

Innovative Mindset in School Education: A global issue or trend in Pakistan?

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Abstract

Education and training are emerging now key drivers of competitiveness for any country on the globe. To cope with the globalization a country has to elevate her education system. In Pakistan HEC upgraded the Teacher Education (TE) by replacing the one year B.Ed. with the 4 year B.Ed (Honors) recently. The upgraded TE and the global challenges are well connected with the real implementation of vision 2030 agenda in the School Education (SE). And crucial to address the advancements in TE for the production of teachers with innovative mindset to grip the global reach in the future. The Punjab government is planning to stop the upgraded 4-year program offered since 2009 in the 33 Government Elementary Colleges for Teachers Training (GCETs) instead of making the GCETs self sustain. The study with the mixed methods of research visualized the advanced professional training needs and essential global demands data from the 33 GCETs including 33 (100%) principals, 330 (82%) teacher- educators and 200 (66.6%) prospective- teachers. Then it strived to propose a transformation mechanism for the elevation of TE. The data analyzed quantitatively by frequencies, percentages and qualitatively through focused group discussions, triangulation and content analysis. Study designed to resolve the globalization issue, by bridging the gaps through a transformation framework for modification in TE. The conceived factual framework is a dynamic revolutionary route to improving the quality of school education via contemporary TE. The suggested framework if implemented would save the scarce resources and provide maximum outputs through quality education.

Keywords: Global advancements, TE, SE, Dynamic Transformation framework

Introduction

We are living in the revolutionary era of information technology with swift advancements in every walk of life. The concept of the global village is now transformed into a global table. The blast of electronic media along

mobile gadgets has also altered the way of social living, modifying the pattern of acquiring knowledge and learning. Schools, as well, should respond to such advanced societal needs. And consequently, schools must re-think and re-emphasize the development and implementation of a new curriculum and pedagogy. As mentioned by Shah (2004), “that schools should develop and reform their curricula in a way that produces the necessary human capital capable of holding up to the government's growing economy and growing population, along with identifying viable solutions for such crucial and vibrant needs”. There is a dire need to adapt globalization wisely rather making it an unresolved issue.

The key findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR), Pakistan has not reached any of the Education for All (EFA) goals set in 2000 with measurable targets. To improve the quality of education, 4 million more teachers are still needed. The trained teachers remain in short supply in one third of countries; in several sub-Saharan African countries, less than 50 percent are trained. However, education quality has received increased attention since 2000 and now with the major focus in the vision 2030 agenda.(GMR –Report, 2015).

According to the vision 2030, under the caption, “The Teacher for the 21st Century” Teachers are the long pole in the tent of education in school to higher education. Having good teachers can dramatically affect the quality education. The teacher numbers are inadequate in schools and colleges, and their background lacks both solidity and diversity; they are also paid very little. From a policy viewpoint the primary objective would be to attract better teachers, and secondly to improve their overall quality. Better salaries and facilities will produce the desired result. Teachers must be enabled to acquire a decent measure of ‘self-esteem’. This has happened in universities and it must now be implemented with even greater emphasis on the school level. (National Economic Council, Vision 2030 paper, 2007).

Rationale

In present scenario of Pakistan, there are more than thirty six percent (36%) children, out of school at primary level. Numerous funding agencies and foreign aids have worked on the enhancement of a quality education through increased enrollment, high literacy rate, improving infrastructure, and significant teacher training, to provide a suitable learning environment. But only short term benefits and improvements were achieved through such make ups. That is true and prevailing situations. (UNESCO, 2015)

The truly required efforts are not made because the root- causes are ignored. Ultimately the problems reappear with high intensity, if the solutions are temporary. And sometimes the institution, itself, is connected with the root causes of the problem as Chubb and Moe argued, that

institution being a part of the problem cannot solve the problem alone. (Chubb, Moe, 1990)

The same situation exists in the Pakistan as in the province, Punjab, there is urgency for good governance and effective management that includes innovative reforms the education system through teacher education institutions (TTIs). Whereas in Punjab School Education Department (SED) privatized more than four thousand schools and stopped the 4 year B.Ed. (Honors) in the 33 Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCET) , instead of making them self sufficient and self sustain to supply an excellent lot of teachers. The study attempted to conceive a research based dynamic transformation process to resolve the existing issue.

Literature Review

The first and most important thing is that no education system can be better than the quality of its teachers. The most successful countries, from the Far East to Far West are those, where teaching has the highest status as a profession. All the evidences from different education systems around the world show that the most important factor in determining how well children do is the quality of the teachers and the teaching. The core of the education system, the Teacher Education, (TE) is the most neglected and ignored areas in Pakistan. It does not even receive the sympathetic attention for the sake of country's future growth and sustainable development. That explains why our TTIs are not well equipped to prepare quality prospective-teachers, encounter the global demands. (education.vermont.gov, n.d.)

The best education systems in the world draw their teachers from among the top graduates and train them rigorously and effectively, focusing on classroom practice. They then make sure that teachers receive effective professional development throughout their career, high social status, opportunities and other benefits. Considering the teacher education as the mother of education systems, the policy makers, planners and the politicians in our country should give highest priority to teacher education for the sake of a robust and sustained education system, but the situation is reversed in Pakistan. Many researches recognized that there are too many teachers who lack knowledge of the content, pedagogical skills and need CPD to address the demands of their advanced-learners from the modern age of technology. (undp.org, n.d.).

According to the ministry of education, In Pakistan the total teacher training institutions(TTIs) are 147, with 3232 teachers- educators in the public sector and only 23, with 266 teachers- educators in the private sector. (AEPM, 2011-2012).

In both sectors the limited teacher training institutes face the challenges of preparing the prospective- teachers for new generations and

utilizing the advance learning theories and acquired modern pedagogy. Both need curricula revise and wise planning with budgetary proficiency for adapting the global advancements. The required advancements can be tailored locally according to the needs for preparing quality prospective teachers. (TE.net.Pk.n.d.)

Teacher Education: Present Scenario in Punjab

There are 40 teacher training institutes (TTIs) in different universities and 33 Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers Training (GCETs) for pre-service and in-service teacher education in Punjab under the directorate of staff development (DSD).The present status of TE in the public sector of Punjab is not up to the mark, to encounter the global advancements and survive in the vibrantly changed social environment.(Shah,2010)

The NACTE established National standards for accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs offered in the country by defining the essential components and aligned the standard framework. The consultants were hired and the consultancy was done. Finally the consensus on provincial and national level was developed in June 2009 and in July 2009 the standards were approved by the NACTE. (NACTE, 2009)

It was a forwarding phase of quality education as the quality assurance needed professional standards of teacher education. The ministry of education in collaboration with UNESCO implemented the STEP (Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan) project that was supported financially by USAID. Under the Pre-STEP project, the national professional standards for teachers (NPST) were developed.

Accreditation, Teacher licensing and (NPST) initiatives: New Global Trends

The process of TE program accreditation, teachers licensing and certification in advanced countries like U.K, Australia, America and Canada was also consider in Pakistan and, NPST and national accreditation council for teacher education (NACTE) were developed by HEC in 2009; the process of the teacher licensing and function of NACTE is still under consideration at the upper level. (HEC, 2009).

Upgrading Teacher education and Good Governance

In Punjab,there is urgency for good governance, effective management and a control mechanism that includes innovative reforming the education system through (TTIs), making them eligible to compete globally. And the expenditure on education should clearly be more than 2.5%. (Planning commission 2012-2013).

Statement of the Problem

The globally competitive quality education is the agenda of vision 2030 for the economic growth and sustainable development of our country. There is a dire need for a dynamic transformation mechanism to adapt the global advancements through quality teachers. The study addressed the globalization and its required reforms through a dynamic transformation mechanism in school education.

Objectives of the Study

- To collect, need assessment data for global advancements adaptation from the GCETs.
- To analyze critically educational documents and budget allocation for globalization.
- To propose a conceived factual framework for transforming teacher education in Punjab.

The Research Questions

Q1: What are the demands of principals, educators and future teachers for the global trends?

Q2: How the education policy, NPST, new curriculum and budget allocations are aligned with the global demands?

Q3: How, where and why to bridge gaps locally with the advanced global interventions?

Significance of the Study

The study has grand weight for the school education department (SED).The suggested dynamic transformation process is a research based and the proposed academies will be an excellent source for achieving the vision 2030 targets. The transforming framework if implemented can be very supportive in boosting the economic growth through quality education.

Methodology of the Study

The study employed the mixed methods of research by focusing the quantitative and qualitative aspects. The population was comprised of 73 Teacher Education Institutes in the public sector of Punjab. Among which, the 40 (TTIs) are working in universities as autonomous bodies and the 33 Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers Training (GCETs) are working under the directorate of staff development (DSD) and school education department.

Sampling

The 33 GCETS, (45%) of the population was selected as purposive random sampling. The representatives of both genders i.e. male and female were selected randomly. All the principals (100%), among 402 teachers-educators (SS/SSS) only 330 (82%) and among 506 prospective -teachers only 200 (39.5%) were selected randomly. The reasons for the purposive samplings were to include the people of central interest with particular characteristics, i.e., the TE in the public sector of Punjab. As viewed that, “key informants can be used to find purposive sample”. (Barany 2006). “Both random and purposive sampling can be combined to produce a powerful sampling”. (Albertan, Nair, 2004).

Instruments of the Study

Three types of questionnaires for principals, teacher educators and prospective teachers were utilized. Focusing the qualitative aspects the other instruments were: i) Focused group discussions with teachers- educators and prospective- teachers. ii) Semi- structured interviews with Principals. iii) Classrooms observations. iv) Check lists. The pilot testing was done and the 3 types of questionnaires were constructed; each item was revised accordingly. Third draft was finalized with the help of experts in the field of education

Data Collection and Analysis

The frequencies and percentages were calculated for each statement. Then triangulation of data was done with three variables. The document's critical analysis was done along cost benefit analysis ratio (CBR) in budget allocation by the questions; i) Is the analyzed document updated for the demands of globalization advancements? ii) Is there any identified implementing authority existing or not? iii) What are the practical aspects of the documents regarding local and global considerations?

Data Triangulation Interpretations

Table.1: The ranks A-E with the scale value 5-1

Various options in the questionnaires	Scale Number	Assigned Ranks
Almost totally, Expert, Strongly Agreed, Excellent	5	A
Quite almost , Very Good ,Agreed ,very Good	4	B
Moderately. Competent ,Not Know, Good	3	C
Slightly, Modest ,Disagreed, Fair	2	D
Not at all, Needs improvement, St. Disagreed, Poor	1	E

The all respondents were at rank A and B for adapting global advancements. Ranks D-E are obtained for all the respondents in English communication, use of IT, computer skills,(SBT), global citizenship

skills,critical,analytical and creative thinking etc. A major finding was a serious change is required to bridging the traced gaps for quality education.

Table.2: Content analysis matrix

Respondents In GCETS	How Important High - Medium - Low	What They Demand as a global trend	How it should be done
Principals	High	High respect &status, Good governance, more funds and autonomy, own fund generating, skills, Activities and projects. Leadership growth and development mechanism required for globalization.	The ownership, respect, skills and strategies achieved by revising the setup as autonomous bodies. Diagnostic foreign tailored trainings with the continuous feedback &follow up.
Teachers Educators S.S/S.S.S	High	Need based tailored trainings are required for the the intellectual-growth, command on collaborative pedagogical skills. HEC Revised curriculum & recognized TE programs, High social-status along incentives.Diagnosed training in science, social studies and mathematics on a cyclic basis.The outlines designed on the TrainingNeed sssments (TNA) on misconceptions taught through latest interactive pedagogy.	Notification of High status, pay equal to ministers, Special field researches by prospective teachers supervised by teacher educators as in (SBT) and (SILT) to know the ground realities in school education. School improvement plans..Strictly follow the NPST for expertise in the subject, quality education and teacher licensing. A mechanism for global advancement adaptation is must at local level.
Prospective Teachers	High	Trained teachers-educators, up-dated, approved interactive curriculum by HEC, well equipped science, computer labs with internet, good infrastructure.	Conducive and secure learning environment with all required facilities and infrastructure, Adding new subjects and Multigrade teaching in the curriculum.

The content analysis conceived that the main aim of TE is to promote the innovative mind set, intellectual growth and moral dispositions in the future-teachers through innovative pedagogy. There is a need for adaptive-trainings to nurture the intellectual growth and wisdom through reflections, discussions and active engagement in the critique of knowledge and practices at class room level.

Findings

The findings from three types of variables was summarised as:

The almost all the Principals (97%) said, the principals are the vital policy implementers so they need autonomy, latest trainings; sufficient

budget, more staff in IT and sciences. The better infrastructures along basic resources are urgently needed. The institutions should be autonomous to deal with complex role and responsibilities in the combined GCETS &DTSC.

The majority (89%) of teachers- educators said,they should be involved in developing and revamping the curriculum. The diagnostic training should focus the policy actions, NPST, accreditation.The best venue and weather make the trainings more effective. The follow up should be a major component of said trainings.All the prospective teachers (100%) pointed out the need for open-minded administrators along expert teacher–educator’s team. The activities like Practicum and SBT should be well managed. Advanced management services with latest equipments and infrastructure should be provided immediately.

Considering the findings and analysis a research based factual framework was conceived and suggested a dynamic transformation process with the rationale given in the following focal points.

i. A Genius Amalgamation of DSD,GCETS and DTSC

The research proceeded by collecting the need assessment data, analyzing the policy demands and budget allocation along cost per student and teacher student ratio.Considering all the ground realities along the sake of quality education the amalgamation is genius and indispensable.

ii. Growth within the Available Resources and Cost effectiveness

The logical justification is that, the highest escalation and production within the available collective- resources. That can be effectively utilized to serve for the quality SE. The proposed academies will provide maximum outputs with multidimensional services.

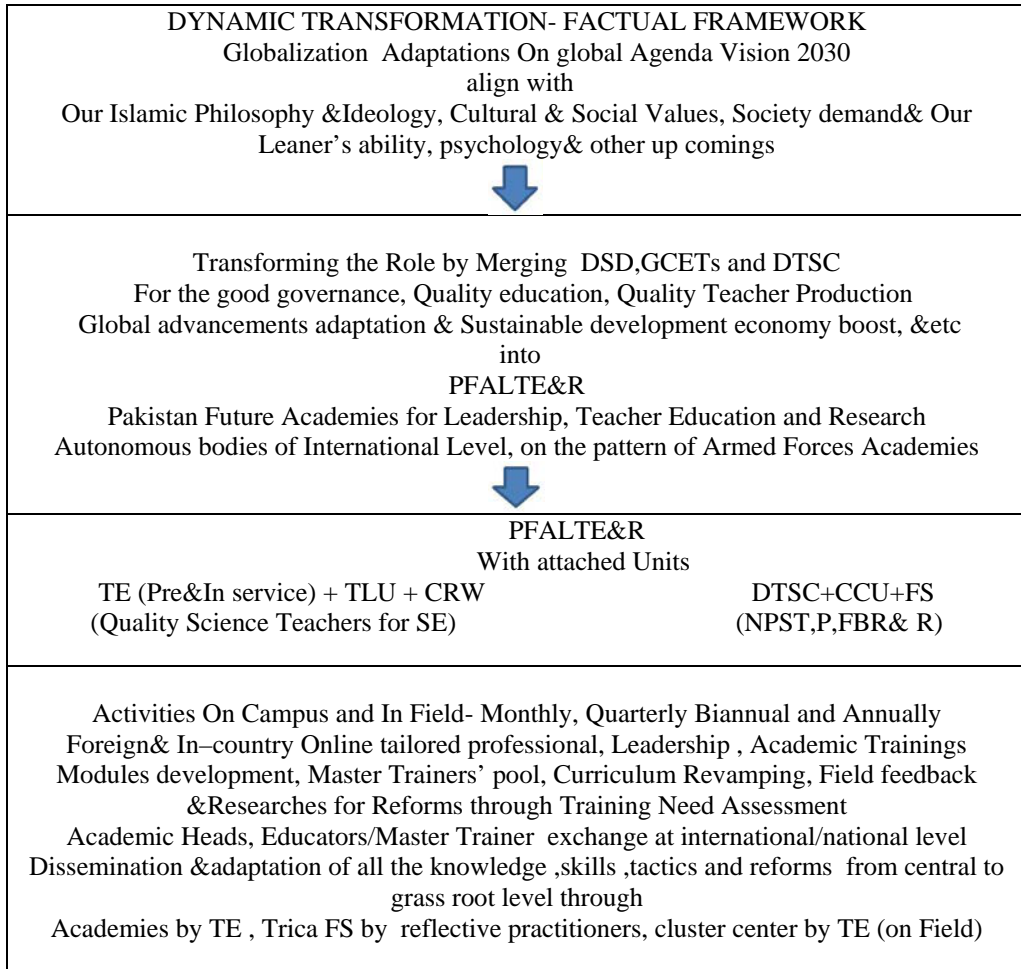
iii. Saving of Limited and Scarce Resources

Considering the calculated cost benefit ratio for the Islamabad and Rawalpindi GCETS campuses that was 300000-700000 per student respectively, for the year 2013-2014.And the total budget allocation for the DSD, DTSC and all GCETS, was 4.5 billion that year. 99 million were allocated to all the GCETS the remaining is utilized by the DSD and DTSC. The merged academies can serve better and save more than 2 billion rupees annually. As the quality assurance reports and third party evaluation is not in the favour of DSD and DTSC.

Conclusions

There is dire need to transform the existing TE system in public sector of Punjab instead of closing and banning the new TE program. To cope with the global market for maximum economic growth a versatile leadership and innovation mind set in school education is the demand of the

day. The researcher suggested a research based conceived dynamic transformation framework given on page no13:



Note: The Regional level total 8 Academies 4 for boys & 4 girls at Islamabad, Lahore, Multan and Bahawalpur. The 21 GCETs converted into Academies’ Sub- Campuses as Training & Model Higher Secondary Schools serve as Feeder center to preparing (8th -12th class) quality-stuff for the regional Academies to prepare Future Science teachers for SED.

ACRONYMES

- CC Cluster centers
- CPD Continuous professional development
- CRW Curriculum Development wing
- DTSC District Training and support center
- FS Family Schools
- FBR& R FeedBack & Reforms
- NPST National Professional Standers for Teachers

P Practicum (Teaching Practice/Putting theory into Practice)
PFALTE&R Pakistan Future Academies for Leadership, Teacher Education and Research
TLU Teacher Licensing Unit

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