

Research Based Innovations In Education; A Case Study Of Esru In Elementary And Secondary Education Department In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the innovations made from 2010-2015 in the Elementary and Secondary Education through Education Sector reform unit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Data was collected through the documents and records of the Elementary and Secondary Education Department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Some interviews of the present and ex officials and decision makers were also conducted for to see the implementation and monitoring process. Parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders were also made part of the population, through which data was collected using random sampling techniques. The study was restricted to three districts out of 35 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They were Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera. The study explores that all the innovations that were made from 2010 to 2015 were political and not researched based. Yet the political leaders opined that it was the publicly motivated innovations. All the teachers rejected the new vision, however students were satisfied to some extent. The parents rejected all the approaches except the monitoring system of the teachers adapted in 2013. All the innovations were not research based and only will of the government initiated them.

Keywords; Innovations in Education, Education Sector Reform Unit, Elementary and Secondary Education

Introduction

Education is the overall development of an individual, intellectual, social, moral, and physical. The educational problems, are growing too, with an increase in the educational uplift. The problems and issues of education are resolved through research in the field concerned. Research is earning due respect in all fields globally, which in turn had made prodigious socioeconomic changes in the theory and practice.

Research in education is more phenomenal as all disciplines are directly proportional to it. Innovations are the changes that are made in the existing system for refinement and development. The innovative approaches, however unlikely in Pakistan, are undertaken without considering the role of research.

Innovations and improvement are a rational and a significant aspect of economic growth, competitiveness, investment in the educational outcomes in the developed countries. It is irrefutable that the Pakistan has made limited improvement on most educational outcomes over the last few decades, especially in the promotion of quality education. "An innovation is one of those things that society looks at and says, if we make this part of the way we live and work, it will change the way we live and work." (Dean Kaman, 2015)

New ideas and its stagnation of performance explode inventions in Education. These innovations provide inflectional solution to many problems of the current educational dilemma. To achieve the objectives defined for the educational outcomes, larger funding streams will need to drive the identification, evaluation, and adoption of effective educational innovations. Systems and programs at the provincial and national level, in their quest to improve, should be in the business of identifying and scaling what works. We traditionally have lacked the discipline, infrastructure, and incentives to systematically identify breakthroughs, vet them and support their broad adoption - a process referred to as field scans.

In the United States, Department of Education, there is a separate office of the innovations and improvements. It carries its work on the basis of their studies and then recommends and notifies the innovations. Their areas of concern are very much different to that of ours. Some of their main innovative approaches are; Charters schools, on line learning, Magnet schools, teacher's certification, Parental involvement, supplemental educational services, school leadership and District school choice programmes.

In the United Kingdom there is a centre for education innovations, which work to strengthen the institutes in promoting new ideas. The centre not only innovates and design for the institutions of the United Kingdom but for the promotion of new ideas in other countries, too according to the cultural background of the countries. Some of its innovative approaches are discussed.

The School Communicator is an integrated communications solution that allows schools to communicate with parents using a variety of online and mobile tools. SOLA (School of leadership in Afghanistan), the first boarding school for girls in Afghanistan, pairs its comprehensive curriculum with national education improvement programs. Connecting Classrooms (CC) is a global education program which offers funding and resources for school partnerships, and the opportunity to share best practices with colleagues in the UK and more than 50 countries throughout Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas, presently made for Nigeria. Connecting Classrooms Professional Leadership - School Leadership Mentoring Project is designed by the British Council to develop the capacity of school heads and school administrators across several areas of leadership.

The Pathways (Novo Caminhos) project offers fast-track primary and secondary education, numeracy and literacy support for out-of-school youth to pursue education and employment opportunities. It is made for the Brazil. The Tutudesk Campaign provides durable plastic lap desks, known as Tutudesks, to learners in disadvantaged schools across sub-Saharan Africa who do not have access to conventional classroom desks to work on. It is currently designed for South Africa.

Design for Change (DFC) is a global movement that aims to empower students to say "I CAN" and inspire others by telling their own stories of change. The innovative approach is working in India. Mother Child Education Program is a home-based early childhood development program designed for preschool children aged 5-6 years and their mothers. It is designed for Turkey. PenPal Schools provides six-week courses on global issues and connects its students with a partner from around the world to help them understand others' cultures, ideas, and perspectives on these topics. The project is useful in multi ethnic and multi religious states, currently working in the USA.

In Pakistan some of the innovative approaches are following.

The Sindh Radiant Organization's Girls Secondary School Certificates project aims to improve access to education for girls in extremely remote areas of Sindh Province, who otherwise would have not been able to continue education after primary school, by setting up community-based learning centres.

Britannica Learning Tools aims to improve the learning outcomes in mathematics of under-privileged students in Lahore, through the provision of an e-learning tool called Smart Math.

The Public Private Partnerships for Education project aims to facilitate the adoption of schools by private or corporate sponsors to improve educational services in marginalized and under-served communities across Pakistan's Sindh Province.

The Broad Class - Listen to learn radio program aims to improve access to quality education for in-school and out-of-school public primary school children in Islamabad using Interactive Radio Instruction to deliver English lessons and teaching materials on air.

Ilm on Wheels aims to enhance learning achievements in mathematics for public primary school children in the remote areas of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, by providing access to online learning content and tools via a satellite-enabled Mobile Van.

The DiSH project uses interactive video lessons to deliver quality lessons in public primary schools in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, simultaneously training teachers to improve pedagogy and teaching practices.

The Skills for Employability Program aims to identify and train 300 Education Entrepreneurs from remote areas and to assist them in opening schools and other educational canter in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Non-Formal Education for Out-of-School Children in District Quetta Baluchistan, works for the development of Resource Solutions, using public school premises in the evenings to

provide remedial academic education and life skills training, in addition to WASH facilities, activities, and snacks, to out-of-school working children with the aim of drawing them back into formal education.

The present study focuses on the innovations that were made in the elementary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010-2015. The study explores the in-depth innovations that were made in the system and it further determines the role of research in it.

Education and research both, as a dynamic process, always find ways for the improvement. The major innovations made in the elementary and secondary education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are discussed in detail.

Free Books

1. Free textbooks were given to all of the students from primary to secondary classes by 2007. The poverty ratio of the citizens in the province with a high dropout ratio forced the authorities to initiate the scheme under the umbrella of ESRU (Education sector reform unit). The initiative, no doubt, attracted the parents and students in a high proportion towards schooling.

Uniform change

2. In the same, era the authorities decided to change the uniform in schools from black colour to white. The innovative tactic was welcomed by all stakeholders in the province, however the mothers made a complaint that they feel uneasy with white colour, as the one gets ugly as early as compared to the black Malesia colour. The decision taken in 2004, was de notified in 2008, with change in the provincial government. The change is again going to be made in 2015, and this time the grey paint and white shirt is advised.

Curriculum change

3. The curriculum was changed after the directives of the federal government in 2006, due to the new scenario of 9/11 incident in the US. The addition of broad-mindedness, was portrayed in the curriculum development, the reorganization of all subjects and its themes, were asked to change under a pre-defined outline directed to the provinces by the Federal government. The provincial curriculum committees suggested only, marginal changes, out of the outlines directed to them.

Constitution & Functioning of Parents Teachers Council (PTCs)

4. The parent's teacher's council formerly known as parents teachers associations, were initiated to involve the share of the community towards owning the institutions, started in 2008. However, its marginal role primarily was enhanced in financial assistance and autonomy in 2014. The change brought positive effects and as a result a huge exchequer was saved. The annual statistical reports indicated that a classroom that was established by the C&W department at worth Rs. One million was constructed by PTCs at the cost of 0.3 million. More than 40 % schools built

their boundary walls and wash rooms, hence the basic infrastructure was improved. It was also assured that an independent firm may validate the internal audit made by such councils.

Collection and Analysis of Data, from Education Management Information System (EMIS) for Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation purpose.

5. Education Management Information system (EMIS) is a separate section made in each district in the office of the District Education Officers. Its main purpose was to collect data annually regarding the prevailing facilities, teachers, students, distribution of free books, number of sanctioned posts filled and vacant and school building. The researched based novelty was statically analysed to make the inferences in judgement and evaluation for future planning. This reform made record of all schools in the data base and decisions are made accordingly now.

Policy regarding special incentives to female teachers in disadvantaged districts approved (Kohistan, Shangla, Battagram, Tank, Dir Upper and Buner) and notified

6. The far flung areas in the disadvantaged districts were either refused by the female teachers or challenged in the courts. An incentive in the shape of special allowance in these areas was notified in 2010; the tactic resolved many issues and concerns of both the teachers and government. The project is now extended to all districts in 2013 to the female students of class 6th to 10th.

Scheme of Stipends to girls' students in grades 6-10 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa implemented through Post Office & EDOs

7. In order to improve the growth and the ratio of the female students in the province, a scheme was initiated to attract them and their parents by offering them a stipend/ scholarship. The development was incredible and 309090 students benefited during 2009-10. The drop out ratio was decreased meaningfully by this ground-breaking approach.

Sports Rules re-framed and notified

8. The rules of the district and provincial tournaments were framed in 1990, since its formation the games were amended by the respective sports bodies internationally. It was intensively felt to amend the sports rules for the smooth conduct of the events to be organized. A committee were formed in 2009; it recommended the amendments after conclusive sessions. Apart from sports activities a reform package was introduced with the inclusion of other 29 items of co- curricular strength. The regional tournament was introduced after the district competition by dividing the 25 districts of the province in 4 regions. Both the winner and runner up teams were given a qualifier chance in the provincial events, for the first time.

The process of admission to 90 poor/intelligent students in 7th class in centres of excellence in the province

9. The students of the government schools reading in class 7th between the age of 13-14, after qualifying a test of the EATA are sponsored in the rest of the education up till 10th class in the centres of excellence in the province. They include the Peshawar Public school and college, Islamia collegiate, Peshawar, University Public school, Peshawar, Pakistan international public school, Abbottabad, the Fazli Haq College, Mardan. They are selected from all the 25 districts, 2 from each, and 40 female students are also selected through the process for their free education.

The bifurcation of the teaching and management cadre in the E& SE

10. In light of the national Education policy 2009, the management and teaching cadres were bifurcated in 2010. Under the process, ADEOS, SDEOS, DDEOS and DEOS were appointed through public service commission and were supposed to focus only on managerial tasks rather than on teaching. On the other hand, the teaching cadre was asked to focus on academic matters. The spirit of the NEP 2009 was implemented but, it caused too many problems in the circles too.

Revision of Education Code 1935

11. The education code of 1935 was revisited in 2010 and several suggestions were recommended to make it effective under the new modern requirements. For the first time in the history, the job prescriptions were defined for all cadres of teaching and management. The new code resolved many issues regarding the teacher's role, facilities, by laws of finance, leave and other matters of concern.

For the purpose of the study, three districts Peshawar, Nowshera and Charsadda were selected conveniently out of 25 districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. All the DEOs, DDEOs, SDEOs were interviewed for the purpose of the study. Apart from it, four Principals of the high/higher secondary schools were interviewed too, from each district.

The innovations introduced in the last five years by the Elementary and Secondary Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, varied on ranking from individual's vision. However, the two main such reforms made during last five years, according to most of the respondents, were the Independent monitoring unit and bifurcation of the teaching and management cadre.

Independent Monitoring Unit

The reform introduced in 2013, is more critical for teachers and principals. The absentees of teachers which caused a huge lost to the national exchequer was determined through the introduction of the IMU in the province. Simple graduates, young and talented, were appointed through a transparent structure in the IMU. They were having no professional knowledge of the pedagogical skills, nor were they trained for such extraordinary task, proved result oriented in unorthodox way. Their main job was not to supervise professional attitude, that's why no such training was needed, according to one of the district monitor. They were supposed to visit the schools without prior intimation to them, collect data about men, money and material, and

report the same to District monitors. The district monitors analysed the data and send the same to the District Education Officers for the verification and action. The lack of professional knowledge of the IMU workers, who raised irrelevant and irrational questions, according to the majority of the DEOs. One such example is the primary school teacher, who was deputized by the Principal of the high school in his one boundary, jurisdiction, was marked absent in his primary school, by the monitoring evaluator. In spite of the appreciation given to a low grade teacher teaching to the high grade classes, he was punished with a deduction of one-day salary. The act made furious the concerned high school principal, sole administrator and supervisor of the school. Another principal was questioned, as to why he had recommended the teachers for casual leaves. Upon the re question to define the casual leave, by the principal, the monitor showed negative gestures. The authority of the principals, whenever challenged, created so many problems. The written reports against the monitors were send to the DEOs, in 2013, however the decrease was observed in 2014 and 2015 respectively, mainly due to the professional adjustments that were made in acquiring knowledge about educational matters. On the other hand, a large numbers of teachers were reported absent by monitors in 2013, in which examiners deputised by the BISEs for SSC and HSSC exams, were also marked as absent. The ratio was decreased in 2014 and 2015, as most of the teachers reached to the schools in time, as a result of the reporting by the monitors, and particularly the deductions made in their salaries.

An ADEO in the inspection slot stated that a Maktab school was showed as Ghost school, by the monitor, after failing to find it. He was briefed about the status of the Maktab School and then were able to discriminate among different categories of schools. A principal responded in flabbergast, as the monitor reported his school and teachers absent on the first of the October at 7;50 am, and he was unaware of the timings of opening of schools from 1st October, as 8;30 am.

Lack of the knowledge some time gives you benefit, is rightly said, as the monitors despite of it, showed impressive results, particularly in decreasing absenteeism of the teachers from the schools.

The introduction of the IMU was a result of the observations and reports of the parents. However, it was not carried after a proper research and piloting, that's why issues are raised by the legal nature to its existence. The deductions made in the salaries of the teachers for ten days being absent for one day, that too by the DC, is a legitimate question of service rules. Whether it will be considered a break in the service and its further repercussions, are subsequent questions often asked by the educators, after the decisions made by the IMU.

Despite its shortcomings, the IMU succeeded in bringing the teachers back to the schools and principals should take advantage of the avail, now in the promotion of quality education.

Bifurcation of teaching and management cadre

After the implementation of the NEP, 2009, the management and teaching cadres were bifurcated. As a result, DEOs, DDEOs, SDEOs and ADEOs were appointed by the provincial public service commission in 2010-2012. The results were strange for the policy makers, as the DEOs exercised absolute powered irrespective of the will and wish of the government. Some of the DEOs, not all, were found in making illegal advantages of the posts. The provincial

government forced to amend the law by allowing the teaching cadre principals to act as DEOs, if needed by the authority. The reverse gear, that too after one year, was due to the lack of research based innovations made in the policies. Although the NEP 2009, defined it in regard of some studies made over on the subject. Almost all the principals opined against the decision, as the criteria set for such appointments was ambiguous. Furthermore, their selection by the public service commission was made merely on the knowledge they acquire in their Master and not of the managerial skill, if they have any. Similarly, most of the principals are of the view that why other recommendations of the NEP 2009 were implemented rather than a one sentence area of concern. Contrary to the views of the principles, the DEOS, DDEOs and SDEOs were all in favour of the innovative approach taken by the government. They viewed that certain changes occurred in the system and transparency of the postings, transfers and financial matters are now assured. However, these posts are political animations and can be removed anytime.

Text Books

Text books were changed in recent times in accordance with guidelines of the 2006. After the 18th amendment in the parliament in April, 2010, the provincial text book board initiated the publications of the new curricula with standardized paper, figure, exercises and modern style. Almost all the teachers and principals consider the innovation as timely and correctly. The decision was made political by making criticism in the statements by all oppositional political parties at the time. The government asked all political parties, individuals, educationists and public through an advertisement in the print and electronic media to suggest any changes, if they wish to do so, surprisingly only 36 persons send their suggestions out of the 12 million people of the province. The ADEOs considered the curriculum changes as out of the thematic status of the Primary school teachers, mostly matriculate. They opined that a refresher courses for the teachers be conducted to address those issues.

Conclusion

The Elementary and Secondary Education department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through its unit of reforms that is Sector reforms unit, initiated several innovations in Education. However, these innovations were not brought into reformation from any kind of research or pilot studies made for to see. As a result, most of the reforms were implemented only on the advice of the Sector reform unit, which were initiated on the political will of the governments rather than the one made after research. The success ratio of these reforms, therefore are questioned by stakeholders from time to time through media, talks, seminars and conferences. Although, some of them got immense popularity particularly the monitoring system, which was always praised by students and parents and highly criticized by teachers. There may be pilot studies before implementation of such reforms and innovations.

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