

A review of Pakistan school system

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Abstract

It is mandated in the Constitution of Pakistan to enhance adult literacy and quality education at primary level through provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years. The year 2015 was the deadline for the participants of Dakar declaration [Education for All (EFA) commitment] including Pakistan but they fail to do so. Education related statistics coupled with Pakistan's progress regarding education targets set in Vision 2030 and Pakistan's lagging behind in achieving EFA targets and its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education call for an analysis of the education system of Pakistan and to look into the issues and problems it is facing so that workable solutions could be recommended. This study finds that Pakistan school system in seems as lowest in the globe. Many reasons involve in this state of affairs i.e., the quality of learning and competency level of both students and teachers in Pakistan is among the poorest in the region. One of the reasons is educational qualification is not enough to become a primary school teacher. Another is inadequate training certification program for teachers. Because teacher is key part of learning progression in education sector which faces many problems owing to which they cannot play their roles efficiently in the education process. Same the problems faced by female primary school teachers in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) "Pakistan Administered Kashmir". Methodology of the study followed the procedure of descriptive research, in which existing status of female teachers in AJK was thoroughly analyzed. The problems of female school teachers were identified using the tools such as a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Conclusion of this study presents that most of teachers affected due to their appointments, transfers, place of posting and individual promotions, rapid rate of bribery, political affiliations and interference relatively high than the merit. In many cases female teachers appointed in far flung areas where transportation is very pitiable. In addition that female teachers are overburdened with extra classes due to lack of teaching staff in primary schools, especially on one side female teachers face huge shortage of teaching and learning resources in schools and on the other hand there are smaller amount proficient development opportunities for all teachers especially for female teachers. These few mentioned factors have very much affected the procedure of schooling and education quality. The study recommends this problem could be resolved by considering some basic measures e.g. system of accountability, schooling environment and education assets, providing ongoing talented advancement opportunities and incentives, making transparent appointments system and on merit promotions procedure, provide enough teaching and non-teaching staff to female primary schools and control political interference and involvement.

Keywords: Quality education, Primary level, Female teacher's problems, possible solutions

1. Introduction

Societies around the globe try to improve the social, economic, political and cultural lives of the nations through education. Education plays an imperative role in raising well-groomed human capital in the society through skill development and capacity building. Skilled human resource produces effectiveness and efficiency in performance thus contributing towards self-sustained

Society. Well-equipped and easily accessible education system for all guarantees the progression of a country. Equality and equity in the provision of educational facilities reasonably result in building intellectual capital among the masses if provided without socio-economic divide. Many societies face lack of awareness of the concept of multiple femininities and masculinities in the discourse on education, Pakistan has no exception. Contrary to this view, acquisition of knowledge and Consciousness are conducive for girls in order to empower them in the community. Education enhances the cognitive ability by raising the sense of self-esteem among girls for achieving a desirable social setup in the country. Education influences living standard as it turns the population of a country into useful human capital and works as an agent of positive change (Hoodbhoy, 1998). However, the teachers are the nation builders and hold a pivotal role in the process of education. In this sense the quality and standards of education are strongly associated with the quality and effectiveness of its teachers. Unluckily in Pakistan very little attention has been paid to the education sector in general and the recruitment of quality teachers in particular. Resultantly, Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rate and quality educations (Farooq, 1990). This study attempts to examine the female problems faced by school teachers such as, academic, recruitment and promotion procedure, administrative and power structure, financial, training, curriculum, parental relations and examination in AJK State of Pakistan.

2. Problem Statement

“Pakistan is one of eight countries worldwide that spend less than 2% of GDP on education. Public spending on education, a vital input for improvement in access and quality, is mere 1.5% of GDP. Female literacy is 45% against male literacy rate of 69%. On average 32%, 40.5% and 67.7% of rural girls aged 5-10, 10-14 and 15-19 respectively are out of school. Less than half of students are rarely complete primary school. The quality of education in the government institutions has deteriorated considerably. Standards of private sector schools are only better than other, but these are too expensive to reach to the normal population. Poorer parents preferred religious institutions which offer free food and boarding to their students. Today, around 25 million children in Pakistan not reach to their constitutional right to have an education up to the age of 16. Average literacy rate is only 57% in the country. Inadequate access to the schools, low attendance and poorly trained teachers as well as weak supervision creates this pity situation. Pakistan is a disaster affected country and it has been continuously hit by major disasters in the past 10 years. As a result of an earthquake on October 8, 2005, the estimate of school-age children and youth who perished in both AJK and KPK was over 17, 000. Most of the victims were between 4 and 16 years old children’s, i.e. primary and secondary school students. Thousands of children have been wounded, made orphans or both—and almost all were traumatized.

The earthquake damaged lives of many teachers as well. More than 10, 000 schools were destroyed or damaged beyond repair in the affected region. More than 955, 000 children of school age were affected by the earthquake. Recent floods in 2010 and 2011 also caused serious damages to the education infrastructure of Pakistan. The developing country like Pakistan has always demanded an emphasis on education sector from state and non-state actors” (Sabil, 2016). This department faces much kind of problems. One of the critical factors which have affected the system is teacher. Although, research shows that teachers are the key to success of any education system. However, studies show that in Pakistan the problems of school teachers have multiplied with the passage of time which has exacerbated the largely system of education (Government of Pakistan, 1998). There is feeling of estrangement among the teaching community. Teaching profession is considering the mainly poorly paid, less profitable and unappealing profession (British Council, 1988). Being a terminal stage, it is the most crucial level of education of a child. Problems faced by teachers at this level dangerously affect the overall process of schooling and learning. As very small research in this area has been done, therefore, this ongoing study was launched to spot out the major problems faced by female government primary school teachers in AJK State, Pakistan and to suggest possible solutions to these problems. In the underlines we shall discuss the problems faced by female government primary school teachers.

3. Analysis of Problem Statement

The successful education systems concluded that the quality of a school system and teaching force should be perfect. Low teacher effort especially in female teachers is often considered one of the most serious problems in AJK schooling, perhaps even bigger than weak teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills to successfully teach the curriculum but may be some hidden problems we need to discuss in this segment. Although teacher time-on-task is often raised as a serious concern, existing evidence regarding the impact of teaching time on learner performance is not compelling in either direction. The first and most reason is need to highlight is gender disparity in our society specially for the female sector even our society not give them right space to perform their duties well as they deserve for. On the other hand female teaching line is under the main pressure in shape of housing wife responsibilities and the other side’s as teacher we expect equally perform the duties at both sides so they are overburdened. On the financial support side this sector is comparatively under paid and poor in performance especially in female. So the teaching community is less motivated towards their duties. Some of cases not attending the schools and doing their own businesses and getting salaries sometimes they use their political relations and pressurize the departments for their own benefits. In some countries teaching is taken as the most honorable and lucrative profession. In developed nations teachers are adored and occupy a reverential social position in society. However, In Pakistan, teaching profession does not enjoy a great social status in the society. Teaching is considered the most underpaid and less attractive profession as compared to other professions like medical or engineering and so on. The main problem of housing lodging for the female sector in Pakistan especially in primary sector is discussable. Female teachers posted on far flung areas and not offer lodging and protection and teachers not have enough resources to cater these basic needs. Political interference, transfers and bribery is also the main problem of education system in Pakistan and it’s suffer female sector more than male. Most of the common problems of physical infrastructure is also exists in many schools although the problem of teaching resources and trainings too weak to strengthen the quality education. Curriculum is very old and no one attempts to modify the new changes according to the new era. The primary level school system is practicing old methods of teaching and there is no training and exposure in this sector to modernize this sector and also there is no monitoring and evaluation system during teaching and examination. Teaching time (based on self-reported data) is a key factor behind under-performance (Taylor, 2011: 27; Gustafsson and Patel, 2008: 25). On the other hand Shepherd (2011: 26) finds that extra classes offered by teachers outside the normal school day

are associated with better learner results. A closely related matter is that of teacher absenteeism. A study by Reddy et al (2010: ix) found that around 11% of teaching time was lost due to teacher absenteeism, though this was not exceptionally poor by developing country standards. Instances of one-day leave were substantially more common on Mondays and Fridays than on other days of the week, indicating an abuse of the leave system to extend weekends. A number of recent studies have drawn attention to weak teacher content knowledge (Spaull, 2011; Stols et al 2007; Taylor and Moyana, 2005; Carnoy et al, 2008). Although the evidence is accumulating, it is less clear what can be done about teacher content knowledge. The DBE's existing strategy of short in-service training courses does not seem to be particularly effective. Taylor (2008: 25) concludes that "short courses of the order of 3-5 days have little impact. It is becoming apparent that intensive in-service training, in the order of weeks per year, is required to equip teachers with the knowledge they need to teach effectively." Such extensive in-service training may however not be feasible. In response to this, an alternative strategy is proposed in the forthcoming section – one that seeks to give teachers an incentive to take responsibility for their own content knowledge. Is the pay of teachers too low to justify higher levels of effort? Considering that teacher pay relative to per capita GDP in AJK is exceptionally high by international standards, that teachers received a pay increase of roughly 15% in real terms between 2014 and 2016 and that productivity and effort amongst many teachers is low, it is hard to argue that on average teacher pay should be higher. Rather than focusing on the level of average pay, the key concern should be on how to adjust the salary structure in order to, firstly, incentives good teaching and secondly, improve salary increments linked to years of experience in a way that reduces the attrition of good teachers and attracts high-achieving candidates into the teaching profession. Arguably the biggest downfall of teacher pay in AJK is the fact that the system hardly differentiates between better- and worse -performing teachers. Whereas AJK had an exceptionally flat age-wage gradient in 2014, major changes to the salary system briefly introduced in 2015 would have considerably improved this gradient and would have ensured that those teachers evaluated as being better performing by their supervisors would benefit most (Gustafsson and Patel, 2008: 21). However, many of the 2015 changes were reversed in 2016 due to union pressure, meaning that the problem of insufficient rewards linked to years of experience remains unresolved (and the magnitude of the problem is not clear as the impact of current policies on the wage-age gradient over time have not been analyzed). Several studies (Gustafsson and Patel, 2008; Armstrong, 2009; Van der Berg and Burger, 2010) suggest that unless experience-related increments for teachers and in particular better performing teachers are improved, more capable teachers will be strongly inclined to leave teaching in their mid -career. Discussions with education analysts suggest that despite the 2016 reversal of pay differentiation, unions are not completely opposed to such measures to improve educational performance. The challenge seems to lie in putting forward an incentives policy that is sufficiently informed by what has worked elsewhere and is sensitive to specifically AJK equity concerns. Unfortunately, available analyses of the teacher salary system and teacher pay trends are not sufficiently detailed for policymakers to be sufficiently informed about this critical area (the pay of public school teachers constitutes around 3% of GDP). Specifically, comprehensive analyses of teacher pay using payroll data are rarely produced. This poses serious risks for the policymaking process and the vital central bargaining process between government and teacher unions. Periodic reports of key trends that respond to the needs of planners and salary negotiators are needed.

There are various constitutional and judicial provisions in favor of women in Pakistan. The constitution of Pakistan has several provisions to safeguard the status of women. Though there are so many special provisions the position of women even in a cent percent literate society is not so promising. Even in service sector, women are facing variety of problems. The changes in family structure from joint family system to nuclear family system fired up problems of women to a great extent. The problems of employed women will vary with the nature of job, sector in which she is working and family setup. Fairly large proportion of teaching community is comprised of female teachers, which is one of the major service sectors chosen by women in the state. Hence a study of this type is attempted to realize the problems of female school teachers at primary level.

4. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are given as follows:

- To study the female teacher problems at primary level in AJK State
- To provide necessary suggestions to overcome these problems

5. Material and Methods

This study use the procedure is descriptive research, in which existing status of female teachers at primary level in AJK was thoroughly analyzed. The problems of female school teachers were identified using the tools such as a questionnaire and an interview schedule. The investigator also carries out discussion with experts to gather relevant information about the status of women in Pakistan and AJK at any level.

5.1 Tools and Sample

The questionnaire and an interview schedule were used as tools for this study. A questionnaire was developed by

the investigator on various aspects related to the personal, professional and social problems of female teachers working at Primary level. An interview schedule was also prepared to gather relevant information which should supplement the data obtained through the questionnaire. The sample of the study comprised of 200 school teachers equally teaching at Government primary level in Poonch and Bagh districts of the AJK state. Since the population size is very large the study was limited to the represent sample. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Due representation was given to locale, type of institution, teaching experience and nature of institution. Interview with forty teachers belong to primary levels was conducted to gather relevant information to increase the data obtained through the questionnaire.

6. Result and Conclusion

The main findings of the study are as follows:

- Majority of female teachers working in different levels are facing Personal, Professional and social problems and the problems faced by them are more or less similar in nature regardless of the level in which they are teaching in different areas of the State.
- Among the social problems cultural related problems are more common. Majority of the respondents have rigid nature of cultural and not allowed females to go for jobs and many have their gender disparity problems and not treated equally in the teaching centers as male teachers.
- On the other hand some of the respondents not get cooperation from their family members in house hold matters. So that they must busy to have their personal households matters and the professional problems by their own. Majority expects support from their spouse in house hold works and in supervising studies of children, but the support available is only marginal.
- As per departmental reputation is noted that the respondents are less motivated towards this profession because of less facilities and fewer salaries as compared to other professions in the state.
- Political influence and frequent transfers from one place to other is also the problems for female teachers especially at primary level. So this problem cause uncomfortable environment for female teachers to perform their duties and sometimes result as termination.
- Geographical conditions also take part to cause problems for female teachers when they posted far-flung areas and they not have accommodation facilities for females staff so they faces many kind of transportation and protection problems as well.
- Due to political intervention in the procedure of appointments, under qualified female teachers are appointed who cannot effectively manage the process of schooling and learning in schools even they are not well qualified for this post.
- Pupil-teacher ratio, huge syllabus, unnecessary emphasis on clerical works, documentation and evaluation, Evaluation of fairly large number of students, loss of working days, the tension caused by the existing system of education, lack of enough reference materials, inadequate support from colleagues and head of the institution, inadequate in-service training, etc are the major professional problems of majority of teachers.
- Shortage of resources in girls primary schools render the female teachers helpless while they need different aids for schooling and learning. There are no training facilities available to professionally equip the female teachers to improve their teaching skills.
- The study also concluded that female teachers are overburdened with extra classes due to shortage of female staff in the girls' schools.
- The study also investigated that master servant environment and political grouping in this level of schooling also the main problem to hinder the teaching and learning environment. This type of situation also affected the quality of education.

7. Recommendations

- Keeping in view of this study we find the following recommendations to tackle down the problems of female teachers at primary level particular in AJK and general in Pakistan:
- The female teachers regardless of the level of teaching, facing personnel, social and Professional problems, which surely influence their physical as well as mental health issues and suffering from physical and mental stress may not be able to engage in creative activities. Since, woman is very important component of the family as well as for society, it is necessary to ease their problems in a time bound manner.
- System of self-reliance and independence should be improved in the school systems, the resources and trainings for female teachers must be enhanced to increase performance in schools.
- Teaching is the profession of full responsibility and accountability to build the new generation. So, teachers should be academically highly qualified and trained to improve the quality of education. Training and refresher system of school should be better to boost the recital.

- Healthy physical activities should be promoted for female sector to enhance the healthy education environment since a working person must have to strive for the family as well as for the institution, adequate support is essential from the family and social groups.
- Education department rules and policies need to be polished and implemented effectively to eradicate political interference which disturbs the school system and female teachers especially.
- Female teachers should be properly trained to proper planning and time management also, which will help them to find time for breakfast, relaxation, exercises as well as for official works.
- Pupil–teacher ratio should be maintained to reduce the pressure on teachers and to increase the working efficiency.
- Examination system needs to be improved and made effective as per international standards. So that the status of this department is elevate to stimulus for the layman to join this department.
- To increase the satisfaction and performance of the teaching sector selection of qualified people with teaching experience should be ensured. Hence, it is suggested that at some point in the process of selection or appointments of female teachers merit should be strictly keep in mind.
- Keeping in views of respondents Curriculum needs to be revisited, evaluated and revised to overcome the pressure on the female teacher community and teachers should be properly trained accordingly.
- It is suggested that Female Teachers’ involvement in the curriculum development should be boost up. This will increase the excellence of education in schools. For this reason, it is suggested that female teachers should be directly involved in the process of curriculum development.
- Teachers are needed to be encouraged through financial and other social benefits. The financial support to primary schools needs to be increased. Resources of teaching and learning need to be increased at the primary level to relax the state of mind.
- Medium of instruction in the schools is needed to be improved. Teachers could be trained in the languages especially in English and Urdu. It will help the female staff to bridge the communication gaps for the smooth development in education sector.
- Unnecessary documentation is another important area which also overburden the teaching community, because it taken away the time for preparation and instruction. Qualified persons should be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning rather that file works and recordkeeping alternative of this purpose is computer based documentations should be promoted to save the time and energy .
- In order to improve the more quality in education and to divide the load on teachers especially at primary level, number of teachers per schools needs to be increased and to train effectively on regular basis.
- It is observed that the Law of Teaching Service should be established that teachers must be evaluated based on professional teaching standards rather than the political of personal relations, in order to achieve required quality in education. Positive motivations and rewards should be introduced for the primary level teaching community. On the other hand to enhance the capacity of the system to work effectively tough system of accountability need to be introduced.

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