Global Changes and Improving Teacher Education Institutions in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore positive changes resulted from an endeavour to improve teacher education in Pakistan. This paper presents findings of the evaluation of 69 teacher education programs in Pakistan. The researchers examined different aspects based on observations related to curriculum, classroom management, teaching methods and teaching practice on the bases of the opinion of program heads, teacher educators, prospective teachers, alumni and the information related official documents and two or three external evaluators' judgment for each program. Quantitative and qualitative aspects of evidences were observed through multiple sources. Data were analysed using SPSS V22.0 and results were presented in graphical form. Analysis of the data reveals that infrastructure and teacher related matters are stronger as compared to students' understanding and skills development. Prospective teachers should be prepared to face challenges of the digital era. Teaching practice and internships are an integral part of almost all teacher education institutions but teaching practice manual, mentoring and feedback components are not as strong as to fulfil needs of the program. Teachers teach the classes regularly but practice traditional methods of teaching and rare by using appropriate and effective instructional procedures and methods. There is also lack of innovative and relevant pedagogical approaches and strategies to promote analytical/ critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the prospective teachers. Teachers' coordination and cooperation for varied and flexible teaching-learning experiences has not been established. This paper also argues that focus should be shifted from information transfer to understanding, application, skills development and dispositions.

Keywords*:* Teacher education, Teacher training, Curriculum, Classroom management, Teaching practice

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Introduction

The year 2009 is a special year in the history of Teacher Education in Pakistan because two major steps were taken to uplift teacher education programs i.e. four-year B.Ed. the program was introduced and National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in Pakistan were documented and disseminated. Like medical and engineering, the duration of the teaching profession has been increased to enable the new entrants to get training and long experience during studies. All existing programs of teacher education were of one or two years. Those students may take admission in four-year programs of teacher education, which would like to adopt and stay in the teaching profession and would like to develop themselves according to the future needs of the profession.

National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in Pakistan have provided a roadmap for institutions and teacher educators to further improve the performance, output, and quality of their functioning. In view of this context, it was necessary to study trends and developments in teacher education to identify the weak areas and gaps between the present and the expected statuses of the profession.

Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) are working to educate prospective teachers across the country. The quality of the prospective teachers and their competence can be assessed, both directly and indirectly. Prospective teachers can be assessed through standardized tests or classroom performance. The competencies they acquire during teaching practices and learning can be reviewed and evaluated in the context of national and international standards for teacher education. In this study, programs offered by TEIs were evaluated on the components of curriculum development Process, Course and Content, Course Transaction and Classroom Management, Teaching Learning Procedures and Methods, and Teaching Practice.

Literature Review

The role of curriculum in teaching and learning process is vital. It keeps teachers on the track, on one side, and on the other side motivates them to progress and explore new destinations. It provides guidelines for preparing and training of prospective teachers. Curriculum and curriculum development are major concerns of both educators and the government and both have an impact on the development of the community and its prosperity. The curriculum is viewed more than before, as the centre of daily life (DeConinck, 2008). Initially, curriculum is planned and developed with the cooperation of curriculum and subject experts with its alignment to the government policies and planes. All stakeholders are involved for improvements and necessary changes.

In contemporary curriculum process key, stakeholders should be engaged for recommendations (UNESCO, 2009). The stakeholders may vary from discipline to discipline or country to country but for teacher education especially in Pakistan, the major

stakeholders of the curriculum are teacher educators, alumni, employers of teachers and representatives of the society. Views of different stakeholders help to improve the curriculum in different dimensions and make its implementation feasible and closer to the attainment of the objectives. The curriculum is developed for teacher educators' facilitation. Teacher educators disseminate the knowledge and develop skills among prospective teachers. Having such an important position, their experience and feedback can help to reform the curriculum. In short, teacher educators provide opportunities for learning the essential knowledge and offer avenues to improve the required skills (Churyk & Yu. 2015). The alumni are incredible assets of the institutions and emotionally attached to their institutions. They are always willing to work for improvements in their institutions and its programs on the basis of their experience (Churyk & Yu. 2015).

The reforms or changes in the curriculum is a time consuming, costly, sensitive and continues our process. New Curriculum takes time for its implementation. Teachers demand training and new guidelines, students require new materials and Government and publishers have to put more effort for new study materials. Parents and teachers ask for justification of change in the curriculum. Curriculum revision cycle may take at least five to ten years. In these years, curriculum should go through five steps. According to Richards (2001) Step1 is Review: in the review it is checked which current practices are useful and bring changes in students' knowledge, behaviour, and practices as viewed by students, parents and colleagues. New research articles, books are consulted and conferences are also attended for review. Feedback from professional organizations is also appreciated for the purpose of review. The 2nd step is where the curriculum redesigned to align it with quality and standards. It is updated according to the need of time. In the 3rd step, new added topics and activities are taught for testing and checking their results. In the fourth step, new aligned or revised curriculum is implemented and in the last step, new or revised curriculum is evaluated for success and effectiveness (Richards, 2001).

The B.Ed. (4year) curriculum of teacher education programs cover four types of courses: (1) compulsory courses; (2) professional courses; (3) foundation courses; and (4) content courses. Teaching practice is also a part of this program. To complete this degree, students are required 135 credit hours. B.Ed. (4 year) was started to make the teacher education degree compatible with global and international trends. Most of the teachers in the Public institutions had qualifications in B.Ed. (1year) or M.Ed. programs but B.Ed. (4 years) program have many extra courses, which is the horizontal and vertical extension of B.Ed. one-year courses. Teachers and institutions are facing challenges to cope with the new programs, in term of competent teachers for the new and extended courses (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2010).

Availability of Curriculum document in the institutions may be ensured but teacher educators and prospective teachers rarely desire to have it because they think

textbooks are a good source for teaching and preparing for the examination. No doubt, good books enrich the experience and motivation to gain new Knowledge (Chambliss & Calfee, 1998). The textbook is a window through which one can see the outer world. Teacher's experience to use textbook, his personal exposure to real world and students' involvement help in the better use of the book. Record keeping of the course file and attendance is mostly exercised in all the institutions. Teachers are also careful about course plan and its implementation. The most important component of teaching-learning process is interaction among colleagues. Sykes, Bird, and Kennedy (2010) conclude that to resolve any issue or problem, teachers sit together with their knowledge and skills which they bring to the work setting. Fullan (2005) advocated that capacity building encourages one another and builds up best practice with on-going learning. Rosenholtz (1998) encourages cooperation among colleagues in improving learning and development. Teachers' sharing of knowledge and good practices strengthens the performance of the schools (Dougherty & Rutherford, 2009). According to Zeichner (2003) professional development should be based on participation, cooperation of the experienced and skilled teachers.

Teaching-learning procedures and methods are other aspects of teacher education programs. It is media through which teacher educators try to impart their knowledge, skills, and competencies to the prospective teachers. These procedures and methods should be updated and made it effective. Prospective teachers are expected to acquire research and reflective competencies during the programs. Most of the teacher educators use teacher centred procedures and methods without having and giving feedback. They provide exam oriented material and students have to do rote memorization to pass the examination.

Teaching practice is an important component of teacher education programs. Generally speaking, there are some positive and negative issues related to teaching practice. It provides the opportunity to individuals to observe the experienced teachers, to interact with the students, control the class, share ideas with the colleagues and develop contact with school reality. In Pakistani context some prospective teachers lose interest in teaching due to the attitude and behaviour of the school administration, with the un-conducive environment, available facilities, and congested classrooms. There are many problems in selection of schools, pick and drop service, lack of orientation before the teaching practice, delayed or no feedback from the supervisors and lack of coordination among the departments. There is a mismatch between the given subject and the prospective teacher's needs and use of ineffective teaching practice model (Flores, Santos, Fernandes, & Pereira, 2014).

Methodology

For this investigation, these 69 teacher education programs were taken which applied for accreditation to the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education

(NACTE). It included 47(68%) B.Ed. (1year) programs and 22 (32%) B.Ed. (4 year) programs. To evaluate each indicator of the standards, different statements were assessed through different approaches. For past events, official notifications, letters and manuals were assessed. For the transaction of knowledge, classroom observation, interviews of students and teachers were conducted. A team of the three experienced members and competent teacher educators visited the institutions and administered different tools for evaluation. A comprehensive evaluation system was used to rate each statement. Final scores to each statement were awarded on the basis of multiple pieces of evidence.

Instrument

The instrument consisted of 35 items with 4 subscales: curriculum, 17 items; classroom management, 6 items; teaching methods, 5 items and teaching practice, 10 items. Each item was scored on the basis of five resources i.e. documentary proof, an opinion of head of the institution or program, at least three teacher educators, three prospective teachers, three alumni and judgment of two external evaluators. The authenticity of data was ensured through all the relevant and concerned resources.

Sample

The description of the sample TE programs is given below:

Table 1

Description of the sample by province, institute, and Program

Province/ Zone	College				University					
	Public	Private		Army	Public		Private		Army	
	BEd1	BEd1	BEd4	BEd1	BEd1	BEd4	BEd1	BEd4	BEd1	Total
Punjab	2	8	2	2	2	6	0	0	0	22
Sindh	0	4	2	1	2	4	3	0	0	16
Baluchistan	1	5	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	11
KPK	0	3	0	2	2	3	4	0	0	14
AJK	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
ICT	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Gilgit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	4	21	4	5	8	16	8	2	1	69

Table 1 shows the number of teacher education programs across the country and is representative of the population of the country. All provinces are weighted according to their population. Punjab is the most populated province of the Pakistan. Its' population is 101 million and Gilgit is the least populated province and its population is 1.1 million and other provinces are between the two extremes. So, the sample size represented teacher education institutions of all the provinces of Pakistan.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from different sources were used to assign the score to each statement. Each statement was assigned one score on qualifying all relevant evidence otherwise it was scored zero in case of absence of any evidence. The percentage scores were calculated for B.Ed.(1year) and B.Ed.(4year) programs. Percentage scores against each statement indicate that B.Ed.(1year) or B.Ed.(4year) programs qualify out of 100 programs. The data related to the study is presented in the graphs below:
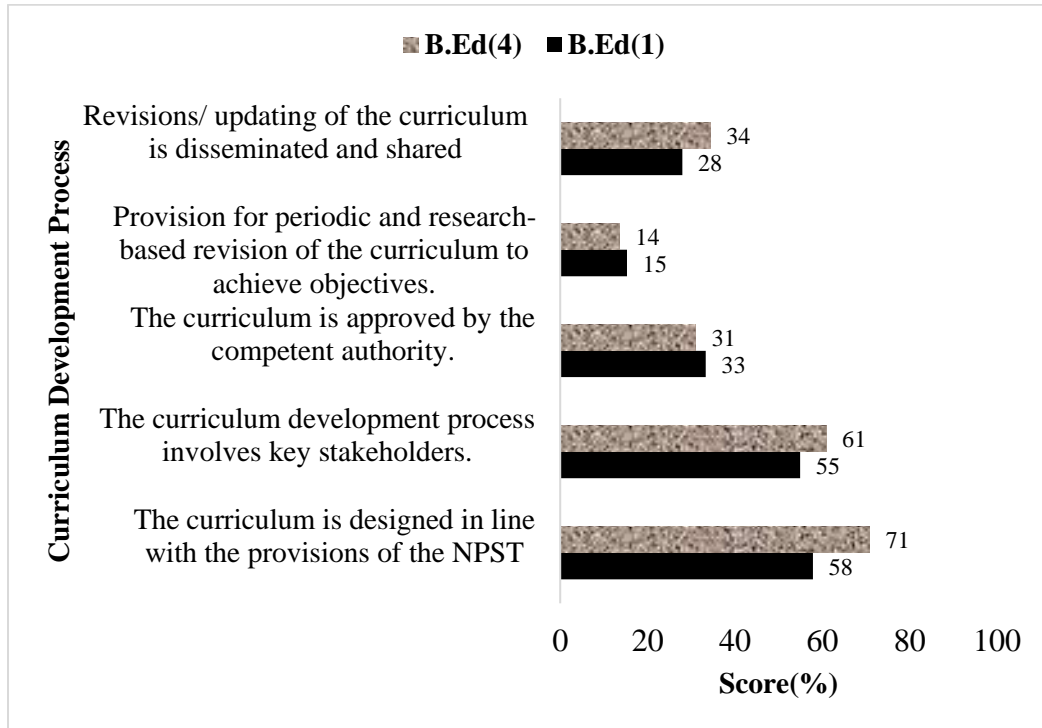
Figure 1: *Score (%) on Curriculum development process of B.Ed. (4) and B.Ed. (1) programs*

Figure 1 reveals different aspects related to B.Ed. (1) and B.Ed. (4) programs' curriculum. The alignment of curriculum with NPST, the involvement of key stakeholders in curriculum development, approval of curriculum by the competent authority, revision of curriculum, and dissemination of curriculum to the concerned stakeholders. All aspects are essential to keep the curriculum effective and updated. In B.Ed. (4) 64% and in B.Ed. (1), 55% programs involved the key stakeholders in the curriculum development process. Only 32% teacher education programs' curriculum area was approved by the competent authority. Only 15% teacher education programs do periodic revision in the curriculum. On the average, 31% institutions disseminate and

share revisions with the key stakeholders. The weakest element related to the curriculum is that it is not revised periodically, especially B.Ed. (1year) which has long history while B.Ed. (4year) has been developed six years before. It may be that sufficient researches are not conducted which could have supported to revise the curriculum. This area needs more attention of the teacher education institutions. Dissemination of revised curriculum to all stakeholders demands more attention.
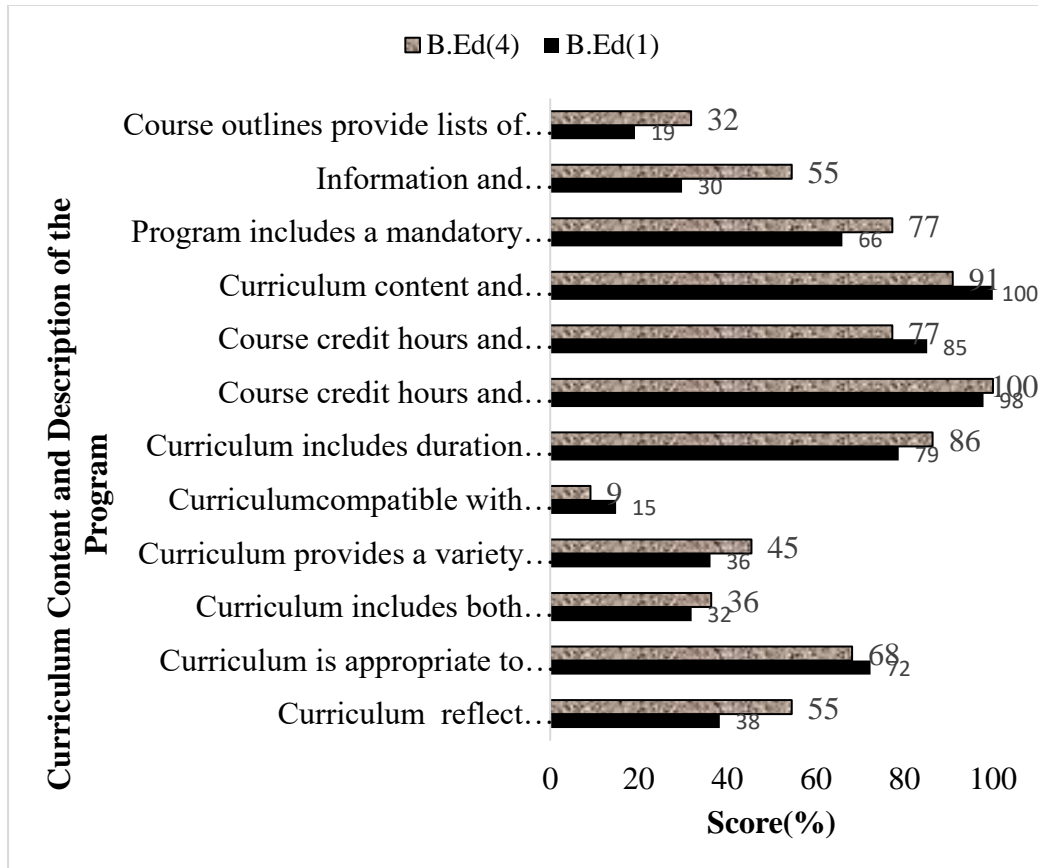

Figure 2: *Score (%) on Curriculum effectiveness of B.Ed. (4) and B.Ed. (1) programs*

The curriculum is not only an official document; it is a path to the destination to produce effective teachers. Curriculum effectiveness can be assessed through the following initiatives: how much is the curriculum helpful to fulfil needs of teachers and their expectations? Whether curriculum has potential to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions? How much is theoretical and practical input is in rest of the curriculum contents? Data disclose significant weaknesses in the curriculum of teacher education

program. Curriculum initiatives can be classified into three categories below: 50%, 50% to 75% and more than 75% of teacher education programs show curriculum effectiveness.

Below 50% effective initiatives were: Curriculum reflected teachers' expectations and concerns, the curriculum included theoretical and practical inputs, a curriculum with the variety of learning experiences, and compatibilities of a curriculum with emerging needs of the society. Information and communication technology is integrated into Curriculum. Fifty percent to 75% effective initiatives were: Relevance of curriculum to develop knowledge, skills and disposition and mandatory courses on the application of the information and communication technology.

More than 75% effective initiatives included: the curriculum includes the minimum duration of the program and course outlines. Curriculums of B.Ed. (1 year) and B.Ed. (4 year) are able to get degree equivalence.
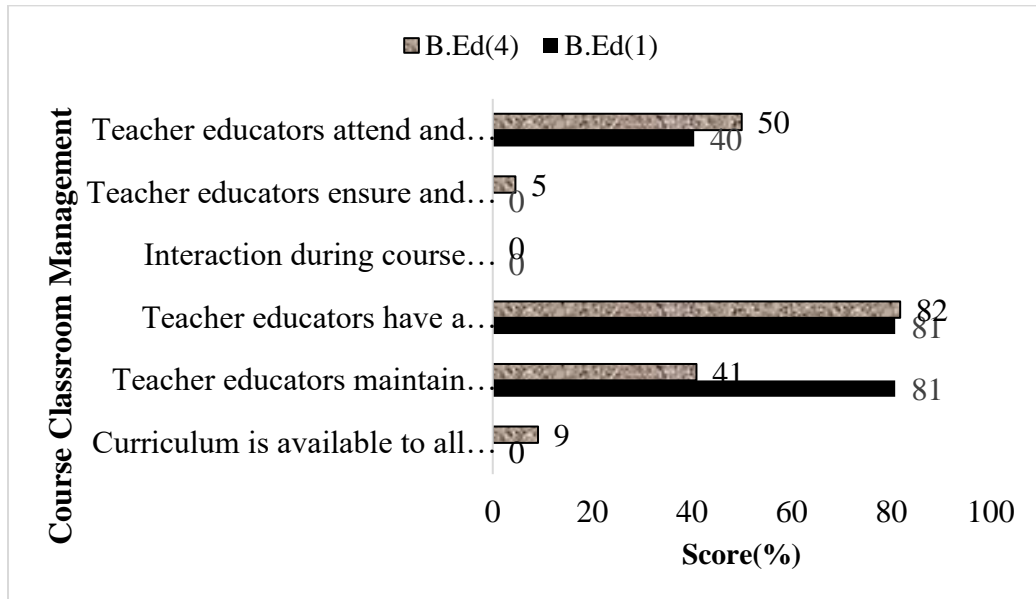

Figure 4: *Score (%) on Course Transaction and Classroom Management of B.Ed. (4) and B.Ed. (1) programs*

Figure 4 shows Percent scores on Course Transaction and Classroom Management of B.Ed. (1) and B.Ed. (4) programs. Data revealed that curriculum documents were not frequently available to all stakeholders in all teacher educations programs. There was no evidence of frequent effective interaction between the teacher

educators and the prospective teachers and even no efforts were initiated by Teacher educators to create an opportunity for interaction.

The 81% B.Ed. (1year) and 41% B.Ed. (4year) teacher educators maintain mandatory course files and prospective teachers' attendance record. Whereas 82% teacher educators of teacher education programs maintain written course plan and follow it.
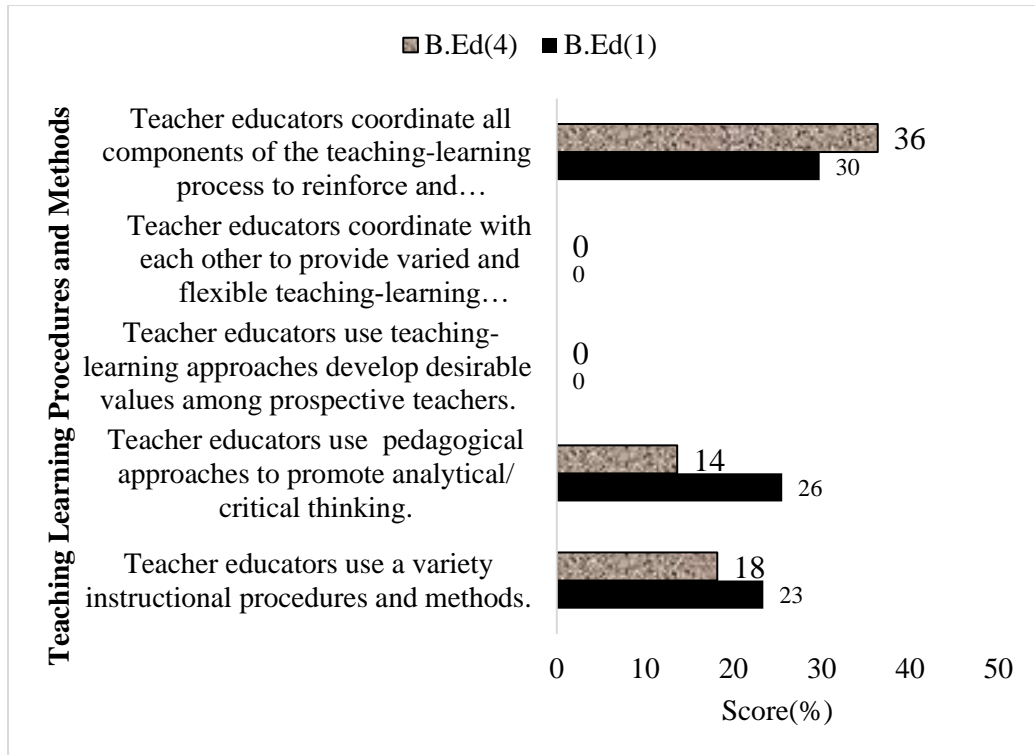

Figure 5: *Scores (%) on Teaching Learning Procedures and Methods of B.Ed. (4) and B.Ed. (1) programs*

Data revealed some alarming perceptions among the prospective teachers that teacher educators were not using any type of strategies to develop desirable values and there was no sharing of experience of teaching and learning among teacher educators. Fourteen Percent B.Ed. (4) and 26% B.Ed. (1) teacher education programs use pedagogical approaches to promote analytical and critical thinking. Only 18% B.Ed. (4) and 23% B.Ed. (1) teacher education programs used a variety of instructional procedures and methods in the classroom. However, 36% B.Ed. (4) and 30% B.Ed. (1) teacher

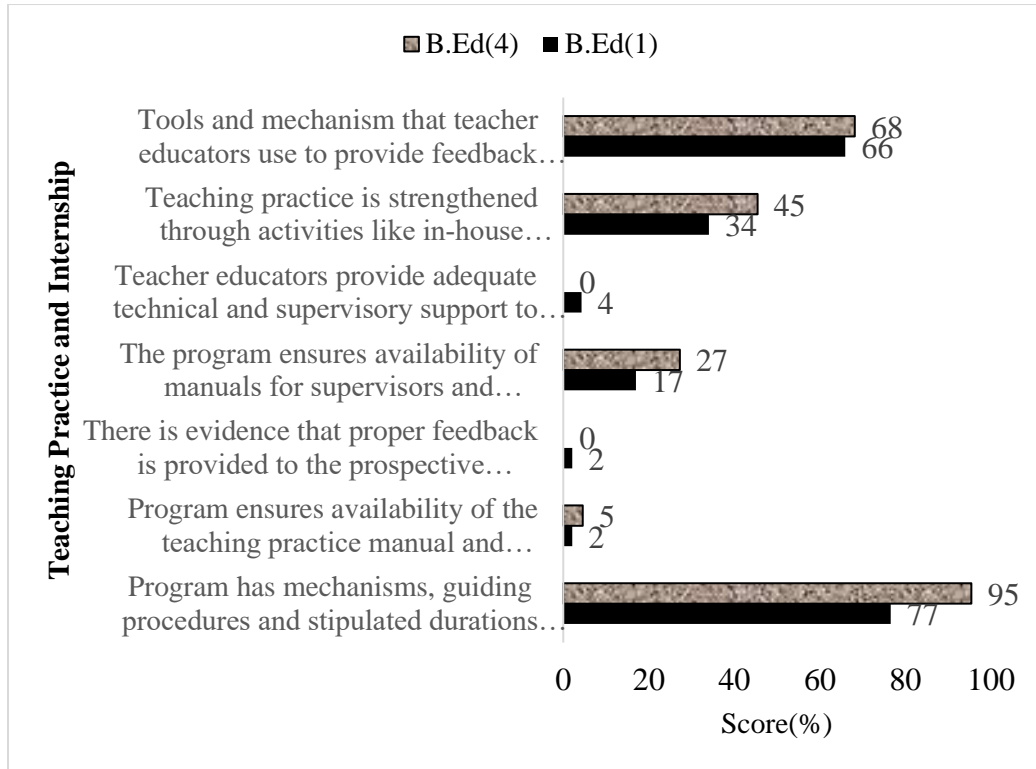educators coordinated all components of the teaching-learning process to reinforce and complement each other.

Figure 6: *Scores (%) on teaching practice and internship of B.Ed. (4) and B.Ed. (1) programs*

Data indicated that almost all programs had procedures and stipulated durations for teaching practice/internship and mechanism for teacher educators used to provide feedback to prospective teachers on their teaching and conduct during the teaching practice.

A few institutions have teaching practice manual and planner for prospective teachers, proper feedback regarding their teaching practice and internship, few programs had manuals for supervisors, cooperative teachers and facilitators to provide adequate technical and supervisory support to the prospective teachers doing their practice/internship in the cooperative schools. For strengthening the practice teaching in-house orientations, simulated practice and microteaching also were missing from many programs.

Discussion

The focus of the study was on four important components of teacher education i.e. curriculum, classroom management, teaching methods and teaching practice. These are pillars of teacher education system. For discussion, all issues can be summarised into three areas; Bottom line areas, middle areas, and better areas. The bottom line issues are those which have not yet been initiated and need the sound strategy and plan for initiation.

Curriculum documents were not available to all key stakeholders; seminars and meetings were not conducted to align curriculum with the national professional standards for teachers. Frequent interaction within and outside the class between teacher educators and prospective teachers was not encouraged. Teacher educators were not using teaching-learning approaches to develop desirable values among the prospective teachers. Teacher educators did not coordinate with each other for sharing teacher learning experiences. Teaching practice manuals were not developed in most of the teacher education institutions and no supervisory and technical support was provided to the prospective teachers. There was no proper mechanism for feedback on prospective teachers learning and performance. The curriculum content was not compatible with the changing and emerging needs of the society. There was no provision for periodic and research-based revision of the curriculum to achieve the stated objectives effectively. Course outlines did not provide lists of websites and recommended books of recent editions for each course. Most of the Teacher educators did not use a variety of appropriate and effective instructional procedures and methods. Teacher educators were not using innovative and relevant pedagogical approaches and strategies to promote analytical/ critical thinking and problem-solving skills among the prospective teachers. The revisions/ updates of the curriculum were less disseminated and shared with the concerned Teacher Education Institutions.

The curriculum was approved by the competent authority. Teaching practice was strengthened through activities like in-house orientations, simulated practice, and microteaching. The curriculum content provided a variety of learning experiences in the institution and in the practicing school. The curriculum content was inclusive enough to effectively reflect and include the concerns and expectations of a teacher. Teacher educators attended to and facilitated the resolution of difficulties faced by the prospective teachers in their learning process. The curriculum development process involved the key stakeholders.

The curricula were designed in line with the provisions of the national professional standards for teachers. The programs included mandatory courses on the application of Information and Communication Technology. There were prescribed tools and mechanisms that teacher educators used to provide feedback to the prospective teachers in their teaching. The program had mechanisms, guiding procedures and stipulated durations for teaching practice/internship. The curriculum document included

duration of the program (number of years, semesters and credit hours) and course outlines. Teacher educators maintained mandatory course files and prospective teachers' attendance record. There was evidence that the teacher educators had a written course plan and they followed it. The course credit hours and duration of concurrent degree program was equal to relevant and equivalent degrees. The course credit hours and duration of the program met the minimum requirements of the Higher Education Commission. The curriculum content and duration of program /courses were compatible with each other.

Data revealed some mismatch between curriculum standards and the National professional standards of teacher education. Fifty-eight percent B.Ed. (1) and 71% B.Ed. (4) curriculum had alignment with the national professional standards for teachers. Inconsistency and lack of coherence in the curriculum of teacher education programmes of Pakistan were observed in many studies (Mahmood, 2014; Memon, 2007; Kanu, 2005). The major agents of teacher education are still not active. As a result, no significant change at school level is observed. According to Memon (2007), many educational reforms in teacher education were initiated in public schools but their area was limited. "Teaching techniques such as group work, problem-solving, and activity approaches are lectured about, but are not practiced by the trainers. The trainees are not involved in any of the activities or practical work suggested in the syllabi. As a consequence, the student teachers go to their classrooms and teach exactly the way they were taught" (USAID, 2007 p.7).

Any program for human training and development has some infrastructure and logistics to ensure its success and existence. Houses have some infrastructure but the transition from house to home require some life and life events. Teacher education programs are houses but a lot of effort, wisdom, and commitment are required to convert them into sweet homes. The condition of teacher education programs in Pakistan has been gradually on a decline for many decades. There are big investments and personalities but there is no productive and innovative initiative and no link with real school life and its ongoing practices. Major problems of Teacher education in Pakistan are lack of consistent policy, inconsistencies in curriculum, lack of resources, incompetent and irrelevant teachers, traditional and ineffective teaching process (The British Council, 1988, Farooq, 1994; Ali, 2006; Saeed, 2007; Haider, 2008; Bilal & Khan, 2012, Mahmood, 2014).

Conclusion

The evaluation of teacher education programs is based on multi-sources and evidences. It is for the first time in the history of Pakistan, that data was gathered through reliable, relevant and authentic resources. After the collection process, data were shared with the concerned teacher education programs to check any inconsistency. However, where subjectivity was involved, it was reduced using multiple sources. The qualifying scores were awarded on the basis of evidence.

After the development of the curriculum, the curriculum was approved by competent authorities; Curriculum revision and curriculum dissemination were not planned systematically and carried out without commitment and periodic expectations. Teachers teach the classes regularly but practice traditional methods of teaching and rarely use appropriate and effective instructional procedures and methods. There is need to inculcate new teaching approaches for developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among the prospective teachers. Teachers' coordination and cooperation for varied and flexible teaching-learning experiences were not established. Teaching practice and internship play very important role in training and improving prospective teachers, work performance and for the teacher educators to get feedback on their practices. Teaching practice and internships are the permanent part of all teacher education institutions but teaching practice manual, mentoring/monitoring, and feedback components were not strong enough to give the desired results.

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