

## **A Qualitative Study on the Newly Initiated Foreign-Funded Teachers' Preparation Programs in Northern Pakistan**

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The study, which examines how a foreign-funded teachers' preparation program was implemented, primarily focuses on policy-related matters and curriculum implementation. Despite some of the challenges faced by the instructors and prospective teachers, the two stakeholders acknowledged that the new program is the correct approach for addressing the issues of quality education in Pakistan. The instructors and students agreed that the new Advance Degree in Education (ADE) program, unlike the traditional teachers' preparation programs that have questionable productivity, helped them to broaden their understanding about such concepts as student-centered learning, practice-oriented teaching, multiple methods of teaching, and the integration of technology in the teaching and learning processes. However, the study maintains that certain issues, such as questionable recruitment policies, limited capacities of teacher educators, and lack of proper orientation about the ADE program, seem to compromise the productivity of this important intervention.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, international educational assistance, teachers preparation program, public educational system

The quality of teachers' preparation, which refers to the duration, process, and content of training, is an essential policy matter (Darling-Hammond, 2017; National Research Council, 2010) because teachers and the teaching profession play a crucial role in shaping the well-being of a nation. Therefore, a question arises: To what extent is the teaching force, or the teachers' preparation programs in Pakistan, cognizant of the learning outcomes of educational processes or intent upon achieving the goals of nation building? Evidence from South Asian countries, including India and Pakistan, suggests that teachers lack a thorough understanding of their subjects, do not have up-to-date knowledge, and fail to adopt practices that promote dynamic approaches of teaching (Dundar, Béteille, Riboud, & Deolalikar, 2014). Researchers have provided two major reasons for this negative state of affairs: first, both pre-service and in-service training sessions do not build the skills and knowledge a teacher needs to be effective; second, teachers are not motivated to actively contribute to their students' learning (Khan, 2010; Mohammad, 2010; Mohammad, 2006). To address the anomalies related to teachers' preparation, Pakistan has turned to donors. The interventions initiated by these agencies have addressed various components of teachers' training, ranging from the improvement of infrastructure, to the provision of books, to the development of new curricula.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Although international donors have a long history of engagement with Pakistan for the development of its teaching force, very limited research focusing on productivity, outcomes, and implementation processes of these interventions has emerged from Pakistan. Therefore, the present study examines how a foreign-funded teachers' preparation program was implemented according to its goals and objectives. While examining this intervention, the study exclusively focused on two matters: 1) policies that include the availability of employment opportunities for the new graduates, incentives (new Basic Pay Scales compatible with the program), and recognition of the new program, and 2) curriculum implementation that includes teaching practices and utilization of instructional resources.

### **Background and Context of the Study:**

Researchers have identified numerous gaps in the pre- and in-service programs offered through various government and private institutions of Pakistan. Additionally, the National Education Policy 2009 was explicit in terms of bringing improvement in the teacher education program of Pakistan and the first measure was identified as the phasing out of traditional teachers' preparation programs including PTC, CT and B.Ed. Therefore, in order to supplement the efforts of government of Pakistan, the USAID launched a new preservice teacher education program called Pre-STEP. "In order to bring Pakistan's elementary teaching degree programs at par with international standards, Pre-STEP has played a key role in the successful introduction of the new four-year B.Ed. and a two-year Associate Degree in Education in colleges and universities across the country. The new degrees are providing a great opportunity to the present set of teachers to improve their qualifications and revolutionize the way children learn in classrooms." (Khan, 2012). The primary aim of this program is to improve the quality of education by training teachers capable of applying effective approaches to interactive classroom learning. Under this program, the prospective teachers are provided with opportunities to upgrade their teaching qualifications by obtaining a two-year Associate Degree in Education [ADE]. The ADE program replaces the one-year Certificate of Teaching (CT) and Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC); the CT and PTC degrees were required to teach at government schools.

### **Method**

Research indicates that only a few qualitative studies have explored the various dimensions of the teaching profession within Pakistan, "Where there is research, it is mostly quantitative and is not used effectively for evidence based policy making...research has rarely built in feedback loops to inform practice" (USAID, 2006, p. 25). Therefore, the study used qualitative approaches to generate data through the application of such tools as interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document review. Not only the qualitative methods, allow the researchers to provide thick description of the subject, but also it provide the opportunity to conduct the research in a natural setting (Mertens, 2005; Stake, 1995).

The study was conducted in two Government Colleges of Education (GCE) - one exclusively for males and one exclusively for females- in Northern Pakistan. There were two reasons for selecting the two GCEs for this study: 1) The two GCEs were regional pioneers that started the ADE program in 2010; previously, these colleges offered traditional CT and PTC programs to new and practicing teachers, and 2) the two colleges were conveniently accessible for the researcher.

Through a purposive sampling strategy 10 instructors (five males and five females from two colleges) who taught ADE courses were identified as a sample of the study. In purposive sampling strategy, only those individuals are selected who can provide the required information (Maxwell, 1996). Additionally, two principals and students [of first and final semester], who were enrolled in the ADE program, were also the sample of the study. Interviews conducted with the principals and instructors were recorded and transcribed; the length each interview was 50-60 minutes. Additionally, class observations and document review were also used to collect data. Four Focus Group (FG) discussions were conducted in which students of the first and fourth semesters were invited to present their perspective about the new program.

Each FG, which included 15-20 students, lasted 90 minutes. The data for this study were accumulated in a two-month period.

Since qualitative methods provide the opportunities to analyze the data throughout the collection period (Stainback & Stainback, 1988), the researchers were involved in analyzing the data from the inception of data collection. Various themes and categories relevant to the research objectives were created for the said purpose. Bodgan and Biklen (1988) stated that data analysis is the “process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (p.157). Therefore, the researchers went through a detailed analysis of the data collected from different sources and narrowed down only those themes whose occurrences were larger in volume.

The following limitations were encountered during the data collection processes: 1) limited access to policy related documents; 2) reluctance of instructors to become explicit about the role of their leadership and implementing agency [local directorate of education]; and 3) skepticism among the students [of Focus Group] that sharing too much information could make their instructors angry.

### **Literature Review- Teachers' Preparation Programs in Pakistan**

**Entry Requirements:** An individual can be eligible for a teaching position in a government school if he/she earns any one of the following degrees: 1) Certificate of Teaching (CT); 2) Primary Teaching Certificates (PTC); and 3) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). “The qualifications of teachers are generally matriculate [ten years of high schooling] or HSSC [twelve years of education] + PTC/CT. In some of the areas even the condition of matriculate has to be relaxed” (Iqbal & Sheikh, 2003). According to Khan (2004), the total duration of these programs is one year; seventy-nine percent of the teaching force in Pakistan has a PTC degree, whereas the remaining twenty-one percent has either a CT or B.Ed. degree. With the CT, PTC, and B.Ed. degrees, teachers can teach at primary, middle, and secondary school levels, respectively. A UNESCO report (2003) notes that individuals in Pakistan need some kind of qualification to enter into the teaching profession, but compared to other countries, “their entry qualifications and the duration of training are lower” (p.11).

### **Gaps in the Pre-service Teachers' Preparation programs**

A vast majority of teachers start their careers without proper training, which negatively affects their pedagogical practices. Therefore, the standard of education in government schools of Pakistan suffers due to incompetent teachers, poor teaching practices, and inadequate teachers' preparation programs (USAID, 2006). Although Pakistan has a numbers of state-owned and private teacher training institutes, these institutes contribute minimally towards the capacity development of teachers. Researchers have identified numerous gaps in the pre-service programs offered through these institutions. For instance, Memon (2007) pointed out that the standards of traditional teachers' preparation programs are questionable; these programs lack certain qualities that could contribute to the education of young learners. He further added that traditional teachers' preparation programs are facing a number of challenges, such as conventional lecture methods, inadequate training of teacher educators, short training periods, and a lack of evaluations of teacher education programs.

### **Gaps in the In-service programs**

A UNESCO report (2006) stated that Pakistani in-service programs offered to teachers are of poor quality and fail to make the teachers masters in their respective fields. They added that teachers do not bring a serious attitude towards these in-service programs; instead of embracing these programs as learning opportunities, the participants consider them as a chance to earn some income through per diems and travel allowances. Not only are the limited finances a hurdle in the way of offering in-service opportunities for teachers in Pakistan (Elliot & Rizvi, 2005), but also teachers are not provided with opportunities according to their subjects and existing skills; instead, the relationship between the teachers and their administrators

determines the suitability of an individual for a particular capacity-building opportunity (Khan, 2010). Elliot and Rizvi (2007) asserted that education and training, both considered as important elements of human development, are not given due importance in the educational landscape of Pakistan.

### **Teaching Culture of Public Schools**

Khan (2010) has stated that the teaching force in Pakistan is unfamiliar with such concepts as learning through experience and problem solving; they are not taught these strategies. Although reflection is considered one of the most important components of the teaching process, the “teachers in Pakistan and most of the developing world are generally unaware of what the term ‘reflective practice’ means” (Rarieya, 2005, p.285). One of the implications of this situation is that educators fail to develop cognitive habits in their students, and students fail to integrate what they learn in school in their practical lives (Khan, 2010). Mohammad and Jones (2008) described the teaching culture of Pakistani schools in these words: “The teachers—isolated from practical and moral support in their schools—were rigidly constrained by the authority of their schools, taught for the right answers and explained facts and rules rather than developing their students’ intellects and thinking abilities” (p.535). The following quotation is taken from a report developed in 1961-62 about the status of education in Pakistan: “Prevailing teaching methods can only be described as the mechanical communication of theoretical book learning to reluctant children. Too much stress is laid on memorization and far too little on initiative, independence of thought, habits of industry, imaginative use of knowledge and self-reliance” (Curle, 1966). Although more than 60 years have passed since the writing of that report, the practices referred to still exist, especially in the government schools.

### **Teachers’ Preparation- Global Practices**

At the global level, teacher’s preparation programs have remained a major focus of educational reforms and it is expected that the new teachers will become well versed with the concepts of learner centered approaches and information technology (Kafwa, Gaudiene, & Kisaka, 2015). A study of teachers’ preparation program of selected countries shows that both the curricula and duration of their programs vary from country to country. In South Korea, the total length of teacher’s preparation program is four years where the prospective teachers are offered variety of courses in the disciplines of social sciences, natural sciences, physical education, and humanities (NCEE, 2017). Additionally, the duration of practicum component is nine weeks which is comprised of four major activities including administrative work, teaching practice, participation practice, and observation practice. In China, where teachers’ preparation programs are controlled by the central government, universities are responsible for awarding teaching certificates/diploma through four models: 1. At the undergraduate level – 04 years model; 3.5 years model; 04 years model; 2 At post graduate level 06 years model. The curriculum of the aforementioned models is comprised of general education, subject knowledge, pedagogy and practicum (Yu,n.d).

## **Results**

### **Policy Matters**

All the stakeholders, including students, instructors, and principals, had a very good understanding of the purpose and rationale of introducing a new ADE program. One of the instructors stated the following: “The ADE program is launched to redefine the process of teacher education programs in Pakistan... and to take the teaching and learning processes to the international level.” The stakeholders acknowledged that the existing gaps regarding the quality of education, particularly in the public educational system, are the result of an inadequate teachers’ preparation program in Pakistan. They also agreed that the new program is a sincere effort from an international organization that strives to introduce a teacher preparation program of an international standard, through the integration of information technology, modern and innovative teaching approaches, and updated curricula.

One of the strengths of the new ADE program is that the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, and the Provincial Directorates of Education have officially validated the ADE program. In other words, ADE will be the minimum requirement to get into the teaching profession. As a

result of these developments, 75 government colleges of education across the country stopped offering one-year CT and PTC programs; instead, they only offer a two-year ADE program. However, more than 150 public and private institutions across the country still offer admission in a traditional one-year CT and PTC program. Although enthusiastic about the new ADE program, the instructors, students, and principals are very vocal or outspoken about the future of the new ADE program due to the aforementioned anomaly.

These stakeholders had different interpretations and arguments as they shared their concerns and reservations. One of the principals stated that they could not benefit from the new program until and unless they introduced structural changes in the educational system. In addition to advocating structural changes, students, instructors, and principals identified a number of other issues related to the ADE program. They agreed that some of these gaps need to be addressed on an urgent basis so that the newly initiated teachers' preparation programs can succeed. When asked what aspect of the new program is a source of concern for them, they identified multiple factors, with the foremost being the continuation of traditional PTC and CT programs through public and private sector institutions across the country. They argued that on one hand, the government has made it clear that a two-year ADE will be the minimum requirement for entering the teaching position once the government colleges of Northern Pakistan phase out the PTC and CT programs; on the other hand, a large number of public and private institutions still offer one-year PTC and CT programs in other cities. One of the implications of this situation, as pointed out by the students, instructors, and principals, is that students either privately take the PTC and CT examination, or go to other cities to pursue the PTC and CT programs as regular students. One of the instructors reflected on this situation:

Why would students attend a two-year semester-based ADE program where they have to pass a number of subjects; where they have to visit schools weekly [for practicum]; where they have to develop portfolios; where they have assignments; where they have to attend college regularly? They will prefer a program that is brief, does not require hard work, does not require regular attendance. And the most important thing is that they would secure jobs early as compared to their counterparts who are attending the two-year ADE program.

The instructors, students, and college principals agreed that as long as other universities offer the traditional PTC and CT programs, prospective teachers would not be attracted to the ADE program. One of the instructors stated the following: "By nature, human beings are easy-loving and prefer shortcuts....Why would they opt for a program that involves hard work and extended course work?" Both the instructors and principals of two colleges claimed that despite being offered scholarships, students remain reluctant to pursue the ADE program, due to unclear policies about certain matters. Students receive Rs 20,000 in scholarship funds per semester, depending upon the fulfillment of certain requirements, as an incentive to pursue the ADE program.

However, students did not agree that only the scholarship motivated them to pursue the ADE program. Instead, they gave additional reasons for pursuing the ADE program, such as parental encouragement, the potential for a suitable profession, the innovative aspects of the program, and the desire to implement change. Students agreed that the scholarship helped them with their program related expenses, but they had different arguments regarding the future of the ADE program. They mentioned that some of their instructors, though small in number, presented a very bleak picture of the ADE program. One of the students stated, "We are being told that the future of this program is uncertain; they wonder why they were admitted to a program that will be wrapped up very soon." According to the students, neither the officials of the education department, nor their instructors/principals, shared with them the policies related to ADE, such as a future scenario of the new program, employment opportunities, etc. Students argued that uncertainties about the program and its future prevented them from motivating others to pursue the ADE program.

Students and instructors showed multiple concerns regarding the future absorption of new ADE graduates, most specifically around pay scales and recruitment policies. For instance, one of the instructors

shared a flyer with me that a local directorate of education had developed for the promotion of the ADE program:

To promote the new ADE program, I was sent to one of the districts of the region where I spent four days sharing with potential teachers the rationale of the new program and its possible benefits ... I distributed flyers that mentioned ADE students will receive preferential treatment at the time of recruitment; they will be offered a better Basic Pay Scale [BPS-16], but none of the above promises were fulfilled. This is a significant concern not only for the instructors but also for the students.

According to the instructors and students, policy makers reiterated on different occasions that the rigorous nature of the program would result in the ADE graduates being offered Basic Pay Scale (BPS) 16. They added that the new recruitment policy offers BPS 14 instead of 16, which is also offered to one-year CT degree holders. A review of the recruitment policies substantiated the instructors' and students' understanding. Yet, the recruitment policies never mentioned that ADE graduates would be given preference; instead, the recruitment policies extended the same priority to ADE graduates as they extended to the CT/PTC graduates. While emphasizing the redefinition of service rules, one of the instructors said the following: "The exiting service rules disappointed me because they did not differentiate between the candidates with CT and ADE degrees... according to the service rules, individuals with a one-year PTC/CT degree and two-year ADE degree got same Basic Pay Scale and financial benefits."

Students demonstrated confidence in the ADE program's ability to enable them to better understand the teaching and learning processes as compared to the CT/PTC programs. As one of the students said, "We are sure that we can surpass the students of PTC/CT due to our exposure to multiple courses and practice-oriented programs." The students asserted that the citizens of Pakistan perceive education as a way to secure employment; therefore, if the government does not properly address the issues related to employment, students will not be motivated to pursue the new program. Students indicated that their senior colleagues with an ADE degree often end up working for the police and prison departments because the government did not provide them with sufficient employment opportunities.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

In order to earn the ADE degree, students need to complete 67 credit hours during the span of two years, which are divided into four semesters. A combination of compulsory, professional, foundational, and content courses are offered to the students (Higher Education Commission, 2012). The program is designed to enable both the teacher-educators and prospective teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the content knowledge, practice-oriented teaching approaches, reflective practices, and integration of information technology in the teaching and learning processes. Additionally, the program aims to empower the prospective teachers with new knowledge/skills and to introduce interactive activities ([www.pakteachers.org](http://www.pakteachers.org)).

There was a consensus among the students, instructors, and principals that the ADE has multidimensional implications, because it not only helps the students become familiar with updated curricula and knowledge base, but it also provides opportunities for the teacher-educators to acquaint themselves with new ways of learning. They agreed that the ADE program's content and curricula are much stronger than those in the traditional one-year PTC/CT and B.Ed. programs. One of the students pointed out that the content and the teaching methodologies of the ADE program surpasses the traditional M.Ed. program of a public sector university best known for distance education in Pakistan. Instructors in the ADE program, whether teaching English or Islamic studies, often adopted strategies of student-centered teaching and interactive learning. Instructors acknowledged that the ADE program led them to alter their traditional practices and made them change their teaching philosophies. One of the instructors commented as follows:

My teaching beliefs have totally changed ...we were only supposed to cover the syllabus and focus on the traditional annual examination system ... but in ADE we are doing many new

thing ... now we have rubrics that help us with assessment...we have a CGPA system...we have a semester system.

Another instructor stated the following: "I have been teaching for the last two decades, but I did not know how to teach; the ADE program has helped me understand the definition of good teaching. I never realized the importance of lesson planning; until the ADE program, I had never even developed a lesson plan." The instructors agreed that the ADE program not only helped them enhance their capacities, but also empowered them in terms of developing the curriculum of their respective courses. One of the instructors stated, "The program has given a new status to the instructors... teachers now have a role in curriculum development, a process that was once the sole responsibility of the National Curriculum Wing and Provincial Textbook Boards."

The new teachers' preparation program offers instructors training programs so they can upgrade their teaching skills. While acknowledging the benefits of training opportunities and curriculum development workshops, one of the male instructors mentioned, "I had limited understanding about the multiple teaching approaches and methodologies. However, the curriculum that I developed for my subjects and the training sessions I attended familiarized me with the multiple methods of teaching, such as group work, student-centered approaches, etc." I noticed the evidence of these approaches while observing some classes. In a child development class, a female instructor organized groups of five students each and then asked each group of students to discuss and answer three questions about Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence.

Students agreed that their instructors tried their best to deliver the curriculum in an effective manner. However, students had reservations about the expertise of their instructors; they believed that their instructors were still affected by their long association with the more traditional PTC/CT/B.Ed. program. In this regard, one of the students stated the following: "A very modern and innovative program has been given to very traditional teachers, and these instructors do not know how to cope with the new program". Both the students and instructors also pointed out that the lack or absence of subject specialists makes it difficult for the instructors to teach the lesson according to the objectives of a particular course. Students further mentioned that some of the courses offered through this program, especially the science and math courses, emphasize methodology over content. Instructors defended the nature of the courses by stating that the students receive enough content knowledge to meet the needs of the elementary school children they will be teaching.

Instead of providing prescribed books and syllabi, instructors are encouraged to consult multiple sources, such as reference books [provided by the donor] and websites, for weekly topics/units. Instructors acknowledged that the ADE program re-connected them with libraries and books. One of the instructors stated the following: "If I do not find a particular book from our library that could help me with some of the units of my subject, I either purchase that book from my own money or borrow it from a local library because I want my students to have uninterrupted learning." However, some of the instructors expressed their dissatisfaction about consulting multiple sources, insisting that teaching from the prescribed books is much easier than consulting multiple books and websites. The donor provided the instructors with internet and computer training, but the instructors maintained that the training had little impact on their internet and computer skills. However, the instructors agreed that the lack of internet and computer skills did not neutralize their teaching and learning activities; instead, they sought the help of their colleagues who are internet and computer literate. It was noticed that approximately 30 percent of the instructors in two colleges had expertise in computer literacy.

Unlike the traditional teachers' preparation programs [CT/PTC/B.Ed.], in which the courses are mostly in the Urdu language—the national language of Pakistan - the ADE offers courses in English. Although it was understood that instructors would use both Urdu and English as a medium of instruction, the students reported that most of the instructors used Urdu only. Both the students and instructors agreed that due to a

weaker grasp of English, instructors face challenges in understanding the literature and the content of the courses. Instructors were explicit in admitting that this situation prevents them from effectively delivering lectures. One of the instructors reflected on this situation, “We have content knowledge because of our protracted teaching experience, but we lack certain skills that influence our teaching practices; for instance, we have limited English language proficiency.”

Practicum, an essential component of the ADE program, exposes students to real life teaching practices on a weekly basis. Students are asked to develop portfolios in order to reflect on classroom practices. While reviewing some of the portfolios, it was noticed that students made their best efforts to link the theory with the classroom practices. The notes/reflections/observations of the students reflect different subjects, such as classroom management and teaching methodologies. During a post-observation session [after school visit] I attended, students discussed their experiences with their female instructor. They highlighted multiple issues related to the teachers’ behavior, students’ aptitudes, and the level of cooperation between teachers and head teachers. During this session, the instructor served as a facilitator who suggested how the students could address and resolve a particular issue. The instructors also shared a rubric with me that they used to evaluate the portfolios.

### Discussion

Research suggests that in less-developing countries, the academic performance of students is largely contingent upon multiple in-school factors, including the availability of qualified teachers (Osman & Nizeyi, 2014). Therefore, the launching of a new ADE program is an attempt to improve classroom practices by strengthening the teacher education program. In fact, the new program is one of the most significant and major paradigm shifts in terms of improving the quality of pre-service education in Pakistan. One of the strengths of ADE is that all the stakeholders acknowledged the productivity of the new program, despite the fact that people have a tendency to resist change. Research also suggests that across the globe, “Government initiatives to regulate quality often meets with opposition from the key stakeholders (teachers, unions)” (Moon, 2007, p. 6). Such opposition was totally missing from this program; instead, the teacher educators and prospective teachers were enthusiastic about accepting change, despite some of the challenges they faced. This absence of resistance by the teachers is a positive indicator that the teachers used their best energies and available skills to deliver the said program. Although certain gaps during the implementation seemed to negatively affect the productivity of the program, it might be unjust to develop a low opinion based upon those gaps

Similar to the students and instructors, the donors also put forth their best efforts to make the ADE program an innovative and productive one that was compatible with the needs of a teachers’ preparation program in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They did this by providing financial/instructional resources, capacity-building opportunities for teacher educators, and access to more modern technology. However, the government of Pakistan needs to address certain policy-related matters on a priority basis, because some of these matters are creating confusion among the prospective teachers—a major stakeholder in the new program. For example, a majority of the students expressed uncertainty about their employment opportunities. Both the instructors and students linked the success of the new program to the availability of jobs. It is pertinent to mention here that in Pakistan, people primarily pursue academic programs just for the sake of securing employment. Research also suggests that unlike developed countries where intrinsic factors are the primary motives for entering the teaching profession (Watt & Richardson, 2007; Watt & Richardson, 2008; Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Chuan & Atputhasamy, 2001; Low, Lim, Ching, & Goh, 2011), in the developing countries, individuals join the profession for extrinsic factors, including financial benefits and job security (Ramzan, Iqbal, Khan, 2013; Michael, 2005; Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 1997; Young, 1995; Brown, 1992; Chivore, 1986). Therefore, the lack of job security, limited or no priority extended to the ADE graduates, and the equal merit between ADE and CT degree have numerous implications. One of these implications is the gradual decline of enrollment, despite the incentive of scholarships.



It seems that even the rigorous nature of the ADE program could not convince the policy makers to use different yardsticks when offering jobs to candidates who have a traditional CT/PTC degree as opposed to the ADE degree. Researchers pointed out that just as each additional year of education can enhance the earning power of individuals, so can additional years of teacher education enhance the capabilities of teachers (Masino & Niño-Zarazúab, 2016). Although the preparation and recruitment of teachers is interrelated (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006), a World Bank report states that “the paramount issue facing education planners in Pakistan today is how to recruit, train, deploy, and improve the quality of teachers” (Hoodbhoy, 1998). Therefore, the government of Pakistan needs to properly address the aforementioned issues, while also recognizing the changing nature of teachers’ preparation programs. Employment policies should be explicit in giving extra credit to applicants who have an ADE degree, because it could be assumed that the rigorous nature of the program, updated curricula, and modern approaches have better prepared these graduates for improving the quality of education. Since a centralized system of government is considered an advantage for developing coherent policies (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006), the government in Pakistan can develop coherent policies covering each and every aspect of the new program, including recruitment policies and structure of salaries should be compatible with the rigorous nature of the ADE program. Although research does not demonstrate a correlation between teacher salaries and their effectiveness in improving student learning (Muralidharan, 2013), data indicates that the structure of teachers’ salary has a powerful effect on teachers’ efforts and students’ outcomes in the South Asian context (Dundar et al, 2014).

One of the related issues is that a large number of both the private and state-owned institutions are still offering traditional PTC/CT programs across the country, whereas the said programs have been phased out from the region where the study was conducted. This situation has several implications. Firstly, students prefer to pursue the traditional PTC/CT programs [from other regions where the institutions offers these programs] because these programs are easier, shorter, and less comprehensive than the ADE program. These circumstances could discourage the students from pursuing the newly launched ADE program. Secondly, since the quality and standard of the traditional PTC/CT programs are questionable, the heavy influx of educators with traditional degrees could neutralize the change efforts of those teachers with ADE degrees. Because the government has owned and recognized the new teacher preparation program, explicit policies should be developed, on a priority basis, for the complete phasing out of the traditional teacher preparation programs from Pakistan.

Policies related to the ADE program were not properly defined, disseminated, or shared with the students, instructors, and principals, because some of these stakeholders believed that the ADE was launched only for a specific period. Although these stakeholders were small in number, they conveyed a message that had a far reaching impact regarding the popularity and sustenance of the program. Therefore, it is essential that the students, instructors, and the leadership understand that the said program is not a project that will be wrapped up with the departure of the donor; instead, the program belongs to the government of Pakistan and is a permanent component of the country’s teachers’ preparation program. Additionally, since a new program has been launched, extensive empirical research is required to explore and examine various dimensions of the program.

There was a consensus among the stakeholders about the productivity of the new program in terms of the learning of the students, practice-oriented teaching approaches, and incorporation of modern technology. This realization led the stakeholders to work hard to make the program a success. As mentioned earlier, the absence of resistance on the part of teacher-educators exemplifies the enthusiasm stakeholders have for the ADE program. Although the instructors faced numerous challenges, such as limited internet connectivity and limited English proficiency, the instructors did not allow these concerns to taint their attitude. Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld (2008) affirm that teachers’ beliefs play a significant role in the teaching and learning processes. The training opportunities provided to the instructors, although limited, played an

instrumental role in shaping the teaching philosophies and beliefs of instructors. The involvement of instructors in curriculum development created a sense of empowerment within the instructors.

Most of the instructors had decades of experience in teaching traditional programs [CT, PTC, and B.Ed.] with Urdu language subjects, but now they were asked to teach a new program whose courses were in English and to use both Urdu and English for instruction. Although the instructors tried their best to fulfill these requirements, their past experiences suggest that whatever knowledge they were transferring to students lacked depth and understanding; the instructors' limited proficiency of the English language was one of the reasons for this state of affairs. Furthermore, 90 percent of the instructors were not subject specialists; even the instructors who were teaching Functional English had another specialty. From this situation, it could be assumed that limited English language skills, and lack of subject specialists, had negative effects on the teaching and learning processes. It would be more productive to hire a faculty with relevant degrees and English language proficiency to deliver the program, because it was noticed that those teachers equipped with the said skills were more successful and that their students demonstrated higher performances. Since the English language has become the mode of communication in this globalized world, policy makers in Pakistan need to realize the importance of providing their teaching force with proficiency in English. Such proficiency will help educators to better understand the content and curricula of different courses.

Although research could help policymakers better address the gaps that compromise the productivity of existing interventions, a new program was launched without conducting extensive empirical research on the needs and design of effective teacher preparation programs. Without knowing the challenges, issues and problems, one cannot guarantee the success of this program. Across the globe, educational reforms are explicit about the quality of teacher education programs. Therefore, researchers agree that teacher preparation programs, whether designed in developed or developing countries, must address such issues as preparation, recruitment, retention, incentives, duration, content, and innovation (Moon, 2007; Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; Craig, Kraft & Plessis, 1988, Avalos, 1980). Unlike the developed countries, such as the United States, France, Germany, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China, where the national government sets the goals for teacher development (Velma, 1999), "Pakistan has no overarching policy framework, which specifically addresses teachers' professional development" (USAID, 2006, p.14). Therefore, Pakistan needs to be explicit while defining its policies of teacher development. Instead of relying on foreign assistance or any other external assistance, the country should itself devise teacher preparation programs compatible not only with the societal needs, but also with international standards. Efforts should be made to develop a teaching force that understands the concepts of tolerance, diversity, patience, harmony, democratic values, and freedom of expression.

### **Conclusion**

Since the study was limited to two institutions located in a particular region, broader generalizations cannot be made. However, based on the findings of the study, some important conclusions can be drawn. The present intervention is deemed an innovative and productive program, as acknowledged by the stakeholders, but ministries of education at the federal, provincial, and regional levels needs to work together to properly address the gaps identified in the implementation of this program. While working together, these entities should bear in mind that the successful execution of the ADE program is key to the improvement of Pakistan's ailing educational system. Proper orientation about the justification, future, and benefits of the ADE program should be provided to prospective teachers, instructors, administrators, and other interested parties. Instructors familiar with the traditional methods of teaching may be provided with training opportunities to deliver an innovative, practice-oriented, and modern program in an effective manner. The integration of information technology and the introduction of courses in English language make it obligatory for the teachers to become familiar with the modern technology and English literature.

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