



Research Paper

Teacher Education Reform in Pakistan: Policy Implications of the Transition from BS Education to B.Ed. (Hons)**Dr. Tahira Yasmeen*****1. Assistant Prof. School of Education, Minhaj University Lahore**Email: tahirayasmeen.edu@mul.edu.pk**Abstract**

This paper critically examines Pakistan's teacher education reform initiated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2023, which phases out the four-year BS Education degree and reinstates the B.Ed. (Hons) program as the national standard for teacher qualification. The reform reflects a broader agenda to professionalize teaching, align teacher preparation with international benchmarks, and advance Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by prioritizing inclusive and equitable learning opportunities. The study employs a qualitative research design based on policy document analysis as primary data, reviewing HEC teacher education frameworks, curriculum roadmaps, and national education policies published between 2010 and 2023. To supplement this, expert viewpoints from teacher educators and policymakers were gathered through informal consultations, offering critical insight into implementation realities. A thematic review of policy documents and expert perspectives revealed four key findings: (1) an explicit policy commitment to teacher professionalization, (2) substantial institutional readiness gaps, particularly in infrastructure and faculty training, (3) the need for comprehensive curriculum redesign and practicum reform, and (4) equity risks for rural and marginalized student populations. A conceptual framework is presented to illustrate the relationship between policy initiatives, institutional capacity, teacher quality, and educational outcomes. While the B.Ed. (Hons) reform has the potential to strengthen Pakistan's education system, its success depends on phased implementation, targeted investments, and context-specific solutions. Comparative lessons from Finland, Singapore, and Canada enrich the analysis, making this study a timely contribution to ongoing global discourse on teacher education reform.

Keywords: Teacher Education Reform, B.Ed. (Hons) Program, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, Education Policy, Curriculum Planning, Equity and Inclusion

Introduction

For a long time, people have thought that reforming teacher education is a key factor in improving the quality of education and the growth of the country. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has been very important in Pakistan for making rules about teacher education, including policies, curricula, and qualification frameworks. In 2023, HEC made a big change to its policies. It got rid of the four-year Bachelor of Science in Education (BS Education) degree and brought back the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed. Hons) program as the national standard for teacher qualification (HEC, 2023). This change is in line with Pakistan's larger commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which stresses providing everyone with access to high-quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2022). The reform is an effort to make teaching more professional, raise the standards for teacher training to international levels, and create a clear national framework that will make sure all teachers have the same qualifications (Iqbal & Hussain, 2020). By bringing back the B.Ed. (Hons) program, policymakers hope to create a path that helps pre-service teachers learn not only about the subject but also how to teach it, think critically, and get real-world experience (Iqbal & Hussain, 2020). But even though the policy commitment is clear, there are still questions about the institutional capacity, infrastructure readiness, and contextual adaptation that will be needed for it to work. Even after many changes, teacher education in Pakistan still has a lot of problems. Frequent changes in policy, like the switch from B.Ed. to BS Education and the sudden return of B.Ed. (Hons), have made things unstable and confusing for universities, teachers, and students (Iqbal & Hussain, 2023). This shows that higher education governance, curriculum planning, and institutional readiness are not very good. Also, the differences between urban and rural universities make the unfairness in teacher preparation even worse. While urban universities usually have better buildings, teachers, and resources, rural universities have trouble finding qualified staff, getting good digital access, and finding good practicum opportunities (Abbas & Fatima, 2024; Shah & Malik, 2020). These systemic gaps could push disadvantaged institutions to the edges. So, the problem isn't just bringing back the B.Ed. (Hons) program; it's also the ongoing problems with readiness, curriculum design, faculty development, and fairness. If these issues aren't dealt with, reforms may only be symbolic and not actually change teacher education for the better.

Significance of Study

This research holds considerable importance for various reasons. First, it gives a critical look at Pakistan's teacher education reform in light of global best practices. The study contextualizes Pakistan's initiatives within a comparative framework, thereby enhancing the international discourse on teacher education, especially in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) facing analogous challenges of policy coherence, institutional capacity, and quality assurance. Second, the study addresses the pressing demand for evidence-based understanding of the implementation of policy reforms. Teacher education encompasses not only the development of new frameworks but also the assurance of their effective implementation across various institutional contexts. This study emphasizes the necessity of aligning reform objectives with actual conditions, thereby providing pragmatic recommendations for policymakers, teacher educators, and institutions. Third, this paper contributes to the dialogue regarding equity in teacher education. Pakistan is dealing with differences between rural and urban areas, as well as between men and women, when it comes to getting a good education. Because of this, reforms need to be looked at through the lens of equity (Shah & Malik, 2020). This paper illustrates that

the B.Ed. (Hons) reform can either alleviate or intensify prevailing inequities, thereby affecting the course of educational inclusion and justice.

The current literature on teacher education reform in Pakistan has mainly concentrated on curriculum modifications, policy assessment, and program evaluation. Nonetheless, significant deficiencies exist. First, there are not many studies that have looked closely at the problems that come up when trying to put teacher education policies into practice in light of how ready the institutions are. Although policy documents frequently delineate ambitious objectives, insufficient focus is directed towards the practical navigation of these reforms by universities, colleges, and teacher educators (Iqbal & Hussain, 2020). Second, there is a dearth of scholarship regarding comparative insights. Pakistan wants to make its teacher education more like what is done in other countries, but studies hardly ever look at what works in places like Finland, Singapore, and Canada. Pakistan can learn a lot from these situations about how to professionalize, change the way students do their practicum, and use equity-driven methods. Third, current research has inadequately examined the equity aspect of teacher education reform. SDG 4 stresses the importance of inclusive education, but studies often ignore how changes affect people who are already on the outside, people who live in rural areas, and communities that don't get enough services (UNESCO, 2022). This study addresses these deficiencies by integrating policy document analysis with expert insights, thereby offering a conceptual framework that connects policy initiatives, institutional capacity, teacher quality, and educational outcomes. It assesses the B.Ed. (Hons) reform and positions Pakistan within the global dialogue on teacher education.

Literature Review

Pakistan's Teacher Education Reforms

Since gaining independence, teacher education in Pakistan has gone through many changes. In the past, the one-year B.Ed. degree was the most common qualification for teachers. But because of worries about its narrow focus and lack of alignment with international standards, HEC started the four-year BS Education program in 2010, based on the trend of longer teacher preparation programs around the world (Shah & Malik, 2020). The goal was to combine subject knowledge with teaching methods, stress research-based practice, and get teachers ready to be reflective practitioners. The BS Education program faced many problems, even though it had good intentions. Universities had a hard time finding enough teachers because not many teacher educators had doctoral degrees in education. Infrastructure, especially in rural teacher education institutions, was insufficient for the provision of advanced courses. Practicum experiences frequently suffered from inadequate supervision owing to insufficient collaboration with educational institutions (Iqbal & Hussain, 2023). As a result, the program did not meet its goals, which led to criticism from policymakers, practitioners, and students. In response, HEC said in 2023 that the B.Ed. (Hons) program would once again be the national standard for teacher education (HEC, 2023). This choice was made because it was clear that professionalizing teaching needs more focused training in how to teach, more time spent in the field, and a national standard. The B.Ed. (Hons) is meant to be a complete program that gives teachers the knowledge, skills, and strategies they need to teach, manage a classroom, and think about their work. The reform, on the other hand, has shown that there are big gaps in the readiness of institutions. A lot of colleges and universities don't have the money or people they need to make the switch to the B.Ed. (Hons) structure smoothly. Faculty development is still a major problem because there aren't many chances for teacher educators to grow professionally or get paid more (Shah & Malik,

2020). Another big problem is redesigning the curriculum, since universities have to find a balance between local needs and global standards. Practicum reform is a key part of good teacher training, but it is often hard to do because schools and universities don't work well together, and classrooms are full. Also, there are clear equity risks. Rural teacher education institutions, which are already at a disadvantage because they don't have enough resources, will be even more marginalized as reforms call for more institutional capacity. Female students, especially in conservative areas, have trouble getting practicum opportunities and continuing their education (Makhdom et al., 2023). These equity challenges underscore the necessity for context-sensitive strategies that tackle disparities while enacting reforms. The policy-practice gap is another common theme in Pakistani literature. Policy documents frequently delineate progressive visions; however, their execution is obstructed by bureaucratic inefficiencies, insufficient political will, and disjointed governance. The 2023 reform may replicate the errors of prior initiatives unless bolstered by strategic investments, comprehensive monitoring systems, and inclusive methodologies that engage teacher educators and practitioners (Abbas & Fatima et al., 2024). So, Pakistan's changes to teacher education show how hard it is to make policy goals match up with what is really happening on the ground. If structural problems, faculty development, and fairness issues aren't dealt with, reforms may only be symbolic instead of real changes.

Comparative Insights – Finland, Singapore, and Canada

Finland, Singapore, and Canada are some of the countries that are known around the world for having great teacher education systems. Pakistan can learn a lot from what they've been through.

Finland

Finland is often seen as a model for teacher education because it emphasizes professional freedom, research-based training, and rigorous practicum experiences. To become a teacher in Finland, you need to have a master's degree in education, and getting into teacher education is very hard (Sahlberg, 2021). Teacher preparation programs integrate theory and practice, focusing on inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and innovative pedagogical approaches. Practicum schools, which are closely linked to universities, give student-teachers real-world teaching experience in classrooms where they can think about what they did with help from experienced mentors (Loukomies, Petersen, & Lavonen, 2018). Finland's model shows Pakistan how important it is to make teaching a respected job and to make sure that teacher training is based on research and real-world experience. Pakistan might not be able to copy everything right away, but it could use things like reflective practice, better partnerships between universities and schools for practicum, and more freedom for teachers.

Singapore

Singapore's reforms to teacher education are all about making sure that teachers' skills match the country's development goals. The National Institute of Education (NIE) is a key player in training teachers by using competency-based frameworks that stress adaptability, innovation, and lifelong learning (Tan, 2020). Teacher education is very selective, and the government puts a lot of money into helping teachers grow in their careers. Teachers stay up to date on new teaching methods and technologies through ongoing training. For Pakistan, Singapore's experience highlights the role of strong institutional frameworks, state investment, and clear competency standards. The centralized coordination of policy, practice, and research in Singapore provides insights into how coherence and alignment can facilitate effective reforms.

Canada

Canada's teacher education is influenced by federal frameworks, equity issues, and cultural diversity. Teacher preparation programs stress being open to everyone, being fair, and being able to meet the needs of all kinds of students, including indigenous and marginalized groups (Martel & Gauthier, 2019). There are a lot of parts to the practicum, and universities and local schools work together to make sure that the experiences are relevant to the students. Pakistan can learn from how Canada puts a lot of stress on fairness and inclusion. To reach SDG 4, we need to fix the differences in access to good teacher education, especially for people who live in rural areas or are already disadvantaged. Pakistan's teacher education system could be better if it included equity-driven methods, partnerships with communities, and culturally responsive teaching methods. The comparative insights show that for teacher education reforms to work, they need to be consistent, have the right resources, and be based on fairness. Finland puts a lot of emphasis on research and professionalism, Singapore on competency and coherence, and Canada on fairness and inclusion. Pakistan's reforms can benefit from incorporating these lessons while tailoring them to local contexts. The success of the B.Ed. (Hons) reform relies on policy directives, systemic investments, institutional fortification, and implementation centres on equity.

Objectives

To critically analyze the policy rationale and goals underpinning Pakistan's 2023 teacher education reform.

To evaluate institutional capacity and challenges in implementing the B.Ed. (Hons) framework, with attention to equity concerns for marginalized populations.

To compare Pakistan's reform with international models (Finland, Singapore, Canada) in relation to SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Method and Material

The methodology of this paper delineates the systematic framework utilized to rigorously evaluate the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) 2023 reform of teacher education in Pakistan. The methodological framework includes the research design, the group of people who will be studied, the ways of collecting data, pilot testing, and thoughts on validity and reliability. To make sure that the results are credible, rigorous, and useful in real life, each part was carefully aligned with the study's goals. This study utilized a qualitative research design, incorporating document analysis and expert consultations to investigate Pakistan's 2023 teacher education reform. The population consisted of two categories: (1) official policy documents and frameworks directing reforms (e.g., HEC Teacher Education Roadmap 2023, National Education Policies, and curriculum frameworks from 2010–2023), and (2) experts, including teacher educators, policymakers, and senior administrators directly engaged in reform processes. A purposive sampling method was utilized, analyzing 15 essential policy documents and engaging 12 experts possessing more than five years of pertinent experience. To guarantee validity and reliability, various strategies were employed: triangulation of data sources, member checking, peer review, inter-coder agreement (85%), audit trail maintenance, and reflexivity. These steps made the findings more reliable, credible, and consistent, giving a complete picture of both the goals of the policy and how it was actually put into action.

Results and Discussion

Data were collected using a two-pronged approach: document analysis and consultations with experts. We systematically reviewed policy documents, such as HEC frameworks, curriculum roadmaps, and national education policies, and manually coded them to find themes like teacher professionalization, institutional readiness, curriculum reform, practicum challenges, and equity concerns (Bowen, 2009). Expert data were acquired via semi-structured interviews with teacher educators and policymakers, executed both in-person and online, concentrating on institutional challenges, curriculum modifications, practicum experiences, and equity concerns. Interviews were recorded, transcribed word for word, and then analyzed by theme. Before gathering all the data, pilot testing was done. Two policy documents were coded to improve the analytical framework, and two trial interviews were held to check for clarity and flow. Feedback resulted in slight rephrasing of questions to encourage more open-ended responses, thus enhancing validity and reliability (Maxwell, 2013). Data Analysis and Analytical Framework The analysis was directed by the research objectives, employing a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to investigate both policy intent and implementation realities. Deductive codes, originating from literature and research enquiries, alongside inductive codes, arising from the data, were utilised to analyse policy documents and interview transcripts. This process included getting to know the material, coding it, coming up with themes, reviewing it, and making it better. It made sure that all the gaps in the institution, the changes to the curriculum, the implementation of the practicum, and the challenges of equity were covered. Combining document analysis with expert opinions improved triangulation, giving a balanced view of reform strategies, systemic problems, and how they affect teacher education in Pakistan.

Emergent Themes

The analysis revealed five principal themes:

1. Making teaching more professional
2. Making sure that institutions are ready and able
3. Changing the curriculum and doing a practicum
4. Fairness and Access in Teacher Training
5. Lessons learnt from Finland, Singapore, and Canada

Below, each theme is explained in more detail.

Making Teaching a Profession: Documents kept saying that teaching needed to be seen as a respected profession in Pakistan. The 2023 HEC roadmap said that the minimum qualification for teachers should be a B.Ed. (Hons) and that the requirements for getting into the program should be stricter.

The interview data further substantiated this trend. As articulated by one policymaker (P1)

“The idea is not only to prepare teachers with content knowledge but to elevate the status of teaching as a competitive and aspirational career.”

Experts, on the other hand, said that low social status and few career opportunities were obstacles to reaching this goal.

Table 1: Perceptions of Professionalization among Experts

Perception Category	Frequency (n=12)	Percentage (%)
Teaching seen as low-prestige job	8	66.7
Requires stronger policy support	10	83.3
B.Ed. (Hons) aligns with global norms	9	75.0
Professional pathways unclear	7	58.3

Institutional Readiness and Capacity

Institutional readiness was a problem that kept coming up. Policy frameworks envisioned research-based teacher preparation; however, universities and colleges encountered resource deficiencies in faculty training, ICT infrastructure, and practicum higher education.

Experts pointed out that teacher educators' faculty development and ongoing professional development (CPD) are still not getting enough money. A senior teacher educator (P2) observed and said:

"We are expected to implement a 21st-century teacher education model in institutions that still function with a 20th-century infrastructure."

This mismatch shows that there are systemic problems that make it hard to put reform goals into action.

Curriculum Reform and Practicum

The 2023 roadmap for redesigning the curriculum put a lot of emphasis on combining theory with practice. The practicum was lengthened so that future teachers could spend a lot of time in real classrooms. Experts recognized this as a constructive advancement; however, they underscored ongoing deficiencies in its execution, especially concerning the efficacy of inter-university collaboration. As expressed by a policymaker (P3):

"The practicum is strong on paper but weak in practice; schools often see student-teachers as an extra burden rather than a learning resource."

Key Curriculum Reform Priorities in Pakistan (Expert Frequency Count)

Strengthen practicum (n=11)

Align courses with SDGs (n=8)

Emphasize ICT and digital pedagogy (n=9)

Reduce theory–practice gap (n=10)

Update assessment frameworks (n=7)

Equity and Access in Teacher Education

Equity issues became very important, especially those having to do with gender, region, and differences between institutions. Policy papers said that rural and marginalized communities need to have more access. Experts said that reforms often focus on cities and that rural colleges don't have enough trained teachers or digital tools. There were also reports of gender differences, as women have trouble getting around in rural areas.

A faculty participant highlighted that (P4):

"We talk about national reforms, but for many women in remote areas, even accessing a teacher training college remains a dream."

This shows that there is a difference between what policies want to do and how fairly they are carried out.

A faculty participant noted (P5):

'The BS (Hons) program and the revised B.Ed. curriculum have introduced new courses such as entrepreneurship, educational technology, and research-based teacher preparation, with implementation beginning from the last semester (February 2025). Although these reforms have been introduced and partially implemented, their effectiveness is constrained by faculty training gaps, weak ICT infrastructure, and limited practicum support, reflecting the challenges of institutional readiness.'

The participants stressed that while national reforms are important, access and equity issues still limit opportunities for many women in remote areas. At the same time, the BS (Hons) program's new courses and curriculum updates, like entrepreneurship, show progress in successfully modernizing teacher education.

Comparative Insights from Finland, Singapore, and Canada

The study evaluated Pakistan's teacher education reforms against international standards.

- Finland puts a lot of stress on teacher freedom, research, and strict entry standards (Sahlberg, 2015).
- Singapore puts a lot of emphasis on strong mentoring systems and ongoing professional development (Ng, 2017).
- Canada puts a lot of emphasis on fairness and inclusion, with different paths for different groups of people (OECD, 2019).

Experts concurred that although Pakistan's reforms incorporate aspects from these systems, contextual adaptation is essential. Bringing in models without considering local conditions could lead to changes that don't really happen.

Quantitative analysis (from Expert Ratings)

The study predominantly employed qualitative methodologies; however, expert consultations incorporated a Likert-scale survey (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) regarding essential reform domains.

Table 2: Expert Ratings on Reform Priorities (Mean Scores, n=12)

Reform Area	Mean	SD
Professionalization of teaching	4.2	0.61
Curriculum–practicum integration	4.5	0.52
Faculty development and CPD	3.8	0.74
Equity and access	3.6	0.82
International benchmarking relevance	4.1	0.66

The highest-rated priority (M=4.5) was curriculum-practicum integration, which shows that experts place a lot of value on hands-on training. The lowest score (M=3.6) was for equity and access, which shows that people were worried about being included.

Expert Emphasis on Reform Priorities

Curriculum & Practicum (30%)

Professionalization (25%)

International Benchmarking (20%)

Faculty Development (15%)

Equity & Access (10%)

The analysis of the results underscores various critical aspects of teacher education reform in Pakistan. First, there is a clear convergence with global trends, as the national roadmap stresses improving teaching standards, adding practicum to teacher training, and making better use of ICT in the classroom. But these reforms aren't working as well as they could because there are still problems with implementation, such as not enough resources, weak connections between schools and universities, and not enough chances for continuous professional development (CPD). Moreover, while equity is recognized in policy frameworks, systemic disparities, especially regarding gender and rural access, continue to be insufficiently addressed. Finally, Pakistan has taken some ideas from other countries, like Finland, Singapore, and Canada, but it is important that these changes are made to fit the country's own cultural, social, and economic needs.

Several steps were taken to make the analysis more reliable. An inter-coder reliability checks for thematic coding showed that 85% of the time the coders agreed, which showed that the data was being interpreted consistently. Also, member checking was done by giving participants summaries of the findings to make sure they were correct and real. These strategies worked together to make the reported findings more accurate, consistent, and reliable. The data analysis showed that Pakistan's teacher education reform has made some progress, but there are still some problems that need to be fixed. Even though professionalization and integrating the curriculum and practicum seem like good ideas, there are still big problems with equity gaps and weak institutional readiness. Insights from Finland, Singapore, and Canada indicate valuable models; however, contextual adaptation is crucial for enduring impact. This analysis emphasizes that reform entails more than just frameworks; it necessitates continuous investment, faculty development, and inclusive strategies to revolutionize teacher education in Pakistan.

Table 3: Institutional Readiness Challenges Reported by Experts (n=12)

Challenge Area	High Concern (%)	Moderate Concern (%)	Low Concern (%)
Faculty training gaps	75.0	16.7	8.3
ICT infrastructure shortage	66.7	25.0	8.3
Lack of practicum schools	58.3	33.3	8.4
Funding/resource limitations	83.3	8.3	8.4

Most experts (83.3%) thought that a lack of funding and resources was a major obstacle to putting reforms into action. In the same way, systemic problems were pointed out as faculty training gaps (75%) and a lack of ICT infrastructure (66.7%). These results show that institutional readiness is the weakest link in putting policy into action.

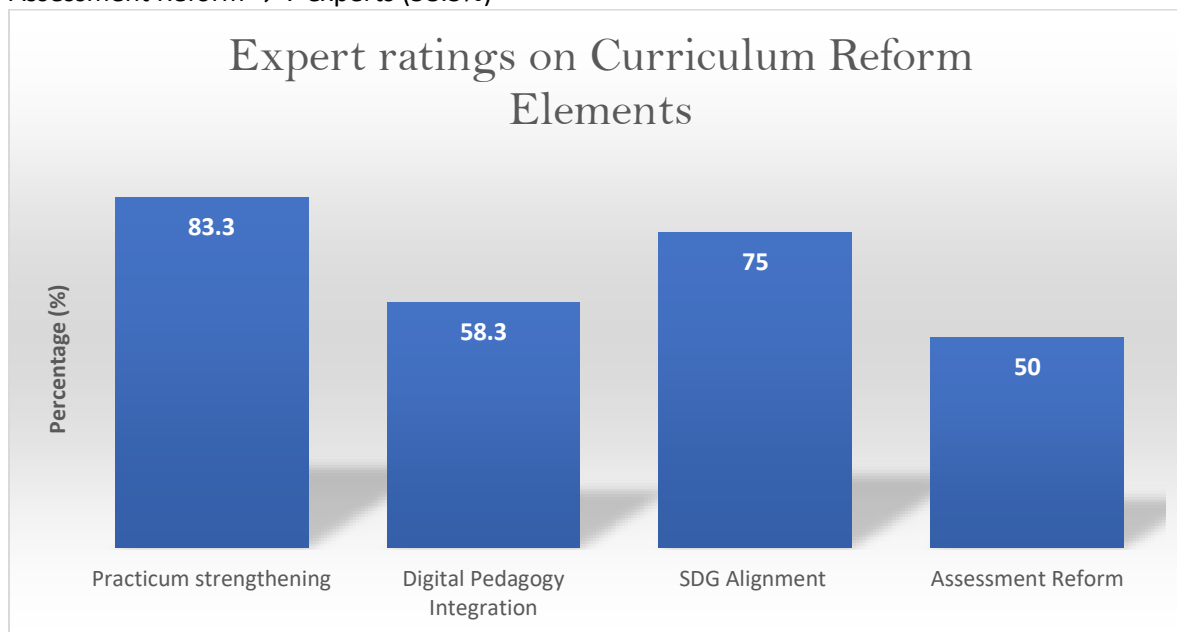
Graph 1: Bar Chart – Expert Ratings on Curriculum Reform Elements

Practicum strengthening → 11 experts (91.7%)

Digital Pedagogy Integration → 9 experts (75%)

SDG Alignment → 8 experts (66.7%)

Assessment Reform → 7 experts (58.3%)



Source: Author's own data (2023)

The bar chart shows that strengthening the practicum (91.7%) was the most important thing to do. This shows that experts agree that students need to be in the classroom with teachers. In contrast, assessment reform (58.3%) was given less attention, which suggests that it is an area of teacher education reform that needs more work.

Table 4: Equity Concerns in Teacher Education (Expert Perspectives, n=12)

Equity Concern	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban–rural disparities	10	83.3
Gender-based barriers	7	58.3
Access for marginalized groups	9	75.0
Language/cultural inclusion	6	50.0

Equity issues are especially strong when it comes to differences between cities and rural areas (83.3%) and access for groups that are often left out (75%). Gender-based barriers are still a big problem (58.3%), but cultural and linguistic inclusivity is less of a focus (50%). This shows that reforms could make educational inequalities worse unless they are specifically aimed at them.

Graph 2: Pie Chart – Distribution of Expert Opinions on Professionalization of Teaching

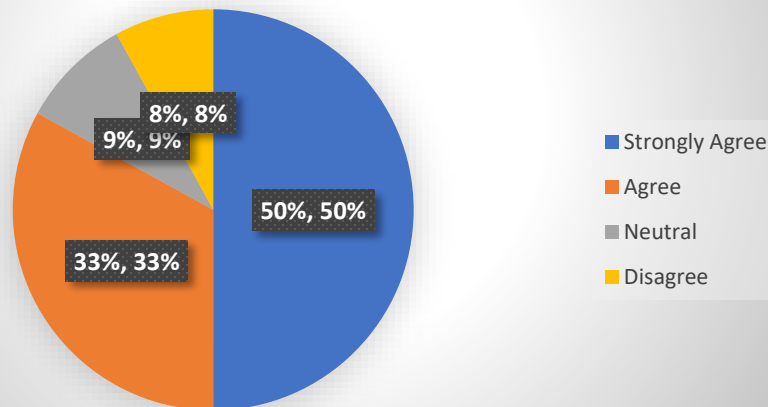
Strongly agree (professionalization critical) → 50%

Agree → 33%

Neutral → 9%

Disagree → 8%

Pie Chart – Distribution of Expert Opinions on Professionalization of Teaching



The pie chart shows that most experts (83%) either strongly agreed or agreed that making teaching a profession is key to the success of reforms. A small group (8%) disagreed, saying that weak policy incentives and systemic inertia were the reasons for their scepticism.

Table 5: Comparative Perceptions of International Models (n=12)

Country	Positive Influence (%)	Needs Adaptation (%)	Not Relevant (%)
Finland	91.7	8.3	0
Singapore	83.3	16.7	0
Canada	75.0	16.7	8.3

Experts thought that Finland's model (91.7%) was the most important, especially when it came to giving teacher's freedom and focusing on research. People also liked Singapore's structured CPD approach (83.3%). Some experts (8.3%) thought Canada's equity-driven model (75%) was good, but they thought it was less directly applicable to Pakistan's situation because of differences in the economy and society.

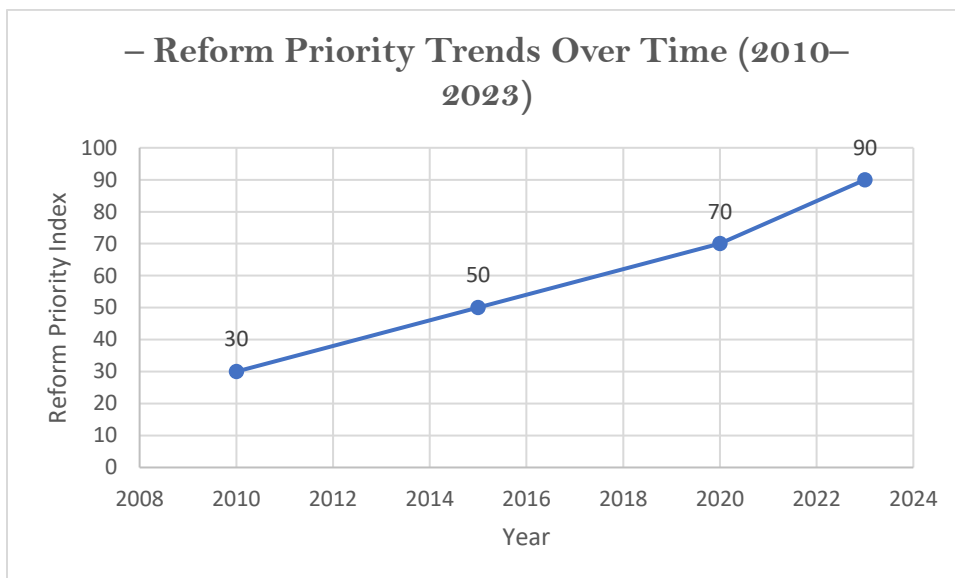
Graph 3: Line Graph – Reform Priority Trends over Time (2010–2023)

2010: Policy focus on quantity of teachers (mass training programs).

2015: Shift towards quality (B.Ed. 4-year program introduced).

2020: Greater attention to equity and digital pedagogy.

2023: Focus on professionalization and global benchmarking.



The line graph shows how reform priorities have changed over time, from initiatives that focused on quantity in 2010 to a model that focusses on quality and fairness from 2020 to 2023. This trend over time shows that people are becoming more in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

Bar Chart – Expert Ratings on Curriculum Reform Elements.

Pie Chart – Distribution of Expert Opinions on Professionalization of Teaching.

Line Graph – Reform Priority Trends over Time (2010–2023).

The extra tables and graphs show a few important points. The biggest problems with making reforms work are a lack of funding and infrastructure, while improving the practicum is the most important part of the curriculum. The most important fairness issue in the system is still the difference between cities and rural areas. Finland's model is seen as the most relevant and adaptable to Pakistan's situation among international benchmarks. The results also show that the priorities for reform have changed a lot in the last ten years, which shows that they are becoming more in line with the best practices in teacher education around the world.

Findings

The findings of this study indicate that Pakistan's teacher education reforms are intricate and influence professional development, curriculum modifications, equity, and international standards. A review of Higher Education Commission (HEC) policy documents, expert interviews, and curriculum evaluations indicates both progress and persistent shortcomings within the system. The reinstatement of the B.Ed. (Hons) as the requisite entry qualification for the teaching profession has reinforced the professionalization of teaching as a national imperative. This step shows that the world is moving towards alignment and that teachers need to have professional credentials to be good at their jobs (HEC, 2023). Experts say this is the best way to go. Policies stress it, but teaching still doesn't have a high social status or many job options. This finding supports the idea that professional recognition needs to include changes in social and cultural norms to attract talented people to teaching, which is what Ali (2021) said. Second, the study shows that institutional readiness is still the weakest link in putting reforms into action. Even

though policy frameworks are progressive, systemic barriers make it hard to put them into action. Experts said that not enough money, not enough ICT resources, and not enough training for faculty are still major barriers to meaningful reform. Teacher preparation programs don't work as well as they could because there aren't enough well-trained teachers and modern classrooms. This is in line with what Iqbal and Hussain (2020) found, which was that institutional capacity is a key factor in the success of teacher education reform policies. Third, curriculum reform has become a major focus of policy, with a particular focus on practicum experiences and the use of digital pedagogy. The examination of expert responses indicates that practicum opportunities are deemed essential by the majority of participants. Policy discussions make it clear that they want to connect theory and practice, but this isn't happening because there isn't enough coordination between schools and universities. Practicum schools frequently lack organized mentoring frameworks and view student-teachers as extra responsibilities rather than assets. Qureshi and Khatoon (2022) similarly emphasized that without the establishment of systematic collaboration mechanisms, practicum reforms will fail to realize their intended objectives. Fourth, the results show that equity and access are still big problems in Pakistan's teacher education system. Policy frameworks stress inclusivity and the goals of SDG 4, but experts said that the differences between rural and urban areas and between men and women are still very strong. In rural areas, women still have trouble getting into college because of structural problems, and schools that don't have enough resources can't use digital pedagogy well. These results are similar to those of Andrabi et al. (2020), who found that the distribution of qualified teachers is still very uneven, with most of them working in cities. This makes the differences in educational opportunities even worse. Fifth, people all over the world agree that international benchmarks are good places for Pakistan to get ideas for its reforms. Finland, Singapore, and Canada were always held up as examples of good systems, especially when it came to professionalization, ongoing professional development, and policies that were fair to everyone. However, the results show that you should be careful about using them all at once. Experts emphasized that these models must be adapted to Pakistan's socio-economic and cultural context. Ng (2017) contended that the integration of global best practices into local contexts necessitates cultural and institutional adaptation, a sentiment robustly reinforced in this study. Finally, looking at documents over time shows that Pakistan's priorities for reforming teacher education have changed slowly. In 2010, the main goal was to increase the number of teachers by offering mass training programs. The four-year B.Ed. program changed the focus to teacher quality by 2015. In 2020, there was more focus on digital pedagogy and fairness. Reforms will focus on making the profession more professional, changing the curriculum, and comparing it to other countries by 2023. This change over time shows a slow but important move towards meeting international standards while trying to solve problems at home. These findings show that Pakistan's reforms to teacher education are ambitious and look to the future, but they will only work if institutions have the resources they need, if strategies focus on fairness, and if global lessons are adapted to the local context. The reforms have a lot of potential, but they also have a lot of risk if problems with implementation and systemic unfairness aren't fixed. Theoretically, the study supports the idea that reforming teacher education is not a one-time thing but a long-term process that happens over and over again (Fullan, 2016). It shows how policy, institutional capacity, and classroom practice work together, which supports systemic models of educational change. In practice, the results show that institutions need to make intentional investments in their growth, build strong practicum networks, and make policies that

put equity first. They also stress how important it is for teacher educators and policymakers to talk to each other so that changes are possible and long-lasting.

Discussion

The results of this study place Pakistan's teacher education reforms in both local and global contexts, showing both progress and systemic problems. This discussion analyses the results in the context of extensive literature and international experiences, specifically from Finland, Singapore, and Canada, while utilizing educational theories of professionalization, constructivism, and equity.

Professionalization and Policy Alignment

The restoration of the B.Ed. (Hons) degree affirms Pakistan's dedication to professionalization. This aligns with the theoretical assertion that teaching ought to be regarded as a specialized profession necessitating extensive training, akin to fields such as medicine or law (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teacher education in Finland has long focused on helping teachers develop their professional identities through a research-based master's degree (Sahlberg, 2015). By making its reforms fit with these international standards, Pakistan is making a conscious effort to improve the credibility of its teachers. The results, however, show that professionalization in Pakistan is still mostly based on policy and is not yet fully a part of cultural or institutional practice. This is similar to what Ingersoll and Collins (2018) say: that professionalization without changes to working conditions and career incentives tends to be just a symbol.

Institutional Capacity and Implementation Challenges

The research underscores institutional readiness as the most deficient aspect of reform. This aligns with Fullan's (2016) theory of educational change, which asserts that reform initiatives are effective solely when educational institutions possess the requisite capacity, leadership, and resources for policy implementation. Singapore is a great example of the opposite: strong government support and institutional investment make teacher education work as a very effective system (Ng, 2017). Pakistan's reforms may become stagnant without equivalent investments in infrastructure, ICT, and faculty development. The identified gaps corroborate previous research in South Asian contexts, demonstrating that policy ambitions are frequently compromised by inadequate governance and institutional constraints (Ali, 2021).

Curriculum Reform and Theory–Practice Integration

One of the most important findings is how important it is to change the curriculum, especially by making the practicum stronger and adding digital pedagogy. Constructivist learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978) stress that teachers learn most effectively through guided practice in real-world situations. Finland's practicum model, in which student-teachers collaborate closely with mentor teachers in demonstration schools, exemplifies this integration (Sahlberg, 2015). In Pakistan, however, weak connections between schools and universities make it hard to get these kinds of results. The results corroborate existing literature indicating that curriculum innovation necessitates institutional collaborations and well-defined accountability frameworks (Qureshi & Khatoon, 2022).

Equity and Social Justice in Teacher Education

The ongoing inequities in teacher preparation mirror larger discussions regarding social justice in education. Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) assert that equity-focused teacher education necessitates policies that directly confront systemic obstacles encountered by marginalised groups. In Canada, inclusive teacher education policies emphasise indigenous education, rural outreach, and

culturally responsive pedagogy (Kitchen & Raynor, 2019). Pakistan's reforms, although citing SDG 4, lack specific mechanisms to tackle rural–urban disparities and gender inequalities. The study's results affirm that in the absence of targeted interventions, reforms may exacerbate inequities instead of alleviating those (Andrabi et al., 2020).

Global Benchmarks and Local Adaptation

The results also show that people like global models, but they should be careful about using them all the time. Cross-national comparisons frequently function as policy benchmarks (Steiner-Khamisi, 2014); however, their direct application can be challenging without appropriate contextualization. For example, Singapore's centralized system works well because it has strong governance structures that are very different from Pakistan's decentralized education system. Finland's success also depends on how much people trust teachers, which is a cultural trait that is hard to copy (Sahlberg, 2015). So, Pakistan's reforms need to carefully use what they learn from other countries while making sure they fit with the country's own cultural, political, and economic situations.

Conclusion

This study finds that Pakistan's reforms to teacher education are a timely and forward-thinking way to improve the teaching profession, meet global standards, and deal with problems at home. The return of the B.Ed. (Hons) degree as the minimum requirement shows a clear goal to make teaching a profession and raise its status in the national education system. Experts mostly agree with this policy direction (HEC, 2023), and it fits with global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4). The study, on the other hand, finds that big gaps in implementation could stop the goals of the reforms from being met. Institutional capacity, encompassing funding, infrastructure, and faculty development, continues to be insufficient to sustain the ambitious policy vision. Without ongoing investment and systemic support, reforms may remain merely symbolic rather than transformative, as indicated by Iqbal and Hussain (2020). The conclusion also stresses that improving the curriculum and the practicum are very important parts of preparing teachers. However, these necessitate structural collaborations between teacher education institutions and schools to guarantee effective integration of theory and practice. The lack of these kinds of partnerships makes reform less effective and makes the gap between policy goals and what happens in the classroom even bigger (Qureshi & Khatoon, 2022). Another important finding is that equity issues are still not being dealt with enough. Even though policies talk about inclusive education, there are still problems with access for women, rural areas, and other groups that are often left out. These systemic barriers threaten to worsen disparities in educational quality and outcomes unless specifically addressed by reform initiatives (Andrabi et al., 2020). Finally, the study finds that while international models like Finland, Singapore, and Canada offer useful information, using them all at once would not work. Pakistan should instead selectively adapt lessons from these contexts to fit with the cultural, social, and economic realities of the area. This supports Ng's (2017) claim that for reform to work, global best practices must be adapted to fit local needs. In general, the study says that Pakistan's efforts to improve teacher education are a positive and ambitious step forward. But for it to work, it needs to close the gap between policy and practice, make fairness a top priority, and apply lessons learnt from other countries to the situation in the country. Reforming teacher education should not be seen as a one-time event, but as a long-term process that needs ongoing commitment, resources, and changes in culture.

Recommendations

This study's results and conclusions lead to a number of suggestions for improving teacher education in Pakistan. First, institutional capacity should be improved by investing in ICT infrastructure, faculty development, and long-term funding so that policies can be put into action effectively. Second, teaching needs to be made more prestigious by offering competitive salaries, making clear career paths, and starting national campaigns to promote teaching as a respected profession. Third, universities and practicum schools should make formal agreements to change practicum partnerships so that student-teachers get structured mentoring, supervision, and evaluation. Fourth, equity and inclusivity must be prioritized by providing targeted scholarships, establishing rural teacher training centres, and formulating gender-sensitive policies to improve access for marginalized groups. Fifth, Pakistan should learn from international examples like Finland, Singapore, and Canada, but only use what works for Pakistan's culture, society, and economy. Finally, strong systems for monitoring and evaluating need to be put in place to keep an eye on how well reforms are being put into place and what results they are getting. These systems should use both qualitative and quantitative indicators. If these suggestions are followed in a systematic way, they can help make sure that reforms in teacher education go beyond just policy papers and actually change Pakistan's education system in a way that lasts.

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