

An Analytical Study on National Education Policy 2009: Teacher Education Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to review the National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective and to explore the teacher educators' opinions about National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective. This study contained two parts. For the first part, content analysis was used to analyze the National Education Policy 2009. For the second part, five teacher educators from public sector universities in Lahore were selected to get their reflection. For this purpose, a self developed semi-structured interview was used. Data was analyzed through coding and categorizing. Then different themes were generated from the categories. The findings of the study show that the most important feature of quality education is quality of the teachers. Policy provisions about the recruitment of teachers and curriculum of teacher education are positive steps to improve the quality of education. Teacher educators' opinions were also strengthening the above findings. There is need to conduct research before planning the policy provisions.

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Introduction

Policy plays an important role in the development of a country. The policy is the result of long considerations, thoughts and discussions. It is brief in content but deep in spirit. An educational policy provides a conceptual framework and sometimes a plan of action about education which should be implemented in the country. It is a vital instrument in bringing the development in the education system of the country like Pakistan (Ghafar, 2006). Education policies in Pakistan were always formulated under the given guidelines by its founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and in the light of Islamic Code of Life. Almost all the education policies of Pakistan have commonalities and similarities. It was strongly needed that once a policy is formulated it must be accomplished with its duration of time unlike the successor governments change these policies with their own interests and priorities. From the passage of 68 years the system of education experienced many lapses.

At the time of independence Pakistan was facing many problems but government was aware of the importance of education. Thus, the first educational conference held in November 1947 in Karachi. In this conference Quaid-e-Azam laid down foundations of education in Pakistan. He provided directions for the future development of education. At that time half of the teachers were untrained. In the same way, National Education Commission 1959 reviewed the education system and made recommendations about education. It is also called the Magna Carta of Education as we can see its implementation. It suggested that qualified and trained teachers should be appointed. But this goal was not achieved due to the lack of proper planning and implementation. The New Education Policy 1970 was not implemented due to political instability (Shami, 2010).

The Education Policy 1972-1980 brought changes in the education system. National Education Policy and Implementation Programme (1979) was more ideological oriented. National Education Policy 1992 and National Education Policy 1998-2010 were more innovative. But all these policies were not fully implemented due to some economic, political and many other factors. In all these policies importance of teacher and quality of teacher is discussed. Quality of education is based on quality of teachers.

The current National Education Policy (NEP) (2009) addresses all the aspects of education system of Pakistan. It was developed after taking the input of all the stakeholders of education like education managers and experts, universities, federal government officials and education departments, teachers, specialists, students, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and many other stakeholders. The NEP 2009 also focused on quality of teacher education program. It suggested to raise the qualification level of teachers and also focused on the in-service training courses of teachers. This policy also focused on institutionalization and standardization of certification and accreditation procedures in teacher education in the country. It suggested that the hiring of the teachers would be merit based and

it also emphasized the faculty training is required in communication, pedagogical and ICT skills to improve the efficiency of teaching in higher education. It suggested that teacher education curriculum would be based on student centered teaching, Islamic teaching and early childhood education. NEAS/ PEACE would provide feedback regarding teacher education (National Education Policy, 2009). Teacher education focuses on the professional and personal development of teachers' abilities and communication skills. These abilities and skills make teachers capable enough to perform their duties effectively. Recent insights into teacher education in Pakistan has contributed a lot and increased awareness among teachers as researchers and practitioners (Gopang, 2016).

To examine the overall policy effectiveness and to see the importance of teacher education some literature will be helpful. Effective implementation of teacher education programs is an important issue in Pakistan in conversations among teacher educators and policy makers, as well as among researchers of teacher education (Pre-STEP/USAID, 2010). Ahmad (2012) stated that more than 2 years have passed since the NEP 2009 was announced but no concrete measures have been taken yet to put the policy recommendations into action. A most recent study by Reba and Inamullah (2014) has found that there are vacant seats of teacher educators which are not filled yet. Regarding quality of teachers training program, they found lack of material, malpractices in examination system and other weaknesses in the areas of training. Gopang (2016) conducted a study in Pakistan regarding teacher education and found that teachers have positive attitude towards trainings and professional programs which are run to enhance the capacity building. Previous studies provide information regarding implementation of NEP 2009. There is a need to conduct study to check the feasibility and effectiveness of NEP 2009 provisions regarding teacher education. This study analyzes the National Education Policy of 2009 in teacher education perspective.

Objectives and Research Questions

From the independence of Pakistan every policy has discussed the importance of teachers' quality and proposed different strategies and programs to improve their teaching competence but these programs were not fully implemented. And due to political instability quality of education system is not improved. The policy makers, experts and implementing agencies could not bring the desired changes in education system. The NEP 2009 also proposed some strategies and programs about teacher education. This study analyzed the NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective. The objectives of this study were to review the NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective and to explore the experts' reflection about NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective. Based on the above mentioned objectives following research questions were formed.

1. What strategies and programs are proposed in National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective?
2. What are the teacher educators' opinions about National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective?

Research Methodology

This study was qualitative in nature. Content analysis was used to analyze the NEP 2009. The content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated. The text is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication. It includes books, newspapers or magazines, articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or video tapes, musical lyrics, photographs, articles, or works of arts (Neuman, 2006). In this study NEP 2009 was analyzed and a comprehensive review was made in teacher education perspective. This study was consisted on two parts. First was to review the NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective and second was to explore the teacher educators' view about NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective. Five teacher educators having expertise in teacher education from public sector universities in Lahore were selected to get their reflection about NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective. Purposive sampling technique was used to select sample. These teacher educators were selected on the basis of their experience and understanding about NEP 2009. For exploring the experts' opinion semi structured interview was used. Participants consent was taken before conducting the interview. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument experts and classmates were consulted and mock interview was conducted. Coding and categorizing was used as data analysis technique. Then different themes were generated from the categories.

Findings

Section I: Analytical Review on NEP 2009 in Teacher Education Perspective

This section contains the analytical review of National Education Policy 2009. Themes emerged from the data are given below. Analysis is addressing the following research question. What strategies and programs are proposed in National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective? This includes recruitment, curriculum, assessment and training.

Recruitment

A Bachelor's degree, with a B.Ed., was suggested the requirement for teaching at the elementary level. A Masters level for the secondary and higher secondary, with a B.Ed., would be ensured by 2018. PTC and CT would be phased out through encouraging the present set of teachers to

improve their qualifications, while new hiring shall be based on the advanced criteria. Exceptions shall be made in case of less developed areas where teachers with relevant qualifications are not available Diploma in Education (D.Ed) may be used as an intermediate qualification till B.Ed teachers are available universally. For merit based recruitment, postings and promotions government should take some steps. It was also suggested that for the hiring of female teachers age limit would be relaxed.

Above mentioned policy provisions are good steps to improve the quality of education. Qualification has been increased which is a positive indication but the availability of B.Ed teachers is challenge for the policy till the time it has framed. This is a prominent paradigm shift from the previous policy and almost it is implemented. Phasing out of PTC and CT is also a notable step because outdated teachings methods are used in these programs but still these courses are being offered by different institution. However there is no need of these courses. There is a need to evaluate all the teacher education programs to bring them under an umbrella. To ensure the merit based hiring government must take some further steps for fair system of recruitment. Some organizations like National Testing Service (NTS) and Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) are encouraging merit based hiring but in other sectors flaws still occur.

Curriculum

It was suggested that teacher education curriculum should be adjusted to the needs of the school curriculum and scheme of studies. Student centered teaching training should be included in the curriculum. Training curricula and teacher education should also train the teachers to talk about education in emergencies and also include ECE in teacher education curricula.

It is seen that curriculum of teacher education is student-centered but teaching methods to prepare the teachers are lacking in student-centered approach. Student centered approaches build confidence in students. This policy also addressed education in emergencies (earthquake etc.). This feature has also been well articulated and timely identified so its importance cannot be underestimated. However, how to address this new aspect is also a challenge for the policy implementing agencies.

There is also provision about early childhood education (ECE). This aspect of education is ignored in previous policies. The early childhood age is from 3 to 5 years. Early childhood education is worldwide considered as an important aspect of educational system. This policy has well defined this aspect. This new aspect has implication for teacher education. The policy action plan suggests that there will not only be requirement hiring teachers for early childhood education but also there should be clear mechanism for ensuring quality in education as per claim of the policy. The private sector is already working on it, so their experiences can be utilized.

Assessment

Policy suggested that for improving the quality different institutions (NEAS/ PEACE) should be involved to give feedback to textbooks development, curriculum development, professional development and teacher education.

After reviewing the general background of policies, researchers came to know that NEP 1998 discussed teacher education in a separate section but NEP 2009 discussed teacher education under the section of 'quality education'. Teacher education is closely linked with all the other issues related to education and influenced by how all other aspects of education are taken into account such as modes of education and trends in education. Thus the quality of education has been well linked with teacher education. So there is a dire need to improve the quality of teacher education and it can be improved by providing continuous assessment and feedback. NEAS/ PEACE are the institutes which provide feedback on professional development and teacher education.

Training

Policy suggested that all teachers should have a chance after three years for getting training. Teacher training arrangements, certification and accreditation should be standardized and institutionalized. Attention should be paid on in-service teachers training of mathematics and science teachers. It is also suggested that in-service teachers training should include the multi-grading teaching, assessment and testing practices and pedagogical content knowledge.

In-service training is very necessary to update the knowledge and get professional skills of teaching. As the policy mentioned that every teacher should have chance of training after three years. It is a positive step to update the quality of teachers if it is fully implemented. For the mathematics teachers in-service training is also compulsory to develop practical reasoning and problem solving skills and also for developing conceptual understanding. For science teachers training should be provided about the use of science kits.

To make the teacher training effective it is good to train the teachers for multi grading teaching, pedagogical content knowledge and assessment. But policy ignored the psychological aspect which should be the part of training because teachers have to deal many students with a lot of individual differences. So attention should be paid on this aspect as well.

Just like the previous policies, the NEP 2009 has also given its analysis reports on teacher education. As usual there has been expressed satisfaction on the quantity of teachers and expressed un-satisfaction on the quality of teachers. The same had been documented in the NEP 1998. This policy suggested that separate cadre of specialized teacher trainers should be

developed but it did not address that from where those trainers will come and how these trainers will be allocated to different institutes. Policy also suggested upgrading the salaries of teachers, giving rewards on their performance and give incentives to the teachers in rural areas. This step can also increase the quality of teachers. This policy only suggested the induction training of those teachers who are hired through PPSC but it did not address the induction training at other levels. Induction training is very necessary because it provides understanding about the responsibilities and rights of the teachers and also provides understanding about the rules and regulation, culture and social ethics of the organization. It also suggested that teachers will be allocated on the need basis. Policy recommended that for the improvement of language skills of rural teachers special courses should be designed. But policy did not mention the duration of these courses. It also suggested that consideration should be given to teachers association. In-service teacher training institutions should emphasis on developing the capacity of teachers and schools managers for school development plans to overcome low achievement scores.

The policy document puts two main reasons for developing a new policy: the first reason mentioned is that the National Education Policy 1998 was not producing the desired outcomes; the second factor that contributed to the development of the new policy was the challenges posed by internationally recognized educational targets which were needed to be sped up given the impact of globalization such as MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and the targets of EFA (Education For All). Overall policy addressed all the aspects to improve the quality of teachers. The policy admits that the quality of teachers in the public sector is unsatisfactory. If it will fully implement then it can change the condition of education system of the country. Implementing agencies and government must ensure the proper implementation of the policy.

Section II: Teacher Educators' Reflection about NEP 2009 in Teacher Education Perspective

This section addressed the question: What are the experts' opinions about NEP 2009 in teacher education perspective? Data was collected through interview to answer the above mentioned question. It was interesting for the researchers that all the participants were having some insight regarding policy. Major themes and sub themes generated from the collected data and analysis of data is given below.

Recruitment

Three sub themes were emerged from the experts' opinion regarding recruitment: minimum requirement for teachers, phase out of CT and PTC and merit based hiring.

Minimum Requirement for Teachers

Four out of five participants were agreed with the idea of teaching qualification for elementary level that a Bachelors degree with a B.Ed and for secondary education level that a Masters degree with B.Ed. One of the participants said, “I strongly agree with this notion”.

I think that the minimum level for teaching at elementary level and above should be Masters degree with professional degree because the teacher teaching at elementary level should have command on one subject in which he or she did masters and professional training of teaching pedagogy etc. [R 3]

Phase-out of CT and PTC

Two out of five participants said that phase out of PTC and CT is remarkable step towards improving teacher education. It can be fully implementable if further appointments are done on the basis requirement of M.A with B.Ed. It is imperative in Pakistani context because teachers with PTC and CT do not have update knowledge and skills neither they are ready to improve. So it is better to phase out it.

I do not think if any research had been done before policy showing that B.Ed. teachers are better than CT teachers or PTC teachers. I strongly believe that teaching is a profession requiring an attitude of growth, inquiry and lifelong learning. If a program does not inculcate these attitudes, the form of degree remains questionable.[R 1]

Another interviewee remarked that,

I do not know what the problem with PTC, CT was except that the duration of the program was less. The same college teacher will teach to B.Ed who used to teach PTC, CT. as far as duration is concerned, this duration could be increased even by the same label as PTC, CT. again its nothing more than change of labels. It's like coding recoding process without quality. [R 2]

Merit Based Hiring

Four out of five participants had the opinion that government is successful in the recruitment of the teachers on the bases of merit. All recruitments in school departments are done through NTS and PPSC and these two are ensuring quality with merit. One of the participants said, “I think government is certainly following merit criteria. However, merit criteria are very loose. In majority cases, interview receives minimum points. This professional judgment, scoring high on academic degrees is certainly not a guarantee of effective teaching”.

It is bad luck of Pakistan that illiterate or ill educated people design policies and programs for educated people. How can the government be successful in such a milieu? Teachers recruitment have been a controversial

subject, we cannot clearly say that the government has a success in fair recruitment system. [R 2]

Curriculum

Four sub themes were emerged from the experts' opinion regarding curriculum: student-centered, Islamic education, early childhood education and curriculum to meet emergencies.

Student-Centered

Policy stated that curriculum of teacher education should be student-centered but four out of five participants had the opinion that curriculum is still teacher centered. Teachers' training, provision of relevant resources, and instructional technology used in the teacher education curriculum are not in contrast with the student centered curriculum. A male participant had a view, "The NGOs are involved in the curriculum for teachers, who have no real idea of the context of Pakistan in revamping the curriculum". Another participant remarked, "Teacher education degrees are based on semester system and semester system is student-centered".

Islamic Education

Three out of five participants responded that Islamic education should be the part of teacher education curricula because by ignoring this aspect it is impossible to achieve objectives of education in Pakistani context. One of the participants remarked, "Yes, of course I would be agreeing with this provision. It is essential for our religious and cultural grounds". However another participant was of the opinion, "Is there any difference in the faith of the teachers who have studied Islamiyat till Matriculation and the ones who have studied it till B.Ed".

Early Childhood Education

Three out of five participants were agreed with the policy provision that early childhood education should be the part of teacher education curricula. One of the female participants said, "Mere increase in ECE enrolment is probably not a focus. ECE teachers are not paid higher like special education teachers".

Curriculum to Meet Emergencies

All the respondents remarked that curriculum is not addressing this aspect as the policy suggested and it is not capable of fulfilling the existing needs with a quality provision. A female participant had a view, "During my teaching experience I didn't come across such curricula which address education in emergencies. However it is important to include it in the curriculum". One of the participants remarked, "Not at all. The policy has

dedicated a section on DRR however, curricula 2006, 2007 and B.Ed. four years is silent on this aspect”.

Training

Three sub themes were emerged from the experts’ opinion regarding training: Training needs, induction training and training cycle.

Training needs

All the participants suggested some areas regarding in-service teachers’ training like Soft skills (lifelong learning, team work, reflective practice, problem solving), assessment for learning Multi-grade teaching, communication skills and psychological skills. These areas must be focused while giving training to teachers.

Multi-grade teaching is one of the areas needed to be focused because researches show that multi-grade teaching is an inevitable option to achieve UPE and EFA. That’s why there should be space for training of teachers to teach in multi-grade settings.[R3]

Another male participant said that,
In-service teacher training program should be need based. There should be clear mechanism of need assessment before working out such programs. The institution can constitute committees to assess their needs and enroll themselves in such programs for their teacher training in their respective fields. [R 2]

Induction training

Policy suggested that lecturers selected through the Public Service Commission shall be required to get at least six months pre-service training. All the respondents were agreed with this policy provision that this step will improve the quality of teaching. Many lecturers are selected on the bases of their content knowledge. They are seriously lacking in their teaching skills. So it will improve the professional behavior of the lecturers.

I agree with the idea. However, such policy actions should be supported by research. I cannot find any kind of research particularly action research which would have been done in Pakistan to see if 6 months training of lecturers make a difference. [R 1]

A female participant suggested that,
I agree with this statement because command on content only does not guarantee good teaching that’s why it is important to train them professionally but teachers who did Masters in Education should be exempted from such type of trainings because they already have such trainings. [R 3]

Training cycle

Three out of five participants were of the opinion that teachers' training cycle should be based on three year cyclic basis but they were not experiencing such training. It is not implemented with its full spirit. One of the female participants was of opinion, "First of all in-service training is not an event that could happen in three cycles. It is a process that should happen throughout one's professional life. Secondly, I do not think if such a plan is being carried out".

Role of NEAS/PEACE in Assessment and Evaluation

Three out of five participants were of the opinion that there are gaps in teacher education programs and assessment agencies reports. One of the participants had a view, "Well there is no systematic process of evaluating teacher education in Pakistan. Every institution imparting teacher education has its own structure. As far as PEAS and NEAS are concerned they are doing what they can".

If the mechanism of teacher evaluation was effective, there would be quality in education. There is no way to assess how teachers are held accountable for not fulfilling their responsibilities honestly. These organizations try to provide but their calculations are inadequate, even if the feedback is provided, the government takes so long to meet the needs identified by such organization. [R 2]

Above analysis shows that most of the policy provisions are suitable to increase the quality of teachers. Many of the provisions are implemented but some are not implemented yet. If these provisions implemented with full spirit then quality of education will improve automatically.

Discussion

The main aim of this study was to analyze the National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective. It was consisted on two dimensions. First dimension was to review the National Education Policy in teacher education perspective and second dimension was to explore the teacher educators' opinion about the provisions of National Education Policy 2009 in teacher education perspective. Since the overall analysis is not how to well document the policy but on how policy is effective in terms of its goals, and actions towards the improvement of the sector of reforms. Keeping in mind the effectiveness of the policy some special features were identified which are recruitment of teachers, curriculum of teacher education, assessment of teacher education and training of teachers.

The new recruitment criteria is good to improve the quality of education. Phase out of PTC and CT is a notable provision given in the policy as these courses were consisting on short duration and old teaching methods are used. According to Pre-STEP (2010) teacher certification programs like PTC and CT are categorized by lack of critical thinking, poor teaching of subject

matter, ineffective formative and summative assessment and use of outdated pedagogical techniques. One of the main features of this policy was the introduction of early childhood education in teacher education curriculum. According to Pakistan Economic Survey (2011-12) early childhood education has been introduced in Sindh to improve the quality of teachers. Findings of the study show that there is a need to evaluate all the teacher education programs to bring them under an umbrella. According to UNESCO (2006) Government of Pakistan has not taken solid steps to bring the teaching courses under a single umbrella.

Previous researches on policies show that all of them were lacking in implementation. Finding of this study indicated that there is no systematic process of evaluating teacher education in Pakistan and policy actions should be supported by research and in Pakistan no particular research is done to know the effectiveness of teachers' training programs. Dilashad (2010) indentified that teacher training programs in Pakistan are lacking in resources, research and evaluation. Reba and Inamullah (2014) stated that there is need to provide feedback to prospective teachers about their weak areas. Findings of this study indicate that teacher education curriculum is not meeting the current requirements and NGOs are involved in the curriculum. Bilal and Khan (2012) stated that teacher education is facing many challenges in Pakistan like lack of resources, lack of quality in teaching process, inconsistency in curriculum and low quality of teachers.

Findings of this study show that research should be conducted to improve the teachers' training programs and policy actions should be supported by research. There should be need assessment before starting any training programs. However increase in quantity is not much significant because the main focus of the policy was to ensure quality in education through teacher training program. These program may be working but they do not functioning effectively as the studies show.

In summary, this study was considered to be significant in respect that it would provide information to policy makers and implementing agencies that which areas of teacher education need to be focused.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The content analysis of the National Education Policy 2009 shows that the most important feature of quality education is quality of the teachers. Policy provision about the recruitment of teachers is a positive step to improve the quality of education because the highly qualified teachers improve the education system of the country. Student centered curriculum of teacher education is suggested by the policy. This is more appropriate for self learning. Islamic teaching and early childhood education are the main component of teacher education curriculum. NEASE and PEACE are responsible to provide the feedback regarding teacher education. In-service training is very necessary to update the knowledge and get professional

skills of teaching. Interview analysis shows that teacher educators' opinion also strengthening the above analysis. All the policy provisions regarding teacher education are the good steps to ensure the quality of teachers if they properly implemented.

It can be concluded from interviews that policy actions should be supported by research and there is a need to focus on teacher education curricula because it is still teacher centered and also not addressing education in emergencies. The main focus of the policy was to improve the quality of teachers and this aim can be fulfilled by improving the in-service and pre-service teachers' training. Based on the above conclusion following recommendations are given.

1. This study was delimited to five teacher educators from public sector universities. It may be designed on large sample.
2. In this study only one part of the policy was taken. Further researches can be conducted by including other parts of the policy.
3. Teacher education programs should focus on research to bring the improvement in professional study programs.

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