

Factors Affecting Initial Teacher Education in Pakistan: Historical Analysis of Policy Network

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Abstract

This paper involves the examination of the interplay between historical legacy, culture and initial teacher education/training policy and actual practice in Pakistan. It will do two things. First, it offers reflection on previous and current education policies regarding pre-service teacher education. Second, it will review empirical research being conducted in selected teacher training institutions in Pakistan on the challenges that participants believe, affect the implementation of education policies at the present time. This phenomenological interview study explored how respondents in an impoverished province of Pakistan, viewed the significance of initial teacher education (ITE). The respondent's views were influenced by political and social aspects, as well as individual perceptions of teacher education and training in their cultural context. Moreover, this research did produce some important emergent issues which have strong influence on the development of initial teacher education and its policies in a process of change from a traditional to a more modern society and from local milieu to global trends. The paper also included research studies, review of education policies, reports of multinational agencies operating in Pakistan, and reviews of strategic documents.

Key Words: Initial/Pre-service teacher education; education policies; emergent issues; global trends; national vision; Pakistan.

1. Introduction

In most of the developed and less developed countries teacher education refers to a process of education and development prospective teachers go through as they prepare to enter the classroom for the first time in their role as teachers. It is normally assumed that initial teacher training satisfies both the theoretical and practical needs of the teaching environment; that a teacher who comes from training will know how to cope with the practical management and organization of instruction in the classroom, as well as the theoretical aspects of child development and learning. The philosophy of teacher education starts with the problem of trainee entrants initially but concerns itself with their expected roles, their educative process, expected professional standing, and with the processes of activities encompassing the two major disciplines, pedagogy and psychology along with the development of the personalities of the prospective teachers (Yogesh and Nath, 2008). Pre-service or initial teacher education and training refers to all programmes that aim to prepare teachers to enter the profession, whether these programmes concern subject-specific learning or teacher training curricula (Irving, 1999). In other words, the concept of pre-service training refers to the process in which student teachers grow up professionally, through involvement in practical training, knowledge construction and behaviour acquisition (Mule, 2006) with a balanced blend of theory and practice (Brian, 2007).

Teacher education in Pakistan is charged that it is doing too little to prepare teachers for realities of public schools, arguing that teacher education programmes lack consistency with school curriculum, inadequate resources, low admission standards, and offer too little quality control (Levine, 2006). Therefore, scores of primary teachers have been passed out with insufficient grasp over the school content and methodologies. The quality of teacher training programmes has an imbalance as they lack harmony with the school system and need to improve by revising the curriculum according to the needs of changing culture and the demands of the modern world (Ahmed, 2009). There has been momentous quantitative expansion in terms of number of training institutions established over a period of time, due to the substantial increase in population, and numbers of teachers being trained in these institutions and this quantitative expansion surpassed the qualitative aspect of ITE.

1.1 Brief Background of Initial Teacher Education in Pakistan

On 14th August 1947, Pakistan became a sovereign State, carved out of the two Muslim-majority wings in the eastern and northwestern regions of British India. The West wing comprising four provinces: Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously known as the North West Frontier Province), Balochistan and Sind, and East wing comprising East Bengal. Its West and East wings were separated by more than 1,000 miles which created political disturbances in the country, especially, in East Pakistan. Modern-day Pakistan (West wing) came in existence in 1971, after a civil war in the distant East Pakistan and emergence of an independent Bangladesh.

Whilst teacher education and training in Pakistan is primarily a provincial responsibility, Pakistan's federal government also plays a role through its Curriculum Wing, which is responsible for teacher education institutions. Each province has a distinct centralized organizational structure to prepare teachers for primary, middle and secondary school levels. Currently, in Pakistan, 300 teacher education/training institutes exist in public and private sectors and offer a variety of ITE programmes ranging from primary school certificate courses to PhD in education (MoE, 2009; USAID & UNESCO, 2009). These teacher training institutes are under the administrative and curricular control of the provincial Departments of Education. Primary school teachers seeking employment in government schools are trained in Government Colleges for Education (GCEs); Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) and Regional Institutes for Teacher Education (RITEs). These institutions are supervised by the provincial Bureaus of Curriculum in Balochistan and Sind. In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCET) is responsible to provide pre-service teacher education through RITEs. In Punjab, since 2004 Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) is accountable to design and implement both pre-service education and continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for primary school teachers in all 35 Government Colleges of Teacher Education (GCTEs). However, common provincial features include the pre-service curriculum and a provincially centralized structure with most of the institutions, functioning under Education Departments rather than the provincial governments.

A full programme of pre-service teacher education includes common courses, disciplinary courses, education specialization courses, and one and a half month or more teaching practicum. Those who meet the programme requirements and pass the examination for teacher qualification obtain a diploma/degree. These courses prepare student teachers to teach common subjects in primary (classes 1-5) and middle (classes 6-8) schools, and this kind of training is not subject-specific.

2. Empirical Research

This was a small-scale phenomenological interview study, conducted with the purpose to understand how officials, principals, teacher educators and student teachers view the significance of ITE policies, and of factors that influence their views. Documentary analysis was carried out to obtain relevant information on current policies and practices in teacher education and training. The documentation collected may come from any of the four scales: international; national; regional; and local.

This qualitative study was carried out in 2008 in Pakistan. Fieldwork was conducted in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two districts were selected. There were forty in-depth individual interviews with policy makers, principals, teacher educators and student teachers. Among the 40 participants, 22 were male and 18 were female. The majority of teacher educators have had the experiences of teaching and headship in the secondary schools. Some trainees have had earlier work-life experiences as unqualified teachers. Their experience as teachers varied between 6 months and 2 years. Four interview schedules were developed, each designed for specific category. Each schedule consists of seven questions with related sub-questions.

	Category	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Policy Makers	02		02
2	Principals	01	01	02
3	Teacher Educators	09	11	20
4	Student Teachers	08	08	16
	Total	22	18	40

Data for this study were collected during individual semi-structured interviews that were audio-taped, transcribed, and subjected to qualitative analysis (Marton and Trigwell, 2000). Each participant was interviewed for 45-60 minutes, depending on the detail in the answers. The data were based on respondents' perceptions. Participants were asked to describe their conceptions about the factors influenced, positively or negatively, to education policies and ITE programmes. Ethical aspects were considered throughout the study and protect the anonymity of participants.

3. Historical Analysis of Education Policies

After independence, several education reforms were launched in order to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the education sector. A number of education policies along with five-year plans, ten-year perspective plans and Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) were formulated and implemented, due to the rise and fall of different governments and political changes. From time to time, committees and commissions constituted by government have recommended major changes in the education system. Some have been implemented, but tradition has been so strong that in its essential aspects the system tends to be resistant to change. The situation did not improve appreciably in the first ten years after independence, because reforms and development efforts were haphazard and uncoordinated due to unsettled political conditions of the country. The development of ITE in Pakistan can best be reviewed within the framework of past educational policies as Sodhi (1993) claimed that the educational system of a country grows out of its historical background, geographical features, economic growth, social set up and political condition.

3.1 Post-Independence Reforms (1947-58)

The first National Educational Conference was held in November, 1947 in Karachi three months after the birth of Pakistan. This conference produced a strong philosophy of education as well as a number of ambitious recommendations indicating the future goals of education in Pakistan. Nevertheless, many of its recommendations remained in documentary form only, for lack of institutional capacity or economic resources to pursue them. Proposals were frequently put forward during the 1950s to modernize syllabi, upgrade standards, and make course content conform to national aspirations, culture and conditions. However, the major thrust of government policy during this period remained on industrial development, and the government's goals for higher level human resource development were deferred to the future.

In 1951, the National Educational Conference for the first time made far-reaching recommendations for educational reforms. Regular overall planning of education was tried for the first time in 1952 in the form of the six-year Educational Development Plan (1952-1958), but lack of finance limited the implementation of the Plan. In 1954, a Planning Board was set up which contributed to the First Five-Year Plan (Pakistan Planning Board, 1956) which because of various difficulties was not released until 1957 and little of it was actually implemented. A comprehensive approach to educational reform did not exist prior to 1958. Despite the shortfall in public expenditure, at the end of the decade 1947-57 Pakistan's educational system had shown some quantitative improvements (Jalil, 1998).

3.2 Developments during 1959-68.

In 1959, a National Commission was established, which recommended that education should be made compulsory up to primary level (years 1-5) by the year 1969 and up to middle level (years 6-8) by the year 1974. The first thorough analysis of education came in the Report of the Commission on National Education in 1959 which *inter alia* conceded that no system of education is better than the teachers who serve it (MoE, 1977: 1). The Report (1959) seemed a realistic approach to the challenge of removing social, economic and political differences. The Report put the emphasis on quality in general education and in teacher education. Educational Extension Centres were established to improve the quality of teaching but failed to introduce new and more modern methods. They soon reverted to 'classical pedagogy' and the teachers came away with little change in attitude. The policy emphasised on teacher education in accordance with changing trends and there was suggestion for the establishment of Colleges of Teacher Educators. Unfortunately, lack of immediate action, poor financial resources and the negative behaviour of different religious and secularist groups, created many problems and prevented the implementation of the policy in 1960 (Ahmed, 2009). So the document remained a mere dream among many in Pakistan's educational history. The main weaknesses were the Commission's authoritarian approach and the lack of support on the part of public opinion.

3.3 Era of Conflicts (1969-77)

The new Education Policy (1970) revealed that the content of the existing teacher training programme was dominated by a general curriculum which served mainly as preparation for a new generation. With a view to ensuring their adequate preparation, it was proposed that the teachers for primary, middle and high schools should have at least Matriculation, Intermediate, and Graduate qualifications respectively and have received professional training. To expand the training of teachers, a crash programme of teacher training on an emergency basis with condensed courses of shorter duration was proposed to be provided by selected educational institutions to meet the demand for a large number of teachers. It was suggested that there was a need to begin a comprehensive programme of in-service training of teachers to up-grade their qualifications. However, the announcement of the New Education Policy 1970 coincided with political instability in the country as conflict started between East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

The New Education Policy (1972-80) was introduced to the modern-day Pakistan. The numerous objectives of this policy included equalizing education opportunities, arresting the decline in educational standards and correcting the growing imbalance between various types of education. To achieve these targets, the government decided to *nationalise* all the privately managed institutions. This action promised to provide opportunity for education to every citizen regardless of race, religion or birth. The teachers serving in these institutions were absorbed in the National Pay Scale (Research Wing, 1984). The Ministry of Education (1972) promised that all teacher-training courses would be revised and a large-scale in-service teacher assistance programme would be undertaken to enable practising teachers to teach the new curricula correctly and effectively. The policy also emphasised improvement of teaching methods and provision of instructional materials and teaching aids to primary schools.

The effective implementation of the Education Policy (1972-80) demanded a fundamental and continuing reconsideration of teacher education programmes at both the pre-service and in-service levels. For this reason the PTC and CT [1] curricula were revised by the National Committee on Elementary Teacher Education Curriculum in 1974-75. To implement the new curricula effectively, teacher guides were developed in various school subjects and provided to all the educational institutions in the country during 1975-80. In this context, various pedagogical groups were established and the recommendations of these groups were approved by the National Committee. The reports of these groups were compiled and implemented. However, implementation by the Ministry of Education (1972) was haphazard and uncoordinated in the sense that carefully planned positive steps could not be taken to implement the recommendations of the various committees set up by the Government. Moreover, nationalisation put a great deal of administrative stress and financial strain on the Government (Research Wing, 1984).

3.4 Quantitative Expansion of the ITE (1979-2008)

In 1979, another National Education Policy and its Implementation Programme was published. The basic aim behind the implementation of this policy was the harmonization of education in Pakistan with the concepts of Islam and the ideology of Pakistan. Considerable emphasis was therefore placed on the improvement of teacher training, including the enhancement of the role of the universities. Primary Teacher Training Institutes and Normal Schools were to be upgraded to Colleges of Elementary Teachers. All teachers would be required to undergo at least one in-service training course every five years. It was also stressed that the curriculum of teacher training should be renewed. Provision was made for setting up an Academy of Education Planning and Management (AEPAM) for further research and improvement in teacher education. The policy also proposed to put more emphasis on the qualitative improvement through up-grading and enrichment of the teacher education programmes. More importance was to be given to in-service teacher training, to improve the quality of teacher education.

The Ministry of Education launched National Education Policy in 1992, and encouraged the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to set up resource centres for the in-service training of teachers. It was also suggested to begin periodical training for updating the knowledge and teaching methods of primary teachers. In 1998, National Education Policy (1998-2010), emphasised higher education, education in technology and science and teacher education and indicated that there was an imbalance in teacher training programmes among the courses pertaining to academic knowledge of the subject, content of school curriculum, teaching methods, teaching practices and curricular activities.

The policy gave a comprehensive list of quality inputs, i.e. merit based recruitment of teachers, pre-service and in-service training, provision of career structure, and a system of awards and incentives. The policy also proposed to increase the educational qualification for primary teachers from Matriculation to Intermediate, revising the curricula of content and methodology, and upgrading the quality of pre-service teacher training programmes by introducing parallel programmes of longer duration at post-secondary and post-degree levels, i.e. introduction of programmes of FA/FSc (Fellow of Arts/Science) education and BA/BSc education (MoE, 1998). In order to strengthen the quality of teacher education, in 2001 Pakistan implemented a teacher education reform. Under this reform, admission to primary school teachers' institutions would require 12 years of schooling. Students who had passed Grade XII would be required to study for one and half years (18 months) for the Diploma of Education. The government also focused on curriculum reforms and improvement in teacher education and training. In order to achieve this target, the government has taken initiatives such as upgrading teacher qualification linked to higher pay scales, in-service training of teachers at all levels of the education system, continuous curriculum reviewing and updating in collaboration with provincial counterparts and through public-private partnerships, and encouraging the multiple textbooks option (MoE, 2001).

3.5 Critical Review of Previous Education Policies

All previous education policies talk about the role of education as a social reform and social development but have been unable to significantly contribute to social inclusiveness by ensuring social mobility through education and training (MoE, 2009a). The policy documents in Pakistan were the result of extensive research but their implementation left much to be desired, so that not one policy achieved its declared goals nor the targets of time set for realizing these goals. Firstly, there was no genuine widespread ownership of policy goals by the majority of stakeholders and secondly, the strategies and plans developed to achieve the policy goals were unrealistic and did not have the support of identified and dedicated resources required to achieve the targets. Nor was there any tailoring of goals to relate to maximum resources available.

The educational system of Pakistan has been the target of experimentation in the form of a number of major reforms and policy packages during the past 64 years. The political instability of the political governments led to non-implementation of the major recommendations of education policies. Thus, a number of education policy statements remained at the status of seminar recommendations and could never be implemented. There are many reasons for this, but the most important is perhaps that the government has not changed its overall priorities in order to redirect resources from other budgets to education (Shahid, 1985). A close perusal shows that there had been huge gaps between planning and implementation of education policies. The most crucial causes of failure are weak and defective implementation mechanisms, financial constraints, absence of public participation, lack of political commitment and national vision (Ahmed, 2009; Barber, 2010). The majority of government policies and reform efforts have clearly failed to address the economic, social and political dimensions of the problems facing the education system (ICG Asia Report, 2004). As regards the improvement of teachers' status and teacher preparation, hardly anything was achieved. To cover up these all problems, there was a need to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system which could supervise education from the grassroots to the highest level.

As is evident from the above review, not much has been done or even planned in terms of teacher education and teacher professionalism in Pakistan. Nonetheless, a review of Western literature suggests that Pakistan is not the only country where policies were not implemented as they were planned. 'It is common to find well-crafted and coherent policy designs failing to attain desired results in developing countries, therefore, Pakistan is no exception' ((UNESCO & USAID, 2006: 9).

3.6 Transformation of Teacher Education- 2009

The Draft of new National Education Policy (2009a) has been prepared in 2008 following a lengthy process of consultations [2]. The review exercise was conducted in close cooperation with all stakeholders, particularly the Provincial and District governments. The policy recommended that teacher education curriculum will be adjusted to the needs of the school curriculum and scheme of studies. The curriculum will include training for student-centred teaching, cross-curricular competencies, and an on-site component. Previously there was no separate cadre for teacher educators the policy suggested developing the separate cadre of specialised teacher educators. Moreover, teacher training arrangements, accreditation and certification procedures will be standardised and institutionalised.

A Bachelor degree, with a B.Ed., is the requirement for teaching at the elementary level, a Masters level for the secondary and higher secondary, with a B.Ed., is to be ensured by 2018. PTC and CT are to be phased out through encouraging the present set of teachers to improve their qualifications, while new hiring will be based on the advanced criteria (MoE, 2009a). The policy also recommended providing the opportunities for professional development through a training programme to all teachers and training needs will be assessed on the basis of research and training programmes. The provincial governments would aim to draw upon resources from the private sector through public-private partnerships in the areas of teacher education and professional development programmes (MoE, 2009a). More than 2 years have passed since the education policy 2009 was announced but no concrete measures have been taken yet to put the policy recommendations into action.

The Government of Pakistan is committed to improving quality of education and quality of teacher education. The quality assurance requires professional standards of teacher education and an effective mechanism of accreditation of teacher education institutions and programmes (MoE, 2009b). The Draft National Education Policy 2008, considered National Professional Standards for Teachers as an important pillar. As a signatory of the world initiative on 'Education for All', the Government of Pakistan launched a project 'Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan' (STEP). Its prime objective is to improve the quality of teacher education through policy-formulation, dialogue with stakeholders and strategic frameworks focusing on standards, certification and accreditation procedures for teachers. Under STEP Project, '*Professional Standards for Teachers*' have been developed in consultation with stakeholders in all provinces and were launched in 2009. Although, the professional standards are aimed for primary level beginning teachers, these standards can be adapted and used for secondary level teachers and teacher educators (MoE, 2009b).

This standards-based movement in teacher education is the development of international, national and regional agreements to improve the professional knowledge and skills of teachers to enhance the student learning. A national system of accreditation for all teacher education programmes based on the proposed standards needs to be implemented in all the provinces. This will homogenize curricular content, critical pedagogical learning outcomes, performance skills and dispositions of teachers. The salient features of standards according to Ministry of Education (2009b) are: Subject matter knowledge; Human growth and development; Knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills; Instructional planning and strategies; Assessment; Learning environment; Effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies (ICTs); Collaboration and partnership; Continuous professional development and code of conduct; and Teaching of English as Second/Foreign language (ESL/EFL).

The development and implementation of National Professional Standards for beginning teachers, proficient teachers, subject specialists, educational leaders and teacher educators is a priority to qualitatively reform the existing system of teacher preparation in Pakistan (MoE, 2009b). These proposed competency standards demand phased elimination of the existing teacher certification (PTC, CT & DIE) programmes and their replacement with a four year undergraduate programme of teacher education (MoE, 2009a) in Government Colleges for Education (GCEs), Regional Institutes for Teacher Education (RITEs) and University departments of teacher education. Although the National Professional Standards for Teachers have been launched, much work is still required to assure their presence and use in the classroom. The launched standards have to set a framework for the national vision on teacher professional performance, but still there is a need to plan their operationalization. Therefore, it would be too early to assess the effectiveness of these professional standards.

4. Emergent Issues and Connections

Dominance of some key factors affects the ITE programmes and its policies in Pakistan. All these factors can be seen both from the literature and from the case-location fieldwork to influence the ITE programmes and implementation of its policies.

4.1 The Interplay between vision, tradition, culture

The participants believe that vision, tradition, and culture affect the policies and practices of ITE, in terms of interplay between the perceptions of the main stakeholders and key actors and perceptions of implementers of change. The discussion is located within a view of change as a complex process which requires collective and collaborative efforts if it is to succeed; tradition in every country plays an important role in the construction of visions and in the planning of policies; and culture determines what will be implemented and how. Vision as an abstract philosophical driver and purpose as the intention of a nation, determine the outlook of any public policy.

Vision, being a universal catalyst for individual and collective accomplishment of progress in Pakistan, is extremely important (MoE, 2007), and as interpreted by various participants, determines education policies. In turn, how the policies are interpreted and played into action plans may affect the practices of ITE. Since the vision, policies and practices in 'top-down' systems mark a linear chain of stages, inconsistencies become inevitable and the gap between the vision holders and the implementers of the policies of ITE is wide. The majority of education policies are not seen as national documents but rather as political party's manifestoes and a political instrument of the government in power (Isani & Virk, 2005). The Draft of National Education Policy (2009) states that:

'The education sector has been without a comprehensive vision for far too long. Indeed, there have been policies, plans, reforms, goals, objectives, initiatives, and countless vision statement, but there has been no vision; no widely owned understanding of where all of our efforts are taking us; no well informed conception of what a high-quality, high efficiency education system looks like and how it must function in order to be that way'. (P.56)

The current study also found mere vagueness and ambiguity on the part of relevant vision, and lack of consistency in education policies (for example, education policies: 1970; 1972; & 1979). Culture and education in general, and teacher education in particular, are closely intertwined. Culture includes interpretive framework, facts, norms and experiences. These are all socially constructed. 'The term culture for the stock of language from which participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding about something in the world' (Habermas, 1987:138). Tradition, culture and structure (societal, political) seem to influence the nature of the vision and shape of the ITE policies. According to participants, there is no knowledge without tradition, and we also participate continuously in reproducing and transforming traditions. The philosophies and ideologies of teaching/learning, teacher educators, and trainees themselves have an important influence. As a result, they influence the pace and directions of the strategies of initial teacher education and training and its accommodation of change.

Cultural perspectives around the world vary from country to country and culture influences all aspects of life, of which education is just one. Education is considered a key element in the transmission of Pakistani culture. Teachers and the education they receive are at the heart of the process of cultural transmission (Thomas, 2000). Teacher education is necessarily both a manifestation and a reflection of culture. It has been formed in the cultural reproduction process of Pakistan and is also part of this process. Teacher education has no absolute objectives and contents; these are always culturally and socially constructed according to certain religious, social, economic, political and scientific situations. Every ITE programme is an integral part of its contextual cultures and traditions in Pakistan, and they reproduce them through their own acts. This study found many cultural and traditional aspects in the values, practices and structures of ITE and its policies.

4.2 Political Regimes and Interaction

A country's political environment can at times be the single most important influence in shaping-up the education system and its policies. This in turn shapes the actions and experiences of all people working within the educational field. All decisions about education are political at one level or another and a shared feature of recent years in Pakistan is the increasing role politicians have played in teacher education. In Pakistan, the teacher education sector is controlled by provincial government and political interference, but it has had the most pernicious impact on this sector. The majority of the stakeholders are of the view that funding, curriculum, recruitment, transfers and postings of teacher educators are heavily influenced by political intervention – the degree varying in various parts of the country. In fact, it appears that the malaise has been similar under successive regimes over the last four decades (MoE, 2007). Shami (2005) criticizes the influence of different regimes prioritised their own will and party manifesto shaping the educational policies of Pakistan.

'Pakistan since her inception has seen various regimes both democratic and military which has consequently influenced the educational plans and policies as per their thinking and priorities. Culture of absolute power by and large has proved prohibited for the growth of political institutions and further more this resulted in discontinuous policies and plans and lack of pasteurization of the work of government by the incoming government has left its mark on the enlightenment and social development of the masses'. (P: 82)

4.3 Financial Mechanisms

The financial status of any country could be very influential in shaping the quality of the education system provided.

Financial pressure could affect teacher education programmes and the whole higher education (Furlong et al., 2000). It could also affect the investment process in education and student's enrolment in courses even the nature and quality of those courses (Tisber, 1995). Pakistan operates some kind of per capita formula funding but the detailed mechanism involved certainly in provision for the adequate preparation of trainee teachers is different. For example, in Pakistan ITE providers do not have control over the bulk of their budget and therefore this is a less influential dimension though not insignificant. The budgetary allocations for teacher education institutes are insufficient to meet the requirements of a dynamic system of quality teacher education. At Pakistan only 2.3 per cent of GNP was being spent on education. Every education policy showed inadequate allocations of funds for teacher education and the capacity to utilize the allotted funds has been far lesser. The recurring budget consists of the salary and non-salary component where the salary takes up the major share (about 90 %) of the total recurrent budget. The policy makers informed the researcher that development budget is almost entirely financed through foreign aid. The funding is generated mostly through donor determined priorities and since the whole sector is uncoordinated, there are issues of overlap and excessive emphasis that distorts priorities for the education sector. Overall the bulk of revenue is collected at the federal level which is distributed to the provinces through the National Finance Commission. At the domestic level, resources are generated through revenues raised at various levels (MoE, 2006) and due to severe capacity constraints the most serious flaw is the under-utilization of funds (MoE, 2007).

4.4 Institutional Forces

The analytical framework used here relies on institutional theory as the education of teachers mostly occurs within institutions---before, during, and after formal preparation for teaching. Influences on teachers come in great part from institutions that may operate at the local level or globally via international lending, policy and research (Tatto, 2006). The institutions or organisations have their own structures, regulations and control mechanisms. There are different elements that shape each learning institution and this, in turn, has its impact on conceptualizing of education and teacher education in particular. These elements could be the system's administration and style, course structure, philosophy and content, learning environment provided by the institution, communication and collaboration among its members, the overall culture within the institution, resources, facilities and the teaching techniques and strategies employed in such an institution.

In Pakistan the government teacher training institutions at the provincial levels have unclear mandates. An overlap between their roles and responsibilities also exists. There is no overarching body to regulate and guide these institutions, particularly in terms of academic leadership, within provincial departments of education. A dysfunctional institutional and organizational set-up has resulted in poor quality teacher training. What emerges from analysis of the data on management and administrative systems is that: a) the ITE providers do not have professional and institutional autonomy, and b) these institutions are also not successful in developing the professional attitude of prospective primary school teachers. In this perspective these institutions should make painstaking efforts to equip the prospective teachers not only with teaching skills but also try to promote the positive professional attitude in them.

4.5 Global Trends

The 21st century makes severe demands on learning in schools. The world is full of contradictory trends and tensions, such as globalisation, regionalisation, value conflicts, social inequities and environmental pressures. These changes also affect teacher education, teacher professionalism and its policies. 'Global education involves learning to understand and appreciate our neighbours with different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the eyes of others; and to realise that people of the world need and want much the same thing' (Tye, 1991: 5). In the present era of competition, survival has become an increasingly daunting challenge. Current trends towards teacher education are strongly influenced by economic globalisation forces as Pakistan attempts to become competitive in the global market place and tries to shape its education system to provide skills needed in the growing economy (Tatto, 2006). In recent years however, education authorities have tended to increase the regulation of ITE as part of tertiary-level educational provision and reform. The reason for this trend may well be the desire for more uniform patterns of training, so that it corresponds to national and international quality standards (Eurydice, 2002). Globalisation is manifesting itself in economic, educational and cultural forms in Pakistan also. It has affected employment levels, skill standards and innovations. Currently, various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan are providing teacher education.

If not in a state of disrepair, they are commencing their structured mandates. With minimal coordination and supervision, they follow their own agendas and objectives. This has created non-standardised, and mostly deficient, teaching programmes. These institutions fail to provide acceptable levels of teacher education, and have refrained from any direct collaborations and linkages in academic areas and teaching methods for most of their existence. There is no single ruling authority to properly provide guidance and direction to these institutions to maximize their efficiency, outputs and to monitor their product quality (UNESCO & USAID, 2006). The participants revealed that there is a need to accommodate new skills, innovations and up to date educational experiences of other countries to inform local requirements in the teacher education curriculum in Pakistan.

4.6 New Technologies and Innovation

The speed of change in information technology and communication is much greater today than during earlier periods, and could reasonably be expected to accelerate. The revolution in communications over the last half a century has changed the way of life on this planet. Information technology has become a part of the modern world and in turn, a part of our lives, and determines our success in this information age and the global economy. The influx of these and other related technologies has meant changes in our ways of thinking and learning of new ideas for teacher training. This is crucial in primary teacher training because young children pick up the modern technology very quickly. We cannot escape from advanced information technologies. The education system as a whole, including in particular teacher education, needs to cater for this development at the pre-service level. This will enable prospective teachers to acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and be better informed about new and developing information technologies for the 21st Century learning environments (Newman and Moss, 1997; Barton, 1996). Teachers need to have at least basic personal skills in this field which they have to learn to apply directly in the classroom. For example, courses on the use of ICT may provide trainee teachers with the computer skills required to write reports or prepare lessons also, the internet and computers provide access to knowledge that changes the role of teachers. No longer are they the only, or even the prime source of information.

The present education system in Pakistan offers only minimal curricular resources for students. In fact, the current national education and Information Technology policies do not promote full integration of ICT in the education system. Therefore, teacher educators and teachers have limited knowledge about information technology and innovations and may lag far behind their students. The government took the initiative to make information technology a compulsory subject in the teacher education curriculum but failed to provide computers and projectors to ITE providers. Therefore, the subject of information technology is taught only theoretically.

5. Conclusion

Although teacher education and training in Pakistan is under strong criticisms however, it has been supplying a massive trained human resource despite of scarce and meagre resource. Whatever the problems are, teacher education has an important role by developing a professional force of primary and secondary teachers. The literature appears to contain few studies such as that of Brownell, et al., (2005) who confidently claim that teacher education definitely influences what teachers do and how their students perform. Even with the shortcomings of current teacher education and licensing, 'fully prepared and certified teachers are generally better rated and more successful with students than teachers without this preparation'. (Darling-Hammond, 2000a: 167) The argument of this paper is that, despite some major changes, there are a number of strong factors which are having significant effects upon the implementation of education policies and hamper the quality of teacher education. In Pakistan the very low level of resource base, fragmented organizational structure for ITE and lack of a national vision and political will to co-ordinate across a four province multi-cultural system, make for a much more difficult situation. It also lacks the necessary injection of an understanding of the importance of ongoing professional development. Finally, lack of financial resources and the dependence of Pakistan on international donors add considerably to the complexity of the problem. If this analysis is correct, a few things are needed. The first is to provide a comprehensive policy framework with clear vision to improve the quality of teacher education. Improving the teacher education system is not the outcome of a mysterious process. It could perhaps, be achieved as soon as Government gives priority to solve the emergent issues highlighted in this article.

Notes

[1] PTC stands for Primary Teaching Certificate; CT stands for Certificate of Teaching; and DIE, Diploma in Education.

[2] A series of 23 green papers were prepared on different topics by National Education Policy Review (NEPR) team and disseminated to stimulate discussions and get feedback. With further consultations, the results were summarised in a pre-policy White Paper and were circulated for comments and debates to finalise the national policy.

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