



Teacher Initial Training : Conventional versus Distance Mode in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT :

The study aimed at comparison of the efficacy of Regular and Distance learning programmes of University of Sindh Jamshoro. It focused on the assessment of the performance of the graduates of Regular and Distance learning training programmes in the field in terms of learning competences as perceived by the Heads of Secondary Schools who are utilizing their services. Data was collected through a questionnaire and was analyzed through a MANOVA technique. Study found no difference between the efficacy of the B.Ed. distance learning and regular graduates of the University of Sindh, but on the whole the efficacy of the both programmes was found at average level by the heads of secondary schools. They observed the positive trend in teachers and viewed that they possess self-confidence and show willingness to learn, but the training system does not provide them an opportunity to enhance professional competency. The mean scores of regular trained teachers show better training environment in on campus programme as compared to distance learning programme. The teachers trained through regular programme have good performance in the lesson planning, demonstration and classroom management as compared to distance learning trained teachers. The study suggested the increase in the duration of B.Ed. course, balance in the foundation and pedagogical courses in accordance with the policy of Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad Pakistan. More meetings for the course and begin instructions through correspondence for distance teacher training and increase in number of practice teaching lessons, demonstration lessons and final lessons in both programmes.

1. INTRODUCTION :

1.1 Overview of Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education is that knowledge, skills and ability which are relevant to the life of teacher, as a teacher. (Sharmon, 1992). During the pre-partition period starting from 1854 to 1947, many developments were made in the system of teacher education. Efforts to improve teacher education in Pakistan started when an All Pakistan Educational Conference was called on the initiative of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali

Jinnah to review the entire system of education and to make suggestions for its improvement. The conference was held at Karachi from November 27th to December 15th 1947. (National Education Policy, 1947) Later the National Educational Commission 1959 recommended a comprehensive action plan for the improvement of system of the teacher education for producing "Quality Teachers". The primary and secondary education committee of this educational conference, recognizing the role of teachers in national development, declared "that a properly trained and reasonably well-paid teaching profession was essential to the

building of great state". (First National Education Commission 1959, p.20) In 1972 and onwards significant development and innovation were made in the field of teacher education such as the determination of new aims and objectives, revision of curricula at all levels of teacher education. In the Province of Sindh, the University of Sindh started teacher education programme. The faculty of education started as the first teaching department of the University of Sindh in 1951-52 and achieved its Faculty status in 1989. It has provided thousands trained graduates teachers to meet the needs educational network not only in Sindh province but also in other parts of Pakistan. It offers BEd, MEd, MA Education, MPhil & PhD programmes. Component Departments of the Faculty are: Department of Science and Technical Education, Department of Curriculum Development and Special Education, Department of Educational Management and Supervision, Department of Psychological Testing Guidance and Research, and Non-Formal and Distance Education Center.

1.2 BEd Distance Learning Programme at the University of Sindh

The twentieth century saw a novelty in the educational field with the introduction of Distance Education. Geography, family, time and money are no more considered barriers in the way of supplementing one's educational qualifications (Hofmann, 2002). Traditional approaches to initial and in-service education for teachers are costly. Initial training progress for teachers usually requires full-time residential study at training institution, together with periods of practice in schools. In-service courses for further professional development needed teacher's withdrawal from schools. The cost of both these forms of training was high and their effectiveness was questioned (Avalos, 1991). Moreover, these approaches could not cope with large number of teachers needing training within short time-scales. New training institutes take time to build and produce their first batch of qualified teachers; another option, the re-use of all the existing premises such as primary and

secondary schools, has often resulted in low quality provision. In-service crash training programmes of a conventional kind was too short to have impact, too expensive and too slow in reducing the number of teachers needing training or re-training.

To overcome the limitations of traditional models for training teachers, alternative approaches such as distance education which is most widely used, mainly because of its capacity to deal with large numbers of learners and expectations of cost savings were adopted. Distance education has achieved parity of esteem with conventional forms of education and training. Within this worldwide expansion of distance education, teachers, especially primary teachers, formed a large proportion of the learners. Many of the developing Asian countries are nowadays resorting to higher education through distance (Tam, 1999). The development of open universities in twenty five developing countries has added an impetus to the growth of distance education during the last quarter of the previous century (Perraton, 2000).

The open universities in particular have large numbers of teachers as students, for example, the UK Open University (Prescott and Robinson, 1993), the Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan (Abbas, 1987 ; Robinson, 1993) and the Open University of Israel (Guri-Rosenblit, 1992). In 1982, Brophy and Dudely identified more than sixty distance education programmes for teachers in over 40 developing countries. According to Keegan (1995) distance education and training result from the material separation of teacher and learner which frees the student from the necessity of traveling to "a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person, in order to be trained".

In Pakistan, distance education started in 1974 after the establishment of Allama Iqbal Open University. The Allama Iqbal University, through out the country launched the BEd programme in 1988. The University of Sindh has followed this experience in 1995 and then afterwards the other two sister universities of Sindh province, the Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur Mirs and the Sindh Agriculture

University Tandojam also launched similar programmes in 1998 in teacher education. The University of Sindh in 1995 launched the BEd distance learning programme under the Non-Formal and Distance Education Center (NFDEC). Objectives of the programme were to promote distance education system, to produce well-qualified and better skilled professional persons, to enable the teachers to avail the distance learning education facilities while remaining in their job, to lay emphasis on research work, to provide education facility through distance learning to rural population.

Now the University of Sindh is running Non-Formal Distance Continuing and Computer Education Centre under the Director of the centre only for teacher training courses. The centre has only provision of face-to-face contact hours and reading material are the mode of teaching. The study centres are established at a place where 50 or more students are enrolled. Centres are placed in government/private school/college buildings and they are working in off-hours and holidays. Workshop for practice teaching component is included in the course. The examination is conducted after the end of the course.

1.3 Courses offered in BEd Regular and Distance Learning Programmes

Part I Core Courses

English, Perspective of Education in Pakistan, School Organization, and Classroom Management. Human Development and Learning, Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Curriculum and Instructions, and Research Techniques are the common courses offered by both programmes. Whereas the Guidance and Counseling, Environmental Education. and Educational Technology are only offered by regular programme.

Part-II Specialization (Methods of Teaching)

Students have to chose any two subjects from among the following subjects ;

A. Humanities

Teaching of English, Teaching of Social Sciences, Teaching of Urdu / Sindhi, and

Teaching of Islamic Studies are common courses offered by both programmes for students belonging to Humanities group.

B. Sciences

Teaching of Physics, Teaching of Chemistry, Teaching of Biology, Teaching of Mathematics, Teaching of Computer Science, Teaching of General Science, and Teaching of General Mathematics are common courses offered by both programmes for students belonging to Science group. Whereas the Teaching of Principles of Home-Economics, Teaching of Drafting and Garment Making are only offered by the regular programme.

C. Practicum

Students belong to both modes of learning have to conduct workshops. Regular programme students practice teaching lessons, demonstration lessons and final lessons while the distance learning programme students practice Annual/Final lessons in real school situation. (Prospectus of Distance Program 2003 and Catalogue of Regular Program 2005)

1.4 Rationale for this Study

It is general assumption in the society and especially in the educational community that the teacher education programmes offered by different universities through distance learning mode are not effective and their graduates are not up to the mark as compare to the graduates of regular programmes. Hence this research study is being conducted to compare the efficacy of the Regular and Distance learning B.Ed. teacher education programmes of University of Sindh as perceived by the Heads of Secondary Schools and to develop a strategy to improve both programmes.

1.5 Objectives of this Study

The objectives of study were as follows ;

1) To compare the efficacy of the BEd Regular and Distance Learning Programmes of the University of Sindh as perceived by the Heads of Secondary Schools.

2) To assess the performance of the graduates of Regular and Distance Learning Teachers Training Programmes in terms of

the various learning competencies in the following categories (a) Understanding of curriculum and professional knowledge. (b) Subject knowledge and subject application. (c) Teaching strategies, techniques and classroom management. (d) Assessment and recording of pupil's progress. And (e) Professional values and personal development.

(3) To give suggestions for improving the efficacy of both programmes.

2. METHODS :

The primary research design involved in this study is a case study covered by analytical and descriptive survey.

2.1 Population

The population of the study consisted of all BEd graduates of regular and distance education programmes of University of Sindh, who were graduated during the period from 1995 to 2005. Total number of students enrolled in regular programme in that period was 3338 and total number of students enrolled in distance learning programme was 11876.

2.2 Sampling

For the sampling purpose 50 heads of secondary and higher secondary schools were selected from those schools having BEd distance education and regular programme graduates of University of Sindh who graduated in between the period from 1995 to 2005. Thirty schools were selected from the rural and urban areas of Hyderabad district because the highest number of the passing students is from the Hyderabad district in both programmes. The rest of 20 schools were selected from rural and urban areas of 03 districts: Thatta, Badin, and Dadu, where BEd graduates of both programs are serving. Hence, all the Regular and Distance Learning BEd graduate teachers working in those schools were included in the study. The total number was 310. Among them 97% BEd graduates were High School Teachers (HSTs) and Junior School Teachers (JSTs). With regard to their teaching experience, 48% possessed 1 to 10 years experience whereas 44% possessed 11 to 20 years experience and 08 % possessed 21 to 30 years experience. On overall basis an equal number of urban and rural schools were included in the study. The following tables show the distributions of the sample.

Table 1 : The Sample according to District

<i>District</i>	<i>Rural Schools n (%)</i>	<i>Urban Schools n (%)</i>	<i>Total n (%)</i>
Hyderabad	09 (36.0)	21 (84.0)	30 (60.0)
Thatta	08 (32.0)	02 (08.0)	10 (20.0)
Badin	04 (16.0)	02 (08.0)	06 (12.0)
Dadu	04 (16.0)	----	04 (08.0)
Total	25 (100)	25 (100)	50 (100)

Table 2 : The Sample according to Regular or Distance Learning Mode

<i>Mode</i>	<i>N BEd Graduates</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Regular	115	37.1
Distance Learning	195	62.9
Total	310	100

Table 3 : The Sample according to Rural or Urban Area

<i>Area</i>	<i>Regular n (%)</i>	<i>Dist Learning n (%)</i>	<i>Total n (%)</i>
Rural	57 (49.6)	95 (48.7)	152 (49.0)
Urban	58 (50.4)	100 (51.3)	158 (51.0)
Total	195 (100)	115 (100)	310 (100)

Table 2 shows that 63% were distance learning BEd graduates, and the remaining 37% were regular graduates. Table 3 shows that 49% of graduates were rural, and 51% were urban.

2.3 Instrument

A questionnaire was developed for those Heads of Secondary/Higher Secondary Schools were using services of distance learning and regular BEd graduates of Sindh University. The questionnaire comprised of two parts ; - Part-I was designed to collect demographic information of the Principals/Headmasters of the schools and the BEd qualified teachers who were rated by the heads of the schools. Part-II consisted of five components of learning competencies areas, namely, (i) understanding of curriculum and professional knowledge; (ii) subject

knowledge and subject application; (iii) teaching strategies, techniques and classroom management; (iv) assessment and recording of pupil's progress; (v) professional values and personal development. Every component had four items to rate the competencies in Likert's 5-point-scale, ranging 1-5. 1- Stand for extremely positive response and 5- extremely negative response on the acquired competencies. Total 20 items were in the questionnaire. Where 'low numbers' represent maximum magnitude and 'high numbers' represent minimum magnitude. The alpha co-efficient obtained for questionnaire is 0.97, which demonstrates that the questionnaire was highly reliable.

3. RESULTS :

Results are shown in Tables 4-8, below.

Table 4 : Overall Analysis of Variance according to Mode

<i>Learning Aspect</i>	<i>Dist Learning mean (sd)</i>	<i>Regular mean (sd)</i>	<i>F value</i>	<i>p value</i>
1. Understanding of Curriculum and Professional Knowledge	2.19 (0.10)	2.06 (0.10)	1.00	0.41
2. Subject Knowledge and Subject Application	2.29 (0.10)	2.14 (0.13)	2.67	0.03
3. Teaching Strategies and Techniques, and Classroom Management	2.21 (0.06)	2.04 (0.03)	2.16	0.07
4. Assessment of Recording of Pupil's Progress	2.27 (0.06)	2.20 (0.10)	5.36	0.25
5. Professional Values and Personal Development	2.01 (0.44)	2.01 (0.08)	0.82	0.51
Total	2.26 (0.06)	2.09 (0.08)	1.19	0.26

Table 5 : MANOVA for Mode within Learning Aspect 1 Above

<i>Learning Sub-Aspect</i>	<i>Dist L mean (sd)</i>	<i>Regular mean (sd)</i>	<i>Total mean (sd)</i>	<i>F value</i>	<i>p value</i>
1.1 Demonstrate knowledge of child development (Physical intellectual, Social and Emotional)	2.07 (0.78)	1.91 (0.78)	2.01 (0.78)	3.02	0.08
1.2 Demonstrates understanding of motivation and other influences in the promotion of effective learning.	2.15 (0.81)	2.06 (0.93)	2.12 (0.86)	0.76	0.38
1.3 Demonstrates awareness of the skills and processes common to level of subject	2.26 (0.82)	2.10 (0.87)	2.20 (0.84)	2.52	0.11
1.4 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of requirements of the curriculum	2.29 (0.80)	2.15 (0.89)	2.24 (0.84)	2.15	0.14

Table 6 : MANOVA for Mode within Learning Aspect 2 Above

<i>Learning Sub-Aspect</i>	<i>Dist L mean (sd)</i>	<i>Regular mean (sd)</i>	<i>Total mean (sd)</i>	<i>F value</i>	<i>p value</i>
2.1 Demonstrates understanding in-depth, of the knowledge, concepts and skills of his or her special subject(s)	2.20 (0.77)	1.94 (0.86)	2.10 (0.81)	7.32	0.00
2.2 Plans appropriate lessons within teaching programmes and employs a variety of teaching strategies to the subject or topics	2.43 (0.77)	2.24 (0.81)	2.35 (0.79)	4.26	0.04
2.3 Demonstrate a knowledge of the particular methodologies and procedures for effective teaching of the subject(s)	2.29 (0.82)	2.17 (0.87)	2.25 (0.84)	1.32	0.25
2.4 Understands how to organize co-curricular activities exploit its educational potential.	2.22 (0.92)	2.20 (0.85)	2.21 (0.90)	0.04	0.85

Table 5, and Table 6, above shows the MANOVA results comparing Distance Learning mode with the Regular mode, at the University of Sindh, as perceived by the Heads of Secondary Schools for sub-aspects within the Learning Aspect 1, and for sub-aspects within the Learning Aspect 2, of Table 4, respectively.

Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9 below shows the MANOVA results comparing Distance Learning mode with the Regular mode, at the University of Sindh, as perceived by the Heads of Secondary Schools for sub-aspects within the Learning Aspect 3, Learning Aspect 4, and Learning Aspect 5 of Table 4, respectively.

Table 7 : MANOVA for Mode within Learning Aspect 3 Above

<i>Learning Sub-Aspect</i>	<i>Dist L</i> mean (sd)	<i>Regular</i> mean (sd)	<i>Total</i> mean (sd)	<i>F</i> value	<i>p</i> value
3.1 Plans and employs wide ranges of teaching strategies appropriate for respective objectives of each lesson.	2.26 (0.83)	2.00 (0.83)	2.16 (0.84)	6.94	0.01
3.2 Is able to prepare or select appropriate learning materials for pupils	2.22 (0.80)	2.05 (0.84)	2.16 (0.81)	2.93	0.09
3.3 Maintain pupils' motivation	2.12 (0.79)	2.02 (0.98)	2.08 (0.87)	0.98	0.32

Table 8 : MANOVA for Mode within Learning Aspect 4 Above

<i>Learning Sub-Aspect</i>	<i>Dist L</i> mean (sd)	<i>Regular</i> mean (sd)	<i>Total</i> mean (sd)	<i>F</i> value	<i>p</i> value
4.1 Demonstrate understanding of the nature and purposes of the different kinds of assessment which may be used.	2.24 (0.88)	2.07 (0.90)	2.18 (0.89)	2.72	0.10
4.2 Assesses and records pupils' performance in a systematic manner.	2.34 (0.79)	2.29 (0.85)	2.32 (0.81)	0.35	0.55
4.3 Uses different methods of assessment as an appropriate in order to monitor the progress of Individual children.	2.30 (0.88)	2.19 (0.88)	2.26 (0.88)	1.15	0.28
4.4 Provides helpful reports to parents on their children's progress	2.21 (0.90)	2.25 (0.99)	2.23 (0.94)	0.14	0.70

4. DISCUSSION :

Overall the results above indicate that the P-value (0.259) with F-value (1.192) of mean scores is greater than 0.05 level of significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Where the null hypothesis is H_0 there is no significant difference in efficacy of BEd graduates between the Regular mode and the Distance Learning mode programmes at Sindh University, as perceived by the Heads of the Secondary Schools.

This indicates there is no difference between the efficacy of the BEd distance learning and regular graduates of the University of Sindh.

According to Table 6 and Table 7, the mean scores of the BEd Regular graduates for three items 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1 in the subject knowledge and subject application, teaching strategies and techniques and classroom management were significantly higher than the Distance Learning mode programme which shows that the Regular mode graduates demonstrate better in-depth

Table 9 : MANOVA for Mode within Learning Aspect 5 Above

<i>Learning Sub-Aspect</i>	<i>Dist L</i> mean (sd)	<i>Regular</i> mean (sd)	<i>Total</i> mean (sd)	<i>F</i> value	<i>p</i> value
5.1 Demonstrate understanding of care of children and seeks to promote the development of the whole child.	2.09 (0.86)	1.99 (0.94)	2.05 (0.89)	0.84	0.36
5.2 Is enthusiastic about teaching and is committed to the value of the educational process?	2.25 (0.78)	2.10 (0.93)	2.20 (0.84)	2.23	0.14
5.3 Posses self-confidence and shows willingness to learn.	1.99 (0.82)	1.91 (0.90)	1.96 (0.85)	0.51	0.47
5.4 Shows ability to establish and maintain constructive relationship with children, colleagues, parents and others.	2.03 (1.01)	2.02 (0.96)	2.03 (0.99)	0.01	0.91

understanding of the knowledge, concepts and skills of his or her special subject(s). For further improvement in the Regular programme, it is suggested that the classrooms should also be equipped with TV, VCR, tape recorder, computer, multimedia, and OHP.

Research findings further revealed that regular graduates plans appropriate lessons within teaching programmes and employ a variety of teaching strategies to the subject or topics in order to achieve respective objectives of each lesson. It is because Regular mode programme graduates attend classes six days a week. They go through intensive teaching process of subjects. They give more time and attention to their subjects. Their contact with teachers is frequent. Sharing of knowledge in classroom is on regular basis so they have very clear concepts of different subjects, which they are taught in the training course. Regular mode programme students have clear understanding of the special method subjects and their teaching techniques; therefore they apply different dimensions of teaching while planning the practicing lessons on different subjects in the institution but they do not deliver the practice lessons in the real school system. They practice different teaching methods during the training period in front of fellow

students and teachers.

While the distance learning graduates attend only 12 meetings in a per course. They get meager time to have a contact with their tutors. They rely on prescribed text books through which they are taught. Therefore, their vision and understanding of the subjects is very limited. The distance learning graduates do not have the opportunity to deliver the practicing lessons in real school situation they attend workshop for practice teaching in the study centers. So they have little knowledge and experience of different teaching practices. Consequently their practice of adopting variety of teaching practices in lesson delivery is limited. Adiviso (2003), it is revealed that over all physical facilities were not satisfactory in teacher training institution. Similarly, the teachers were academically sound but not abreast of modern teaching techniques nor any budget is allocated for their practical training. Therefore it is suggested that the number of practice teaching lessons, demonstration lessons and final lessons should be increased to make up shortage of practice teaching prevailing in the existing system of both training programmes. In the distance education programme the study centers established in urban as well as rural areas. Therefore rural centers should be equipped

with the same facilities. Teachers should be encouraged for maximum utilization of modern technology to make their lectures more effective and also emphasize the students to utilize these aids for their presentations.

Full time faculty for each study center and mobile faculty for those areas, which have no local competent tutors available for the different subjects should be hired. The operating budget of the distance education programmes should be fixed in relation to enrolments and in keeping with the requirements of training: materials/equipment, development of courses, recruitment of part-time faculty, resource persons, transport for delivering system, and evaluation and monitoring the programmes on a realistic basis. Student fees collected by the institutes should be utilized for the development of institutes only. Evaluation should be both summative and formative; more importance should be given to self-assessment and the process of evaluation. The examination should be planned and conducted timely of distance learning programme. Practice related assignments should be designed to support the linkage between theory and practice for both programmes. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant difference between efficacy of BEd Distance Learning and Regular BEd graduates of the University of Sindh.

Overall analysis of the research findings shows that the all mean scores of the BEd Regular graduates and the BEd Distance Learning graduates are falling between (2.01) to (2.35) shows the efficacy of both the programmes are considered at the 'Average' level. Only one variable 5.3 'Possess self confidence and shows willingness to learn', perceived as at 'Positive' level with mean score (0.191). It shows the both programmes are not working effectively. The quality of students seeking admission to both programmes should be up graded through the system of guidance, counselling and pre- entry test Students of both programmes should be motivated towards mini-research studies and action research in their institutions so that they may meet the modern challenges

in pedagogy and find solutions of the problems related to teaching learning. Besides teaching learning, seminars, conferences and workshops should be held and students should be involved in all affairs. The duration of both BEd courses should be increased. The weight age of foundation and pedagogical courses should be adopted in accordance with the policy of Higher Education Commission, (HEC) Pakistan, and Federal Ministry of Education. Many researches in distance education have also identified 'no significant difference in the effectiveness of the traditional and the distance teaching environment'. Various reports have found that 'no significance difference between on-campus and distance learning degree students regarding performance. Through the analysis of findings of the research study, it was clearly visible that the component of skill development of delivering lesson, lesson planning on the given topics and classroom management, were found suffering in both programmes. Students were simply aware of the lesson planning process and demonstration lessons but the practice of teaching in the real school situation was missing in both programmes. Some of these apparent discrepancies suggest that possibly the duration of practice of teaching may be increased according to the programme of training.

In distance education programme face-to-face contact hours with printed material, which are only the main and solo mode of learning must be added with more meetings. The study materials and reference books should be kept available because the face-to-face contact teaching methodology needs a lot of things to promote effective learning facilities for student at distance. 'Distance education corner', should be established in the school and college libraries where study centers are working.

5. CONCLUSION :

The whole process of education is shaped and molded by the teachers. Teaching is a challenging profession, and so only those

teachers who are adequately prepared and have sound professional attitude can shoulder the heavy responsibilities of nation building. To cater the upbringing needs of teachers and their improvements all endeavors are being made through formal and non-formal system of teacher education in Pakistan. Both systems are providing training to thousands of teachers of Urban and Rural areas. The introduction of proper policy making mechanism, modern technology, standards, accreditation, certification and licensing, and commitment of Government bodies will definitely leave a far reaching effects on future teachers education programs in Pakistan.

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