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An Assessment of Character building in light of National Professional Standards of Public Sector Teachers at Primary Level in District Peshawar

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective of the study was to assess the teaching practices of the public sector primary school teachers in light of the national professional standards (NPS) approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) on 23rd February 2009 in collaboration with the financial support of the USAID. The program was named as STEP which stands for strengthening Teacher Education Program. The study was delimited to only 3rd standard, being related to character building. For data collection, a criteria based Rubric was constructed. Data was collected from 360 public sector primary school teachers of District Peshawar. Collected Data, for selected standard, was analyzed through mean score. Findings of the study showed that majority of the teachers didn't perform as per investigated Standard. So, it was recommended that Education department should chalk out a widespread program for the training and supervision of public sector primary school teachers regarding Character building of students.*

KEYWORDS: Assessment, Public sector, primary schools and National professional standard

INTRODUCTION

National character building has become vital in the context of the grim realities facing Pakistani society today (Abbas, 2011). But all this will be done through trained and dedicated teachers as the Development of a nation depends upon the development of its citizens. The development of its citizens depends upon the development of their education; the development of their education depends upon the development of their teachers (Ibrahim, 1997. P.127). However, excellence in education is conditioned to well-trained and committed teacher. Teacher is the soul and substance of the education system and devoid of a competent, skilled and efficient teacher it will not be possible to make earth-shattering advancement.

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Teaching profession is a bedrock and leading profession of all other careers. Effective teaching affects students' potential and makes them to be conscientious citizens. So, there is a dire need of character building through professional development of teachers. The model of instructional process has been modified all over the world and introduced teacher assessment and certification mechanism to appraise the professional capabilities of teachers.

Keeping in view the same objective, a project under titled "Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP)" was initiated in Pakistan on 12th October, 2005. So, the Ministry of Education developed Ten National Professional Standards for primary school Teachers in Pakistan. The project was financially supported by USAID with cooperation of UNESCO. The proposed standards were put into practice on February, 23rd, 2009.

Though Standards were developed and let to put into practice but there is a need to know whether teachers follow and teach in light of these standards. The assessment of existing status of teachers' practices is urgently required so that to transform and reform teacher education and improve quality of teaching and learning. In this study an attempt has been made to critically assess the performance of primary school teachers in light of standard three, prescribed for 2006 curriculum by Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE) Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at selected eight circles in district Peshawar.

Objectives of the Study

To critically assess character building of students in light of standard three of national Professional standards at primary school level in Urban and Rural areas in District Peshawar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching is a very noble profession that is imperative for nation building. The success of our education system is judged not only by the academic achievements of our students but also the quality of the people the education system produces. The value of good character cannot be overstated in the classroom, or anywhere else, for that matter. Building strong character qualities like honesty, integrity, and respect isn't always easy, but with support from parents and teachers, children can learn how to become their best selves. Teachers are uniquely positioned to help students develop the kind of morals and values that will serve them well throughout their lives, so it's important that they know how to shape good character in their students through lessons on empathy, honesty, loyalty, hard work, resilience and more.

Good character is a major theme in the teachings of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. Allah praised the Prophet's character and set him as the example for all believers to follow; Allah said: (وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ)

Verily, you are upon great moral character. Surah: Al-Qalam 68:4

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The primary mission of the Prophet was to instill good character within the believers in every aspect of their lives. Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

(إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ)

Verily, I have only been sent to perfect righteous character (Musnad Aḥmad, 8729).

Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: (بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ حُسْنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ)

I have been sent to perfect good character (Al-Muwaṭṭa, 1614).

Abu Dharr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: (وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِ حَسَنِ)

Behave with good character toward the people (Sunan al-Tirmidhī, 1987)

Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: (خِيَارُكُمْ أَحَاسِنُكُمْ)

The best of you are those with the best character. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 3366)

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: (

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ خُلُقًا)

The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best in behavior to their women (Sunan al-Tirmidhī, 1162)

Character education is an important part of any student's education. The teacher's role is to establish a classroom atmosphere that encourages self-discipline, self-respect, responsibility and a sense of moral obligation toward others.

So, in light of the above brief review, it is concluded that Character is the solid foundation on which an individual's entire life is based. Men of good character have been remarkably successful. Character determines the success of individuals and teachers have the ability and the potential to develop and strengthen students' character.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Being descriptive in nature, a quantitative approach was adopted to conduct this study.

Population

The population for the present study encompassed all the Government Boys primary school teachers of eight circles of district Peshawar. According to Electronic Management Information System (EMIS) of Education Department, the total population of primary schools in district Peshawar is 3465 teachers from 647 schools.

Sample size

After rationalizing through online Raosoft sample size calculator, 360 teachers as a sample size was selected from 120 schools of the total population in which 135 teachers from 45 schools were treated in urban areas while 225 teachers from 75 schools were treated in rural areas in district Peshawar.

Sampling technique

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Multi-stage Cluster Sampling Technique was used to select the sample from each circle. In each circle 45 teachers were observed by selecting 15 schools having at least 6 teachers in which 3 teachers were observed in each school.

Data collection tool

To assess the teachers' teaching, a rubric with a four level coded rating scale, (Outstanding=1, Good=2, Satisfactory=3 and Unsatisfactory=4), was developed. National professional standards based Criteria, for each area of observational rubric, was defined.

Data collection

After piloting on 8 teachers, the rubric was personally administered to collect data from the sampled teachers in each circle of the district. Being human instrument, passive form of observational technique was used for the present study. Each area of the selected standard was critically and keenly observed in natural classroom setting and the evidences of observations were properly recorded. Prior to data collection, permission, both from the head of the concerned school and teacher was sought to fulfill the ethics of research and collect data properly.

Data analysis

After collection of the required data, Software SPSS was used to analyze data by using statistical formulas of simple percentage, mean and significance value through Chi-Square.

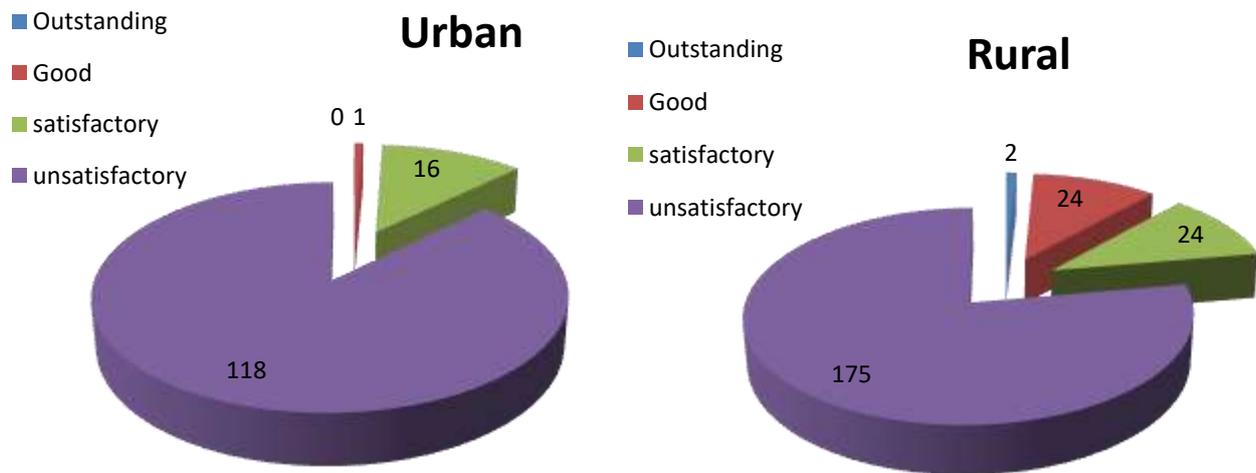
Table 4.1. Character Building of the students

Area	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total		X ²	p-value
	1		2		3		4					
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Urban	0	0.0	1	0.74	6	11.85	118	87.4	13	37.5	14.24	0.0025
Rural	2	0.89	24	10.67	4	10.67	175	77.7	22	62.5		

Table 4.1 indicates that no one was rated as outstanding of level-1 in urban area while 0.89% teachers were rated as outstanding in rural area. 0.74% was rated as good of level-2 in urban area and 10.67% teachers were rated as good in rural area. Level-3 of the above table illustrates that 11.85% teachers were rated as satisfactory in urban area and 10.67% teachers were rated

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as satisfactory in rural area. Results, of level-4, further reveal that 87.41% teachers were rated as unsatisfactory in urban area and 77.78% teachers were rated as unsatisfactory in rural area. The p-value of Character Building in table 4.1 is 0.0025 which is lower than 0.05. So it was concluded that there is little difference regarding Character Building between urban and rural areas in District Peshawar.



DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Three hundred and sixty teachers were treated in their classes at primary school level in District Peshawar to assess their performance in light of theselected standard. One hundred and thirty-five teachers were observed in urban areas and two hundred twenty-five teachers were observed in rural areas of District Peshawar.

Rating criteria: L-1 Outstanding: (*Highly Effective Performance*), L-2 Good: (*Expected Performance*), L-3 Satisfactory: (*Mediocre Performance-Improvement necessary*), L-4 Unsatisfactory: (*Unacceptable Performance- criteria are not followed*).

DISCUSSION

Results of the study indicate that majority of the primary school teachers were rated at level-4 which shows unsatisfactory performance as per national professional standers' criteria as well as the criteria set for 2006 curriculum instruction both in urban and rural areas. While a rare portion of teachers partially demonstrated according to the prescribed criteria. The study further showsthatthe teachers don't demonstrate knowledge of Islamic values during their instruction. So, they need to be trained and guided to provide practical opportunities to their students such as peace, harmony, tolerance, disciplined personality, prohibited things and avoiding of false and unfair means etc. and it will be done unless and until teachers, themselves, have a sound

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knowledge of Islamic values and character building techniques. More than 87% teachers were rated at unsatisfactory level as during study teachers were rarely observed to integrate their lessons with character building of the students.

Conclusion

On the basis of findings and discussion it was concluded that prescribed area of instruction is not practiced and most of the public sector teachers at boys' primary school level in district Peshawar are unaware of the national professional standards. During research when the teachers were asked about national professional standards, most of the teachers not only didn't know about national professional standards but even they remained unable just to tell the names or total number of standards which shows lack of awareness regarding national professional standards.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided based on the basis of findings and discussion drawn from the current study.

1. It hereby recommended that administration and Education department should chalk out a wide-ranging plan for the awareness, holistic training on each individual standard and supervision of school teachers in light of the approved Standards.
2. The existing in-service training programs are not effective and successful in managing professional growth of the teachers. So, it is recommended that in-service Education centers such as Education Extension Centers (EEC), Directorate of Professional Development (DPD), Regional institute of teacher Education (RITE), Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE), Read Foundation and other provincial agencies must work jointly with cooperative and collaborative approach to work on character building.
3. As the goal of education is holistic development of individuals that's why teachers must know how how to do character building of the students. Here are a few recommendations for teachers to help them in character building of students. They have to teach some norms theoretically as well as practically. These norms include: Treat every student with respect. Set an example of being fair-minded and willing to listen to your fellow's opinions; develop an attitude of respect for others. Try to listen attentively and don't interject while someone else is speaking. A daily Quranic verse can be used as the "Theme of the day" to be observed by all the students like;
 - a) Do not be rude in speech (Qur'an 3:159)
 - b) Do not be arrogant (Qur'an 7:13).
 - c) Speak to people mildly (Qur'an 20:44).
 - d) Do not ridicule one another (Qur'an 49:11)
 - e) Do not spy and backbite (Qur'an 49:12)
 - f) Respond to evil with good (Qur'an 41:34)

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4. Pillars of character building such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship all of them can be inculcated in a child only through planned education.
5. Teachers are recommended to integrate their lessons with Islamic values, Quranic verses, Ahadith and tell students stories of the prophet's companions.

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