

Gender Inequality in Teacher Training Programs

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Abstract

Present study was designed to investigate the reasons for gender inequality in teacher training programs. The sample of the study was comprised of 200 graduate students enrolled at general colleges and 10 heads of teacher training institutions working in Pothohar region of Pakistan. Two instruments were designed to collect data. The students were asked to fill three point likert type scale questionnaire. Interview was designed for the heads of teachers training institutions. Similar reasons were reported by students and heads of institutions. All were agreed that teaching is a low paid profession and it is not given respect by society. It was recommended to increase the social and economic status of teachers to ensure male participation in teaching profession for balance society.

Keywords: gender, teacher gender, biological differences, teaching profession, teacher training program.

1. Introduction

Gender is simply the state of being male or female. Gender role is the person's self perception or self awareness being male or female. The roles are defined by society and culture. These are the social and psychological perceptions about the gender differences. Male and female are different by birth. These differences are important but sometimes the persons are tagged with some social behaviour. Society dislike if the person goes the other way that is called gender biasness. Wietny and Lloyed (2004) describe gender biasness by if a women exhibits traditional masculine characteristics are often perceived negatively.

Gender differences are reported by many researchers especially in educational activities; like Hyde (1981) & Maceoby and Jacklin (1974) founds female scored higher than males on measures of verbal abilities. Similarly Halpern (2000) analysed that boys scores high on problem solving in high school mathematics course. The gender differences are clearly visible in spatial abilities. The different abilities of males and females lead them to select different careers. Previously engineering education was tagged with male and medicines with females. According to Thomas (2002) teacher education is also gendered and it is perceived as female profession. The reason given for that was: female has more passions and soft corner for kids and their motherly attitude, tolerance and encouragement enhanced students' motivation and learning. This trend was perceived all over the world that females are good teachers especially for primary school education.

In Pakistan most of the public and private sector institutions either registered as male, female or junior model schools female teachers are working there. With reference to the report by federal Directorate Education (2011) and Facts and Figure (2004); there is a growing shortage of male teachers in school. Females dominated the teaching profession and male are going for other fields. The gender of teacher effects students learning. Top positions in majority of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) examinations were secured by female students and male remains under-performers. When achievement rate was compared it was found in US 65% boys and 72% Girls complete there high school education. In UAE the situation is even worse only 27% male students complete their high school education in comparison to 70% female students. In Pakistan Gazette (2011) result of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi showed this as 53% boys and 65% girls completed their high school education.

1.1 Teacher's gender and students performance

Boy's performance is poor as compared to girls. The US Department of Education (2006) reported gender of teacher affects the students' performance.

The female teacher instead of a male teacher raises the achievement of female students by 4% of standard deviation (SD) and lower the achievement of boys by 8% of SD. Reynolds (2010) investigated that female social science teacher increases female students' performance by 9% of SD and female science teacher decreases the boys performance by 5% of SD. Regardless of academic subjects when class is taught by female teacher boys are twice as likely as girls to be seen inattentive, disruptive and unlikely to complete their home work. According to the report of US Education Department (2006) 76% boys were suspended from schools, 90% were diagnosed as having learning disabilities and 42% are suspended from school at least twice.

Anselm, Godinho (2009) revealed that only 27% boys attending high school compared to 70% girls. The report highlighted its reason as male and female students have different kinds of teaching needs. These needs are basically related to genetically different brains of male and female students and their learning styles. The main reason was the feminine mode of co-operative learning are not supporting the boys learning needs and they do not respond to female teaching methods. As reported by Akhtar (2009) female students preferred participation and collaborative learning styles whereas male preferred competitive and avoidant learning styles.

Sax (2005) said there is no difference in what girls and boys can learn, but there are big differences in the best ways to teach them. It support the previous argument that female can teach in a best way to females and male can teach in a best way to male students. Further Shepherd (2010) endorsed the different needs and abilities of male and female students. She suggested different examinations set for girls and boys keeping in view their different needs. The root of this suggestion came from the poor performance of boys in traditional examination system. Peterek (2007) suggested the solution of problem of low performance of boys by single sex schools and classes as she thinks co-education is not good for both boys and girls with respect to their educational performance.

Coates and Draves (2006) was also concerned why boys under-perform in schools. This issue is very serious for low income families. This issue not only impact boys it has a serious negative impact on society too. Boys feel they can not continue their formal education in future. This perception was interpreted by a report of department of education, Australia (2000), that female dominates higher education. This problem was not only faced by Australian Government it is a common concern all over the world and this is feminization of teaching profession.

1.2 Gender and teacher education

In Pakistan teacher education is offered by universities. Different programs are designed by Higher Education Commission like B.Ed (Hons) 4 years degree program, MA (Education) 2 years degree program, B. Ed (after 14 years of education) 1 year degree program, M.Ed (after 14 years + B.Ed) 1 year degree program, MS (Education) 3 years degree program and PhD (Education) 3-7 years degree program. These programs are designed to cater the training needs of teachers working at different levels.

Different incentives were given to student's teachers to involve them in teacher education programs like scholarships and other educational certificates Kim (2001). Every profession has certain value and people join it keeping in view their interests and abilities. Teaching profession is being joined because of certain interests and factors. Bastick (2000) classifies them in to intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons. Chan (2006), divide them in to two categories intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors are translated as desire to help others, interest to work with children, working for nation, work for the quality of teaching, social work, improve the environment et. The extrinsic factors were associated with pay, vacations, and opportunities for advancement etc which are translated as economic and social factors.

Whatever the motives for joining teaching profession was when the participation of male and female teachers were compared it was found that in US, Canada, Britain and Australia 90% of teachers in primary education were females Reynolds (2010). Carr (2004) reported the situation in Ireland as 82.5% teachers were female and only 17.5% teachers were male. In Pakistan according to Facts and Figure (2004), 77.57% primary teachers were female whereas only 22.42% teachers were male. When the data was collected from the teachers training institution in Pakistan for male and female student's enrolment, it was found that female participant's enrolment was ranging from 80-90% and male enrolment was 10-20%. The situation is very alarming. The male departments are vacant. They have very low enrolment. If the situation remains the same in future some of the departments may be forced to be closed. To cope with this situation present study was designed to investigate the gender inequality in teacher education programs.

2. Methodology

The study was designed to investigate the opinion and attitude of male and female students towards teaching profession. Study further explores the reasons why male students do not prefer to join teaching profession and what are the incentives for female students to join it? The population of the study belongs to Pothohar region of Pakistan. It includes the graduate students who were near to complete their 14 years of education and ready to join professional training programs and the heads of the teacher training institutions. The sample of the study was 200 (100 male and 100 female) students and all the heads of teachers training institutions working in Pothohar region.

2.1. Instruments

Two instruments: a questionnaire for students and structured interview for heads of teachers training institutions were developed to collect data. The student's questionnaire was designed to measure student's opinion and attitude towards teaching profession. The interview was planned to conduct by the heads of the teachers training institutions. They reflected upon the social, economic and emotional and personal reasons why students are reluctant to join teaching professions. What measures are taken by them to motivate prospective teachers to join teacher training institutions for professional training? The instruments were designed in English Language.

2.1.1 Students Questionnaire

The student's questionnaire was comprised of 27 statements. 26 statements were semi-structured and one open ended was included in the questionnaire. The statements of the questionnaires focused three areas. The first was about the attitude of student's toward joining teaching profession and teacher training institution for their professional training. Second area focused to investigate the social, economic, emotional, environmental and personal concerns regarding joining teaching profession. The third area explored the reasons why they don't want to join teaching profession. The statements were rated on three point likert type scale ranging from agree = 3, neutral = 2 and disagree = 1. All the statements were positively designed to measure the responses of students regarding teaching profession. No inverse scoring was done. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by test retest method. After the gap of two weeks the second administration of instrument was done. The reliability coefficient was 0.72 which is acceptable for research.

2.1.2 Interview from heads of the institutions

The structured interview was designed to gather information from the heads of the teacher training institutions. The heads of teacher training institutions were asked to respond on six main questions regarding the social, economic, emotional, environmental and personal reasons of students why they are reluctant to join teaching profession and teacher training institution. One statement was kept for the heads what is their perception why the enrolment of male students is low in teacher training institutions. It was also asked by the heads what measures and initiatives they took to motivate students for joining teaching profession and teaching training institutions. What measures the Government and NGO's has taken to increase the male participation in teachers training institutions. Both the instruments were finalized with help of expert opinion of specialists of relevant fields.

2.2 Data Collection

The student's questionnaire was distributed to them after their class with the help of their teachers. They were asked to fill the questionnaire and return it. The average time required to fill the questionnaire was approximately 7 to 10 minutes. 183 students filled the questionnaire and returned. The response rate was 91.5 %.

10 heads of the teacher training institutions were requested for an interview. 7 heads were available 3 were busy in some matters and were not available after contacting many times. So the response rate of the heads of the institutions was 70%.

The collected data was in two forms: the quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data was gathered by the 26 statements on student's questionnaire; which was analyzed by calculating cumulative score. t-test was applied. The qualitative data come from student's response and the interviews from the heads of the institutions. This data was classified in to groups. The similar responses were combined in one group and different responses were treated separately.

3. Results

The collected data were in two forms: the quantitative and qualitative.

3.1 Quantitative data

The data collected through student's questionnaire was analysed through mean score. t-test was applied to generalize the gender-wise difference in opinion of male and female student's responses towards teaching profession.

Table:1 Gender-wise difference in students opinion towards teaching profession

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Female	083	66.35	8.47	2.46*	150.68	.015
Male	100	69.14	6.43			

* Significant at $p > .01$

Table 1 indicates significant difference in opinion of male and female students towards teaching profession. The mean score of male students is high. It showed the attitude of male students is positive towards teaching profession then the female students.

3.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative data was gathered from students and heads of institutions both. It was analyzed separately. The students and heads responses portrayed almost same situation.

3.2.1 Students qualitative responses

The students were asked to give reasons why they don't want to join teaching profession. Different responses were reported by male and female students. 25% male students were willing to join teaching profession. The remaining 75% gave different reasons for not joining this profession. The responses of male students were focused around 5 main reasons.

Table:2 Reasons given by male students according to ranks

Reasons	Ranks
Society do not gave respect to teachers	1
They want to become lawyer	2
Teaching is low paid	3
Teachers has no authority	4
They want to become banker	5
Others	6

From the above responses of male students it reflected that male students do not prefer to join teaching profession because of three things respect, money and authority. Society do not gave respect to teachers. Government pay policy is not appropriate for teaching profession. Teachers have no authority.

The female students also responded to open ended question. 75% female students agreed to join teaching department without giving any reason. One respondent said she want to serve humanity so she wants to become a teacher. The other 25% female students reported different reasons for not joining teaching profession.

Table: 3 Reasons given by female students according to ranks

Reasons	Ranks
Teaching is low paid	1
Society do not gave respect to teachers	2
Its tough job	3

The similar reasons given by female students for not joining teaching profession were grouped into three categories according to ranks. Some other reasons were highlighted by individual students. They want to serve by some other professions so they don't want to join teaching profession such as police, lawyer, doctor, banker, economist, air-force and fashion designer.

3.2.2 Heads of Institutions responses

The interviews from the heads of the institutions focus on six main aspects for joining teaching profession. Everyone emphasizes the economic factor is major which is affecting the life of an individual. In Pakistan and all over the world economic status determines the social and emotional status. Teaching profession is a low paid profession so male students avoid to join it. The variation in responses about which factor motivates female students to join teaching profession and why male students do not prefer it was recorded. The motivating factor was reported as it's not a physically pain taking job. In Pakistani society it suits to females so they join this profession. The different responses were as:

Females join teaching profession because of gender compatibility with profession. It is an international trend that females join teaching profession while it is the last preference of males.

Females want easy task. In teaching physical effort is less. They are willing to join teaching profession.

Another respondent said:

The females after completing their graduation have nothing to do. Their parents take them to profession training courses to keep them busy; so they get enrolled in teacher training institutions. While the male child's mind is trained on the lines that he has to earn money to help their parents so they tried for a job and found no time to be enrolled in teacher training institutions.

No cultural or religious factors were reported which act as a barrier for joining teaching profession.

The responses about which "social factors effect the enrolment of male and female students in teacher training institutions" were different.

Society does not pay respect to teachers. If a male joins teaching profession the society does not give him due respect as it gives to other professions. They are not supposed to make common decisions for the betterment of society or people don't involve them in their decisions.

One participant said:

Even in the institutions the students enrolled in teacher education departments have low status as compared to the students enrolled in management sciences, IT, medicine and engineering. The reason is associated with the job they will get after completing their education. Low pay in teaching affects the social status of students.

One comment was:

Education is not the Government's number 1 priority at national level. The department of education is not rated as number one although they have highly qualified faculty in universities. The students of Department of Education are also not rated as number 1. The male students do not prefer to join teacher training institutions/departments.

Although the status of teachers tried to be increased by Higher Education Commission by increasing pay and giving incentives and rewards to university teachers but at school level it's not working yet. The enrolment of male students at higher education level increases like in MS and PhD programs but it is not at B.Ed/M.Ed and Master's level.

When asked that what do you think teaching is a low ability job. All the respondents negate this perception i.e. teaching is not a low ability job it is a challenging job. Teaching is a demanding job.

The responses about the question: what they think Government policies, NGO's and Donor Agencies are affecting the low participation of male students in teacher education institutions and promoting female participation. Different responses were received:

The Government encourages female teachers at primary Education.

NGO's are working for the promotion of female education no incentives for male participants.

NGO's are sponsored by other agencies they have their own agenda. They are not working for the promotion of teacher's education. Very few are working in urban areas whereas deficiencies are lying in rural areas and no NGO is there to serve them.

One question was about the infrastructure and physical facilities whether it creates hurdle to enrol the male students in teacher education institutions. All the heads of the institutions responded no physical facility is creating any hurdle for students. All the departments are fully equipped.

4. Discussion

The study was aimed to investigate the reasons of gender inequality in teacher training programs. The male student's enrolment was very low this leads to the perception that male students may have negative attitude towards teaching profession.

The analysis of data of table 1 showed there is significant difference in opinion of male and female students towards teaching profession. Male students showed positive attitude towards teaching profession as compared to female students, but they are not willing to join it. The reasons they highlighted are presented in table 2 were economic and social. Teaching profession is low paid and society gives no respect to teachers. The same reasons were indicated from female students in table 3.

These reasons were verified by the comments of heads of teacher training institutions in the interviews. All the reasons highlighted were extrinsic factors. The extrinsic factors were associated with pay, vacations, and opportunities for advancement etc which are translated as economic and social factors. The economic and social condition of Pakistan in these days may force people to go for secure and highly paid professions. The people in teaching profession are unable to fulfil basic needs of their families because of low pay. Different research studies reported the same findings such as Hayes (1990), Evans (1993), Yong (1995) that teaching is a low paid job. Some research studies were conducted to investigate what are the motivating factors which motivate people to join teaching profession. The finding highlighted intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic factors. In some research studies the intrinsic factors were dominating like

Lingam (2004) and Chan (2006) and in some studies extrinsic factors were dominating such as BastiK (2000). The intrinsic factors are translated as desire to help others, interest to work with children, working for nation, work for the quality of teaching, social work, improve the environment et.

The intrinsic or extrinsic factors of person have roots in the social environment of the country. If the local conditions are favourable then people think about the intrinsic factors. If the environment is uncertain like in Pakistan then people give priority to their personal and family needs.

In Pakistani society males are considered to run a family. They are responsible to earn money to lead family life. Their parents since their childhood inculcate in their mind for joining a profession in which they can earn more. The reason behind is; they want secure, safe and sound future for their children specially the male child because their own future is also associated them. With this vision when students reach near to completion of their graduation they tried to get a job and not to enrol themselves for further training programs. As there is no surety of job after completing that training program. The one who went to medicine and engineering are satisfied by their future. They will surely get a job. The remaining search such a profession in which they can earn money, respect and authority.

There is a need to redesign the social preferences. The teaching profession may be made as an attractive one for males by increasing the social and economic status of teachers. So that male teachers can contribute for teaching male students. Otherwise female teachers fulfil the needs of female students and male students remain under-performer and society remains unbalance.

5. Conclusion

Schools are the social organization. It is the reflection of society. Society remains balance when every one male and female contributes to their maximum efforts. Keeping in view the findings and discussion it is concluded to make a balance society there is a need to have male teachers for teaching male students and female teachers for female students. The male role models can train the male students in best way. It is recommended that social and economic status of a teacher may be increased to attract male students in teaching profession by increasing their pay packages and fringe benefits.

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