in-service education. The aim is to provide in-service training session to each teacher at least once every five years. But these sessions are fewer than the number of teachers as indicated by a study of in-service refresher courses in Punjab. This study found that the courses reached a nominal number of teachers. For instance, in 1988, 16 refresher courses were offered to only 4,400 teachers, out of a total teaching corps of nearly 180,000 (http://www.yespakistan.com/education/teacher_training.asp).

Anees (2005) found in his PhD thesis that course content of formal B.Ed. programme was not future oriented and provided no base for research. Courses of the programme did not reflect latest knowledge. Teacher trainers were non-cooperative in solving students' educational problems. They casually planned their lessons and did not use discussion method and individualized instruction during teaching. They did not emphasize on practical work. Formal B.Ed. programme was not cost effective and it did not inculcate Islamic ideology for the students. Duration of the programme and distribution of marks between theory and practice teaching were not appropriate. The programme did not introduce modern instructional strategies. Formal B.Ed. examination system did not measure student teachers competencies. Instructional material did not help to enhance professional skills and it did not develop creative thinking. Courses of the programme had no potential to meet students' future needs and did not develop administrative qualities in the student teachers. Courses did not reflect latest knowledge, tutors casually took their tutorials and did not use variety of methods, they did not use student support services and casually monitored students' activities during practice teaching (<http://eprints.hec.gov.pk/363/>).

Rehmani (2006) found in his study that teachers' schooling background, their teachers' approaches to teaching, who taught them, socio-cultural contexts of the society in which they live, teachers' own knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning, their professional development, school environment and their colleague-teachers play significant role in shaping teachers' conceptions of teaching. Teachers' conceptions range from teacher-centered transmission and conventional approaches to teaching to student-centered, active and transformative approaches. However, reflective and reflexive conceptions did not significantly emerge (<http://www.aku.edu/ied/conference2006/abstracts/047.asp>).

A major problem afflicting education in Pakistan is the quality of learning and competency level of both students and teachers. Increases in access and enrollment are unsustainable without improvements in the quality of teaching and learning at the classroom

level. Current data indicates that for every 100 students enrolled in government schools at grade one, only 8 go on to complete grade twelve (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI415.pdf).

Overview of Main Teacher Education Institutions of Pakistan

a) University of Education, Lahore (Punjab)

The University of Education Lahore was established as recently as September 2002. The administrative, financial and academic control of GCETs and colleges of education are with University of Education.

b) Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), Punjab

Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) looks after the management and administration of the provision of in-service training.

c) Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing (Sindh)

The Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing (BC&EW) Sindh and the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) are the major provider of both pre-service and in-service teacher education in the province. The Departments of Education in the Universities provide teacher education at graduate and postgraduate levels (B.Ed., M.Ed., and PhD) through their Institutes of Education and Research (IERs) and Colleges of Education. The Bureau of Curriculum also undertakes curriculum development in collaboration with the Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education and collaborates with the Sindh Textbook Board in textbook development. Short in-service courses on special topics are held often through funding by donor agencies.

d) Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE), Sindh

The PITE in Sindh caters in-service training, material development and research activities. For its in-service training programs, the PITE utilizes the services of the faculty of the Bureau's GECEs in addition to its own nucleus staff and also uses their premises for holding the workshops. As such there is collaboration between the Bureau and PITE in provision of in-service training. Bureau and PITE in Sindh are independent institutions both reporting to the Secretary Education and receiving their budgets from the Department of Education.

e) College of Education, Sindh

The Colleges of Education offering postgraduate courses in education are affiliated with the Universities but they are under the financial and administrative control of EDO Colleges. The staff is the employees of the Department of Education, not of the Universities. The Universities are mainly examining and degree awarding bodies so far as teacher education is concerned and have some role in curriculum and syllabus prescriptions.

f) Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE), Khyber Pakhtunkhah

Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE) exercises administrative, financial and academic control over Government College of Physical Education and a Government Agro Technical Teachers Training Centre.

g) Regional Institutes of Teacher Education (RITES), Khyber Pakhtunkhah

Regional Institutes of Teacher Education (RITES) provide PTC and CT level of Education.

h) Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE), Khyber Pakhtunkhah.

The PITE in Khyber Pakhtunkhah is semi-independent since its budget is allocated under the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education but it reports directly to the Secretary Education.

i) Institutes of Education and Research (IERS), Khyber Pakhtunkhah

The graduate and postgraduate level of Teacher Education is offered by Institutes of Education and Research (IERS) as constituent institutions of Peshawar, Hazara and Gomal Universities.

j) Bureau of Curriculum, Baluchistan

The Bureau of Curriculum has the administrative, financial and academic control of Government Elementary Colleges for Teachers (GECTs) offering PTC and CT courses and College of Education offering B.Ed. The Bureau of Curriculum offers 10-15 days in-service training courses mostly through the support and often the request of the funding agencies. The management related courses for heads of schools and school management cadres are held by

the Bureau of Curriculum while the PITE usually conducts in-service courses for primary and middle level teachers. The Bureau of Curriculum fulfils its major responsibility of curriculum development when the Curriculum Wing invites participation. The Bureau of Curriculum is also the examining and certification body for the PTC and CT courses offered by GCETs

k) Provincial institute of Teacher Education (PITE), Baluchistan

The PITE Baluchistan is responsible to the Bureau of Curriculum. PITE Baluchistan is not an independent institution as in Sindh. It is under the administrative and financial control of the Bureau. The PITE engages in activities assigned to it from time to time by the Bureau of curriculum. The PITE Baluchistan has no regular fund allocation from the government for its major functions of in-service training and materials development. (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI415.pdf).

A ranking given on the web site <http://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings>, we come to know that there are only two Pakistani universities in the top 300 universities of the world. Why it is so? We are lacking in many things especially in funding, research culture, HRM practices (e.g. training, selection, performance appraisal, job definition, compensation, career planning, and employee participation), productive politics, highly qualified staff, training of the staff etc. There is a need to improve the HRM practices in the universities. There is also a need to investigate the HRM practices by the heads so that we may be able to find out the weak areas for effective HRM.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- ❖ To Identify the problems of heads of teacher education institutes in achieving the goals of new millennium
- ❖ To give fruitful suggestions to achieve the goals of new millennium especially in education sector.

Research questions of the study

Following were the research questions of the study:

- ✓ What are the problems of heads of teacher education institutions showing hurdle to achieve the goals of new millennium?

- ✓ What are the social problems of heads of teacher education institutions which are obstacle to achieve the goals of new millennium?
- ✓ What are the political problems of heads of teacher education institutions proving hindrance to achieve the goals of new millennium?
- ✓ What are the administrative problems of heads of teacher education institutions which create complications to achieve the goals of new millennium?
- ✓ What are the financial problems of heads of teacher education institutions which stop them to achieve the goals of new millennium?
- ✓ Being a head of teacher education institution, what are your suggestions to overcome the aforesaid problems?

Methodology

Nature of the study

The study was qualitative in nature. Broadly, it was a survey mode of research in which Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to identify the problems of heads of teacher education institutions in Punjab.

Population

All the heads of teacher education institutions of Punjab were the targeted population of the study

Sample

A sample of twenty (20) heads of teacher education institutions was selected through convenient sampling technique

Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to identify the problems of heads of teacher education institutions. The questions of interview were validated through five experienced professors with experience of 10 to 15 years. The interview protocol was also validated through pilot testing of three heads of teacher education institutions [UMT, IER (Punjab University), University of Sargodha]. An average time for interview was half an hour. The interview protocol items were:

- ✓ What are the problems being faced by you as a head of teacher education institution?
- ✓ What are the social problems being faced by you as a head of teacher education institution to achieve the goals of new millennium?
- ✓ What are the political problems being faced by you as a head of teacher education institution?
- ✓ What are the administrative problems being faced by you as a head of teacher education institution?
- ✓ What are the financial problems being faced by you as a head of teacher education institution?

- ✓ What are your suggestions to overcome the problems faced by you as being a head of teacher education institution?

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected through interview was first transcribed and segregated into broad categories, then coded by using descriptive coding technique.

Findings of the study

Findings of this study are shown in a table 1 given on the next page:

Table 1

Broad Categories	Small Categories	f	%age
Social problems	Behavior of parents is rude and they do not take care about the education of their children	14	70
	Society is not cooperative in implementing new policies of teacher education	8	40
Administrative problems	Shortage of qualified teaching staff	17	85
	Staff is not regular and punctual	5	25
	Staff is not cooperative in the development and implementation of policies of teacher education	9	45
	Pressure of stake holders	10	50
Political problems	Undue political pressure	12	60
	Threats from the political leaders some time slowdown the process of teacher education	10	50
	Transfers and appointments of staff are done on political bases	18	90
Financial problems	Shortage of funds for the necessary and latest equipments	17	85
	Complex channel to utilize funds if available	16	80
	Number of donors are very few	11	55

Above table shows the problems faced by heads of teacher education institutions in Punjab (Pakistan) in the response of interview questions. When the researchers asked for identifying social problems, 70% of the heads attributed their responses to behavior of

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parents. They replied that parents had rude behavior and they did not take care about the education of their children. One of the heads replied that *“parents use harsh language during meetings”* another pointed out, *“parents do not take interests to celebrate national events in the institution”*. And 40% of the heads replied that society is not cooperative in implementing new policies for training of teachers. One of the heads replied, *“Society plays an important role in the development and uplifting the institutes but unfortunately this is not going to be happened”*.

As for as administration problem is concerned, 85% of heads pointed out that they faced the problem of shortage of staff, due to which training process suffers. One head was of the view that *“we are lacking in experienced and highly qualified staff”*. 45% of heads responded that staff was not cooperative in the development and implementation of new policies for training of teachers.

When researchers asked about political problems, 90% heads of the teacher education institutions attributed their problems that transfers and appointments of staff are done on political bases. One of the heads said, *“There are lots of appointments on political pressure”*. Another head pointed out that *“Sometimes I face shortage of experienced teachers due to transfer through political pressure”*. 60% heads replied that they faced undue political pressure.

When researchers asked about financial problems, 85% heads replied that they had shortage of funds for the necessary and latest equipments. One head was of the view, *“we have only one multi-media device but we need more”*. Another said that, *“The equipments used in the institute are older one, some are damaged, and we have not enough funds to reduce this problem”*. 80% of heads were of the view that they have to follow the complex channel to utilize funds.

Overall, we can say that heads of teacher education institutions are facing diversified problems such as social, administrative, financial and political problems.

Conclusions

The main concluding points drawn from the findings are:

- ✓ The most serious problem which is faced by heads is the transfers and appointments of staff on political bases

- ✓ The second serious problems are the shortage of funds as well as the shortage of qualified teaching staff.
- ✓ The third serious problem is the complex channel to utilize funds if available.
- ✓ The fourth serious problem is lack of cooperation of parents regarding the education of their children.

Recommendations

In view of the aforesaid conclusions, following recommendations may be put forwarded;

- ✓ The appointment and transfer of teaching staff may be transparent and political interference may be discouraged in this regard.
- ✓ There may be the provision of sufficient funds to purchase necessary and latest equipment (AV aids especially multimedia). Moreover, shortage of staff may be minimized by appointing experienced and qualified staff.
- ✓ Make simple but transparent channel to utilize the available fund.
- ✓ To enhance the standards of teacher education, parents may be motivated to cooperate with the heads of teacher education institutions.

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