

Teacher Training Education Programme in Three Muslim Countries- Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan

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Abstract

The main objective of the present article is to shed some lights on teacher training education programme in the context of three Muslim countries namely Islam Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan after reviewing some relevant erstwhile studies. The findings reveal that all countries under the study are under resourced particularly Afghanistan followed by Pakistan. However, in Afghanistan over all education system is miserable comparing to the education system to the other studies in particular and region in general. Alongside, economic, cultural and social problems cannot be ignored. In the light of findings of this study, it is suggested that the policy makers of all three countries should plan appropriate and right policy in order to promote education. It is further advised that adequate teacher training must be arranged to prepare skilled and proficient teacher which will consequently improve student performances. Sound policies will not only help to achieve the Millennium Development Goal but will certainly play decisive role in the enhanced level of socio and economic conditions of these countries.

Keywords: Education, teacher training programme, problems, 3-Muslim countries
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Introduction

Education plays an essential role to set economic, social and moral values of any nation and has a very durable effect on ideas, beliefs and arrangement of future strategies of any country.

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Education encourages creative opportunities for the socially and economically poor sections of society largely. Therefore, education is the greatest important issue which plays a leading role in human resource development. The philosophy of education pressures on a learning method through which knowledge, experience and skills are conveyed from one generation to another generation. The credit goes to teacher where through their love and forgoes has shown us the correct path in which great men have created our nation. It is through our dear teachers who polish our personality our character, and shows us the right path which leads us to our last destination. Without a teacher's growth knowledge arriving can be likened to an eyeless man walking without his stick. Teacher is a representative of the society who teaches moral principles. Both knowledge and morals would suffer without teachers; nobody can have a power more deep than that of a teacher. Through teacher's love and care, students are deeply pretentious his personality, his capability, and his ethical commitment.

Unquestionably, education is intently associated to the social welfare and standard of living of the society. Perhaps, education played an imperious role in the enlargement of economic and social condition of the developed societies, where less developed countries left behind due to the deficiency of appropriate desirable education. Numerous previous studies discovered about the relation between education and living standard of the individuals, for example Lochner and Moretti (2004) described that education is an essential right of all individuals and it accompanying with several other benefits contains smallest crime levels. The studies of Azam and Khattak (2009) and Azam and Ather (2010) measured human capital by school enrollment and found that it has positive relationship with overall national economic development of the country.

The study of Shahmohammadi (2012) reveals that indeed teachers are called nation-builders. The role of teacher in every country, in every era, and in every society is of great prominence. It has been observed that in the past, a teacher was cogitated as a vital source of knowledge, but today this view is somehow vary. Generally, the predominant role of teacher for the purpose to contribute to the development of a society in indispensable.

In this regard, teachers are required to acquire and improve their professional skills, through a variety of both formal and informal teacher training Programme.

The term of professional development covering different types of opportunities and experiences that are systematically planned to encourage the development and evolution of the teacher. Moreover, teacher education provides an imperative link between a nation's institutions of higher learning and the public, they are proposed to serve of the society. Explicitly, the advantages and benefits of higher education to the mainstream of the population are largely transmitted by the skilled and proficient teacher who is a product of this higher education in any country.

Research on comparative education is highly imperative and it helps to reduce the gap and at the results it will increase quality of education largely. According to Bereday (1964), comparative education was an interdisciplinary area of study centered around a geographical perspective of education. The Bereday's model includes on four main stages of analysis namely description, collection of pedagogical facts; interpretation, the analysis of the facts by the methods of different social sciences; juxtaposition, introductory comparison of facts; and simultaneous comparison, the final synthesis of the facts with equally collected data from other countries with aim of comparison. These stages are known mechanics of analysis. The study of Rust (2002) indicated that the term comparative study has been unsuccessful, because mostly knowledge is comparative in nature. The studies of Hwang (1996) has shown that several earlier studies display that training of teachers education programme may be comparatively ineffective in preparing competent teachers for classroom teaching. However, some other studies revealed that the prime objective of teacher training programs is to improve teachers' practice of their pedagogical knowledge and acquaintance with desirable teaching methods (Begle, 1979; Goldhaber & Brewerm, 2000). In as study Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage (2005) shown that prospective teachers required relevant information on certain subject content and the learning context additionally to general teaching skills.

After reviewing many of articles by Adamson (2012) the study exposed that units of analysis covered by the field of comparative education comprise are: assessment, cultures, curricula, economics of education, educational organizations, governance and accountability, educational achievements, international indicators, ideologies, goals and purposes of education, locations, language in education, policies and policymaking processes, social equity and access to education, systems, student performance, teacher education and professionalism, times, values, conflict resolution and citizenship, ways of knowing and learning, and ways of teaching.

The study concluded by recommending a potential future agenda for international comparisons, one that follows answers to the indigenous challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) by looking for solutions external. The study of Ali and Parveen (2013) mentioned that teachers' professional education is as one of the decisive element in purifying of students' learning activity. Numerous developed and developing countries gave relatively more consideration to stimulate the practices of teacher education up to large extent. Therefore, to promote and enhance capable trained teachers, the state need to formulate right policy for which efforts are required to establish good teacher training institutions, consequently quality of education will be improved largely.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the crossroads of central Asia, attaching India, Asia, and the Middle East, and throughout its history, has had worrying reigns in the world. Numerous nations have had maintains on Afghanistan as a nation, and have battled brutally to gain rule over it. History reveals that Afghanistan is one of the utmost underprivileged nations of the world. During the 8 and 9 century, Islam was brought to Afghanistan by the Arabs. The nation had been governed by several Persian, Greek, Sassanian and Central Asian empires. Factually the Pashtun nationality has been the most influential and dominant nation in Afghanistan. The term Afghan, for example, usually is regarded by other peoples in the country to refer to the Pashtuns nation. The royal families of the country were Pashtun, and nowadays the Pashtun denote around 50% of the total Afghanistan population. Whereas, Tajiks come in second with 25%, and the rest considerably lesser in percentages (*Ritscher, 2012*). The World Population Statistics (2013) shown that the existing population of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is recorded to be almost 31.11 million people, which is an increase of about 4.4% from the last census obtained.

The current population figures of Afghanistan are marginally larger than the population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but lesser than the Iraqi population.

Education in Afghanistan is demonstrated on the American education system; it includes K-12 and higher education, and is administered by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education. Afghanistan has been going through a national reconstruction procedures since 2002 and despite of some hindrance though the education sector is improving steadily.

The education system suffered extremely and several circumstances still make the education process difficult for many Afghans people, for example Violence, Teacher's credentials, An extremist curriculum, Infrastructure, Women's Education and Education against all odds. The main characteristic, developing problems, prominent structures of Afghanistan teacher education including current challenges are as follows. In Afghanistan majority of teachers in the country do not meet the official needs as a teachers and also the shortage of quality teachers training is one of the major fact which resulted in poor instructional quality in the classrooms. Pre-service training is cracked and out-of-date, subject specialists are not fortified, and current short-term in-service training interferences have had partial influence. Perhaps presently employed half of the teachers would not be capable to pass the examinations that are given to their students. Another major problem is low level of teacher salaries. Average teacher's salary is USD 74 per month while this is likely to increase as part of implementation of overall public administration reforms (UNESCO, 2008).

Moreover, the UNESCO (2008) highlighted that over the coming five years, the foundation of a teacher education programme in Afghanistan would be developed where pre-service teacher training facilities would also be provided in every province in order to promote quality education in the country. Qualified male and female teachers in the rural areas of the country should be enhanced largely. The report further added that attractive incentives for those Afghan teachers who working in other countries like Pakistan and Iran should be arranged, so that they would have to be returned to their homeland so they will also contribute to the quality education in their own country and they must job in their country. On the central level the government will authorize a national Teacher Training Institute(TTI). It stresses will be on training teachers for the provincial Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). Similarly, it will also provide direction for all provincial TTCs and will be prepared with internet and audio-visual facilities. The Ministry plans to construct new facilities.

The TTCs will provide the main support for pre-service teacher training. All TTC will be prepared with a training centers, library, science laboratories, administrative buildings, video, internet, audio-visual and radio equipment's and conferencing facilities. The government of Afghanistan formulated plan for improving education system and committed to achieve the Millennium development goal for education by 2020.

In March 2011, Afghanistan comes to be a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) developing country partner. This success is seen as a critical event in the development of the education sector in Afghanistan. It represents an important international advocacy of the policies and volume of the government of Afghanistan to attain the EFA goals. The programme goals that 55 districts in 13 provinces due to high rates of poverty, harsh terrain, remoteness, insecurity, low population density, and conservative social attitudes, mostly towards the education of girls. The GPE Programme of Afghanistan agrees four programme precedence derived from the National Education Plan, i.e., Strengthening of community and governance systems at the local level, Expanding and reinforcing pathways to education, Increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities and Streamlining policy and administrative systems in the Ministry of Education.

Afghanistan is the fifteenth least developed country in the world, and grieves from ongoing violence. Between 2001 and 2010, primary enrolment rates increased from about one million to 7 million students. In 2013, the education minister requests US\$ 3 million foreign aid received from USAID for the building of about eight thousand extra schools to meet the increasing enrolment demands in the country. The National Strategic Plan for Education in Afghanistan planned that in 2020 a new curriculum will be running in all secondary schools; female teachers will be increased by 50%; excluding enrolment rates for primary schools for boys and girls of at least 60% and 75% respectively; and at least 70% of Afghanistan's teachers will have passed a proficiency test and a system for evaluating learning success will be in place.

Global Giving Foundation (2013) reported that low education levels in teaching in Afghanistan resulted by rote memorization and dictation. In practice, Afghanistan's education system has traditionally depended on teaching methods of rote memorization and dictation. Though, school enrollment has been poor on one hand and dropout rates have been high on the other hand. It is evident that literacy rate in Afghanistan has one of the world's lowest.

As Afghanistan restructures its education system in the aftershock of war, teachers who have not used their skills in decades should be equipped with further appropriate training and must learn contemporary methods of teaching that improve critical thinking and other cognitive skills central to learning and consequently student achievement will enhanced.

Therefore, relatively more efforts are required in Afghanistan in order to improve quality of education through quality trained teachers in the country.

In a report Carberry and Faizy (2013) shown that there are some causes of the low literacy rate and poor enrollment in Afghanistan which include: *First-* cultural and economic obstacles. In Afghanistan boys are not going school because they are working. Majority families of Afghanistan are live in poverty; therefore, they cannot afford to send their kid to school. Afghan children attend class in a tent in one province of west of Kabul namely Bamiyan. It reveals that there are shortages of school building which are prerequisite for quality education. The report maintains that in more than 166 districts of Afghanistan out of 416, there is no a single female teacher. *Second* problem is lack of classrooms and books. *Third* obstacle is recruiting qualified trained teachers, where almost 300,000 student graduate from high school every year; they are competing for 60,000 openings in colleges as well as vocational and teacher training programs in Afghanistan. Thus, trained and skilled teacher in Afghanistan is one of the visible problems in the country.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Republic of Iran is a new nation with a lengthy cultural and tradition history. However, it faces several problems in the social and cultural of its people in the country. Where, one of the utmost of these problems, both in significance and in scope, is the enhancement of its educational system in order to meet the needs of young generation involved in the process of comprehensive and inclusive reform includes economic, social, and political (Shahmohammadi, 2012). According to the report of UNESCO (2008) the main characteristic, related problems and prominent structures of teacher education including current challenges of Islamic Republic of Iran includes are in Iran education system, where public schooling is playing the leading role but like in Tehran and many other big cities there is existing large numbers of private schools.

During teacher training in Iran educational administration, educational planning, and counseling especially aim to ready and prepare students in higher education to work in education system. In-service education is used by the Ministry of Education as an instrument to manage modification in the education system.

Teachers who pass in-service education programs are entitled to collect a certificate for their training. Likewise, certificate of in-service would be considered an important factor in teachers' appraisals and add to their credentials.

Regarding the pre-service teacher training programme, the period of study for Bachelor's degree is up to 20 semesters (10 years) and total 132-141 credits are compulsory for Bachelor's degree in Payame Noor University (Iran). While, in TarbiatMoallem University, the Faculty of Psychology and Education is one of the oldest faculties, and it has numerous departments including: Foundations of Education and Educational Technology, Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, and there is also a Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Science. Similarly, the pre-requisites of pre-service teacher education system or the requirements for entrance into teacher education programs in Iran is where the candidates for the bachelor's degree are compulsory to be secondary school graduates with a satisfactory Grade Point Ordinary (GPA) in their written examination. GPA is stated by the Payame Noor University every year. Regular degree programs are presented to those who pass the National University Entrance Examination held every year by the National Educational Assessment Organization (Payame Noor University, 2007). Though, an alternative process for qualifying for entrance at Payame Noor University of Iran where, the alternative entry means that candidate no longer requires to be attending the National University Entrance Examination. However, conditionally accepted students will study for one semester. If the students are succeeded in the final examination, they will be competent to continue their studies, if not they will be withdrawn (UNESCO, 2008).

Shahmohammadi (2012) shown that explaining teacher education in the context of developing countries Iran, one of the most significant concerns in the field of teachers' education was efficiency of teachers' education programs. The study tried to assemble relevant information to the state of pre-service and in-service teacher education programs in Iran. For this purpose, the study evaluated pertinent literature and used a questionnaire for data collection. The results indicated that there were specified and defined objectives; the organization was satisfactory, teaching methods were lecture and conference, and the method of evaluation was written method.

The study suggested some policy recommendation that academic degree of recruited teachers and educators employed in elementary schools could be upgraded to B.S. by appropriate training programme.

Furthermore, the teacher training colleges in Iran must offer broader range of courses in general along with for professional education development. Nezakat-Alhossaini and Ketabi (2013) conducted a study in order to compare teacher training courses in three countries namely Iran, Turkey, and Australia to find out the differences in terms of programming and materials in teacher training courses. The study found that in Iran and Turkey very alike in teacher training programs and even had the matching problems with their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. However, in case of Australia seemed to have a very precise and rich teacher training system in comparison with the Iran and Turkey. The study recommended that a relatively unified, goal oriented, and to the date teacher education system is desirable in terms of study hours, course content, employment opportunities, and course practicality to have better EFL classes in Iran.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The UNESCO (2008) reported that the initial issues concerning teacher education in Pakistan includes are financial limitations, lack of facilities right from buildings, equipment, furniture, library books; faulty examination system; unsatisfactory management, lack of supervision and accountability exercise. The study of Memon, Joubish, and Khurram (2010) highlighted that in Pakistan almost above 5 decades, the developmental indicators are yet disappointing. The participation rate at higher education is apparently low comparing to other countries of the region. There are several problems comprising of lack of quality and skill staff, library, laboratory and other reading materials. Messo and Panhwar (2012) in a comparative study on teacher education program in three countries namely Germany, Japan and Pakistan shown many of problems containing nonexistence of accountability, scarcity of incentives, insufficient hope of a career track, and motivation which are facing by the teachers. At the result, all these issues jointly seem to be boundless emerging from the failure of the system.

The study of Ahmad, Rehman, Ali, Iqbal, Ali, and Badshah (2013) provided evidences after reviewing literature that education system of Pakistan disturbed by numerous problems includes poor finance, deficiency of motivation among teachers, teachers transfer based on favoritism and nepotism, political intervention, appointment of under qualified teachers, shortage of teaching staff and lack of teaching and learning resources.

Similarly, Arshad and Akram (2013) found the trained teachers are more competent and proficient in their presentation than untrained teachers. In a study Sadruddin (2013) identified that there is a potential gaps in Bachelor of education one year curriculum in Pakistan when making global competent teacher. The finding exhibits that even teacher need to promote the awareness regarding the forthcoming challenges to the students and should make them prepared to solve any difficulty in the future. The study suggested a solid involvement mechanism to modify the teachers' curriculum to benefit teachers amalgamate the phenomena in their everyday classroom teaching in the context of Pakistan.

It has been observed that the national education and health sectors in Pakistan having less resources where annual public health expenditure is about US\$ 4 per person, compared to a United Nations recommendation of US\$ 45. In Pakistan approximately 1.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) is invested in education, compared to a world weighted average of 4.9 % and it indicates that 3.1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less amount invested on education in the country. Therefore, National education indicators in Pakistan are amongst the lowermost in South Asia. In a similar vein, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey (2010-11) stated that literacy rate for the population (10 years and above) is assessed 58 % in 2010-11, while during 2008-09 it was 57 %. In urban areas literacy remains relatively higher comparing to rural areas and much higher in case men than for women. Likewise, Province wise data exposes that in Punjab literacy rate is recorded 60 percent followed by Sindh with 59 %, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 50 % and Baluchistan with 41 %. Pakistan has allocated 2.3 % of the budget for education which is almost 0.3% less than in 1999. In term of government spending is on education, placing Pakistan 113th amongst 120 countries on the education development index. On the other hand, countries like India spends 4.1 % of GDP, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka spend even more on education. Pakistan lags behind Nepal when it comes to female education (Nizami, 2013).

Table 1 portrays that literacy rate in all three Muslim countries under the study, where Iran with 77% literacy rate is on the top followed by Pakistan with 45.4% literacy rate and unfortunately literacy rate in Afghanistan is at the lowest at 28.1 % only in the world.

Table 1: Ranking in Literacy rate in three Muslim countries

Country	Population	National Income (GDP)	Literacy rate	Ranking
Islamic Republic of Iran	78.9 million	\$1.02 trillion	77%	151
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	190 million	\$ 524 billion	54.9%	198
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	31.1 million	\$29.7 billion	28.1 %	213

Source: Find the Data (2013), <http://country-facts.findthedata.org/>

Summary, Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The broad objective of this study is to compare the training of teacher education programme in three Muslim countries-Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan based on thorough review of prior studies. The role of education in the development of any society is undeniable. Therefore, education is the greatest important issue which plays a leading role in human resource development. However, the role of teacher beside other factors in the improvement and enhanced level of education system is crystal clear and indispensable. It is through our dear teachers who polish our personality our character, and shows us the right path which leads us to our last destination. Without a teacher's growth knowledge arriving can be likened to an eyeless man walking without his stick. Teacher is a representative of the society who teaches moral principles. Both knowledge and morals would suffer without teachers; nobody can have a power more deep than that of a teacher. After studying previous studies, this study finds that teacher training education particularly overall education system including literacy rate in all three countries varies. The main problems found are economic, social, cultural and traditional.

Apart from these problems several other problems related to curriculum, management, evaluation, infrastructure, finance, library, computer and reading materials (UNESCO, 2008; Shahmohammadi, 2012; Sadruddin, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2013).

The finding of this study suggests that policy makers of all the three countries should focus more on the development of education sector in general and teacher training programme in particular. Therefore, each government should allocate more budgets for education sector. While, curriculum need to be reformed and updated according to the international level. If possible some represented teachers should be send to develop countries for trainings and after getting training from developed countries, they also should arrange training for their local teachers in their own country. Apart from the government, it is also the responsibility of the teachers to perform their duties honestly and efficiently in order to improve quality education.

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