

**TEACHER EDUCATORS' COMMITMENT WITH PROMOTION OF  
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN**

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**Abstract:** *The indispensable role of education in promoting sustainable development is intensifying sustainable awareness and shaping attitude and behavior of the people. Equipped with sound awareness, have positive and strong attitude and behavior, teacher educators promote valuable theoretical knowledge and practical activities to students for their understanding and practicing of sustainable development. This effort was to examine commitment of teacher educators with promotion of sustainable development in Pakistan. Teacher educators from leading teacher training institutes including universities were interviewed to ascertain their awareness and understanding of issues related to sustainable development, as well as their underlying attitudes and behaviors. The Results revealed that the teacher educators possess awareness about sustainable development to the extent of just familiar with the terms related to ESD. This would indicate a weak commitment to ESD as they had positive but non-significant attitude and behavior. This would be a call of the day for policy makers and concerned competent authorities as Issues raised concerning the awareness, attitude and behavior of teacher educators if they are to enable students (prospective teachers) to prepare their pupils for life as global citizens.*

**Key words:** *Teacher Educators, Commitment, Education for Sustainable Development*

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## **Introduction**

The basic function of education is forming sustainable awareness and behavior among people, which is good for future generations. To some extent, this statement shows that sustainable development includes individual development and is related to complex social contexts. Thus, it is requisite that governments, schools and teachers should examine how to implement Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Strengthening teacher training is an effective way to help teachers supply valuable theoretical knowledge and practical activities to students for their understanding and practicing of sustainable development (SD). ESD aims to empower everybody with the information, necessary value, attitudes and skills to form a sustainable future. This can be done by education only and teachers have the main role in it. For this reason, throughout the world, teacher education has now gradually recognized the responding necessity to the political, economic, social and cultural challenges. Values and teachers' role in different contexts has been related to broader social, political and economic goals. Education for sustainable development calls questions about the teachers training and extent to which teachers play a part beyond simply communicating skills and knowledge, with endorsing social justice, equity and environmental responsibility (Jones, 2009)

SD came into play in 1980 within the World Conservation Strategy (Rauch, 2002). In Saskatchewan it is not the part of directed curriculum, but on international scale it is acknowledged as an initiative of education (UNESCO, 2003).

Sustainable development comprises economic, social and environmental factors (Summers, 2003). Quality through re-orientating teacher education has been emphasized. It includes changes in programs, policy and practices, as well as knowledge, awareness, values and skills and recognition of the sustainability paradigm' (McKeown, 2014). A motivated and competent teacher's compassion, empathy, commitment with ESD and his/her concern with global issues can deeply influence the impact of ESD within the classroom. Hunt (2012) provided evidence to propose that teacher educators which are enthusiastic and motivated are expected to comprise the themes globally. It means teachers own values and mind set plays key role. Gaudelli (2016) and Lang-Wojtasik (2014) opined that the relationship of teacher's values and their skills in teacher education are much required to teach the themes of global citizenship is important. The inspirations of

a teacher who is inclined toward sustainable development came from different sources which include the family, diversity exposure and social status (Carano, 2013). Though, pressures on achieving targets were reported as to have a demotivating influence (Czer-niawski, 2011).

Teacher educators are the people who develop prospective teachers. Unfortunately, they are overlooked, they deserve special focus but are ignored. They perform a complicated but important role. If they prepared well, better students' performance can be achieved. As Deem and Lucas (2007) opined that it will be easy to attain outcomes of student learning if the preparation of teacher educators is better, resourced and supported. However, only in few countries teacher educators were reported with effective structures for the professional development, guidance and support. McKeown (2014) presented an inclusive approach to ESD for teacher education which is based on struggles to instill ESD into teacher education, curriculum and professional development's programs. For inclusion of themes related to sustainable development in curriculum of teacher training institutes, science education has been recognized as most appropriate area. The worldwide issues as the change of climate, energy, pollution, natural environment and water has been incorporated in science modules but Hagevik (2015) reported that many teachers cannot comprehend relation of the environment, energy and education with the sustainable development. Moseley (2015) suggested a conceptual framework of place consciousness for making this interconnectedness comprehensive for teachers.

## **Literature Review**

For achieving sustainability education is a necessary tool. Now people around the world have been recognized that current tendencies of economic development are not sustainable and to move the society towards sustainability is depends on publics' awareness, education and training. And they wonder that why educators are not moving quickly for developing the programs of Education for Sustainability (EfS) (Rosalyn McKeown, Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit, July 2002)

It has rapidly recognized around the world by teacher educators the need to react to the social, economic, political and cultural changes (Cushner, 2011, 2012, 2014; Grant and Portera, 2011).

ESD features are directly relevant to the teacher educators and these themes can be used as an instrument and interpreted to achieve the pre-determined goals.

Behavior modification and social outcomes are very much relevant within the ESD and teacher educators' discussion (Pipere, et al, 2015; Manteaw, 2012; Mannion, et al., 2014).

For getting better quality of teacher education, ESD and teacher educators initiatives support a re-orientation. Suggestions by the exponents of this approach are, 'it is a deep process of the re-orientation of education to address sustainability that consists on the changes of programmes, policy and its practices, values, skills awareness and paradigms' acceptance of sustainability' (McKeown, 2014:129). For the inclusion and promotion of ESD in many areas of the world poor quality of teacher educators have a direct impact on it.

To promote cultural understanding, sustainable literacy and global awareness, policy makers and government should encourage teacher educators increasingly. In Canada example of this can be found (Mundy et al., 2007); Finland (Alasuutari, 2011); Ireland (Martin et al, 2016); Scotland (Bourn et al, 2016; Wisely, et al., 2010); South Africa (Lotz-Sistka, 2011) and South Korea (Sung, 2015).

In much of the literature the underlying assumption is the importance of motivation from teacher educators for teachers and the ESD's interest in the practice of their classroom.

Relationship between the own values of teachers and the needed skills for teaching the themes of global citizenship is important for teacher educators (see: Andreotti, 2012; Gaudelli, 2016; Osler and Starkey, 1996; Lang-Wojtasik, 2014.)

It is identified by Carano's (2013) research that if teacher educators have good commitment for the promotion of sustainable development's' promotion and are globally minded, their influence depends on factors including the exposure to diversity, family, status of minority, international travel and attending the courses of global education (Czer-niawski, 2011).

For developing trainee teachers, the role of teacher educators is crucial but frequently they do not get the deserved focus. Teacher educators are many times overlooked, despite of their important role. Role of teacher educator is of great importance yet and is complex and difficult.

If teacher educators were better resourced, supported and prepared in both developed and developing contexts, better learning outcomes of students can be attained (Deem &

Lucas, 2007). For the guidance, support and professional development of teacher educators there are effective frameworks in few countries. Many teacher educators approach their work in an ad hoc way rather than proper planned programs of work (INEE, 2015: 104-5).

In ESD in relation to teacher education it is suggested that enthusiastic and motivated teacher educators are likely to include the global themes (Hunt, 2012). The focus on ESD can be ad hoc in nature and limited and teacher educators frequently have self-sufficiency in what how they train the teachers and how they teach teachers.

Requirements for teacher educators already have increased by policy makers for preparing teachers for the classroom (Moore, 2005). Teacher educators have to be imaginative and creative where ESD are not included in the curriculum for their inclusion within courses.

Proponents of ESD tending to demand for a constructive approach towards learning and considers as a part of transformative approach to learning (McKeown and Hopkins, 2010; Sterling, 2001). Within the discussion similar themes can be found on the education of inter-cultural and rights of human (Bourn, 2015; Gaudelli, 2016; Osler and Starkey, 2010; Scheunpflug, 2011; Wisely, et al., 2010).

It is identified from world's different regions that skills mastered by teachers are linked with the reproduction of knowledges' bodies in the classroom and much importance on the usage of textbooks (Darling-Hammond and Liebermann, 2012; Bajaj, 2012; Kithuka, 2015; Griffin, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to know that how teachers are getting training and pedagogical focus of that training.

A more holistic approach was described by McKeown (2014: 128) to ESD within the institutions of teacher education that have a good experience in the reorientation of teacher educators for addressing sustainability through imparting ESD into curriculum, programmes of professional development and teacher education.

Summers (2003) and Hart (2003) for teaching about sustainable development focus on the teacher's beliefs.

Action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997; Ballantyne et al., 1998; Rauch, 2002; and Barrett, 2006) as an approach identified as an approach on which researchers firm believe that has the extreme impact on the learning of students.

Smyth (2005) suggested that teacher educators should be trained enough to reduce the global problems like unequal distribution of resources, media impact as a big source for the information of environment etc.

Three major themes for teacher educators' commitment with promotion of education for sustainable development are: modeling sustainable practices, value's promotion in education, action competence.

Many studies described action competence as an effective method for teacher educators for teaching about the sustainable development to the students (Jensen & Schnack, 1997; Barrett, 2006; Lundegard & Wickman, 2007). To encourage and facilitate students for developing skills and desires for the promotion of SD is the role of teacher educators in action competence.

Jensen and Schnack (1997) believe on the qualitative changes rather than the environmental problems lies within quantitative changes. So students must develop a sophisticated thinking and acting framework rather than only repeat actions simply to promote consciousness of environment. So for teacher educators, the objective of the environmental education is to make students capable for seeing the alternative ways of development.

Student's empowerment is directly related to action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). Empowerment sense involves in students from effective teaching of sustainable development (Lundegard & Wickman, 2007). Elements of sustainability need to choose by students for their present and future. Teacher educators need to support them to take ownership of an action project.

Students get confuse by the variation between teaching and culture of school (Higgs & McMillan, 2006). Higgs and McMillan (2006) provided some examples from a qualitative study on how teacher educators' should model the sustainable development: decreasing consumerism, composting and recycling, conserving energy, reducing waste, promotion of democratic classroom environments and encouraging opinion sharing. Students are likely to follow when they observe teacher educators doing such actions according to Higgs and McMillan.

With the help of these actions teacher educators can make more supportive sustainable culture of school.

Some researchers pointed out the connection between teacher educators' commitment of teachings about values and teaching about sustainable development. In terms of ecological significance, citizenship, competence and values of responsibility are discussed and awareness of environment is left behind according to Smyth (2005).

Hart's (2003) founded many reasons in his study include the outdoors and nature's love, teacher educators and parents influence and several other personal values force them to do so. Summers (2003) wonders if teacher educators have the time with their load of work to take on and likes new ideas for sustainable development. Teachers' work has intensified in this era of accountability (Alsop et al., 2007).

Success of pedagogy in SD can be determined by the use of teacher educators' enquiry based or strategy of problem, critical thinking and fosters collaboration. The outcome is expected outcome leads to the SD if the plan of teacher educators is based on these ideas and concepts (Capelo et al., 2014; Mukuria & Obiakor, 2008; Dearing, 1999; Khali et al., 2013; Treare et al., 2013; Darley & Farley, 2003).

Moreover, it will be ecologically relevant if teacher educators focused on the problem solving and work with proper planning. Teacher educators' outcomes for sustainable development are visible very clearly to the community and observed as complementary to SD (Diamond, 2005; Darley & Farley, 2003; Dearing, 1999; Capelo et al., 2014).

The studies (e.g., Corney, 2006; Summers, Childs, & Corney, 2005) pointed out that inconsistency between sustainable development and academic fields is a barrier towards ESD.

Teacher educators should be well prepared by the means of professional support with necessary qualifications to overcome these all barriers. Therefore, some non-governmental organizations support the professional repertoire of teacher educators with respect to ESD.

## **Methodology**

The research was conducted in qualitative paradigm under interpretative approach. It is an appropriate approach to use within research concerned with ESD, which has a strong values base and emphasizes personal as well as societal change. The research involved sixteen purposively selected teacher educators from teacher training institutes in Lahore. Among them seven were male and nine were female. It was felt that gender would influence their commitment as male would have more 'life experience'. Age and backgro-

unds were other demographic variables. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Semi structured interviews are considered an appropriate strategy with essentially interactive and interpretative characteristics. Each teacher educator was interviewed for approximately an hour. They all were informed and agreed about tape-recording of interviews. These semi structured interviews were felt to be the bland and forthright mean of data collection which enabled the researcher to ponder on what the participants were saying?

### **Research Questions**

The questions focused on teacher educators' awareness of education for SD and their commitment with it in terms of their attitude and behavior.

- What do you think about education for sustainable development? What is sustainable development? How much do you think you know about global issues?
- What do you think about the future? Do you think that sustainable development is achievable? Which values and attitudes do you want to teach or develop?
- Do you do anything in efforts for sustainable development? Can you narrate your practices to assure a sustainable future?

### **Analysis of the data**

Data analysis was consistent with underlying descriptive philosophy and interpretative research. Recorded interviews were transcribed. The data were distributed into three themes developed from three research questions. Then data in each theme was identified into sub-themes. Themes and sub themes had been suggested and generated by theory, intuition and data: for example, it had not been anticipated that teacher educators would raise need for training sessions on sustainable development. The findings are presented in terms of gained impressions. Little reference is made to numbers as the main concern was to explore their commitment by examining their extent of awareness, range of attitude and behavior rather than how many and how strongly they hold the view.

### **Findings**

A number of findings emerged from the study. These were discussed below.

#### **Awareness of Sustainable development**



Majority of teacher educators were familiar with the term and its associated concepts. They had sufficient knowledge about global issues related to sustainable development. However the alarming situation appeared when it was found that few teachers were misunderstood the term and were defining it only in economic perspective. They were unable to relate global issues like water crises, energy shortage, climate change etc with sustainable development.

*'you can't increase the rate of development without providing jobs to people'. (R4)*

*'-----Poverty is the result of less development..... industry and factories can enhance the rate of development'. (R 12)*

*'Education is must for sustainable development as highly educated and competent people can get jobs' (R4)*

Most teacher educators appeared to have higher order understanding of the concept.

*'Climate change, pollution, population all are related to sustainable development. People should ponder on it'. (R2)*

*'Sustainable development mean to save future of our children. ....save resources for the future' (R6)*

*'Tolerance and peace -----values are very important for the progress.-----justice in resource distribution and utilization are the pillars on which sustainable development stands'.(R 9)*

### **Attitudes**

All except one of the Teacher educator were absolutely positive and sanguine about education for sustainable development.

*' No-----I don't believe on media reports .....that resources will finish and survival will be diminished .....because I believe in ALLAH(GOD) who will manage all this. No education and effort can save us as it will happen one day - hundreds, maybe thousands of years down the line' (R4)*

Most teacher educators inclined to see any global issue as 'out there' and not really relevant to them. There was, however, some indication that they felt they should 'do something'.

*'----- - by the time anything unpleasant happens we won't be around but I do feel we should make more of an effort for future generations' (R 3)*

*'Shortage of resources..... M not afraid . . . there is science..... technology will solve problems'(R )*

Sustainable development was seen as non-practical idea.

*'It is wonderful but is not practical'*

*'Natural resources are not sufficient for us... How can I save for our future?' (R)*

Most of the teacher educators opined that Education for SD should be included in existing curriculum of teacher training institutes, few said topics related to sustainable development might be incorporated into content and pedagogy courses of geography, science and literature and while a participant said it should be introduced as a single content and pedagogy course like others.

*"If we want to equip our future teachers with knowledge and skills required for promoting education for sustainable development then curriculum of teacher training institutes should be changed accordingly'(R)*

*'.....It would be better that a new content and pedagogy course of education for sustainable development is included in curriculum' (R)*

According to teacher educators to promote education for SD is a difficult idea especially when there is a clash between value and money.

*'...for me lack of money matters more than environmental considerations' (R)*

## **Behaviors towards Education for SD**

Education for sustainable development was found to be highly desirable process. Teacher educators pointed out significant features such as active or collaborative learning.

*'I take it as active and collaborative learning . . . good idea. . . change can be possible only when people work together and in field'(R )*

Teacher training courses related to education for sustainable development should make the experience 'real' for prospective teachers if action plans were assigned during their practicum.

*'We should leave hypocritical efforts - just talk about it in the classroom is not enough instead should do something '(R)*

When they were asked if they are involved in any project related to sustainable development. Two of them responded positively.

*' yeah ..... Me and my supervisee are engaged in a project related to save water in community. ( R)*

*' ..... it wouldn't be easy to directly handle the issues related to it. But in developing a module for awareness workshops on sustainable development and it was suggested for every new entry in civil service '(R)*

Another reported her practice

*'I often encourage my students for recycling' (R)*

Respondent 12 said

*' I always do switch off extra lights in my classrooms even in home .....I know this is a little effort but I don't have any concern for others..... I know my responsibility.....i have to do it.' (R12)*

Although not all but most of the teacher educators exhibited a strong positive behavior towards sustainable development. They emphasized on a collaborative approach for sustainable development based on teachers' sufficient knowledge and competencies for delivering it and students' positive and motivated attitude for it.

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

The study aimed to examine commitment of teacher educators with promotion of sustainable development in Pakistan. Majority of teacher educators were familiar with the term and its associated concepts. They had sufficient knowledge about global issues related to sustainable development. However the alarming situation appeared when it was found that few teachers were misunderstood the term and were defining it only in economic perspective. They were unable to relate global issues like water crises, energy shortage, climate change etc with sustainable development.

As a whole teacher educators had a positive attitude towards sustainable development. Many researches already conducted in the area shows a positive direct relationship between attitudes and behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Our results are in line with these researches. The present research reported that teacher educators had strong attitude and they exhibited a strong behavior towards ESD. It can be said that if teacher educators will come with the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to address ESD once in the classroom, then all will be right with the future generation. However, it should be thought that if ESD is to be tracked for progress, then it needs to be seen as part of a process involving not only teacher educators but the whole society.

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