

QUALITY OF TEACHING & LEARNING AT DIRECTORATE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT (DSD) IN THE PUNJAB PROVINCE: PRACTICES AND PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT: *Quality in school education has been a debate since decades in Pakistan and it still remained a question unresolved with almost no viable solutions at present or for the future. However, a ray of hope beamed through this darkness when the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) was restructured and mandated to address the issue of quality by improving the quality of teachers. DSD coordinated well with the provincial School Education Department, PESRP/ PMIU, District Education Departments, national & international NGOs and UN agencies to seek technical and financial assistance to execute the quality plans; CPD framework. The DSD revamped its pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes and trainings to address the quality concern among the existing teachers and the prospective ones as well as those attending some teacher education programme. Meanwhile the DSD got itself certified by the ISO 9001-2008 and developed Quality Management System (QMS) to carry out all its programmes and initiatives in line with the Quality System Manual, a guideline to successfully manage the in-house and field capacity building initiatives for teachers and education managers. DSD is also capitalizing on accreditation services being provided by NACTE and improving quality of the pre-service education and has convinced the Punjab Government to legislate teachers' licensing and certification to enhance the quality of teachers which will eventually impact overall quality of teaching and learning in public and private sector schools in the Punjab.*

INTRODUCTION:

Quality is defined as “the characteristics of a product that meet the stated or implied need” and also “conforms to the requirements” [1]. The quality has also been referred to fitness for use, zero defects, customer satisfaction and the degree of excellence (Wayne, 1983 and other quality gurus of different ages) [2]. Similarly quality assurance is defined as planned and systematic review of procedures and processes to see whether it went as was intended with reference to the pre-set criteria or standards [3]. It is worthwhile to state that quality assurance is different from the terms quality control and quality improvement/ enhancement. Quality assurance informs us about the existing status of any product or procedure against some pre defined standards; while quality control refers to the controls on the procedures to continue maintaining the quality as per the quality enhancement or improvement plan [4].

To assure the quality of the products, the corporate sector uses different quality assurance models as “total quality management (TQM)”, Lean, Six Sigma and Lean-six Sigma. Quality management system (QMS) is a process normally adopted under TQM to assure the quality of the products through a systematic approach involving planning, modeling, designing, implementing, controlling, reviewing, evaluating and re-planning the processes.

The concept of Quality Assurance in education was actually borrowed from the corporate sector and was implemented in the higher education first. Now it is being used widely by many universities. Krishna Kumar, and Padma M. Sarangapni, (2004) [5] in “History of the quality debate” state that the term quality in education was first used in 1950 and captured substantial space in educational debates and discourses from 1960 onwards. The Universities in the USA and the UK started using the term and adopted procedures to assure the quality of higher education programmes to attract off shore students and respond equally well to the

manufacturing industry especially when the technological advancements started taking place at a higher pace.

It was formalized when ISO 9001 issued its standards for education and universities queued up to get themselves certified to survive and to excel in the fast growing education industry. Evaluation, assessment and assurance of the academic quality is intrinsic to higher education[6].

European foundation for quality management (EFQM) was formed in the UK which used the TQM approach for quality assurance in the higher education institutions in Europe. Accreditation and licensing approaches were also used for this purpose. [7] Harvey (2004) stated that Europe is keen towards accreditation.

Different institutions have started adhering to the quality models either through external evaluations or by managing the quality through internally developed standards. In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission has established Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which is responsible for quality assurance interventions in the higher education institutions. It has instructed all the chartered universities to establish Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) so as to take care of the internal preparations for programs' and institutional accreditation processes.

At the same time, quality assurance in school education has also been started in Pakistan. The Punjab Province in particular has responded enthusiastically to the international and national drives towards the catchphrase of quality in situations where the quantity of education is still a challenge for the nation.

Rationale:

Although the higher education commission has responded really well to the call for quality assurance in educational institutions but the overall quality of education can only be addressed if the school education and teacher education follow the same path with the same fervor as HEC has embarked upon. It is rather easy to evaluate a programme

offered by some university but the same becomes a little difficult when it comes to the school education where thousands of schools operate to provide education to the children of different age groups. The number of schools has restricted the doable solutions for the quality in schools and school education. Nevertheless, the need as well as the debate continue to address the quality of education at school level in Pakistan.

The efforts continue after a formal start was made towards assurance of quality in school education back in the early years of the 21st century. The initiative was planned to provide quality solutions to around 57,418 public sector schools in the Punjab Province [8] (retrieved from schoolportal.punjab.gov.pk/schoolcensusNew.htm). The Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) was declared responsible for enhancing the teacher quality which was considered the center of the overall quality of school education. The decision was wise one as the initiative addressed the issue of quality in the school education through revamping teacher education; both at pre-service and in-service levels. The DSD was restructured and funded appropriately to take a lead in this venture. DSD, being a department attached to school education was mandated with quality assurance targets and empowered to achieve its aims. Forthcoming discussion takes account of the DSD as a successful model and the quality initiatives taken to assure the quality of school education.

Objective:

To analyze the quality assurance initiatives formalized by the DSD in school education in the Punjab Province."

The research paper analyzes the initiatives taken to assure the quality of teaching and learning in school education in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. The paper takes account of the quality statement/ or quality objective of the department, what are the quality assurance frameworks and which department takes lead to implement the quality assurance framework in the Punjab. The paper also discusses the lead department as a case study. Following are key parameters of the quality and quality assurance discussed in this paper in relation to the DSD as an institution responsible for the quality in school education in the Punjab province:

1. Conceptual framework of quality of education, quality assurance and quality objectives, and
2. Governance structure supporting implementation of quality assurance initiatives to enhance the quality of education in the Punjab province.

The DSD (directorate of staff development) is an apex institution and a department attached to School Education Department (SED) of the Punjab province and is responsible for managing the quality assurance initiatives. The DSD and the initiatives are discussed and analyzed in detail in the paper to find out the efficacy of the quality assurance initiative that may be of some use to strengthen the said framework.

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

The concept of quality is inherent to DSD and can be traced back to years when it was established in 1959 as an education extension center (EEC). Key functions of the EEC were to work as change agent to enhance the quality of

education. The aim of the quality of education was to be achieved through several interventions focusing primarily on the teachers and their capacity to teach. The EEC continued to work to build small scale models in building capacity of teachers till 1994 when it was named as DSD (directorate of staff development) with almost similar mandate.

A major shift in the role of the DSD occurred when the DSD was restructured and brought under the administrative control of the University of Education (UoE) during year the 2002. It was again made independent in 2004 with major internal structural changes while the academic control remained with the UoE. The academic control comprised curriculum, programme planning, implementation, review and the programme assessments [9].

The DSD's role and functions underwent strategic changes and it was empowered to take the lead, plan and execute initiatives relating to the development and strengthening of teachers of both public and private sectors. It was interesting to note that teachers' development was considered as the sole channel to rely on for the assurance of the quality of teaching and learning in the school education.

The DSD's strategic framework (vision and mission) was reworked so as "to develop a knowledgeable, committed, motivated, competent and ethically sound cadre of educational personnel to deliver top quality education to the students in government schools of the Punjab province."

The said vision is to be pursued by The following steps:

1. Establishing a quality management system (QMS), for the professional development for teachers and education personnel that conforms to the vision statement
2. The QMS will help devise quality assurance steps to guide the DSD's work to enhance quality teaching and learning
3. The quality assurance steps may involve developing standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all initiatives

The above stated strategic framework and the means to pursue the vision is based on quality management system (QMS) which is the only workable channel as prescribed by the ISO 9001-2008.

It is worthwhile to deliberate that the DSD [10]

(information can be retrieved from

<http://www.dsd.edu.pk/pages/contents/46>), after formulating the strategic framework based on the quality principles, got it certified by the ISO 9001-2008 during the year 2011 confirming that the quality is central to DSD's work.

In order to implement the QMS and pursue the quality vision, DSD's quality assurance department has taken several initiatives to carry out and perform activities that are meaningful and guided by the concrete principles of quality conforming to the requirements of a large number of clients; the state and the wider society who demand relevant quality education compatible with the global market and produces productive citizens. The quality assurance department has developed a comprehensive "Quality System Manual, (QSM)" that guides the path defined by the quality principles.

The QSM follows the model where the customer is central. It addresses:

1. Customers’ Requirements, and
2. Customers’ Satisfaction,

Where the customer is 1) The Government of the Punjab, 2) The trainers and the 3) The trainees. The Government of the Punjab requires the DSD to produce high quality trainers that are able to satisfy the training needs of hundreds of thousands of teachers in public and private sector schools who will eventually create an environment which is conducive for effective teaching and learning. “Inputs” are argued within the system (QMS) as raw material and rudiments while the “*professional development*” is a product, an output that conforms to the customer satisfaction. Inputs have been given the due weight and substantive space with the following essential parameters:

No	Parameters	Quality Management .in.. Details
1	Management Responsibility	Management commitment is the core while focus is on “the trainers and the trainees” by adhering to the “Quality Policy”. Management has also a clear role and responsibilities with authority and communication rules. Management review with regards to the inputs and outputs is central to the management responsibility.
2	Resource Management	Provision of resources; human, infrastructure and environment are core functions under the resource management process. Human resource is further emphasized aiming at competence, awareness and training.
3	Process of Professional Development Training	The process includes planning, design of the courses/ curricula, and the process of conducting the trainings. The parameter provides precise information about the purchase and acquisition which is cross cutting to the entire process and has to be followed at all stages of professional development trainings.
4	Evaluation, analysis and improvement	Monitoring & evaluation, control of non conformance, data analysis, and improvement are among the key ingredients. M&E clients include the trainers, the trainees and the students. The process requires the prescribed tools to collect and analyze the data. Focus on improvement is continual, corrective and preventive.

According to the “Quality System manual” [11], the DSD has developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all the parameters and stages argued earlier. The staff involved in trainings is well equipped to manage all the processes required to train the trainees. The Satisfaction of the trainers and the trainees has been central to the planners and reviewers and corresponds to the quality as well and is embedded in all the tools and instruments.

The DSD has also started ranking of Government College for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) [12] and has revealed the ranking results for years 2010-2011 through the key performance indicators (KPIs). This is really a good step ahead towards building competitive environment between the teacher education and training institutions in the Punjab. Areas selected for ranking include, 1) administration, 2) academic, 3) institutional plan, 4) professional development, 5) finance, 6) HRM, 7) co-curricular activities, 8) Lab School and 9) Visit remarks by the DSD officers. These are broad areas, each having multiple KPIs (indicators) with a particular weight and the data against each KPI is gathered at set time intervals.

The DSD is managing both pre-service & in-service education and training:

1. Pre-service education of Prospective Teachers in 33 GCETs all over the Punjab through professional pre-service courses and programmes e.g B.Ed, M.Ed, MA Education etc.

2. Induction level trainings for the newly recruited teachers and Educational managers
3. In-service training/ professional development for the teachers and educational managers

The DSD, to assure quality of teaching & learning, has introduced a (Continuous Professional Development) CPD Framework for Primary School Teachers (PSTs). The framework aims at improving the student learning and corresponds to the quality standards through:

1. Awards, incentives and accountability,
2. Short courses, education & training/ professional development activity, and
3. Degree courses.

Teachers are provided with follow up & support through:

1. Mentoring and follow up activities by the expert trainers and facilitators
2. Materials and distance education programmes

The CPD framework is further strengthened by

No	Quality assurance initiatives	Current status/ Progress
1	Teacher’s licensing and certification	The Punjab Government has agreed to initiate licensing for teachers. ¹
2	Accreditation	Of teacher education programmes/ courses by NACTE (national accreditation council for teacher education)
3	Assessment/ ACRs	Underway as was in the past
4	National Professional Standards for teachers (NPST)	Developed and being used in collaboration with the UNESCO

It is pertinent to mention that the DSD’s quality framework is being implemented in full spirit together with the District Education Departments, PITE, GCETs and the District Governments. The programme is financially supported by the World Bank, GIZ, Asian Development Bank, Unicef and UNESCO through PESRP (Punjab Education Sector Reforms programme) in addition to the resources provided by the Government of Punjab [13].

CONCLUSION:

Concluding notes are underneath:

- DSD has come up as a strong institution responsible for the quality assurance of teaching and learning through building professional capacity of the teachers of public and private sectors. It has concrete institutional foundations and is certified by ISO 9001-2008.
- DSD has a well developed quality assurance plan being executed under the guiding principles of quality management system (QMS).
- The quality assurance plan and the QMS, through Quality System Manual, provides standard guidelines and procedural way-forward to carry out the in-house and field training to enhance the professional capacities of the teachers and educational managers.
- DSD is well connected with school education department (SED), PESRP, District Education Departments, national and international NGOs, UN agencies so as to coordinate and execute activities in the true spirit as enshrined in the quality principles.

- DSD is capitalizing well on the existing initiatives e.g. utilizing national professional standards for teachers as well as the accreditation of teacher education programmes through NACTE to enhance the delivery of pre-service teacher education courses/ degree programmes.
- DSD has well knitted plans towards licensing of teachers and has already sought agreement of the Punjab Government. All the existing and new teachers will be required to obtain license for teaching to become eligible for teaching in public or private sector institutions.

Acronyms:

ACRs	Annual Confidential Reports/ Review
B.Ed	Bachelors in Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DSD	Directorate of staff development
EEC	Education Extension Center
EFQM	European foundation for quality management
GCET	Government College for Elementary Teachers
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit; German INGO
HEC	Higher Education Commission
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
M.Ed	Masters in Education
NACTE	National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPST	National Professional Standards for Teacher
PESRP	Punjab Education Sector Reforms Programme
PITE	provincial Institute for Teacher Education
PMIU	Project Management & Implementation Unit
PSTs	Primary School Teachers
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QECs	Quality Enhancement Cell

QMS	Quality Management System
QSM	Quality System Manual
SED	School Education Department
SOPs	Standard Operating procedures
TQM	Total Quality Management
UMT	University of Management and Technology
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational Scientific Cultural Organization
Unicef	United Nations' Children Fund
UoE	University of Education

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