

An Assisment of Teachers' Unions and Their Contribution in Educational Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan

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Abstract

The study in hand deals with the investigation of the contributions of teachers' unions in educational reforms. The main objectives of the study were to highlight the main functions of teachers' unions and to evaluate the importance of teachers' union for education system. All secondary school teachers in Peshawar District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan were population of the study. Ten High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools and 100 teachers were chosen as sample of the study through random sampling technique. Questionnaires as research instrument were used for the collection of data which was then analyzed by SPSS. Findings of the study indicate that teachers' unions are the integral part of education system which work for the delivery of quality and effective education and also struggle for the professional development of teachers' community. The existence of teacher unions can cause the enhancement of literacy rate in the country.

Keywords: *Teachers' Unions, Representatives, Reforms, Collective Force, Innovation, Harmony.*

Introduction

The existence of Teachers' Unions in education system has been accepted globally. The combined power of these unions has strength to compel government to bring reforms in the education system. Various countries have developed their combined networks of Teachers' Unions to share new knowledge and experiences in the field of education to bring reforms in the system. They arrange their combined programs for teachers trainings and for generalizing educational reforms. Vaillant in 2005 published his famous document under the title "Educational Reforms and Teachers' Unions" with the help of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It provides a vivid picture of Teachers' Unions and the implementation of educational reforms. In 2011 Loveless published his famous conflicting mission which provided sufficient detail about Teachers' Unions and their role in educational reforms. He

discussed the contribution of Teachers' Unions for productive students' achievement. Teachers' Unions possess an enormous force for good because they provide creativity for children (Sinnott, 2007). Teachers' Unions are powerful because they have a strong combined force for bringing reforms in education system. They work to produce creativity and modernization through new methods of teaching and by producing competitive environment in education institutions. According to Berg (2009) Teachers' Unions determined quality education and it is one of the most important purposes for these unions. Quality education means that even a weakest student of the class acquires the required minimum level of the course. Most Teachers' Unions work for quality education through refresher courses, workshops, seminars and professional trainings of teachers. Teachers' Unions should rise their voices for important changes in education system (Haas 2010). The collective efforts of these unions can bring important changes in education system because continuous changes can make education system more affective and modern. Teachers' Unions can provide suggestions to government about introducing modern trends in education, the use of new technologies in education and the application of new instructional approaches and techniques. Teachers' Unions improve the teaching standard of teachers because teachers perform their duties with full satisfaction knowing that their union leaders will speak for them and will defend their rights (Pienaar, 2006). Individual teachers cannot solve most of their problems alone. They need help in promotions, transfers, upgradations, salary and allowances matters and especially achieving their rights from governments. These union leaders make it easy for them to achieve their rights, to provide them justice and to win best possible working conditions for them.

Rosenfeld (2010) suggested that teachers and their unionism should confine their activities to teaching-learning process only. He seems right in his suggestion because some leaders of these unions take part in political activities and some of them even support political parties which is injustice with teaching profession. The main aim of these leaders is to work for the development of education system and especially to restrict their activities to school and classrooms only one among the most important roles of Teachers' Unions is the prevention of child labor which directly increase the literacy rate (Report of ILO 2014). Teachers and their union leaders are considered the most respected personalities of the society. Their suggestions are accepted everywhere in the society. They play the role of bridge between the parents and government. They give suggestions to the parents to keep children away from labor and provide knowledge to their children. It decreases child labor and help in increase of literacy rate.

According to Heckock (2006) Teachers' Unions are the main candidates among all social groups interested in educational reforms. There are many social groups, agents and authorities working for educational changes including governmental organizations, NGOs, counselors and other selected members but teachers and their unionism are considered the backbone of educational change because their collective force can easily bring reforms and changes in education. Teachers' Unions are aimed to improve the standard of education (Moe, 2001). Similar opinions were given by Henderson in 2004 that Teachers' Unions play their roles in promoting the quality of education for all the students. They have close contact with other teacher associations on national and international level. With the help of fast communication, they transmit their progress, new approaches, new researches and new innovations to each other for the promotion of quality of education. They can easily bring reforms in education system. The collective voice of Teachers' Unions improves the economic conditions of teachers on one hand and develops the standard of education on the other hand (Burroughs, 2008). Teachers' Unions have a united and recognized force. It is fact that they fight for their rights by increasing salary and other facilities but it is also fact that they are also demanding standardized curriculum and modern approaches for education system. According to Weiner (2013) Teachers' Unions must produce excellence in education system. They should bring reforms and positive changes in all the aspects of the system for the betterment of all the students. Their purpose may not be only the increase of wages and promotions but their pivotal purpose must be the betterment of education system in all dimensions.

Teachers' Unions Reform Network (TURN) develops various tools and introduces new approaches to help members in bringing reforms in education system (Rothmann, 2001). It also arranges professional training to improve quality of teaching and learning. It arranges seminars, workshops and meetings on regular bases to create a harmony among teachers and to introduce new techniques of teaching to bring reforms in the whole system of education. Hannaway and Rotherham (2006) indicated that Teachers' Unions are powerful players during educational policy-making process. They can bring reforms easily at that stage and can help in the implementation of those policies. As teachers are the key agents and active participators of education system, they are well-aware of all the ups and downs of the system therefore they can easily point out the negative aspects of the system and can provide possible solutions for the betterment of education system.

According to Thek wane (2002) Teachers' Unions provide right directions on different issues of reforms in education as they have sufficient information on various issues related to education system including the curriculum issues, teachers' issues, students' issues and system issues. A famous Teachers' Unions of the world Danish Teachers' Union has been working in various developmental projects with the help of other Teachers' Unions all over the world. It provides suggestions, support and online training for the professional development of teachers to bring reforms in education. Peterson (1999) suggested that Teachers' Unions should work for the broader needs of students and should look beyond their self-interest. Peterson is right because education system is fundamentally for the fulfillment of students' needs therefore Teachers' Unions should prefer students' interest over their self-interest. Bill and Melinda in 2010 indicated the strength of Teachers' Unions as the accelerators of educational reforms due to their effective role in the mechanism of education.

Objectives

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To highlight and evaluate the importance of Teacher Unions.
2. To investigate the contribution of Teachers' Unions in reformation activities.
3. To give viable suggestions to teacher unions for their effective role.

Methodology & Delimitation

The study is descriptive in nature. Required data was collected with the help of questionnaire from the targeted population. Due to time constraint the study was delimited to urban area schools of district Peshawar only. Research tool was administered personally, the collected data was analyzed properly and the result was shown in graphs. The findings were discussed, conclusion was drawn and at the end some recommendations were given.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study was consisted of all secondary school teachers in Peshawar District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Ten High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools and 100 teachers were chosen as sample of the study.

Research Instrument

The main tool for the collection of data was a survey questionnaire. For this purpose a closed- ended questionnaire was designed for teachers to get responses of the respondents. The collected data was

analyzed through SPSS, tabulated in the form of percentage, means and standard deviation and presented with the help of graphs.

Results and Discussions

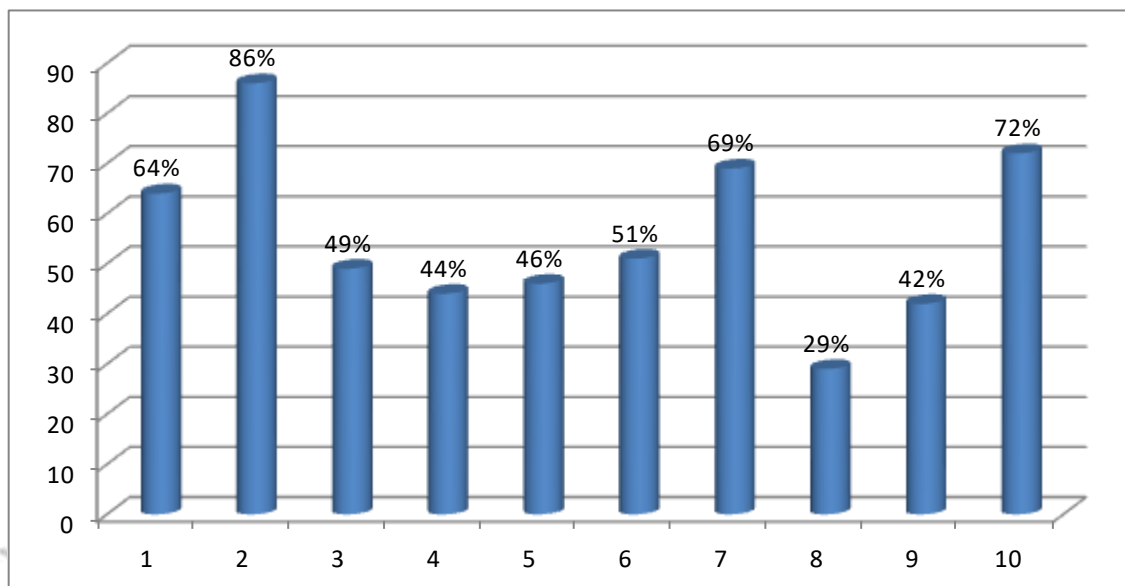


Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents' Agreements

1. Teachers' Unions work as an integral part of education system.64 %
2. Teachers' Unions work for the professional development of teachers.86 %
3. Teachers' Unions play their effective role during educational policy-making process.49%
4. Teachers' Unions are the representatives of political parties. 44%
5. Teachers' Unions encourage community members for school development.46 %
6. Teachers' Unions promote healthy and competitive educational environment in schools. 51%
7. Teachers' Unions raise their voices against the deficiencies and faults in education system. 69 %
8. Teachers' Unions work for the increase of salary only.29 %
9. Teachers' Unions create awareness among teachers regarding modern trends in education. 42%
10. Teachers' Unions ensure an effective and integrated education system.72 %

Discussion

Result shows that out of total (100) respondents 64% were agreed, 26% were disagreed while 10% were undecided. Mean score was 3.43 while standard deviation was 1.17 which support the statement that Teachers' Unions work as an integral part of education system. 86% of the total respondents were agreed, only 10% were disagreed while 4% were undecided. Its mean score was 4.24 and standard deviation was 1.08 which supported the statement that Teachers' Unions work for the professional development of teachers. Half of the respondents (49%) claimed that Teachers' Unions play their effective role during educational policy-making process. 32% were in opposition while 20% were uncertain with the statement. Mean score was 3.32 while standard deviation was 1.19 which supported the statement. Only 44% of the respondents were agreed, 9% were undecided while almost half of the respondents (47%) were disagreed

with the statement that Teachers' Unions are the representatives of political parties. Its mean score was 2.93 which was less than the assumed mean score (3). The result showed that teacher unions are not the representatives of political parties. Only 46% teachers were of the opinion that Teachers' Unions encourage community members for school development. While nearly the same respondents (41%) were disagreed with the same statement. 51% opted for agreed, 25% opted for disagreed while 24% were undecided with the statement that Teachers' Unions promote healthy and competitive educational environment in schools. Majority of the respondents (69%) declared that Teachers' Unions raise their voices against the deficiencies and faults in education system. Only 18% were opposed while 13% were undecided with the statement. The mean score was 3.65 and standard deviation was 1.07 which supported the statement. Only 29% of teachers were agreed while a large number (56%) were disagreed with the statement that Teachers' Unions work for the increase of salary only. Only 42% of the total respondents answered with agreement, 40% with disagreement while 18% were undecided with the statement that Teachers' Unions create awareness among teachers regarding modern trends in education. Nearly two-third (72%) of the respondents reported that Teachers' Unions ensure an effective and integrated education system. Only 16% were disagreed while 12% were undecided. Mean score was 3.74 and standard deviation was 1.00 which supported the reality of the statement.

Findings

- Teachers' Unions work as an integral part of education system.
- Teachers' Unions work for the professional development of teachers.
- Teachers' Unions play their effective role during educational policy-making process.
- Teachers' Unions encourage community members for school development.
- Teachers' Unions promote healthy and competitive educational environment in schools.
- Teachers' Unions raise their voices against the deficiencies and faults in education system.
- Teachers' Unions create awareness among teachers regarding modern trends in education.
- Teachers' Unions ensure an effective and integrated education system.

Conclusion

The main aim of Teachers' Unions is to bring necessary reforms in education system according to the requirements of the students. These unions work for the professional development of teachers, play their effective role in educational policy-making, encourage community members for school development and create healthy and competitive educational environment in schools. Although they work for the increase of salary also but they rise their voices against the deficiencies in school, create awareness among teachers regarding modern trends and ensure an effective and integrated education system. These Teachers' Unions are therefore considered as an integral part of education system.

Recommendations

1. Teachers' Unions may work for the professional developments of teachers.
2. Teachers' Unions may take part actively in educational policy-making process
3. Teachers' Unions may encourage community members for school development.
4. Teachers' Unions may introduce new methods of teaching.
5. Teachers' Unions may promote healthy and competitive educational environment in educational institutions.
6. Teachers' Unions may provide training facilities for teachers.

7. Teachers' Unions may publish their regular journals to provide regular instructions to teachers' community.
8. Teachers' Unions may arrange refresher courses, workshops and seminars for teachers to keep them updated about new trends and researches in education.
9. Teachers' Unions may work continuously for creativity and productivity of students.
10. Teachers' Unions may have close contact with each other on international level so that they may get advantages of each other's experiences and developments.

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