



PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION REFORMS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract:

India and Pakistan are two strategically important neighboring countries in Asia-Pacific region. Since independence of more than six decades, both, India and Pakistan have transverse different paths, India as a Sovereign, Democratic, Republic Country and Pakistan as Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The advent of democracy in India and Islamic republic in Pakistan resulted in new hopes, aspirations and demands on education. During the six decades after Independence, teacher education in both countries has come a long way from its initial bleak stature to gain an identity as a complex network of institutions and programs. The present paper takes a close look into the paradigm shift in teacher education programs in India and Pakistan and how much the shift is influenced by constitutional frameworks of each country. Paper looks into the pertinent issues in pre-service teacher education such as pedagogical beliefs, theory-practice gaps, curriculum and assessment within the educational framework of both the countries. The paper identifies crucial areas that demands attention of academia of both the countries to develop research partnerships and strengthen cooperation to improvise status of “Education” as a whole in South –Asian region.

Keywords:

Pre-service teachers, Teacher Education reforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

“The spread of education in society is at the foundation of success in today’s globalized world, where the real wealth of a country is not in its tangible natural resources but in knowledge, which is the driver of the economic development”. (Excerpt from Report to the People on Education, 2012, Ministry of Human resource Development, Government of India).

Education as an institution is well recognized as a powerful catalyst for development and welfare of any society. Teacher is at the heart of every education system, around which the entire setup revolves. Teachers have the potential to bring life to the curriculum and make education a meaningful experience for students. This great responsibility is a direct outcome of their preparedness as a teacher. There is a direct correlation between the quality of education and standards of teacher education.

The Report on National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) rightly observed,



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“There is just no way to create good schools without good teachers. Success in any aspect of reform—whether creating standards, developing more challenging curriculum and assessments, implementing school-based management, or inventing new model schools and programs—depends on highly skilled teachers working in supportive schools that engender collaboration with families and society.” Presenting the Action Plan for Teacher Education reform and Improvement (2009), U.S. president Barak Obama said, *“From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents, it’s the person standing at the front of the classroom... America’s future depends on its teachers. That is why we are taking steps to prepare teachers for their difficult responsibilities”.*

Many scholars throughout the world have propounded that, the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation to survive successfully in the global community. In a longitudinal study conducted by the Duke University team of Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007), researchers concluded that teachers’ credentials, particularly their qualifications and pre-service preparation affect student achievement in systematic ways and that the magnitudes are large enough to be policy relevant. In the review report presented by Department of Education-commissioned, USA (2001) of 57 rigorous studies, Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy found consistently positive relationships between teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness. Empirical relationships between teacher qualifications and student achievement were found across studies, using different units of analysis and different measures of preparation, and in studies controlling for students’ socioeconomic status and prior academic performance.

Teacher education reform movement is an international trend towards the teacher professionalism. There is sense of urgency to raise the standards of teacher education across nations. The pressure is more significant on developing countries to prepare the students to meet the global standards of education. The new scholarships in teacher education are a much richer domain in western countries whereas teacher education is still a research deprived area in South Asian region. India and Pakistan are the most significant neighboring countries in South –Asia region. Both countries share common historical legacy of British education system as well as common concerns on developmental issues, socio-cultural diversity, economic disparity and demographic challenges. Also, both countries have large pool of young generation who will lead their country in coming years, if given the right education. The school education and the training of teachers have been the most frequently discussed topics by educators in the region. As reflected through policy documents and related reports (National Curriculum framework (India, 2005, Draft National Policy on Education, Pakistan 2009) governments in the region have been seriously engaged in reorganizing their educational endeavors and redefining their educational goals. These redefined educational goals, along with changes in the concepts and practices of education and the demand of inclusive education have brought about several significant changes in the roles and functions of teachers. In response to the new framework of school education and to the more challenging role of the teacher, has required teacher education program to be more innovative and dynamic. It has also required policy makers to think of teacher education in terms of lifelong learning and professional development of teachers. Concerns to meet these changing demands, the educational bodies in



India and Pakistan have intervene more actively in all aspects of school life over the last few years. Significant steps have been taken in the neighboring cohort to raise the standards of teacher education setup (NCTEF2009, National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan, 2009).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers are potentially the single most influential factor in achieving the aspiration of a learned society. More the ever before, it is teacher who holds the key to students' growing or diminishing self-esteem, intellectual curiosity and sense of achievement. It is the kinds and quality of the education, training and professional development opportunities and the cultures in which teachers' work that influence their ability to help students to enjoy positive educational changes.

The significant impact of teacher education on student performance has been established through quite a few studies. Darling, H. (2000) gave evidence that “fully prepared and certified teachers were better rated and more successful at performance of students than teachers without this preparation.”

In Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda Symposium Report (2001), Maurice Tardif observed that research on pre-service training curricula shows that piecemeal program revision is a mostly futile undertaking. Rather than adding or re-jigging content or attempting to evaluate the effects of isolated innovative interventions within fragmented programs, curriculum developers should attempt to situate the process of learning to teach within a new overall vision. Such an alternative vision would challenge traditional multidisciplinary models and propose a new model based no longer on knowledge of the discipline, but on the knowledge of professional action and on competencies; would affirm the need to ground the training process in learning, students and the analysis of practices, rather than in theories transmitted in the form of declarative, specialized, disciplined-based knowledge; and would integrate new knowledge and competencies on ICTs and culture, all the while stressing the need to negotiate reforms with stakeholders in the field and their organizations, in order to avoid overnight, overly hasty changes.

In a 2002 review of research on what makes a good teacher—and the difficulties in answering that question, Dan Goldhaber reported evidence suggesting that teachers' knowledge of their subject matters measured by degrees, courses, and certification in that area is associated with high student performance. Specifically, using studies with more detailed measures of teachers' education levels and course work in particular subject areas; he confirmed the positive influence of teachers' academic preparation on student achievement.

Imig and Imig (2007) in a study highlighting the far reaching impacts of teacher education stated, “There is almost a universal quest for both teacher quality, and with it exists a demand for higher quality teacher education”.

In an empirical study Cheng and Monk (2007) found that the paradigm shift in teaching and learning was correlated with 18 indicators of students' learning in a sample of 26 Hong Kong secondary schools involving 7,063 students. This study found that the more a school was in paradigm shift towards globalized, localized and individualized learning and teaching, the more



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its students had positive attitudes towards their learning, applied various methods and ways to enhance their learning, gained learning experiences and opportunities to perform self-reflection and self-directed learning, experienced contextualized multiple thinking including technological thinking, economic thinking, social thinking, cultural thinking and learning thinking in learning activities, and felt satisfied with the opportunities to grow and perform in the school.

Yogesh and Nath (2008) elaborated that the philosophy of teacher education starts with the problem of trainee entrants initially but concerns itself with their expected roles, their educative process, expected professional standing, and with the processes of activities encompassing the two major disciplines, pedagogy and psychology along with the development of the personalities of the prospective teachers. Brian C. (2007) also recommended, “Pre service teacher education would improve if there were more school based experiences of longer duration offered to student teachers, being educated for their future roles, with a balanced blend of theory and practice. As per observation of Westbrook J. (2009) “Research on the effectiveness of teacher education and the relationship between training and actual classroom practice, particularly at Peshawar, Pakistan stands to be very limited, even though it appears to be highly pertinent to sustained improvement of educational quality.

A summary of research on the impact of teachers prepared by a major national alternative teacher preparation program, Teach for America (TFA), by Heilig & Jez in 2010 revealed a mixed picture, with results affected by the experience level of the TFA teachers and the group of teachers with whom they are compared. Studies found that, when the comparison group is other teachers in the same schools who are less likely to be certified or traditionally prepared, novice TFA teachers perform equivalently, and experienced TFA teachers perform comparably in raising reading scores and slightly better in raising math scores. The question for most districts, however, is whether TFA teachers do as well as or better than the credentialed non-TFA teachers with whom districts aim to staff their schools. On this question, studies indicate that the students of novice TFA teachers perform significantly less well in reading and mathematics than those of credentialed beginning teachers.

Iqbal (2010) in his study on teacher education programs in Pakistan concluded that B. Ed. courses in Pakistan needs to be reviewed to make it more practical, interactive, learner supportive and less-examination oriented. Yadav (2011) in his study on pre-service teacher education programs at secondary level in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh concluded that there is a need to enhance the duration of PSTE courses at secondary to make it more professional in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Pandey, Saroj (2010) on reflecting upon professionalization of teacher education in India, concluded that the present teacher education program is inadequate to meet the challenges of diverse Indian socio-cultural contexts and the paradigm shift envisaged in the NCF 2005. The pedagogic reform from this perspective need to invest on building on teachers’ capacity to act as autonomous reflective groups of professionals who are sensitive to their social mandate and to the professional ethics and to the needs of heterogeneous groups of learners.



Thus, many kinds of scholarships are developing in teacher education. There are descriptive studies, experimental research, survey analysis, case studies and combination models. The studies exploring varied dimensions of teacher education ranging from epistemological beliefs to pedagogical practices are leading us to most shared understanding of urgent need to strengthen teacher education practices.

Within the existing paradigm discussed above, many a researches critically analyzed the existing teacher education programs in India and Pakistan, individually and strongly suggested the need for systematic reforms in teacher education system in both the countries.

3. DEVELOPING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Teacher Education reforms in India has been a significant concern taken up by various Education commissions and reform committees since independence. The Education Commission (1964-66) dwelt at length on various issues related to teacher education. It recommended professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programs, comprehensive colleges of education and internship. The National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) recommended five-year integrated courses and internship. The National Policy on Education (1986) recommended the overhaul of teacher education to impart it a professional orientation and referred to the same concerns voiced by the earlier Committees. Its recommendations led to the launch of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education incorporating the establishment of DIETs, CTEs and IASEs. The NPE Review Committee (1992) and the National Advisory Committee on Curriculum Load (1993) have also drawn attention to the need for qualitative reform of teacher education and suggested various measures.

The National Knowledge Commission in its final report (2006-2009) has observed that teachers are the single most important element of the school system. Emphasizing the importance of competent teachers, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) stated that the quality and extent of learners' achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. The National Curriculum Framework (2005) places different demands and expectations on the teacher, which need to be addressed by both initial and continuing teacher education.

In India, The NCF- 2005 expects a teacher to be the facilitator of students' learning in a manner that helps them to construct knowledge and meaning utilizing their individual experiences. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) developed by NCTE tries to ensure that teacher education courses to be reoriented to align with the epistemological shift envisaged in the NCF- 2005 and develop teachers as facilitators of learning. It includes the contexts, concerns and visions of teacher education which calls for preparing teachers for learning society, empowering teachers in learning to learn, and making teacher education liberal, humanistic and responsive to the demands of inclusive education. It has tried to incorporate the changing school



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contexts and demands in the light of recently implemented Right to Education Act (RTE 2009), issue of academic burden of students, and universalization of secondary education that have implication for teacher education.

With planned interventions and sustained efforts through multipronged initiatives, literacy rate has been improved from 64.83% to 74.04% since last 2001 census (Report to the People on Education, 2012, Ministry of Human resource Development, Government of India).The flagship program Saakshar Bharat, launched by Prime Minister of India, Dr. Man Mohan Singh has initiated several steps, like, lifelong education, Basic education through equivalency education, vocational skills, functional literacy. As a follow up of RTE and revamp of SSA framework, 3,66,599 new schools has been opened till September 2010 to enroll 99% of rural population. Dropout rate has declined to 24.93% from 39.03% in 2001. Gender parity Index has also improved from 0.83 in 2001-02 to 1.00 in 2008-09. 24. 59 lakh children with special needs have been enrolled in schools by September 2010. (Report to the People on Education, 2012, Ministry of Human resource Development, Government of India).

Though the statistics highlights the considerable progress in school education in the recent years, Education for All is still a long cherished dream to come to reality. With around 8 million who are out of school or drop outs, particularly from disadvantaged section of society, equality in education is still a daunting task.

The increasing privatization and differentiation of the schooling system have drastically affected the right to quality education for all children (NCFTE, 2009). With increasing school enrolment to achieve the mandate of RTE, there is a massive increase in demand for teachers. The added challenge is to fulfill the criteria of essential qualification for appointment of teachers set by NCTE, continuing professional development of in-service teachers and preparing untrained in-service teachers for mainstream teaching through short term intervention programs. The far exceeding demand for trained teachers as compared to the enrollment capacity of existing teacher education institutes has caused mushrooming of inadequate teacher education institutes. Raising the grave concerns on the issue of quality of pre-service teacher education programs, NCFTE (2009) observed that from 3489 courses in 3199 institutions and an intake of 2, 74,072 in 2004, there is an unprecedented rise in numbers with 14,523 countries in 12, 266 institutions with an intake of 10, 73,661.This expansion has compromised heavily on quality parameters, like, course content, infrastructure, faculty learning resources and student-teacher profiles. The policy level initiatives to expand the number of colleges of teacher education (CTEs) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), face acute faculty shortage due to non-availability of qualified faculty. The mandated roles of CTEs and IASEs (Institute of Advanced Studies in Education) has come under serious questioning because lack of performing adequate research, development and innovative activities (NCFTE, 2009). The presence of unqualified and under qualified teachers has posed a serious challenge to meet the standards of professionally inclined qualified teachers. The segregation of school education from institutes of higher learning allows little scope to meet the professional needs of school teachers.



The existing teacher education programs have come under severe criticism, firstly, for not addressing the contemporary issues of school education and secondly, not preparing empowered teachers to meet the changing needs of schools. Enlisting the systematic concerns in Teacher Education, NCF-2005 highlighted the challenge areas as, lack of language proficiency among teachers, uncalled repeated practice of isolated lessons as sufficient condition for professional development, no articulation between learning theories and classroom practices, lack of reflective discourse among teachers to examining their own biases and beliefs and excessively quantitative evaluation system in teacher education programs.

In the light of changing education scenario and recommendations made by several commissions and committees on education reforms (NPE, 1986; Model curriculum by UGC,1990; Yashpal Committee Report, 1993; Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education, 1998; Teacher Education for Future, 2000; National Curriculum Framework, 2005), National Curriculum Framework for Teacher education (2009) envisioned the role of teacher education as liberal, humanistic and responsive to the demands of inclusive education by stressing the potential of indigenous culture as source of rejuvenating teaching and learning. To increase the pedagogical knowledge base of the teachers to meet the needs of diverse contexts, the framework emphasized the reflective practices as the central aim of teacher education. In its' concluding statement relating to perception of teachers' role and purpose and practice of teacher education, NCFTE (2009) articulated the need to develop among teachers:

- Love for child, knowledge and profession
- Engagement with theory along with field experiences
- Opportunities for self-reflections
- Developing social sensitivity and finer human sensibilities

Envisaging a broad vista of a teacher education curriculum that incorporated the vision of teaching as a profession and teacher education as a process of professional preparation of teachers, the framework presented the broad outline of the structure , on which a variety of context specific courses could be designed without compromising the principle of process based teacher education.

3.2. PAKISTAN PERSPECTIVE

“When the Qur'an began to be revealed, the first word of its first verse was 'Iqra' that is, read. Education is thus the starting point of every human activity. A scholar (alim) is accorded great respect in the hadith. According to a hadith the ink of the pen of a scholar is more precious than the blood of a martyr. The reason being that martyr is engaged in defense work while an alim (scholar) builds individuals and nations along positive lines. In this way he bestows a real life to the world. Islam attaches such great importance to learning that the Quran has this to say: “It is the men of knowledge who can truly realize God.” (35:28)



Teacher education in Pakistan has undergone several structural and policy changes but these appear to be of ‘cosmetic’ nature rather than ‘making a difference’ in teacher education in the country (Farooqui, Memon & Khan, 2009). Raising the concerns about existing pre-service programs in Pakistan, the researchers continued that teacher education is still operating in a technical-rational paradigm to prepare teachers as ‘instructors’ rather than ‘reflective practitioners’. Through pre-service teacher education reforms, emphasis had been on both quality and quantity but somehow quantity remained in the foreground.

In Pakistan, a ten-year school education yields a Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C). After completion of a two-year post-secondary education students get Higher Secondary Certificate (H.S.C) through a dual delivery system- Intermediate Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools. For teacher education program, after Bachelor Degree, students obtain a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree. The B.Ed program contributes to the fifteenth year of education followed by the sixteenth year that yields a Master of Education (M.Ed) degree. A number of B.Ed graduates have their Masters qualifications in various disciplines but Masters Qualification is not the prerequisite for seeking admission to B.Ed and M.Ed programs. The pattern is almost same as in teacher education institutes in India. Apart from regular degree level teacher education courses, there are certificate level courses, namely, P.T.C. and C.T. immediately after schooling. The table below shows the existing pre-service teacher education programs in Pakistan.

Pre-service teacher education programs in Pakistan

Teacher Training Course	Degree/Certificate	Minimum Pre-requisite Qualification	Length of the course	Eligible for teaching
P.T.C	Certificate	S.S.C	1 year	Upto 1-5
C.T	Certificate	H.S.C	1 year	Upto 6-8
B.Ed.	Degree	Bachelor/Master Degree	1 year	Upto 6-12

The National Education Assessment System, Pakistan- NEAS (2008) also indicated a severe quality deficit in schooling system in Pakistan. This quality deficit is mainly attributed to the lack of qualified and well-trained teachers. This also reveals that these one-year teacher education courses such as P.T.C and C.T do not appear to be quality programs preparing quality elementary teachers to develop students’ literacy, numeracy, and life skills including critical thinking, conflict



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resolution, problems-solving and decision-making skills. Likewise, there is a need for bringing about improvement in teacher education program such as B.Ed to prepare upper elementary school teachers. Taking a serious call on the deficits of existing pre-service teacher education programs, the National Education Policy (Pakistan, 2009) recommended that, ‘A Bachelor degree, with a B.Ed, shall be the requirement for teaching at the elementary level. A Masters level for the secondary and higher secondary, with a B.Ed, shall be ensured by 2018. PTC and CT shall 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’ (pp 42-43).

In order to implement this policy imitative, the Government of Pakistan has developed quality assurance mechanism to raise professional standards of teacher education.

Entrusting heavily on its teachers, the Government of Pakistan is committed to improve the quality of teaching. The Policy and Planning Wing of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with UNESCO has implemented Strengthening teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP) project with financial support of the United States Agency for International Development. Under STEP project, “Professional Standards for teachers” have been developed in consultation with stakeholders in all provinces /areas which have been officially adopted by all provinces /areas. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) working in Pakistan has launched a Pre-Service Teacher Education Program (Pre-STEP) to assist Government of Pakistan in its efforts to meet the objectives of the National Education Policy. Pre-STEP focuses on the improvement of pre-service teacher education by developing framework/strategies for the policy action, teacher-educators’ training in 15 universities and 75 government teacher education colleges for technical support and staff development (Fact Sheet, USAID, March 2009). To delineate the vision and objectives of Pre-Step program, it is felt that for improving teacher education in the country, there is need for developing an able leadership cadre in teacher education. Capacity building for the teacher educators is essential. Improvement of pedagogical aspects, science, technology, English and Mathematics and research skills are also important. A proper human resource development and management structure on needs based is also highly desirable in the education sector. (Fact Sheet, USAID, March 2009).

In order to meet the goals set in the National Education Policy (2009) and objectives of the Pre-STEP program, a four-year Bachelor in Education (Honors) teacher education program is being introduced in various universities. It also made several recommendations that include, offering two-year Associate Degree Program of 4 semesters, linking teacher education courses to school realities and developing professional networking among teacher educators .

The above discussion highlights that teacher education systems in both the countries have suffered from a crisis of quality, quantity and relevance though efforts have been made in recent years to raise the standards of teachers preparation courses through policies and practices. As the two



nations are so alike in their educational perspectives yet so diverse in their approaches to education, it would be relevant to develop collated understanding similarity and diversity in teacher education practices in India and Pakistan.

4. REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

“Teachers are the human point of contact with students. All reforms on the quality of education are mediated by who the teacher is and what the teacher does. For better or worse, teacher determines the quality of education (Clark, 1995)”. Palmer (1998) cautioned that “in our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula and revising text books, if we continue to ignore the human resource called the teacher. “ To expand the reach of any reform in education, it is essential to strengthen the teacher education program.

Above discussion highlights the concerns, challenges and survival steps taken through various initiatives in the both regions. In the face of rapid technological and economic developments globally, schools in the region have been under increasing pressure to prepare students who are adaptable to change and empowered to change their environments. Teachers in such learning environments have to take on the more demanding role to provide guidance, strategic support, and assistance to help pupils at all levels to assume increasing responsibilities for their own learning. The demand puts the responsibility on teacher education institutions to prepare teachers who are open to new ideas, new practices, and information to learn how to learn, unlearn and relearn, and to understand and accept the need for change (Lim, Cock, Lock & Brook, 2009).

Since independence of more than 60 years, both India and Pakistan have transverse different paths, India as Sovereign, Democratic, Republic Country and Pakistan, as, Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Still their journeys have many common sharing, the history, the demography and the post-colonial struggle to make their presence felt at global stage.

India and Pakistan are the world’s most populous countries with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, abundant natural and human resources and strategically important geopolitical position. Both countries share common challenges of huge demographical diversity, regional disparity, economical imbalance and socio-cultural disparity. The Constitutions of both the countries direct all states/provinces to provide free and compulsory basic education to all citizens. Working towards to fulfill the constitutional obligation, India has made Education as fundamental right for all children between the age of 06-14 years (RTE, 2010) and Provinces in Pakistan have made several provisions and recommendations to expand primary education. To meet the demand of Education for All, both nations are facing range of similar challenges, namely, large number of out of school children, huge dropout rate, gender disparity, extreme rich and poor divide, child labor, acute shortage of professionally qualified teachers, presence of untrained and under qualified teachers in schools, acute shortage of funds to meet the demand and difficult



demographic locations, are some in the list of many challenges inherited in the system. Both countries are agriculture based economy with more than 70% population living in rural areas. The socio-cultural perspective for both countries demands indigenous practices in education with modern outlook.

As governments of both nations are trying to improve the respective education system, teacher education has received significant mention in the recourse of the education reforms. The countries have marked some of the most ambitious and innovative education reforms to bring the promise in action. Establishing the center of innovation in India, opening an exclusive dedicated National University of Education in Pakistan, screening of already qualified teachers through entrance test to maintain high standards for appointments of teachers, strong public-private partnerships in provinces of Sind and Punjab, teacher incentive programs in provenance of Punjab are a few in the list of many proposed schemes to improve the quality of teaching and expanding the reach of education reforms.

We live in an interdependent world where all our actions affect each other. The world has learnt the lessons of coexistence through shared experiences. Spread of knowledge and intellect has eased the regional boundaries and the entire world has transformed as a global community. There is huge expansion of collaborative partnerships in all spheres of human endeavors.

The trend of cooperation is also visible in often tense relations between India and Pakistan when top scientists from the two countries have agreed to initiate university-level cooperation through exchanges of researchers, students and academics. The unprecedented scientists' 'summit' held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on 18 January included the heads of science academies from both countries who hammered out a plan for collaborative research projects, setting up a system for distance learning, student and academic staff exchange and joint seminars, workshops and conferences as members of the summit strongly felt that "there is wider scope for cross-border cooperation in higher education, science and technology because both India and Pakistan share culture and language and are physically contiguous"(University World News, 20 January, 2012).

The umbrella of cooperation and partnership should be extended to other academic fields including teacher education as high priority area. There are exemplary collaborative research exchanges in many of the European countries. Instead of working in isolated frameworks and struggling with education related problems individually, the countries in Europe are working mutually to share their concerns and lessons learned from each other. The Sigma project is an exemplary partnership of Cross-European study to provide coherent integration, research based knowledge and rich experience with multiple perspectives across member nations. Such partnerships have strengthened the partnerships among multinational groups to establish powerful networks of research and development in teacher education (Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe, 2000).

Teacher education is a research deprived field in India and Pakistan. Research is the backbone of a progressive society. There is an urgent need to develop research and development resource groups



to make the proposed education reforms a success. The pre-service teacher education programs play a crucial role to prepare prospective teachers as changing agents. The field requires cross-cultural research studies to document and analyze reforms in pre-service teacher education programs in the neighboring cohort. It is important to critically look into the pertinent issues in pre-service teacher education such as pedagogical beliefs, theory-practice gap, curriculum and assessment within the educational framework of both the countries. It is of significant relevance for academia of both the countries to look into the current paradigm shifts in the vision of teacher education system in India and Pakistan and to do the comparative analysis of the challenges in meeting the exemplar shifts envisage in various initiatives. It is of significant importance to do a focused investigation in current reforms in teacher education curricula at both policy level and contextual level in India and Pakistan, not only within the comparative framework but also with in the nationally distinctive framework of education.

At this crucial phase, when leadership in India and Pakistan are moving forward for strategic partnership in culture and trade, it would be of significant importance to look into possibilities of educational partnerships between the two nations. It is time to mark the journey of collaborative research and development in teacher education that would contribute to the practices drawn on multiple perspectives and roles for prospective teachers and ongoing professional development of teachers between the two nations.

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