

Comparative Analysis of Prerequisites for Entry into Initial Elementary Teacher Education Programs (IETEPs) in SAARC Countries

Education

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Abstract

The present research work has studied and compared the Pre-requisites of Initial Elementary Teachers' Education Programs (IETEPs), practiced in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) during 2005-08. In the perspective of SAARC countries, the perception of (200) experts from SAARC and (50) from educationally advanced (UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Singapore) countries were taken about the Pre-requisites of IETEP. Statistical analysis of collected data showed significant coherence in the experts' perceptions. Elements for which experts' perceptions exhibited 75% or above coherence were selected as the elements of criteria used for comparison. These elements were converted into questions to frame research instrument. It has closed and open ended items. It was piloted, preened in the light of expert's feedback and sent to selected teacher education institutions of SAARC countries through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, Embassies of concerned countries and research associates. The data about the selected institutions was collected from primary and secondary sources like Institutional syllabus, prospectuses etc.

Descriptive analysis of the program's data highlighted the mutual similarities and differences along with the difference between the desired (by experts) and actual situation of Pre-requisites of IETEPs, executed in SAARC countries. Based on the coherent to the criteria (expert's endorsement), the Pre-requisites set for the IETEPs of Sri Lanka and India surpass rest of the SAARC countries. It is followed by Pakistan (B.Ed), Bangladesh (C-in-ED) and Bhutan (B.Ed), Maldives and Nepal.

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Key Words: Initial Elementary Teachers' Education Programs (IETEPs), Pre-requisites are admission criteria and procedures of admission for entry into the IETEP, SAARC countries

Introduction

Quality education is essential to survive in this competitive, market oriented and technology driven global village. Teachers have a decisive role in improving the quality of education. In this scenario, movement to reform teacher education is underway in all parts of the world. The direction and approaches to these reform vary from country to country. The analysis, comparison, review and evaluation of these efforts are beneficial for every country, especially neighboring countries of a region. The population of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) can learn a lot from such efforts. In this perspective a study was conducted to compare the present Initial (Pre-service) Elementary Teacher Education Programs (IETEP) of SAARC countries to reveal innovative ideas that may be adopted and adapted in other countries, including Pakistan.

Why to Compare SAARC Countries

Before 1947, SAARC countries were colonies of the Great Britain and had the same teacher education system. After independence these nations revised, redesigned and formulated their own systems of teacher education to meet the local requirements of peoples, who, share common values embedded in their shared historical, cultural & linguistic heritage. The educational problems were almost the same during different course of the history. Generally all SAARC countries have weak infrastructure, a low level of training, shortage of trained teachers and quality teacher education. The similarities of present and past problems, common background but different status of teacher education persuaded the researcher to compare the Pre-requisites of IETEPs of SAARC countries to improve the Pre-requisites of Teacher Education system of Pakistan.

Dimension of Comparisons

The key aspects of comparison were the pre-requisite of entry into the IETEP.

Literature Review

Finding the right recruits is critical to teacher quality (UNESCO 2004, p.161). The recruits selection practices of the educationally advance countries from the top third layer of the topper and Linda's advise "to select the best" endorse that finding right recruit is imperative to develop quality teacher,

capable to impart quality education-needed for economic growth and sustainable development. In the elementary education scenario, this enables initial elementary teacher (IET) to increase access, literacy, stay in, student achievement and eradicate all kinds of parity. The teachers produced by quality initial elementary teacher education program (IETEP) decrease dropout, overcome the scarcity of resources, eradicate parity and rectify deficiencies of system.

In this perspective, a review of elementary education in SAARC countries, displays a discouraging picture of students' as well as teachers' education. It is reported that out of 161 million primary school age going children; 40 million (girls 21.4, Boys 18.6) who do not attend school belong to this region. Those who attend school do not learn. Competency analysis of students from Bangladesh (2000), Nepal (2001) and Pakistan (2002) showed that South Asia is producing a huge number of school illiterates. Studies showed that at least half of the children finishing primary education in South Asia cannot effectively read/write nor do simple mathematics (UNCIEF, 2006). Here, out of every ten students, three drop out (Global Digest, 2012). Literacy levels are low and parity levels are high with the exception of Maldives and Sri Lanka.

According to EFA Global Monitoring Report (2008), good quality teaching and learning remains a major challenge for all countries in the South Asian region and as a result, not a single country is close to achieving EFA goals. Only a small percentage of teachers meet the minimum standards for teaching at the primary and junior secondary level in SAARC countries (UNESCO, 2006).

One reason of poor quality of teacher in Pakistan are the poor prerequisite for IETEP. Jabeen, F. (2010) concluded that despite the commendable improvement in service conditions and perks, the profession is yet to attract best brains. Low pay, lack of resources, unattractive incentives and least career growth let the profession as last option left with the educated lot to adopt. Salma, M.K (2011) states that "no restriction about the content of the subjects studied relevant to the National school curriculum, nor of school experience certificate, nor letters of recommendation to ensure the suitability of the candidate for teaching were obligatory for admission in B.Ed program at Peshawar, Pakistan.

Azhar, M. Q. (2006). Azhar with reference to Shaukat (1981) and Khalid (1994) pointed out that there is no set criteria for selection of the candidates for teacher education program. No test, no interview and no other check levied for the selection of the people entering in the teaching profession. Khaliq (2006) stated that admission committees in Pakistan select students on the basis of marks obtained by candidates in the last exam and 60 % principals

are satisfied with this practice. However, 80 % respondent of Khaliq recommended the incorporation of aptitude test in admission procedure. Shamim and Juma, 2006, concluded that in Pakistan particularly limited or no choice is available in selecting candidates for any teachers' education program. Common practices to tackle quality related issues of teacher education programs are review, analysis, comparison, accreditation and evaluation of a program or programs. Review and analysis critically accesses the system or situation under study. Comparisons explore the similarities and differences in educational practices to unfold those hidden realities which are difficult to understand when studied in isolation. They show how ideas work in practice at the system level for improvement.

Objective of the Study

This study was designed to find out the similarities and diversities of pre-requisite of IETEPs to experts endorsements for the determination of their status and deduction of implementable solutions for Pakistan.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the prerequisite for entry into IETEPs, executed at Public colleges or Universities of SAARC countries. The program's prerequisites were judged through experts' endorsements of assistant professor or above level as a measure of quality improvement.

Procedure

The objectives were achieved by developing an agreed criterion for comparison and comparing the state of each dependent variable with it. Criterion for comparison contains set of characteristics selected by high majority (75%) of experts for the selection of quality recruits.

Population and Sample

To develop criteria for comparison two hundred experts from SAARC and fifty from educationally developed countries were selected from globally available many experts of assistant professor level through convenient sampling technique. The experts overall response rate, at criteria development stage was 70.4 % (Male 70.0%, female 71.0%).

At program stage, forty institutions were selected through stratified sampling technique from all IETEP providers in SAARC countries. The selected sample institutes were the true representatives of almost all the IETEP provider in the particular country. Program providers are generally termed as affiliating institutions and each affiliating institute may have many affiliated institutes.

Policy and procedure of the affiliating institutions prevail in all affiliated institutions.

Faculty member of the fifteen institutions, out of selected institutions responded to all elements of the criteria. The responses from the rest of the institutions were same for the elements of criteria but incomplete. The received data was sorted out. The secondary sources confirmed the responses of the primary resources. The response rate was about forty percent. Over all response rate was low from all SAARC countries except host country-Pakistan.

Independent and Dependent Variable

Program provider institutions represent the Independent Variable and program's pre-requisite as dependant variables.

Tool for Data Collection

Two survey questionnaires consisted of closed and partially closed questions had been used as tool for collection of the primary data. They are annexed as Appendix A and B. Document analysis, prospects, home pages of institution on the web, published national and international material about SAARC countries teacher education pre-requisite were studied as secondary source.

Data Collection and Analysis

Responses of all the experts were recorded question wise. The responses were converted into percentages for clarity and comparability. Finally these responses received from sample institutions or retrieved from secondary sources were compared with the expert's endorsements to determine their comparative strength.

At criteria of comparison development stage, Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (version 13) and the level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses. Percentage values were calculated and Chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship/association between two groups of experts. Result showed significant similarity.

At program stage, the prerequisites of each country's IETEP received or retrieved through multiple resources were compared with the criteria of comparison. The IETEP's prerequisites of any country with values similar to criteria were called as criteria coherent components. They were mentioned as =Y. The components with values different to criteria were called as criteria non coherent components and denoted as = N. Criteria non coherent components with values above the criteria were represented as N+ and those below the criteria as N-. If the information about some component is not available, it is denoted as #.

All components of each country's IETEP were noted, compared with the criteria and presented in tables (annexed as appendices at the end) as criteria coherent and criteria non coherent components. The culmination of all criteria coherent and criteria non coherent component gave the overall status of IETEP of each country. Findings, conclusions and results have been drawn on the basis of this analysis.

Findings of the study

1. Available Models of IETEP

Many model of IETEP were available in SAARC countries. The models in Pakistan are (14+1), (12+1), (12+1½). Bangladesh has 12 +1, India and Maldives have (12+2) model. Sri Lanka staged (12+3) and Bhutan bring forth (12+4) model. Nepal has 10+2 model.

2. Basic Education

Bachelor degree is the minimum requirement to apply for (14+1) model. HSSC (12 years basic study) is compulsory for (12+1), (12+1½), (12+2), (12+3) and (12+4) model of IETEP. Ten years of school study is needed for 10+2 model of Nepal.

3. Cut off–score for applying to all available models

In Pakistan it is 45%. In Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka it is 50% in HSSC, in Maldives and Nepal it ranges from 45-50 %. In Bhutan 50 % score in English language is only pre-requisite for admission.

4. Duration of the Programs

After basic education , duration of the teacher education Program at elementary stage is four years in Bhutan, Three years in Sri Lanka, Two years in India , Maldives and Nepal, One Year in Bangladesh. Pakistan has multiple model of Initial Elementary Teacher Education. In Pakistan, there is one year B. Ed (Elementary) teacher education program for the preparation of elementary teachers after graduation in the province of Punjab. There is one year C.T program for the same task in other provinces after the completion of grade twelve. Federal College of Education in the Federal capital runs an another program of one and a half year duration under the title “Diploma in Education”

5. In India and Sri-Lanka candidates had to prove their **arithmetic and linguistic competencies. In Bhutan and Maldives students deficient in linguistic or certain other competencies are granted admission but they**

have to make up their deficiencies with bridging course. Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan do not bother these competencies.

6. In India and Sri-Lanka candidates had to qualify **aptitude tests before the final interview**. In Maldives and Nepal, no test is taken and admission is granted on the base of score only. Bangladesh arranges test but in Pakistan neither test nor interview is included in the admission procedure.
7. Kinship, minority ship, co-curricular activities and previous employment were rated but no credit is accorded to them in all SAARC countries except for seats reserved in these categories.

8. Experts' perception about Admission criteria and procedure

The experts endorsed 12+2 model of IETEP for candidates secured at least 50 % marks in grade 12 examination. The candidates must prove their aptitude, arithmetic and linguistic competencies by test. The kin ship, hard ship, membership to minority, previous employment, achievement in sports and extra-curricular activities must be rewarded.

Discussion on the findings

The study found on the basis of experts opinions that admission should be conferred to candidates having teaching aptitude, secured 50% score in (HSSC) and proved their linguistic and numeric competencies. Keeping reserve seats for minority, ex-service men, kin ship and co-curricular activities, preference should be given to fresh, younger and extra qualified candidates.

Characteristics selected by high majority of experts for the selection of candidates proved the admission proposal of Jabeen, F. (2010); findings of Casey and Childs (2007); Casey (2005), admission policy of excellence achieving countries, norms introduced by National Education Commission (1986) and National council for Teacher Education (NCTE) India. Casey and Childs (2007) determination that teacher preparation programs continue to use grade point average (GPA), standardized test scores, individual and group interview performance, letters of reference and written profiles to make decision about which students to select into their teacher education programs support the findings of the study.

In the study, it was found shows that admission criteria and procedure of Sri-Lanka and India are more coherent to developed criteria and that of Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal are comparatively less coherent to criteria. Bangladesh and Pakistan stands in the middle of these two extremes. Seven SAARC countries prefer competent, extra qualified and fresh students. Regard

& reward for previous employment, co- curricular activities and minorities are also common among them. The non coherent components about admission are pre-requisite of basic qualification, cutoff score and procedure of admission.

Experts recommended that basic qualification should be graduation. This is supported by worldwide trend towards the generalization of pre-service teacher training at the level of tertiary education, either in university or non-university equivalent level institutions like college of education (Sarita and Tomar, 2004). A wide variety has been observed in SAARC countries. Nepal provides this education after secondary school (grade ten). Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka are providing after higher secondary school (10+2). Pakistan is imparting this education after graduation. Pakistan had stopped its delivery after (10+2) in Punjab since 2002, the province having more than 65% population of the country and catering the educational needs of about 60 % population. Some further relaxations in the admission requirements are seen in all SAARC countries for ladies, rural and undeveloped areas.

High achieving countries select the students for teacher education from the top third layer of students but situation in SAARC countries was found totally different. Pakistan has fixed 45% score in graduation as cut off score whereas India and Bangladesh set 50% score as cut off score in higher secondary school certificate examination. Score in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal is decided by the Ministry of Education keeping demand and supply in mind. Bhutan demand only 50% score in English language from the higher secondary school certificate holders. This prove the *iDiscoveri* report (2008) which indicated that candidate selection is only based on a class XII pass, with no minimum percentage being required (p. 47) and the finding of RUB Strategic Plan (2006) that the quality of students has been a concern for many years (p. 85).

Regarding procedure of admission, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh follow most of the guideline set by experts for admission into IETEP of the SAARC countries. Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan deviates the most. Pakistan stands in the middle. India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh test linguistic and arithmetic competencies. Interview is conducted to check teaching aptitude. Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka do have formal interviews but it is missing in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The causes of non coherence to admission criteria among SAARC countries are unequal demand and future requirements, status of profession and different level of development. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, there is severe shortage of trained teachers. According to UNESCO institute for statistics (2009) Bangladesh needs 299774, Pakistan needs 241670 and Sri Lanka needs 116463 more teachers by 2015 to meet the EFA goals. Nepal and Maldives too require many teachers to replace untrained and expatriates. According to

(MOE, 2005) in Nepal about 30 % in-service teachers are untrained. MPND, 2007 of Maldives stated that about 75% secondary school teachers are expatriates. These conditions compelled these countries to adopt a softer criterion to attract more candidates. India doesn't need many teachers and this provided space for quality selection.

India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan offer incentives and salary package to teacher that is better than other employee of the same qualification. Sri Lanka offers the incentive of early promotion, higher salaries. During the period of two years residential training trainee are provided with meals and lodging facilities to the value of Rs. 2,000 per month for ten months in a year. During the internship year a monthly allowance of Rs. 2,500 are paid for ten months. In Maldives prospecting-teachers signs a bond to assure stability. In Nepal scholarships are provided. Bangladesh enrolls the selected candidates as in-service public servants. The provided training is categorized as in- service training despite its pre-service nature. They are paid scholarship, equivalent to their salary. Bhutan invested 7% of the GDP on education and offers 30 % more salary to teachers than their counterpart with similar qualification. But despite all this students confessed that they had no choice and less than 15% selected teaching as first choice. According to Khaliq (2006) this ratio is less than 40 % in Pakistan.

The explored adverse condition of admission criteria and procedure in SAARC countries by the present research is supported by the Madhavi and Pushpanadham (2008) meta-analysis of the research documents published by various international organizations like UNESCO. That meta-analysis culminated at the conclusion that admission and remunerations system are not able to attract bright students. The poor pre-requisite of admission in Pakistan is supported by Salma, M.K (2011); Jabeen, F. (2010), Khaliq (2006); Shamim and Juma (2006), Azhar, M. Q. (2006).

However the present findings about admission in Pakistan disapprove the findings of Butt, A.D. (1982) and Nawaz Hameed (1998) because they pointed out that admission at elementary level is granted on the bases of interview, academic achievement, written test, personality test, aptitude test and sports distinction. This apparently contradicting result is due to the difference of research timings. It might be possible that selection at that time were made so.

Conclusion

1. Admission criteria and admission procedure of all SAARC countries is weak except Sri-Lanka and India.

Recommendations

1. The policy makers should make ways to raise the social and economical status of the profession to attract competent candidates.
2. Entrance examinations consisted of student aptitude test, written competency (linguistic and numeric) tests, group discussions and interview should be introduced as part of admission procedure.

Future Researches

Based on the total criteria coherent components, we concluded that maximum coherence to criteria is shown by the program of Sri Lanka and minimum by the program of Nepal. It is also clear that Pakistan and Bangladesh are very much near to each other and holding the central positions. There is hardly a margin of a point among them so qualitatively they are very much similar to each other. This analogy is also seen in their ranks on human development.

If we go in detail, we found some other interesting result. For example some deviation from criteria is considered as positive by a group of experts while others as negative. So by determining the nature (positive or negative) of deviation some more match or mismatches can be derived by future researchers.

Similarly, based on the range of deviation more critical and sharp state of status can be reached by developing agreed rubrics by future researcher. So, rubrics preparation may be another research, which from this research can be initiated in near future.

A study may be designed to see the impact of stronger admission criteria and procedure over the student's performance.

The incentive in every system has a decisive role in boosting the status of the profession. So the data of this study a study about the impact of incentives over admission can be designed.

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(APPENDIX-A)

“QUESTIONNAIRE TO SET STANDARDS FOR THE PRE-REQUISITE OF INITIAL ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF SAARC COUNTRIES”

ADMISSION CRITERIA & PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL (PRE-SERVICE) ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

For Admission into Initial Elementary Teacher Education Program, What should be the---					
NO	Indicators	Responses			
1	Minimum education for admission	Grade 10	Grade 12	Grade 14	
2	Minimum Percentage (%) Score	40	45	50	Open
3	Maximum Age at entry	26	24	25	Open
4	Impact of session seniority	Supportive	No	Adverse	Open
5	Impact of Extra qualification	Supportive	No	Adverse	Open
Which of the following should be <u>included and rewarded</u> in the admission procedure?					
6	Aptitude Test	Yes		No	
7	Interview	Yes		No	
8	Written Entrance Test	Yes		No	
9	Language Competency Test	Yes		No	
10	Numeric Competency Test	Yes		No	
11	Quota for Minority ship	Yes		No	

12	Quota for Co- Curricular Activities	Yes	No
13	Quota for Kinship	Yes	No

Q	Please answer the following questions about admission criteria		
1	What is the maximum age at entry into program?		
2	What is the percentage score required for an entry into program?		
	During admission process,		
3	Does age seniority is a supportive factor?	Y	N
4	Does session seniority is a supportive factor?	Y	N

(APPENDIX-B)

**RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF
SAARC COUNTRIES
"QUESTIONNAIRE TO COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT PRE-
REQUISITE OF INITIAL ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAMS EXECUTED IN THE CAPITALS OF SAARC
COUNTRIES"**

For--- {Members Admission Committee}---Please attach the admission policy.

Name: -----Gender: -----

Institution Name: -----

**Q: Please tick (Y) if the factor is incorporated in admission policy
Otherwise N)**

Q	Admission Procedure	Y	N
1	Aptitude Test		
2	Interview		

3	Central Written Entrance Test		
4	Internal Entrance Test		
5	Language and Numeric competency Test		
6	Previous Employment		
7	Kin ship		
8	Minority quota		
9	Co-curricular activities		

Table 4.1: Distribution of high majority experts⁷ (75% or above) endorsement about **Prerequisites for Entry into IETEPs** of two year duration, executed in the public institutes of SAARC countries N=N1+N2=50+200=250

No	Components of criteria about policies and procedures of admission	Selected values	SAARC countries		Developed countries		Total		Chi ²	Prob	
			n**	%	n*	%	n***	%			
1	Minimum basic education required	Grade 12	112	80.1	30	83.3	142	80.7	0.204	0.651	P>0.05
2	Cut off score	50%	122	87.2	30	83.3	152	86.9	0.353	0.552	P>0.05
3	Reward extra qualification	Y	122	87.2	28	77.7	150	85.2	1.995	0.158	P>0.05
4	Test aptitude	Y	113	80.7	29	80.5	142	80.7	0.00	0.983	P>0.05
5	Take interview	Y	107	76.4	28	77.7	135	76.7	0.029	0.864	P>0.05
6	Check language and numeric competency by entrance test	Y	106	75.7	27	75	133	75.6	0.008	0.929	P>0.05
7	Keep minority quota	Y	107	76.4	27	75	134	76.2	0.032	0.858	P>0.05
8	Reward co-curricular activities	Y	106	75.7	27	75	133	75.6	0.008	0.929	P>0.05
9	Reward kinship	Y	102	72.8	23	63.8	125	71	1.119	0.29	P>0.05
10	Maximum age limit for admission	25 year	92	65.7	26	72.2	118	67	0.549	0.459	P>0.05
11	Support session seniority	N	103	73.6	26	72.2	129	73.3	0.027	0.87	P>0.05

P>0.05 = Non-significance at 5% level of significance. Respondents from SAARC countries are represented by n**, Developed countries by n* and total from all countries by n***. N represents the total number of selected experts as sample=250. N1 is number of selected experts from developed countries and its value is 50. N2 is the number of experts selected from SAARC countries and its value is 200. Selected values stand for values selected by high majority of experts (75% or above).

Table 4.2: Prerequisites for Entry into the IETEPs (B.Ed and equivalents) executed in the public institutes of SAARC countries during 2005-08 and their coherence with the selected criteria

Components of criteria about admission criteria and procedure	Criteria	Bhutan	Sri Lanka	Maldives	India	Pakistan			Nepal	Bangladesh
		B.Ed	B.Ed	D.Ed	D.Ed	B.Ed	D.Ed	C.T	HSBS	C-in-Ed
1 Basic education	12 Y	12-	12-	12	12	14	12	12	10=N-	12
2 Cut off score	50%	Eng=-N	6As=Y	2+3P=N-	Y	N-	N-	N-	N-	Y
3 Duration of the program	2Years	4Y	3Y	2Y	2Y	1Y	1.5Y	1Y	2Y	1Y
4 Test aptitude	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
5 Take entrance test	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
6 Keep minority quota	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7 Reward co-curricular activities	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8 Reward extra qualification	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Criteria coherent components		4	7	4	7	4	4	4	3	6
Criteria non-coherent components		3	-	3	-	3	3	3	4	1

Key: Criteria= values selected as criterion values, Y= criteria matched, Criteria coherent elements, N= criteria not matched, Criteria non coherent elements, #= information unavailable, +N= criteria not matched and is above criteria, -N= criteria not matched and is below the criteria.