

College Teacher Educators Becoming Researchers: Stories From A Public Sector Teacher Education Institution From Northern Pakistan

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Abstract

In higher education institutions, conducting research, alongside teaching, is an integral part of work. However, in the elementary teacher education colleges in Pakistan, this role and responsibility of the teacher educators may be mired by a number of factors. This qualitative study, therefore, aimed at documenting the change process of teacher educators' practises while initiating their roles as researchers in an elementary college of education in one of the remotest regions of Pakistan. In the college, there were 16 teacher educators. Purposive sampling approach, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 research respondents (5 males and 5 females) and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with all the teacher educators (16 participants). The main findings of the study elucidated that external factors such as the need for programme accreditation and its requirements were the key driving force for teacher educators assuming the role of researchers. In doing so, supportive leadership, use of available human resources, and use of internal and external support played an important role in making teacher educators take the role of researchers. The findings have pertinent implications for teacher educators' role in similar settings.

Keywords: Change management, institutional change, research culture, teacher education, teacher educators.

Introduction and Background

Research in education plays an important role in enhancing the quality of education. It bridges gaps between and within the existing body of knowledge and literature, caters to the needs of society, and provides solutions for reforms and innovation in education. Thus, the value of research cannot be ignored, as it has become the key mandate of higher education across the world. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, there is an expectation from teacher educators that they embody the role of researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Khan, 2011; Wilson, 2006).

However, unfortunately, in college teacher education, conventionally, it is an evident fact that teaching and learning have primarily been the focus of attention in Pakistan (Farooq, 1990). Research in teacher education institutions, especially at the college level, has always remained a neglected area of practice. It would appear that exploring the nature of research culture in teacher education institutions in the country and studying challenges that teacher educators face concerning research and addressing those issues have not been the focus of researchers. This study, therefore, is an attempt to explore teacher educators' role in initiating research work in a public sector teacher education institution in Gilgit-Blatistan, Pakistan. For this purpose, a public sector teacher education institution was selected for the study. The college, for the first time, took the research initiative in the recent past. This study broadly aims to explore those factors that contributed to or hindered the process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing research work of the teacher educators of the college.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Studies show that teacher educators undertake research both in schools and in higher education institutions (Murray, 2008; Elijah, 1996; Todd, 2002; Livingston, McCall & Morgado 2009). As a result, they are seen as academics, researchers, field supervisors, and expert classroom teachers. Livingston et al. (2009) highlight the importance of the role of teacher educators as the bedrock of higher education along with the contextual factors and practices. The authors argue that to take up the role of faculty in higher education, teacher educators need to conduct research. Secondly, Livingston et al. (2009) see the importance of research based on certain elements, including the temporal and dynamic concept of knowledge; societal change; changing educational landscape and demands; inter-professional working; lifelong learning; and research as a collaborative model for the development of teaching and learning.

In reality, individuals begin to take on the role and identity of teacher educators based on their learning through practice in teacher education institutions. In performing their role as teacher educators, individuals are seen to take a hybrid position of a "teacher" and a "researcher." Given the institutional reality, nature of work, and the competence to sustain the roles, teacher educators face the tension of balancing their roles (Smith & Flores 2019). Discussing the changing role of teacher educators in Australia, White (2019) is of the view that given the broad role, teacher educators need to work across and between schools, communities and universities. The changing scenario of looking at teacher educators as researchers has pressured them to earn research projects and publish their work (MacPhail & O'Sullivan 2019). In the UK, Maguire (1994) found that

teacher educators face uncertainties and tension due to the dual nature of their work in schools and higher education institutions. She found that in schools they are seen as ‘far too ivory tower’; whereas, universities consider them less qualified and less capable of doing academic research. This is because, generally, teacher educators come up with less academic research and publications. Murray (2008) also refers to the dual nature of teacher educators’ roles and practice, relating to schools and higher education institutions.

In the context of higher education, as part of their roles and responsibilities, teacher educators engage in academic research (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Elijah, 1996; Murray, 2008; Zeichner, 1999). Studies have shown that teacher educators carry out various types of research work, including action research (Ponte et al., 2004) and self-study research (Bashiruddin, 2006; Delamont et al., 2005; Loughran, 2005; Zeichner, 2005), among all other types of research.

It is a fact that teacher educators generally spend more time in schools with prospective teachers and students than any other group of higher education faculty. As a result, they are usually involved in operational activities and have less time to spend on research and scholarly activities (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994). Cole (1999) reported that teacher educators spend about 60% of their time on teaching-related activities, less than 20% of their time on academic research and a little more than 20% on administrative activities. He further found that in the status quo-keeping institutions, advocating a research agenda was a challenging task due to the fact that teacher education institutions were the victims of the elite patriarchal culture of the academics.

Ducharme and Ducharme (1996) in the USA found that teacher educators spend very limited time on research and academic work. They observed that those who teach at the BS level (B.Ed.) spend 7–9% of their weekly time on research work, those who teach at the master’s level spend 9–13% and those who teach at the doctoral level spend 13–24% of their weekly time on research-related activities. In addition, teacher educators not only need to know how to conduct research but also need to develop skills as consumers of research findings (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

In Pakistan, limited literature is available in this area; very few studies have been carried out to explore how teacher educators see themselves (Khan, 2009; Khan, 2011). Generally, high school teachers are transferred to teacher education colleges as instructors, who tend to be less motivated and follow traditional methods of teaching (Kizilbash, 1998; Tahseen, 2015; Warwick & Reimers, 1994). A majority of the teacher educators in colleges do not have any research publications to their credit (Farooq, 1995; Khan, 2009).

Some teacher education institutions have recently begun to initiate change processes through setting up their targets, welcoming innovation, and continuing change processes. According to Fullan (1993), change is a complex, interwoven, and uncertain journey, full of excitement and challenges. Understanding the internal and external contexts and ensuring both individual and collective responses are vital. In the change process, individuals can become change agents. Issues are inevitable, and external and internal conditions can affect the journey. As a result, the change process becomes a cyclic journey or an iterative process. However, in Pakistan, while we generally know about the duties and responsibilities officially assigned to teacher educators, their roles as researchers have been one of the neglected research areas. Moreover, there

is a dearth of research into how teacher educators learn about research and use it for their professional growth; what meanings they give to their experiences as researchers; how they balance their roles as researchers in relation to their traditional practices; and how they experience the change process.

The Study Context

This study was conducted with teacher educators in an elementary college of education in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The college is situated in the suburbs of a town in a remote and mountainous region. During the study period, the college had sixteen teacher educators (11 women and 5 men). Similarly, over 90 prospective teachers attended college, with the majority of them being females.

Earlier, these types of colleges offered one-year extended Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Certificate of Teaching (CT) programs. Later, those programmes were phased out in favour of two-year diploma programmes known as Associate Degree in Education (ADE) and four-year B.Ed. (Elementary) Honours programs. The four-year programme has more emphasis on research and practicum. Such changes, taken at the strategic level, have created changes in the college's teaching and learning programme structures. In Pakistan, generally, secondary school teachers are transferred from schools to these teacher education colleges (Khan, 2011; Kizilbash, 1998; Warwick & Reimer, 1995), who are perceived to be good at teaching, yet lacking in research skills (Farooq, 1990). Thus, in this college too, teachers were transferred from different schools. The college does not have any budget for research and innovation.

In addition, several governing bodies control teacher education colleges in the country with respect to curriculum and examination, recruitment and placement of teacher educators, budget, and administration (Faheem, 2006). Thus, how teacher educators see their academic identities and how they function within the web of various governing bodies is a question that needs attention (Khan, 2011).

The college, where the teacher educators worked, was monitored by the Directorate of Education (school system) of the provincial government. It had a functioning library, an internet facility, and a computer lab with an interactive board. The library was full of books. However, we could not find any subscribed academic journals in it. All the teacher educators had their own desks and chairs fixed in a common room called the Staffroom. The principal of the college was a strong advocate of change and development. She believed in cooperative efforts and learning from each other. The principal had a separate spacious office, decorated with plans and charts, showcasing information about the students, staff, and teacher educators. Students' work and various other themes were on display in the offices, staffroom, and corridors. The displays showcased texts and portraits about effective teaching, teachers' roles, a clean and healthy environment, the importance of research, and instructions for the students. Most of the displays in the corridors and classrooms were the work of the students.

Prior to 2014, the college did not think of initiating research projects. As a result, almost all of the teacher educators in the college never thought of their role as researchers. It is a general

phenomenon that, in the elementary colleges of education in Pakistan, teacher educators do not carry out research work. For instance, in a study, in one of the provinces of Pakistan, Khan (2009) found that none of the teacher educators in the Elementary Colleges of Education spared their official time for research work. The majority of the teacher educators had never seen any of their own teachers conduct research at their respective universities. In the year 2014, the college initiated small scale research projects. As a result, a majority of the faculty members became involved in small-scale research projects within their classroom contexts. The college started inviting guest speakers on basic research and action research approaches.

This sudden change in the college caught our attention, and we planned to study and document the change initiative. Certain questions provided us some pathways for the study. Those questions included: who initiated the research agenda? Why did the teacher educators and the college management feel it was important? How was the process initiated and why was it so? What and how was the implementation mechanism? What challenges did the college management and teacher educators face during the implementation process and how were they addressed? Where is the college now with respect to its research initiation agenda? What can we learn from their experiences?

Data Generation, Analysis, and Trustworthiness

The principal author started visiting the college and documenting observations and interactions (interviews) with the management and faculty members and tried to capture the change initiatives and their implementation using a case study approach (Merriam, 1998). The in-depth nature of the approach helped us to generate comprehensive data for the analysis. Educators were interviewed, comprising of five men and five women. Likewise, all the teacher educators (16 in total) in the college participated in two different FGDs. The teacher educators were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The age of the research participants ranged from 24 to 46 years. During field visits, the teacher educators shared their research plans, reports, and published abstracts and papers in various seminar and conference proceedings and international journals.

We got formal permission from the principal of the institutions through a consent letter and then arranged a meeting with the teacher educators to share with them the scope of the study and possible harms and benefits to the participants of the study. After getting consent, we conducted individual interviews with the principal and the other nine teacher educators. We audiotaped all the interviews and transcribed them verbatim. In order to get a broader view, we also held two Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with teacher educators.

The data analysis went side by side with the data collection (Merriam, 1998). This enabled us to be open to newer interpretations and opportunities to generate data. Once the transcription process was completed, we kept on reading the transcribed data several times in order to develop broader themes based on emerging patterns. We came up with certain emerging themes based on the meticulous reading of our data (interview transcripts and field-notes). Those themes eventually became the findings of the study.

For trustworthiness of the fieldwork and data, we concur with and have followed Eisner's (1998) suggested ways of dealing with trustworthiness and rigour of the study, and further refer to three different sources of evidence, including structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy. According to him, structural corroboration, like triangulation, is a means through which multiple types of data are linked to each other in order to interpret or evaluate a state of affairs. Consensual validation is about the agreement where different professionals agree and come to consensus that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and developed themes are right. Likewise, referential adequacy refers to the description of the work that enables readers to "see what they would have missed without the critic's observations" (Eisner, 1998, p. 114). Hence, in the study, the longer period we spent with teacher educators and management in the college, not only interacting with them (interviewing) but also observing them planning, doing, and working (publishing), and later on our own joint reflections, enabled us to come up with a robust analysis and ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of the study.

Findings

The findings showcase how and why the teacher educators initiated the research work, how they implemented their plans, and continued the research work.

Planning for the Journey: the Dilemmas of Dreams and Reality

Historically, the college did not have any research initiatives. As a result, neither the college had a specific allocated budget and resources for the research work nor did the teacher educators see their roles as researchers. Teachers from the school cadre had been transferred to the college as teacher educators, who had never carried out research work in their previous cadre in the schools.

In addition, a majority of the teacher educators in the college had not seen any role models for research during their own academic journey in the past. A research participant mentioned

I received my B.Ed. as a regular candidate from one of Karachi's public sector teacher education colleges. The principal of the college was very competent in all subjects. He would visit classes on a daily basis and would call teachers to his office so as to guide them for better teaching. However, I did not observe any faculty members conducting research in the college.

Another respondent shared this perspective: "Initially we were of the view that research is not a mandate of a common teacher; it could only be carried out by PhD scholars or university professors." Likewise, a third teacher educator mentions, "without having any research expertise, when I planned to learn research, I felt very novice and thought that I did not know anything about research." Such conceptions always impede research activities. The teacher educators who had limited understanding of research felt they had limited skills and were eager to learn from their experiences and that of their seniors in the field. In addition, there were no role models available in the college doing research that could encourage and support the novice faculty members and prospective teachers in conducting research.

When the college planned for the accreditation of its programmes through the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE), the college's management and faculty realised the importance of doing research. For instance, after phasing out the traditional one-year PTC and CT programs, realising the importance of initiating new programmes such as Associate Degree in Education (ADE) and a four-year B.Ed. (Hons) program, the college planned to strengthen the capability of its faculty members so as to get the accreditation of the new programs. One such initiative was enabling them to conduct research and supervise students' research theses. A research participant explained

Due to the introduction of the ADE along with NACTE [National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education] demands for quality standards in the colleges, we felt a direct threat to our survival at the Elementary College. We also came to know that in the near future, besides the two-year ADE program, we would also have a four-year B.Ed. programme in the colleges. Thus, we decided to enhance our research skills and professional standards.

It shows that an external fear was present among the teacher educators in connection with their traditional role as teacher educators. They realised the importance of taking up the role of a researcher as they realised the need and demand for the new programs. Failing to do so would have created a serious threat to their continued role as teacher educators. The principal of the college also felt that, besides the intrinsic motivation of the faculty members, there were some extrinsic motivations too. She explained,

The reason behind our motivation for conducting research is that we are currently working on fulfilling the requirements of the NACTE to run BS programs. For that, our faculty members need to have expertise and skills to teach research and supervise research theses. Secondly, we, in our day-to-day practice, sometimes face problems and challenges; therefore, we thought of solving such problems through research-based practice.

As part of the research initiative drive in the year 2014, all the faculty members of the college participated in a professional development project at the Aga Khan University in Karachi, where they were introduced to some basic research work and skills. This example made them realise the importance of conducting research. For the very first time, the research participants realised that doing research was not some particular person's job; rather, they started to realise their role as researchers. A respondent shared this view:

I learnt Appreciative Inquiry research from AKU-IED in 2014 and started to conduct a study using this approach. This enabled me to learn how to design a research question, collect data, and do the analysis. During this process, I realised that research is needed all the time for a teacher educator. I realised that we, as teacher educators, can carry out research work.

Another participant reflected,

Previously, I did not do any research work. I had studied various research methodologies, but I had not conducted any research in the past. Participation in the workshop on research made me rethink my role as a researcher. Teacher educators, I discovered, also conduct research.

The extracts above show that external pressure and motivation, coupled with exposure to research work in a professional development project, made the college management and faculty rethink their roles as researchers. However, the teacher educators lacked the capacity to carry out independent research work. Nevertheless, the principal realised the importance of using the available human resources. She saw that some faculty members could play a key role in initiating research activities in the college. She was aware of the fact that some of her faculty had recently completed their Master's in Education from various universities and, as part of their degree requirements, they had conducted research theses as well. Therefore, these faculty members could be mentors to their colleagues. A research participant also shed light on this in these words:

I conducted a qualitative exploratory study as my master's thesis at Karakoram International University and a quantitative research thesis at the Aga Khan University, Karachi. When I came back and joined the college, I saw colleagues planning for various research activities. This gave me the courage to conduct research too.

Another research participant concurred and had this to share:

Initially, I thought research was not a teacher's job. However, during my Master's program, I conducted a thesis. Fortunately, my supervisor was a great researcher. His encouragement made me feel that I was by birth a researcher. Now, I feel comfortable not only doing research but also helping my colleagues do so.

He further added,

My thesis at the Master's level was on the Agay [an ancient language spoken in the region] script. Currently, I am working on the revival of the Agay script in our region. Likewise, my current research project focuses on the integration of ICTs to improve language learning.

In a similar vein, another research participant reflected on how he learned research and what motivated him in his previous alma mater by sharing that:

Earlier, I always perceived research as a challenging task. Later on, when I went to AKU-IED for my Master's in Education, I initially saw research as a challenge too. But due to

the support of the AKU-IED and my supervisor, I completed my thesis. In the recent past, the encouragement by our college management to do research has given me the courage to conduct research and publish my work. Tomorrow, if we introduce a four-year B.Ed. program, we will be able to supervise thesis research.

Thus, in the initiation phase, the external pressure to revamp the college programmes as per the NACTE requirements forced the management and teacher educators to see their roles in a wider perspective, in terms of being able to conduct and supervise research work. Likewise, the college also saw that some of the teacher educators were able to do research and facilitate others in doing so. Using the available human resources with research capabilities in the college paved the way for having and embarking on the research agenda.

The Journey Begins: the Story of Haves and Have-nots

After the realisation of the importance of doing research, the college management and faculty members looked for opportunities to learn and conduct research in their respective fields. Firstly, the college management planned to train the teacher educators in conducting research. However, the college did not have any budget allocation for training or for research activities; therefore, they looked to NGOs for funding. In this regard, the principal shared

Upon our request, the Marafie Foundation graciously granted us some funding to initiate research activities. Through this fund, we arranged sessions on research by inviting faculty members from Karakorum International University.

The principal elaborated further in these words:

To initiate research work in our college, we needed to facilitate and extend our cooperation to our faculty members in terms of arranging sessions and training programmes and budgeting for such activities. We thought of giving exposure visits to institutions that have been doing research; allocating time for research; purchasing books related to research; and facilitating our faculty members in disseminating their research findings.

In the implementation phase, the role of the college principal seems to be pivotal in searching for opportunities for initiating a research culture in the college. In connection with further funding and budget, the principal, along with her team, requested the Directorate for research grants. They were able to convince the director to allocate some funds for research activities. Upon receiving funds from the Directorate, the college requested the Head of Professional Development Center North (PDCN) of the Aga Khan University for their support to initiate research activities. As a result, the PDCN conducted sessions on how to do research in general and action research in particular. Later on, they also conducted follow-up visits as well. "Now we are well trained to conduct action research," said a research participant. Due to the

cooperation and support of the principal, we went to the PDCN for a training programme on research. We learnt how to conduct action research. We then conducted research in our classrooms and college, "another participant added." Similarly, a participant reflected on the importance of research for future programmatic activities and the role of the principal:

Due to the charismatic leadership of our principal, we have successfully initiated a research culture at the college now. We will teach research [skills] to our students as well from the beginning of 2019, when we start offering BS programs. We have an Internet facility at the college and support from the college principal.

Almost all the research participants admired the role of the principal in convincing, initiating, and supporting a research culture in the college. A participant, for example, mentioned,

Our principal convinced us that we had to promote a research culture, and for the first time, a research budget was allocated for conducting research and books on research were available in our library. I appreciate our principal for the proper planning to initiate this activity. Now we are conducting research with the help of PDCN Gilgit.

Along with giving training opportunities for teacher educators, the college management also realised that there was a lack of relevant books on research in the library. The college did not have any specific budget for the library books. However, the principal and teacher educators planned to purchase some books on research from the amount of money they had received from the NGO and the Directorate of Education. "Having books on research in our library was indeed a luxury," a teacher educator recalled. I personally benefited a lot from those books.

During the implementation phase, teacher educators faced two types of challenges related to administration and academic affairs. The challenges included additional workload, a limited number of books and journals in the library, and a lack of budget for conferences and seminar attendance.

The Journey Continues: Stories of Collaborations and Achievements

Initiating research activities and planning to implement them through sessions on research and securing funding for small-scale research activities encouraged the faculty members to take on small-scale research projects in their respective fields. By 2018, five of the 16 teacher educators had published their research in various periodicals and conference proceedings. Of these, one faculty member had published four research articles during the period. Teacher educators felt that it was a big accomplishment for them as they had never done any research work in the past.

Some of the research participants who had never thought of doing research began to develop research plans, tools, collect and analyse data, and prepare papers for conferences and

journals. For instance, the following extracts from the interviews show the research participants' involvement in research activities:

I have done some small-scale research on spelling mistakes made by students in a school context. While doing so, I also learnt how to develop a questionnaire along with an interview guide to explore students' spelling problems. I conducted another research on students' learning in groups and the group dynamics.

Likewise, another participant reflected on her experience in these words:

I have carried out some research projects, but I have not been able to publish them yet. It is my dream to publish them soon. The issue for me is that I do not have valid information about research journals and how to submit papers for publication. I have to learn it from colleagues who have already published.

This shows the eagerness of the teachers to publish their work. It also showcases the opportunities for learning from colleagues. Taking up the research initiatives not only enabled the teacher educators to think through their roles as researchers and to initiate small-scale research work, but it also resulted in a collaborative learning atmosphere in the college. Involvement in research activities enabled the research participants not only to present their papers at various national conferences and seminars but also helped them to publish their research work in various national journals. A research participant highlighted this in these words:

I presented my paper at the NACTE national conference held in KIU Gilgit in 2017. My abstract has been published in the conference proceedings. Doing small scale research, developing an article and presenting it was something very encouraging for me. I sometimes realise that we, as human beings, are naturally researchers.

Talking about his publications, another research participant had this to say:

I have already published three of my papers in journals and have had five abstracts published in seminars and conferences. I will soon send another paper to an international publication. As a teacher educator, I see myself as a researcher. It is good that some of our colleagues have begun to do some sort of research in the college; this is good. In this way, we get encouraged to see that we all struggle to learn something good.

Some of the research participants felt that their involvement in the research activities gave them the courage to continue their studies further. For instance, a respondent shared:

Currently, I am doing research to explore the leadership styles of heads of colleges. I want to explore what factors influence their decision to adopt certain leadership styles. In the

future, I want to do M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees; therefore, research practise will ultimately enable me to achieve my goals.

The above-mentioned extract from an interview shows how involvement in a research activity gave courage to a teacher educator to dream of her M.Phil. and PhD studies. Nevertheless, writing research reports in English and identifying academic journals for publication were key challenges related to academics. In order to address such issues, teacher educators started working in small groups. This helped them learn from each other. In this regard, a research participant mentioned, "working in the small group enabled me to do the proofreading, eradicate language errors, and write my research report." This enabled me to learn from colleagues.

Thus, involvement of the college faculty in various research activities not only enabled some of the research participants to be involved in research activities, publish their work, and share their research findings at various conferences, but it also gave them the courage to think about furthering their academic qualifications.

Discussion

Research has become a key aspect of the teacher educator's role worldwide (Wilson, 2006). The lesser involvement of teacher educators in research seems to be a global phenomenon across university departments and teacher education institutions (Maguire, 1994; Khan, 2009). Thus, the research culture and conducting academic research may not appear to be a norm within the teacher education colleges in Pakistan. However, considering the importance of conducting research, management and teacher educators of the college have started to realise and enact their role and responsibilities as active researchers. In this study, the key factors that made the teacher educators learn the role of researcher were external pressure (Ben-Peretz, 2006; MacPhail & O'Sullivan 2019) and competition in order to meet the demands of the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. In learning their new role as researchers, the use of available human resources and an engaging leadership approach seemed to be prominent in the college. These factors have played an important role in initiating, implementing, and sustaining the College's research agenda.

Due to the revamping of teacher education programmes, with a particular focus on introducing four-year teacher education programs, the college management and faculty have started initiating their research agenda through the initiation of research activities. Meeting the standards for NACTE was a prerequisite for the College. NACTE's mission is to ensure quality teacher education both in public and private teacher education institutions across the country and to certify their programs. According to NACTE (n.d.),

Accreditation of teacher education is the process of quality assurance whereby an institution or programme evaluates itself, is evaluated by a third party, and develops a plan to improve in relation to predetermined standards. As a result of this process, an institution

is awarded a certificate that states its current status and attests to its commitment to continuous improvement in relation to the predetermined standards (p. 10).

Thus, the external factors in terms of accrediting the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) and four-year B.Ed. programmes in the near future by the NACTE were one of the key external factors that made the college enhance the research skills and knowledge of the faculty members. The four-year B.Ed. Honors programs, for example, have a three-credit-hour course titled "Research Methods in Education" and another three-credit-hour research project mandatory for the programme (Higher Education Commission, 2012). Thus, in order to teach the research methods course and supervise the research projects (theses), teacher educators need to have adequate research knowledge, expertise, and skills.

In Pakistan, teacher educators in colleges are generally transferred from public sector schools, primarily working as secondary school teachers (Khalid, 1996; Kizilbash, 1998; Khan, 2011). Though they were good teachers in schools and had expertise in certain areas of schooling (Khan, 2009; Zeichner, 1999), they were novices in research (Danaher et al., 2000). Most of them did not have the knowledge and skills to conduct research in their respective fields. They themselves did not have any of their role models in research (Timmerman, 2009). When they began to learn and conduct research, they felt like 'experts becoming novices' (Khan, 2011, Murray, 2005). It is like renegotiating professionalism, roles, values, practices, and knowledge as teacher educators (Danaher et al., 2000). In other words, they had gone through the transition of teachers becoming teacher educators (Todd, 2002) and therefore did not have the research expertise. This has remained an issue over the years (Warwick & Reimer, 1995; Kizilbash, 1998) and no particular step has been taken in the country to develop a cadre of teacher educators. For instance, studies show that teacher educators feel work-related stress due to numerous academic and administrative issues and challenges (Tahseen, 2015).

In this college, some faculty members who had recently completed their Master's in Education from some reputed universities and had carried out research activities earlier seemed to play the roles of mentors and change agents in the college. Knowing the basics of educational research enabled them to carry out small-scale research projects in the college and help their colleagues learn research skills while conducting their research projects. Attending a training session on research also played an important role in re-conceptualizing their roles as researchers and learning the basics of research work by the teacher educators. Other studies (e.g. Smith, 2003) have also noted the importance of professional development for teacher educators. In addition, the roles of the principal as an encourager, supporter, and resource generator seemed to facilitate the change process.

Financial resources were also a key challenge for the college. The reason is that teacher education colleges in Pakistan are managed and monitored by the Department of Education of school systems for budget and administration (Faheem, 2006; Khan, 2011). As a result, these

institutions do not have budget heads for research and academic work. Teacher education colleges in the country seem to be in transition with the introduction of newer programmes such as ADE and four-year degree programs. Ideally, they should be managed by universities in connection with academic, administrative, and financial matters. This will ultimately strengthen the capacity of such institutions. The phasing out of the two-year programmes by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in recent times has raised certain questions among the teacher education colleges in the country. For instance, in order to survive in the long run, such colleges need to offer four-year teacher education programs. In doing so, they need to initiate and strengthen their research capabilities too. Policy reforms at the national and strategic level to empower teacher education institutions are a must. Such reforms will strengthen the institutions' capabilities, particularly in research capabilities, in the years to come. The policy reforms need to include developing a cadre of teacher educators rather than transferring them from schools to the teacher education colleges, as well as reforming financial and administrative mechanisms and procedures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed at and focused upon answering research questions that included: how do teacher educators take the roles of researchers and initiate a research culture? What happens when they aim to develop their capacities in research? And how do they address them? The study showed that external pressure was the key to enabling the teacher educators to rethink their roles as researchers and to learn basic educational research. The effective use of available human resources, as well as supportive leadership, were critical in enabling teacher educators to assume the roles of researchers and develop a research culture.

The administrative and financial management of these colleges by the provincial departments of education (school departments) seems to ostracise the teacher educators and the teacher education colleges in Pakistan. Because the mandates of higher education and school education are different, there is a need for strategic decisions and advocacy so as to manage such colleges through universities. This will enable the colleges to have research productivity.

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