

Adaptable Program Evaluation Strategies for Teacher Education in Pakistan: A reflective paper written on the bases of literature review and document analysis

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Abstract

Teacher education in Pakistan is going through a transitional period. On the one hand teacher education institutions are developing curriculum for newly launched four-five year teacher education programs with the funding of USAID and support of institutions of teacher education in the USA. On the other hand, "National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan" have also been recently developed by the affiliated bodies of Federal Ministry of Education through another USAID-funded project. With the development of new teacher education programs another significant area is to develop mechanisms for program evaluation for the newly introduced programs. Keeping in view an array of contextual factors, evaluate the program evaluation strategies used here in the US for how well they would apply in the Pakistani context. This paper explores a crucial research question i.e. what features of program evaluation would strengthen the Pakistani system and what features might inhibit development there?

Preamble

Evaluation of teacher education programs in USA is based on a long history of research and reforms. In Pakistan this is a very new field which was only initiated within last ten years. With regards to program evaluation systems and mechanisms, a country cannot completely borrow such systems from elsewhere and simply implement them. But due to lack of research and background in the field it is considered beneficial to learn from the experiences of a country like USA and adapt some of the mechanisms which are applicable. Another reason for adopting foreign systems is that Pakistan has a long tradition of educational developments on the bases of foreign funding. Educational development has only been mentioned as a priority by many government leaders but allocation of funds in national budget never increased to allow further development as in other sectors. USA has become the biggest donor in last ten years and hence has made significant impact on education system in Pakistan.

In Pakistan with the beginning of twenty first century, issues of quality assurance were identified in teacher education. There have been two major initiatives specifically in teacher education within last five years with huge funding of USAID. One is "Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan" (STEP) and the other is "Pre-Service Teacher Education in Pakistan" (Pre-Step) which is now renamed as USAID Teacher Education Project (USAID-TEP). Along with the financial support these two programs also brought major changes in teacher education policies and practices. On the one hand teacher education institutions are developing curriculum for newly launched four-five year teacher education programs with the funding of USAID and support of institutions of teacher education in the USA. On the other hand, "National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan" have already been developed (USAID, 2009). Now the focus is on developing mechanisms for accreditation and evaluation of newly introduced programs. There are two major areas in which Pakistan can learn and adapt strategies from USA. One is to strengthen research in the field of quality of teaching and teacher education; the other is setting up a formal system of program evaluation and accreditation for the purpose of quality assurance of teacher education programs.

Background of Teacher Education in Pakistan and Involvement of USA

Before I begin with identifying the adaptable features of the US system of evaluation it is necessary to present a brief overview of teacher education in Pakistan. In Pakistan almost fifty-sixty years were only spent in fulfilling the demand for teachers and physical infrastructure for basic schooling (Muhammad, 2000). Therefore more than half a century, Pakistan has tended to follow unquestioningly the patterns set in middle of twentieth century. In National Education Policy of 1998 for the first time the quality concerns were mentioned for both teacher education and public school education. Then the National Education Assessment System Report in 2007 documented the already suspected conditions about poor quality of teaching and student outcomes.

Most of the teacher education programs since 1947 have been structured on the model inherited from British system of education. Looking into the previous policies it is evident that all the efforts were initially being made to attract more and more people towards teaching; therefore the selection criteria for teacher education programs were set rather low. There was an urgent need for teachers in large numbers so the duration of the teacher education programs was kept as short as possible (Muhammad, 2000). All these steps which were solutions to the challenges of those times have resulted into challenges to quality of teaching. All programs and courses of teacher education mostly focused on providing prospective teachers “a handful of recipes for good teaching”, handing over a “fixed and static model of teaching” to the novice teachers, and giving them a limited “self-image of being a tiny screw in the big machine of education” (Siddiqui, 2010).

There has never been a common criteria established for “good teaching” or to assess quality of teaching at various levels (Siddiqui, 2010). But on the basis of some researches from local and foreign scholars it is reported again and again that there is a severe quality deficit in public schools. National education policies of 1998 and 2009 one after another related it to poor quality of teacher education programs. During the period of ten years between these two policies some major interventions were made such as affiliation of all Colleges of Education with universities; establishment of University of Education; founding of provincial and regional institutes of teacher education which are mainly responsible of in-service education; and organization of National Accreditation Council of Teacher Education. USAID is the biggest donor within the field of assessing quality of teacher education in Pakistan and experts from USA have played a major role in all these initiatives.

The year 2009 marked a serious initiative in teacher education in Pakistan. Ministry of Education, with the cooperation of UNESCO and the financial support of USAID, developed National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan. These standards frame a vision of the qualifications Pakistan expects of its teachers. “These standards are part of a larger reform effort and developed in close coordination with the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and USAID's STEP program (Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan)” (USAID, 2009). In the same year a new project named Pre-Service Teacher Education in Pakistan (Pre-STEP) was launched with the funding from USAID. One of the major goals of this project is to improve teacher education practices and policies in Pakistan. A four year undergraduate program has now been launched in many institutions with the input of experts from USA to develop new curriculum. It is crucial at this stage to set mechanisms for program evaluation to assess the effectiveness and quality of the newly developing programs.

Difference of Administrative Structures in Pakistan and USA

Before looking at the adaptability of approaches, strategies and methods of program evaluation currently applied in USA, it is necessary to understand that there is a difference in organizational structure of teacher education in USA and Pakistan. In the USA because of how the government is set up, with state government having much more control on the happenings within the state, departments of education have been a part of individual states. However, as federal monies are tied to education policies, states surrender some control of education requirements to the national authorities, but at many levels jurisdiction is not clearly distinct among the two. Ultimately certification requirements and curriculum are still controlled by state governments in USA as opposed to Pakistan where the federal government has the final say in how education is conducted in the country. There are four provinces and smaller management units called districts. Though district education departments work under the supervision of provincial administration only but they all follow largely the policies and plans approved by federal ministry of education (Shah, 2003). The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible mainly for administration of institutions located in the federal capital territory and in other areas under federal administration.

The institutions and universities located in various provinces are under the jurisdiction of provincial governments, but major funding of higher education initiatives comes from the federal government through the Higher Education Commission (Shah, 2003). The eighteenth constitutional amendment 2010 has given much more rights to provincial governments and departments but it has not yet brought much difference specifically to planning of teacher education programs in recent years.

Various Models and Approaches to Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is a formal procedure adopted by the program implementers or by any other internal or external agency in which the information about a program is collected and analyzed through various lenses for various purposes. Hence one definition or description of program evaluation is not possible to be drawn. Stufflebeam (1999) describes the nature of Program Evaluation as:

It encompasses evaluations of any coordinated set of activities directed at achieving goals. Examples are assessments of ongoing, cyclical curricular programs; time bounded projects; and regional or state systems of services. Such program evaluations both overlap and yet are distinguishable from other forms of evaluation, especially student evaluation, teacher evaluation, materials evaluation, and school evaluation. (p.2)

Program evaluation is on the one hand related to program goals and on the other hand has its own goals and purposes. Its definition lies within its goals and purposes. If it is being done to assess the achievement of preset program objectives then it will have different meanings from when it is being done to assess if the program has affected the larger society positively or not. A holistic model helps evaluating both internal and external efficiency and effectiveness of the program. Program evaluation in teacher education can begin with the assessment of provision of resources, faculty, curriculum, learning opportunities and go beyond assessing teachers' competence, teaching quality and student learning outcomes. It might be more useful initially to consider what goals of evaluation we have, besides thinking what bureaucratic structures do we need. Stufflebeam (1999) has identified four main approaches of program evaluation –“Pseudoevaluations, Questions/Methods-Oriented Approaches, Improvement/ Accountability-Oriented Evaluations, and Social Agenda-Directed (Advocacy) Models”.

“Pseudoevaluation” is something that is close to what is being done in Pakistan. Programs claim unwarranted strengths in filling up the forms of quality assurance. “Social Agenda-Directed (Advocacy) Model” is the one mostly adopted by the NGOs working for social causes. E.g. environment education is a current social concern and every other NGO is evaluating schools and teacher education programs to see if this cause is being focused or not. Second and third approach is more exhaustive and mostly adopted by researchers and evaluation bodies in USA.

‘The Question Method Approach’ according to Stufflebeam “...includes studies that are oriented to (1) address specified questions whose answers may or may not be sufficient to assess a program's merit and worth and/or (2) use some preferred method(s)” (p.4). This is the most common approach adopted by researchers in the field of teacher education. They develop their set of research questions and evaluate programs to answer those. To answer those questions they use theoretical framework, operational definitions, standardized tools and various qualitative and quantitative procedures to collect and analyze the data.

The method of using questions is found to be a useful way for focused program evaluation, but it also has its own strengths and weaknesses. These studies are usually “quasi evaluation studies” as they begin with a question or set of questions and then try to answer those by applying various methods and tools. Only sometimes they give holistic picture otherwise the scope of such studies is too “narrow” (Stufflebeam, 1999).

At larger levels (state or national) the more commonly used approach is ‘Improvement/ Accountability-Oriented Evaluations’. Like any other program every educational program has a statement of purpose and desired outcomes, this model uses those goals and outcomes to assess the quality. The “CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model” introduced by Stufflebeam can be very useful for this approach. In this model both internal and external evaluation work together for knowing, decision making and improvising (Stufflebeam, 1971). Such evaluation takes place in teacher education programs in formative as well as summative forms. Pakistan needs to develop such mechanism for evaluating its teacher education programs. Evaluation procedure adopted by Teacher Education Accreditation Council in USA is very similar to this particular model. It is described in detailed further ahead.

The major goal of evaluation in this approach is to ensure the quality and to revise the teacher education program for improvement. In USA this approach is widely applicable since second half of twentieth century and even more since the outcome approach is applied to teacher education.

Traditions of Research and Reform in USA: What lesson can Pakistan learn?

It is important to understand that in USA quality of teaching and teacher education has been a key area of interest for researchers and reformers during twentieth century till today. Within twentieth century alone, Ziechner and Liston (1990) identified four traditions of teacher education reform in USA -“the academic tradition, the social efficiency tradition, the developmentalist tradition, and the social reconstructionist tradition” (p.3). Each one of these traditions not only set different criteria of quality in teacher education but also brought in major changes within procedures of evaluation. A more recent tradition is the tradition of assessing quality in terms of outcome (Cochran-Smith, 2001). This trend has developed with the schools reforms of late twentieth century and strengthened with the “No Child Left Behind” act in the beginning of twenty first century. That also brought standardization and improvisation of accreditation procedures. The outcomes approach assesses quality of teacher education in three domains – “teacher learning” that can be evaluated through teachers’ test scores; “professional practice” that needs follow-up assessment; and “student-learning” which is measured through standardized tests in US (Cochran-Smith, 2001). These elements of outcome approach are not exhaustive and within each one of them there are many variations and sub-factors.

Looking at the transition from one tradition to another in USA keeping some of the useful features of previous traditions alive seems very progressive but it is not such a smooth transition. Program evaluation in teacher education like in any other profession is based upon certain criteria of quality. Variations that exist within and across different traditions of reform have brought in the issues and challenges of disagreement among various stakeholders upon these criteria of quality. One of the major reasons given for that in case of USA is absence of a “common curriculum” (Cohen, 2010). In the absence of common curriculum it is not possible to have an agreement about how to teach it effectively. It is also unlikely to have an agreement about what should be taught in teacher education programs. Even at a single point of time the criteria are defined and described differently by different stakeholders and evaluators. Thus the problem of disagreement about “quality of teaching” remains unresolved. (Cochran-Smith, 2001, & Cohen, 2010). Teacher education institutions, state education departments and national accreditation bodies have their own sets of criteria which result in confusion and contradiction. Cohen and Cochran Smith offer a common solution that is to have research informed set of criteria. Cohen offers a set of research studies that can provide a base for developing a coherent professional knowledge and standards:

Heneman and his colleagues (2006) use a carefully developed framework that attempts to identify a complex and far-ranging set of teaching behavior that can identify competent performance. Schacter and Thum (2004) use earlier research on teaching quality to advantage, and devising research-based measures of teaching quality strengthens the approach to what Gordon et al. (2006) refer to as “subjective” measures of teaching quality. (p.299)

Though Pakistan is in a somewhat better condition to begin with; as a common curriculum is followed in all public schools at least a provincial level, and a similar scheme of studies is followed in all teacher education institutions around the country. Even in this case, because of no clear cut policy provision, teacher education within provinces does not meet same standards of quality as it is completely left on the institutional will how they develop their curriculum and syllabus (UNESCO, 2006). Hence basic research in the field of education and teacher education is required to have an agreeable set of quality measures. Without a background and research base for quality mechanisms the first thing that can naturally happen is to borrow ideas from elsewhere. Even the courses at post graduate level in universities are all based upon foreign literature. The research conducted by students and scholars in Pakistan has never been reported in any coursework. The only information provided is through national surveys and data provided by public agencies and bodies.

There is no harm in learning from the experiences of advanced countries but we cannot rely upon foreign theories completely due to difference of context. For instance classroom management of 20-25 students is completely different from that of 50-100 students. The competence required in rural schools where only black board and chalk is available for teacher to use with a multi-grade classroom and with majority of students coming from totally illiterate and poor family background; is definitely different from what is required in the well equipped classrooms of city schools.

Thus the criteria of effectiveness in two different scenarios will also not be comparable. Donors come from different backgrounds and contribute to improving situation in bits and pieces- only a few donor agencies like UNESCO and World Bank fund researches within various fields. The culture of educational research such as identified by Cohen and Cochran-Smith are not conducted at any level. Government began to give research grants to students and faculty members from year 2000 onwards (HEC, 2010). But it is a huge bureaucratic structure that is involved in processing the application of these grants that graduate students do not even think to apply. National Education Assessment System conducted a country wide assessment through standardized tests in 2004-5. It can be regarded as the first initiative by federal government to conduct a large scale research in public schools of Pakistan(UNESCO, 2006). In the absence of research grants faculty and graduate students in Pakistan are unable to conduct any large scale researches, thus the significance or scope of their work remains limited.

Adaptable Evaluation and Accreditation Mechanisms and Strategies

In USA there are various levels and mechanisms of evaluation for teacher education programs – institutional level, state level and national level.

Institutional Level Program Evaluation

First of all every institution itself has a formative assessment system. It helps institutions and faculties to keep a track of strength and weaknesses of not only the overall program but also within courses and various elements of the program. Such as in case of Michigan State University, to fulfill the requirements of program accreditation, College of Education has its own mechanism for “internal audit” (“inquiry brief”, 2010). In this process faculty members use various methods, tools and strategies to evaluate the performance of students and conduct studies to identify the strong and weak areas within various courses and activities, throughout the year. Students filled evaluation forms at the end of each course and interns reports also help in assessing the practicum part of the program. All these procedures help the institution to assess the internal efficiency and develop a culture of self accountability (“inquiry brief”, 2010).

In Pakistan only a few universities have the internal audit system. Since the quality assurance bodies under HEC began to work, almost every institution only uses the evaluation performas sent out by the quality assurance cell. These sets of forms serve as the survey instruments and are not even designed particularly for teacher education. Therefore many parts of the instruments are left blank. The strategy of institutional level internal audit, in which faculty members and students are themselves part of the evaluation will be very useful in Pakistan. A comprehensive program design as suggested by Darling-Hammond (2005) can have many inbuilt mechanisms for formative assessment. Such as “case studies” and “portfolios” are two examples that being the part of teacher education program can easily provide detailed data for evaluation purposes.

There is a difference in the culture of colleges of education and universities. Colleges of education only fill the required report forms for the universities they are affiliated with. In the programs offered at universities only a few of faculty members and departments get involved in collecting any feedback and evaluating their courses. To make it a regular practice and developing reports on the bases of such evaluations can be very helpful. This will also develop a sense of ownership and accountability among the faculties. The institutional level evaluation also helps then in fulfilling the requirements of state / national level program evaluation. And it prohibits the culture of only filling in the report forms and showing off a good day performance when the inspectors come to visit.

State Level Program Evaluation

At state level in USA, departments of education or “professional standards board” have the responsibility to develop clear policies and criteria for approving teacher education programs. The policies and criteria guide the procedures adopted for periodic reviews and program evaluation. Relevant state agencies not only require documented program reviews but also engage teams of inspectors to visit campuses for assessing the institutional credibility. In some states accreditation is completely under the jurisdiction of state departments and in others national accreditation bodies work in collaboration with state departments. State departments also have the authority of testing and licensing teachers finally after completing the program requirements. The testing and licensing procedures are also placed under the jurisdiction of state departments and are based upon the pre-set policies, criteria and standards (Crowe, 2010).

As described earlier the administrative structure is not the same as in Pakistan. Provinces and districts have their own education boards but these boards are not responsible for policy planning or developing independent set of standards or criteria of evaluation. The strategies adopted at state level, for accreditation, licensing and certification can be adapted in Pakistan but with the variation in the process adopted in USA. All these procedures can be based upon the national policies and standards that are already developed through involvement of provincial representatives, HEC and NACTE. It cannot be suggested that with huge variations between and within provinces, all institutions will be able to meet the same criteria at the same time. Therefore the broader set of national standards then can be decomposed at regional level into achievable targets and goals, but there is no need to have different sets of standards at each level.

In Pakistan there is no other examination or test to assess teachers' competence for certification than the exams conducted by the universities at the end of courses and programs. Policies and procedures of certification and licensing need critical analysis before adopting. Research shows teachers test scores in USA do not provide any assurance for quality of teaching and cannot be used as quality indicators (Cohen, 2010 and Crowe, 2010). In Pakistan all universities practice exit exams therefore another testing exercise for certification purposes might only be a duplication of efforts. Education budget and allocation of limited resources does not allow any duplication of efforts at any stage.

Procedures and policies of licensing can be useful if adopted to assess teachers at a later stage, i.e. after induction on the bases of periodic review of performance may be done for a year or so before licensing. As in Pakistan once a teacher is inducted in public schools teaching, then there is no mechanism at all for further evaluation, only a satisfactory report is required from the school-head for probation period of six to nine months, to confirm the status of teacher (ILO, 2000). Hence the certification and licensing procedures can be adapted with some amendments as per needs and after feasibility testing.

National Level Program Evaluation

In USA there are two main national accreditation bodies – National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) that was launched in 1954 and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) that was established in 1997. The two bodies have recently been merged into one Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Jurisdiction of accreditation in some states is still not clear. State departments also play an active role in accreditation of programs and these bodies play their role separately at the same time. Referring back to the difference of administrative structure in Pakistan, this might not be very difficult to have clearly defined jurisdiction for program evaluation at federal and provincial level.

Before I look at the options of accreditation now being offered by CAEP, a brief overview of strategies of program assessment applied by NCATE and TEAC can help understand what is adaptable in Pakistan. NCATE and TEAC differ in their approaches and methodology of program evaluation, though both require institutional reports for the purpose of accreditation or reaccreditation. One major difference is that NCATE evaluates and accredits “units”, while TEAC evaluates “programs”. Further differences include separate accreditation decisions of NCATE for “initial educator preparation” and “advanced educator preparation”; while “self study” reports are required for evaluating “educational leadership” in the TEAC accreditation decision making (CAEP, 2011).

Procedure for NCATE accreditation is long and meticulous. It is a three years long procedure in which the college pays an annual fee as well as submits documents including program's plans and prospects along with its philosophy and conceptual framework and reports comprised of hundreds of pages each year. Almost after two years of these procedures NCATE's accreditation team i.e. “Board of Examiners” visits the college, before which another comprehensive report is to be submitted. The team meets faculty, students, graduates and employers. After two to three visits the team develops a report to which the institution can respond before it is send with all other materials to NCATE's accreditation board or state department depending upon the kind of agreement NCATE has with the state department. There is a complete set of well established standards that work as the final goal to achieve for the institutions that comply with NCATE accreditation. NCATE keeps revising its standards and now it no more rely only on internal efficiency rather it also accounts for student learning outcomes (NCATE, 2011). Unlike NCATE, TEAC does not offer its own set of standards but gives liberty to the institutions to set their own goals and standards or chose from the state's standards.

The accreditation procedures are based on three guiding principles –“Evidence of program candidate learning; Evidence of faculty learning and inquiry; and Evidence of institutional commitment and program capacity for quality”(TEAC, 2011). The accreditation procedure include fee with ‘online application’, ‘formative assessment’ reports with an ‘inquiry brief’ that may address in detail how the three principles of quality are fulfilled and how the standards chosen by the program are met. Internal ‘audit’ reports and report of ‘survey’ conducted by TEAC provide another set of evidence for “Accreditation Committee and panel” (TEAC, 2011). There is a mechanism of annual reporting that continues and TEAC reviews these reports in the light of quality principles and state standards that are selected by the program.

CAEP as one unified body for accreditation has proposed to offer four options for institutions and programs that seek accreditation. This is a step towards a more integrated and cohesive accreditation process. The basic three guiding standards are- “Candidates demonstrate knowledge, skills and professional dispositions for effective work in schools; Data drive decisions about candidates and programs; and Resources and practices support candidate learning” (CAEP, 2011, p.4). CAEP is going to let the programs chose for the process of accreditation through them the option to go through the NCATE or TEAC’s mechanism.

We cannot simply idealize a huge investment of money or a complicated bureaucratic structure of accreditation to bring good results. “If teacher preparation were deregulated and current programs stripped of their monopoly, competitive pressure might compel them to document their quality in useful and appropriate ways without the bureaucratic constraints or costs of accreditation” (Hess, 2002). Having various bodies NCATE, TEAC and then state/ provincial/ district departments is neither affordable nor beneficial in case of Pakistan. Duplication of efforts can bring two major issues, one is the confusion and contradiction in the process of goals setting, and the other issue is again time and resources being used inefficiently. It is a better option to have one body like CAEP as in USA or NACTE in Pakistan; but what is essential is to have representatives of all stakeholders -University teachers, schools administrators, provincial and district managers as well as school teachers or subject specialists. And to offer options of various mechanisms of program evaluation for the purpose of accreditation to the institutions at university level also seems reasonable. Once the university decides which process of evaluation to follow, then the affiliated colleges should also be encouraged or rather obligated to follow the same process. Each college of education should go through the accreditation process individually. What happens is that performance of a few model colleges is projected and the parent university claims to have the required quality control. But colleges in cities and rural areas do not match the same quality indicators.

Role of accreditation agencies like CAEP or NACTE in Pakistan is even more crucial because issues like corruption, irresponsive behavior, and poor performance of institutions in Pakistan are some big challenges at the moment. People are not willing to do much hard work right now. Due to the politicization of institutions majority seems to be in a state of frustration. Another significant feature is scarcity of resources. Funding is limited and sometimes even remains unutilized or underutilized. Pakistan cannot afford wastage of resources at any level. Heavy investment in the form of donor agencies’ programs is going into teacher education such as STEP and Pre-STEP. Pakistan needs to set a mechanism to evaluate internal and external efficiency but on the other hand the accreditation fee and annual fee attached to accreditation procedures might bring other challenges in Pakistani institutional set-up. Having a single body under the administrative structure of public education will keep it simple and help to save these extra expenses as well as this will not compel institutions to pay the fees to accreditation bodies.

Conclusion

The above analysis has clearly shown that in USA many mechanisms for program evaluation are applied at various levels at one point in time. Researchers play their own part by exploring and analyzing the current teacher education practices and teachers’ performance in schools. These researches provide basis for identification of indicators of quality not only for teaching but also for teacher education programs. Research in the field of education and teacher education is required to be strengthened in Pakistan. Researches that address the quality issues can help developing effective mechanisms for teacher education program evaluation. But for this it is necessary that higher education authorities of Pakistan provide support to faculties and graduate students in universities and colleges of education. This is one of the major strategies that can be adapted in Pakistan as the universities and colleges already provide basic training of research to graduate students. Having research and evaluation as a part of teacher education program can save a lot of effort and resources.

Being a part of the program evaluation, the students and faculties can develop a sense of ownership and the self accountability can be strengthened which is most significant for Pakistani institutions at the moment.

A further step is to design and implement an effective evaluation system in which the culture of internal audit and accountability may be stronger and external evaluation may follow the model of “Improvement/Accountability-Oriented Evaluations” (Stufflebeam, 1999). A common curriculum that is already followed around the country can be a base of developing common standards for teaching. A national accreditation body - NACTE in collaboration with provincial departments, boards of education and universities can become the elements of a larger system of quality assurance. But various heads and distributed jurisdiction can bring in contradictions, conflicts and confusions. Pakistan must learn from the current situation in USA and avoid duplication of efforts. Rather a cohesive set of strategies may be identified and implemented around the country. It should be clear that institutions and programs in all parts of the country will not have the same starting point to meet the standards. Therefore variations should be expected and variation in goals setting as well as in evaluation criteria should be acceptable.

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