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The Impact of School Reform on Teacher Professionalism:

Lessons from Case Studies to inform Future

Professional Development Initiatives

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Abstract

This paper will outline a number of issues faced by Government Primary Schools in Pakistan. Specifically, it will identify a research agenda that needs to be addressed if these schools are to progress.

Pakistan's educational system is faced with many problems and dilemmas and each dilemma justifies a reason, but perhaps no problem is as grave as the low quality, the poor morale and the dejected professional status of the government primary school teachers. I say that because I believe that schools are only as good as their teachers, regardless of how high their standards, how up-to-date their technology, or how innovative their programs. As Ingvarson (1997, p.31) so rightly states, "To have the best schools, we must have the best teachers. What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn".

With large number of under-educated, under-trained, under-paid and, most important of all, undervalued government primary school teachers in Pakistan (Hoodbhoy, 1998: & Shaikh, 1997), what can we expect the students to learn? Whether we want children to be the enlightened and the informed citizens of tomorrow or ignorant members of society will depend on teacher knowledge, teacher education and above all teacher professionalism.

Yes, teachers do matter the most. But what is being done for this section of the society which matters so much? Are efforts being taken to find out what teachers in the government primary schools need to achieve their professional goals? Are these teachers given adequate opportunities to learn, to improve and to become effective? How can these teachers meet the ever-increasing demands placed upon them? How will these teachers successfully lead the students into the twenty-first century? Do the government school teachers believe that they can successfully lead children into the 21st century? Are the school reforms geared towards enhancing their professionalism?

This paper considers these questions. In this paper I outline some of the measures that have been taken at the government, at the non-government and at the school sector level to restructure and reform primary government schools in Pakistan. The paper goes on to argue that it is important to identify the impact of these reforms on teachers' efficacy, leadership and collaborative efforts for enhanced teacher professionalism. Thus, the paper argues that research is required which addresses the question of "What it actually means to be a professional in government primary schools in Pakistan and what models of school reforms can actually develop teacher learning for improved teacher professionalism?

1 Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with 310,527 square miles of area, is located in South Central Asia. It is bounded by the Arabian Sea, Iran, Afghanistan, USSR, China and India. The nation is federal, composed of four provinces with considerable local authority: Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. (North West Frontier Province). The city of Karachi, where I intend to conduct my research, is in the province of Sind. Muslims constitute 96.7% of the population with the remaining divided among Christians, Hindus, Parsees and Sikhs. Urdu is the national language and English is the official language. (USAID/Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan, 1986, p 3).

Pakistan is one of those countries of the world, where the school system is marked by its diversity. There are government schools, semi government institutions and completely

private schools. In Pakistan, public education is organized into five levels: primary (grades one through five); middle (grades six through eight); high (grades nine and ten, culminating in matriculation); intermediate or higher secondary (grades eleven and twelve, leading to an F.A. diploma in arts or F.S. science; and university programs leading to undergraduate and advanced degrees (UNESCO, 1994).

On the 14th of August 1947, urbane Karachi native Muhammad Ali Jinnah led India's Muslims out of colonialism to independence from both Britain and cultural sibling India. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammed Ali Jinnah had made people's dream come true. He had a vision of a Pakistan built on "character, courage, integrity and perseverance." Jinnah had, on more than one occasion, emphasized the significance of education as an instrument of any nation's socio-economic change. However, his untimely death in September 1948 also marked the death of the visionary leadership that was required to guide the newly founded state on to the road to progress and development.

Now in the year 2000, Pakistan is still far from realizing Jinnah's dream. This is not to say that Pakistan's education system has not changed at all. Quantitatively, it has shown immense progress. In 1947-8, Pakistan's entire educational infrastructure was estimated to comprise around 10,000 primary and middle schools (1,700 for girls), about 408 secondary schools (64 for girls), 46 secondary vocational institutions (18 for girls), 40 Arts and Science colleges including five for women, and two universities. There was not a single professional college in the country (Jalil, cited in Hoodbhoy, 1998, pp. 34 & 35). According to Internet Wing Ministry of Information, Government of Pakistan (2000,http://www.pak.gov.pk/govt/basic_facts.html), Pakistan now has 150,963 primary schools, 14,595 middle schools, 9,808 high schools 708 Arts and Science colleges, 161 professional colleges and 35 universities (10 in private sector).

Pakistan's citizens are proud of what they have achieved in terms of quantitative development in education in the past 52 years, but many are apprehensive too because, according to the latest data, Pakistan's literacy rate is 38.9% (http://www.pak.gov.pk/govt/basic_facts.html) and its literacy rate for women is 21 percent (Warwick, 1995). This literacy rate has also increased from 21.7% in 1972 (Mahmood, Zahid, & Muhammed, 1999, p. 8) to 39% in 1998 (National Education Policy, 1998, p. 141). However, this rate does not look good enough compared to the population of 135.28 million and the population rate of 3% per annum (http://www.pak.gov.pk/govt/basic_facts.html).

The data in relation to education in Pakistan are quite staggering. National Education Policy 1998 - 2010 (1998, p. 141), states that about 25% of the children in Pakistan are not enrolled in primary schools, and 50% of those who are enrolled, drop out before completing primary schools. The participation rate at middle and high school level is 46% and 31% respectively. In literacy rate, the placement of Pakistan among the Muslim world is 31 out of 35 countries and globally 134 out of 180 countries.

The growth of private school system is increasingly filling the gap in the public system. It is estimated that, overall, private education now accounts for about 10-12 percent of gross enrolments (Bregman & Mohammad cited in Hoodbhoy, 1998, p.69). Most of these schools are profit-based, but parents are still willing to sacrifice a great deal of their income to get a better quality of education for their children. The private sector also consists of a number of non-profit based catholic and community schools which offer quality education. In the private school system, principals, teachers, students, and community are excited about the educational process and take their school very seriously. Dynamic principals and/or community leaders seem to be the prime movers in the successful schools (Bregman and Mohammad cited in Hoodbhoy, 1998).

While acknowledging the efforts made by the private sector to give quality education, I cannot ignore the majority of the children who cannot afford to study in these schools. According to Bregman & Mohammad (cited in Hoodbhoy, 1998, p. 68), four out of five school going children are in government schools. Children in these schools do learn, but it is not known if what they learn is useful in today's modern society or whether the standards are comparable with those abroad.

Since independence Pakistan has seen the rise and fall of different governments. Each government tried to improve the staggering status of education at the government school level. As a result seven different education policies have been planned and implemented in Pakistan since 1947. It becomes clear from the close analysis of different education policies that they all say the same thing in different words. The main focus of all the policies has been the universal primary education (UPE), which has not been achieved as yet. Nearly all the plans have emphasized the importance of quality education and have reiterated the improvement in teaching standards as one way of achieving it. Yet, the improvement in terms of teacher training programs has only been minimal. On the other hand, the work in terms of technical education, has been quite satisfactory, as there are several technical colleges and institutions in the country. However, this improvement in technical education has been at the cost of primary education, which was given prominence in all the policy documents but was always neglected due to insufficient funds. Hence, my decision to focus my research in the area of primary education.

Despite UNESCO's recommendation that the governments of low-income countries spend 4% of their Gross National Product (GNP) on education, Pakistan falls short of that figure. Pakistan's financial allocation on education falls between 2%-3%. (Warwick, 1995; Hoodhbhoy, 1998; Mahmood et al., 1999; & National Education Policy 1998-2010, 1998). Perhaps the government should change its priorities and redirect resources from other budgets to education, particularly to primary education (Warwick, 1995; & National Education Policy, 1998).

It is important to regard teachers as change agents capable of generating knowledge and of making change happen, rather than as passive recipient and users of knowledge. It is important to transform life within government primary schools so that they provide to teachers a supportive and stimulating environment that allows them to gain sense of professionalism out of their work, and opportunities to renew and enhance their skills in effective and meaningful ways. That is why it becomes important to study the school reforms in government primary schools and their impact on teacher professionalism.

2. The Focus of the Study

This research is about teacher professionalism. It is this theme of teacher professionalism which ties together the school reforms and the government primary schools in Pakistan. Below is a brief recount of the government primary school system in Pakistan, the initiatives that have been taken to reform some of these schools and theoretical framework about teacher professionalism.

1. The Government Primary School System in Karachi, Pakistan

The main thrust of the government primary education cycle (Classes I-V) is to provide the basic foundations of language learning, writing and numeracy skills. Grades IV and V pick up at the student's growth and development level attained in mosque and regular schools, and assist them to move on toward a more complex academic program of studies (UNESCO, 1994).

The methodology of teaching in the lower primary grades of the government schools is essential for imparting the needed basic knowledge and skills for further study. Teaching in the primary government school is characterized as rote learning and memorization of facts to be regurgitated on internal school exams. Some of the more modern methods of teaching such as the Inquiry Method in social studies, the Process Method and Discovery in Science might be the intent of curriculum designers but lightly captured by textbook writers. The lack of diverse and modern instructional practices as one of the critical problems facing primary education and among the main causes for the low performance of the system (USAID/Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan, 1986, p.165).

The social and cultural status of the primary government school teachers is generally low. Students are reluctant to become teachers in government primary schools because of low salary scale, generally poor conditions of schools, and the lack of career opportunities for advancement in the profession (USAID/Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan, 1986, pp. 145-146).

Teachers in primary government schools in Pakistan still happen to be what Hargreaves (1997) calls the pre-professional stage of teacher development, when the education systems in most parts of the world are moving towards what Hargraeves (1997) describes as post-professionalism. Teachers in the primary government schools in Pakistan are still struggling alone in their classrooms to cover content with large groups of learners, with few textbooks or resources to help them, and with little reward or recognition. Several studies (Cuban, 1984; Curtis, 1988; Goodson, 1988; Hamilton, 1989) assert that public education appears to be following a factory-like system of mass education, where students are processed in large batches and segregated into age-graded cohorts or classes (in Hargreaves, 1997).

The traditional, recitation-like patterns of teaching have their advantages, of course. They enable teachers working with large groups of students and small resources to meet four fundamental demands of the classroom: maintaining student attention, securing coverage of content, bringing about some degree of motivation, and achieving some degree of mastery (Abrahamson 1974; Hoetker and Ahlbrand 1969 cited in Hargreaves, 1997). However, the cost of this is that the teachers can not orient themselves to the needs of individual students. As a result, teachers cannot ensure that all of their students can and do learn and so they cannot get their students to high standards of performance.

Teachers in primary government schools in Karachi are probably teaching in the traditional manner because they were themselves taught in this manner. Perhaps such a situation necessitates an investigation in this area to discover how the teachers learn in a Pakistani context and what models of professional development can help primary government school teachers to discover their leadership potentials, believe in their capabilities to bring about change and work together to help get their students to high standards of performance.

2. **The School Reform Initiatives in Government Primary Schools in Karachi, Pakistan.**

The above mentioned literature about the primary education system in Pakistan presents a very bleak picture of the government primary schools in Pakistan. However, I have reasons to believe that Pakistan's government primary schools in Karachi have progressed. Recently, different non-government and government organizations have implemented school improvement programs at the government primary school level. Since, the programs are fairly recent and in practice, most of their findings have not been documented for public reading as yet. Given below is a very brief summary of the reform initiatives, which have been implemented at the government primary schools in Karachi, Pakistan.

- ***Primary Education Program (PEP)*** falls under the category of project-based activities. Whole school development is the focus of this program. It aims to involve decision-makers, principals, teachers, parents and the community in improving and sustaining quality primary education. The PEP focuses on government schools in selected urban settings. PEP is initiated and organized by Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC), which is a non-profit, non-government organization. TRC began this project in July 1997 and it is expected that it will be completed in 2002. (Teachers' Resource Centre, 1999).

- ***The PTA Strategy in the two districts of Sindh*** or Innovative Scheme No. 5, emerged out of the intensive collaborative work between three sets of partners, viz. the Sindh Education Department (SED), the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) and the Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC). The objectives of this strategy were to improve sustained access to education opportunities especially for girls in Sindh through direct parental involvement in 150 (girls and mixed) schools of Districts Shikarpur and Karachi South; to create a partnership between government, NGOs, and the community; and to build management and planning capacity of PTAs through a needs and site based training methodology. This project was initiated in July 1997 and was completed in 1999 (Khan, 1999).

- ***The Adopt A School Program*** is initiated by the Sindh Education Foundation for improving the quality of education being imparted in government schools; for systematic and replicable collaboration between the private and public sector; and for mobilizing parents / communities in order to sustain the program even after the withdrawal of SEF and the adopter (Sindh Education Foundation, 1998).

- ***The Government School Project*** is initiated by the Book Group. In April 1995, the Government of Sindh issued a notification to transfer the management of a government girls school to the Book Group. Since September 1995, the Book Group has been working to improve the quality of education in the school by introducing interesting and relevant curriculum with the existing teaching staff and without any major financial input (The Book Group, 1996).

- The Department of Education, Government of Sindh had been engaged for 8 years since 1991, in a large-scale program called the ***Sindh Primary Education Development Program or SPEDP***. The World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID), UK and Norwegian Aid Agency (NORAD), supported this program. The main goals of SPEDP were to improve access to primary education, especially for girls, with equity and quality (Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing, 1997).

It will be challenging to investigate if the educational reforms have brought about any change in government teachers' teaching practices for effective student learning. According to Fullan (1992), the implementation of educational change involves "change in practice." Although change in practice can occur at many levels (the teacher, the school, the school district,

etc.), teacher level is the closest to instruction and learning. It, therefore, becomes important to study any changes in schools with changes in teachers in terms of what they do and think. It is valuable to discover whether the teachers in government primary government schools consider themselves capable of making any difference in students' lives or they are only following the reforms; whether they understand the changes that are taking place in schools or they are merely implementers of ideas; whether the school reforms have brought about any change in their sense of professionalism or they have left them exhausted and stressed.

1. Teacher Professionalism

I do believe that schools are only as good as their teachers (Ingvarson, 1997). In the light of the above statements it can be argued that it is impossible to improve schools without first improving the teachers. But how do the teachers improve? How do the teachers learn?

"Professional Development, of course. How else?" One might say. Yes, professional development for teachers is the answer to the above questions, but making provisions for it is not a simple task. Especially in this age and time when teaching is in the midst of a great transformation.

The target of almost every professional development program is to enhance teachers' professional learning and to develop teacher professionalism. There exists a large body of literature on the sociology of the profession and the evolving nature of professional work (Beck & Murphy, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Day, 1999; Gusky & Huberman, 1995; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1996; McLaughlin & Oberman, 1995; Schudson, 1980; and Shacklock, 1994).

The nature of what teachers do in classrooms and schools has been undergoing significant change over the last two decades and therefore, any debate about the meaning of teacher professionalism must take place within the context of changing work practices and educational policies. Researchers (Broudy, 1988; Eraut, 1994; Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990; Willis and Tosti-Vasay, 1990) have also theorized that professional learning is influenced by: 1) the context in which the learning occurs; 2) factors that motivate individual engagement in learning activities; and 3) the use of knowledge in practice (in Scribner, p 5, 1998). It is for this reason that the researcher wishes to identify the different measures that have been taken at the government and at the NGO level to reform primary government schools in Pakistan. The true meaning of teacher professionalism in a Pakistani context will only occur in the light of these reforms and new work practices.

In the light of the background literature about the government primary education system in Pakistan and the perspectives of different educators on professionalism, the researcher wishes to concentrate on the following dimensions of professionalism:

- Teacher Efficacy
- Epistemology of Practice - Standardized Teaching Practice
- Teacher Collegiality
- Teacher Leadership

2. Teacher Efficacy

Research suggests that teachers are more likely to adopt and implement new classroom strategies if they have confidence in their own ability to control their classrooms and affect student learning (Smylie, 1988 cited in Scribner, 1998). Furthermore, Smylie, (cited in Scriber, p 9, 1998) suggests that teacher efficacy, specifically Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) may act as "a professional filter through which new ideas and innovations must pass before teachers internalize them and change their behaviour".

A sense of efficacy seems to have at least two core components. The first is the belief that one is capable of doing her or his work effectively. The second is the notion that one can make a difference in some larger sense, that an individual's work and decisions can help to bring about positive change in a system (Chapman, 1990; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982 cited in Beck & Murphy, 1996).

2.3.2 Standardized Teaching Practice

The work of bureaucratized professionals is controlled by management is becoming increasingly organized into discrete, fragmented tasks in much the same way that is the case for less skilled workers (Derber, 1982 cited in Shaclock, 1994). In these bureaucratic organizations, teaching is considered to be relatively simple. Once the teachers have learnt to master it, they need no more help after that point. Schools where teachers continue to believe teaching is basically easy, where the pre-professional view persists, are schools that Rosenhltz (1989) has described as 'learning-impoverished'. They achieve poorer results in basic skill achievement than their more professionally oriented counterparts. (Rosenholtz, 1989 cited in Hargreaves, 1997).

What does it mean to be a professional in such organizations and what is required to help teachers understand the complexity of their workplace situation? It is the answer to this question, which the researcher plans to explore as a result of this research.

2.3.3 Teacher Collegiality

Schools where teachers continue to believe teaching is basically easy, professional learning for new teachers is largely seen as apprenticing oneself as a novice to someone who was skilled and experienced in the craft (Hargreaves, 1997). The unquestioned grammar of teaching is passed on from experienced teachers to novice ones. And once they have served their brief apprenticeship, experienced teachers see no more of their colleagues in the classroom, receive no feedback on their practice, and change and improve mainly by trial and error, in their own isolated classes (Hargreaves, 1997).

Hargreaves (1997) says that under such a situation even the improvement in the teacher education programs and courses will not make much of a difference because the grip of traditional teaching will be so tenacious that even the teachers, who appear to espouse new philosophies of teaching and learning during their teaching education programs, will revert to transmission and recitation patterns when they take up their first position. For educational reforms to succeed there is a need to build strong professional cultures of collaboration.

Collegial professionalism helps teachers to cope with uncertainty and complexity, respond effectively to rapid change, create a climate which values risk taking and continuous improvement, develop stronger sense of teacher efficacy, and create ongoing professional learning cultures for teachers (Hargreaves, 1997).

2.3.4 Teacher Leadership

Advocates of professional learning communities (Bhindi, & Duignan, 1996; Duingan, 1996; & Whutbey, 1995) suggest that teacher leadership surfaces as an important element in addressing school improvement. In such communities teachers assume both formal and informal roles while maintaining direct contact with the classroom. They are problem solvers, staff developers, and powerful influences in their work with colleagues (Harcher & Hyle, 1996 cited in Moeller et al, 2000). Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). These teachers influence their colleagues toward improved practice by being perceived as competent, credible, and approachable (Leithwood, 1997; Zinn, 1997 cited in Moeller et al, 2000).

Whether the school reforms in Pakistani government primary schools have been able to build professional learning communities, which can build the professional capacity of teachers to share leadership and to take on leadership roles is what I am aiming to discover with help of this research.

The Western literature about teacher professionalism provides a conceptualized theoretical framework for the study. However, it is imperative to localize literature so that the findings of the research are meaningful and substantial for the teachers in Pakistan. This requires an investigation which is thorough and which facilitates a richer and a complete data to be gathered and analyzed. Hence, my decision to conduct this research following the case study design.

3. Research Design

This research is an exploration of the impact of school reforms on teacher professionalism in government primary schools in Pakistan. The research design involves multiple case studies. Six government primary schools where reforms have taken place to effect teacher professionalism will form the case studies.

The reason for the selection of this design is related to the issues noted in the contextual analysis of primary education system in Pakistan. In that analysis, it is noted that the top-down policies of the government in Pakistan to reform schools in the past have not been successful. This implies that for any educational change to be successful it must involve the teachers. The preparation, induction, and professional development of teachers are the core issues for educational reform. If educational reform is to happen it is imperative that teachers understand themselves as professionals and be understood by the others as professionals. This issue necessitates a thorough investigation of the schools where reforms have taken place to determine their impact on teacher professionalism.

Each case will be investigated by employing a mixed methodology. Green, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) define mixed method designs as those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative methods (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm.

For this research quantitative data will be collected with the help of a questionnaire survey and the semi-structured interview will be conducted to collect qualitative data. The use of a mixed methodology will enable the researcher to predict as well as interpret result; to generalize as well as contextualise findings; to give causal explanation while at the same time to understand the perspectives of others; to begin with a theoretical framework and to

conclude with grounded theory; to gain some degree of control, yet to let new ideas to emerge; to retain some degree of distance, yet at the same time become personally involved and act as an insider rather than an outsider; and to produce data which is hard and reliable, yet rich and deep. In short the fusion of qualitative and quantitative methodologies within each case study will make it possible for the researcher to investigate*how many* teachers say *what* and *why* do they say that.

It is not my intention to take a Western methodology and apply it unquestioningly in a Pakistani context to achieve results. A number of principles underpin the application of mixed methodology within the case study design as the most suitable research strategy for studying the research issues.

- One of the most important principles of mixing methodologies is to clearly differentiate the

purposes for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods (Green et el. 1989). There are two purposes which underpin the use of mixed-method design for this research. These purposes are described below:

Table 1 Purposes for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs

Purpose	Rationale	Key Sources
COMPLEMENTARITY seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.	To increase the interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of constructs and inquiry results by both capitalizing on inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other resources.	Greene, 1987 Green & McClintock, 1985 Mark & Shotland, 1987 Rossman & Wilson, 1985
DEVELOPMENT seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.	To increase the validity of constructs and inquiry results by capitalizing on inherent method strengths.	Madey, 1982 Sieber, 1973

(cited in Green et al., 1989. p. 259)

- Mac Donald & Walker point out in Simons (1996, p. 231) that "the kind of case studies which we believe education needs have characteristics which call for a fusion of the artist and the scientist". By using mixed methodology, I will be able to work both as an artist (qualitative researcher) and a scientist (quantitative researcher).

- The use of mixed methodology also meets the principle of triangulation. According to Flick (1992) cited in Denzin & Lincoln (1994), triangulation is a process of using

multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen.

The first step in designing a case study is to formulate a research question, which makes it possible to achieve research objectives. The problem or the issue highlighted in the case gives rise to the following research question.

- *What does it mean to be a professional in Pakistani primary government schools? How can the Pakistani government primary schools be reformed or restructured to facilitate this professionalism among teachers?*

This question implies that there is a need to build contextual knowledge about teacher professionalism in Pakistan; that there are relationships between school reforms and teacher professionalism; that the school can be restructured in ways that facilitate teacher professionalism.

In order to find answer to the above question the research process will involve three phases. The *first phase* will be what Yin (1989) calls the *exploratory* stage in which the researcher will identify the case sites, that is, the schools in which the reforms have taken place and will seek official permission from the government authorities to conduct research in the identified schools. The *second phase* will be a combination of *exploratory* and *explanatory stages* (Yin, 1989). The focus of research in this phase will be on exploring the meanings the Pakistani government primary teachers attach to the different dimensions of professionalism by using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This phase will also focus on explaining and analyzing the data, which will emerge in the identified case sites. In the *third* and the final phase conclusions will be drawn leading to the conceptualization of a framework of teacher professionalism in Pakistani government primary schools.

4. Summary and Conclusion

In the end I must reiterate once again that there is a strong need to conduct research on teacher professionalism in Pakistan. The reasons for this are noted in the contextual analysis of the country. As noted before, Pakistan has shown steady and impressive long-term economic growth and is successfully making the transition from an overwhelmingly agricultural to an industrial economy. Yet, despite its considerable achievements in technology and commerce, Pakistan confronts many of the same social problems it faced at its birth.

Not only is the literacy rate one of the lowest in the world, Pakistan has not made much of the progress in terms of improving the quality of government primary school education in the country. We require a shift...a major shift; some would even suggest a radical shift in the direction of educational reform and improvement. This shift will not be possible without a force of teachers who are committed and who have the desire and the capability to lead Pakistan on to the road to educational progress and prosperity.

In order to make the educational change possible, we will require a change in teachers' purpose, passion, and desire for teaching. While mastering the skills of teaching and the knowledge of what to teach and how to teach is central to teacher development, it tends to miss what lies deep inside teachers and what motivates them most about their work. Understanding how teachers learn and then helping them understand the changing concepts

is not an easy task, but it is an important one and it requires teacher involvement and commitment.

It has been noted in the theoretical framework of this research that there have been efforts at the government and at the non-government level to reform government primary schools in Pakistan in the last ten years. The research is a step in discovering what initiatives have been taken to help government primary school teachers understand themselves as professionals and be understood by the others as professionals. The use of case study approach would enable the researcher to undertake an in-depth analysis of the issues arising from the investigation of case sites. By concentrating on a single phenomenon in six case study sites, the researcher will begin to unearth the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon to arrive at a holistic framework of professional development of teachers in these schools. It is hoped that the data of the cases of reforms in Pakistani government primary schools will enable the researcher to inform the policy makers in Pakistan about a set of principles, which could facilitate teacher development in these schools.

I believe that it is only through professional training and development that teachers can begin to understand and appreciate the important role they play in students' lives. I want to help teachers realize that they are the most powerful change agents because they can revolutionize the minds. I want to help teachers develop into reflective professionals. I want to help teachers successfully lead the students into the twenty-first century - but first, I must understand myself what teachers need to achieve their professional goals. Hence, my keen interest in pursuing my doctoral research studies in the area of professional development.

I hope that my research studies will enable me to join other educators who are finding professional development an area ripe for some rethinking and redefining. Perhaps together we can discover ways of promoting professional development among teachers and redefining professional development as a continuous life-long learning process.

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