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COLLABORATION PROBLEMS DURING PRACTICUM IN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the problems and issues confronted by teacher education institutions (TEIs) in collaborating with cooperating schools (CSs) during practicum. The study utilized concurrent mixed methodology in which 126 teacher educators cum supervisors (TEs) participated from 14 Government of Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) of Punjab province. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used for data collection. The surveys were distributed to 126 participants, while interviews were conducted with 28 TEs. The study revealed that the practicum participants [i.e. supervisor, mentor, student teacher (ST), cooperating school (CS) head] were unclear about their own and others' roles. CSs distrust STs' teaching and undervalue practicum. Female STs' abundance is problem for male supervisors during supervision. Government involvement is strongly recommended for policy and regulation development and as a liaison for collaboration between TEIs and CSs. written communication is recommended for the better communication between the participants of practicum.

Keywords: Collaboration and communication, Pakistan, pre-service teacher education, practicum, teacher educators

INTRODUCTION

Competitiveness of the day is a driving force for the organizations and institutions to develop a collaborative environment to produce better products (Bounds et al., 1994), which is also true for the educational organizations (European Commission 2003). The collaboration is determinant of the life of any institution and accomplishment of institutional goals is not feasible without strong collaboration (Agaoglu & Simsek, 2006).

The collaborative education concept started since the beginning of 20th century, initially, to finish the theory-practice gap in engineering education (Haddara & Skanes, 2007; Sovilla & Varty, 2004). This programme started in America in 1906 in Cincinnati University followed by Canada in the University of Waterloo in 1957. In the first programme in America only 27 students were enrolled while in Canada 75 students were enrolled by University of Cincinnati and University of Waterloo respectively (Haddara & Skanes, 2007). The beginning of cooperative education in America was to some extent the result of inspiration by the sandwich programmes offered in UK since roundabout 1840 (Brewer, 1990).

Soon, the other universities and disciplines other than engineering started cooperative education; as University of Cincinnati in Business in 1920 and Universite de Sherbrooke in 1964 followed by Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1968 in Canada (Haddara & Skanes, 2007). With a little hindrance at the beginning, the cooperative education or work-based learning started in different fields. But the literature about cooperative education of

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60s, 70s, and 80s have not been validated by research or theory and, hence, have limited generalizability, some of studies with conflicting results (Finn, 1997 as cited by Haddara & Skanes, 2007).

Now the concept of cooperative education also named as work based learning or work integrated learning is incorporated in many disciplines; banking, teaching, nursing, medical, etc. The Levy *et al.* (1989) defined work-based education as *linking learning to the work role* (p. 4). Brennan and Little (1996) quoting Seagraves *et al.* (1996, p. 6) view the definition of Levy et al. as "linking learning to the requirement of people's job…it includes application of job-related learning (possibly acquired elsewhere) and the skills and knowledge acquired in the process of doing the job (p. 3)." Liberman and Mace (2008) aptly said "professional learning…is rooted in the human need to feel a sense of belonging and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as part of community (p. 227)."

As, partnership is compulsory for engineering or business education (Brennan & Little, 1996, p. 2), so is its importance for education faculties and CSs. It is compulsory to build a strong collaboration with the CSs in order to plan context rich practicum experiences for the STs (Agaoglu & Simsek, 2006). For effective and durable partnerships between the faculty and CSs, a sincere struggle is needed on both sides (Villers & Mackisack, 2011). The practicum experiences are gaining room in pre-service TEP (Zeichner, 2010), so the partnerships and collaboration between the education faculties and CSs are being emphasized. The literature accentuates that "quality practicum would integrate theory and practice at progressive stages of development through strong university-school partnerships" (Hudson & Hudson, 2013, p. 9).

Collaboration is the pivot of any professional practice and same is for the teacher training programme (Darling-Hammond, 2005). It is not limited to inter-institutional level but inter-personal level also needs a strong collaboration i.e. between supervisor, mentor, and STs (Sorensen, 2004). That's why the education faculties have been trying to develop partnerships with the schools for the last two decades (Sim, 2010). Presently, the major part of debate also focuses collaboration (ibid). The literature reports that the determinant for the burnout of novice teachers is "lack of collaborative and supportive ambience" (Gavish & Friedman, 2010)" The intricacies of partnership between faculties and CSs are reflected in STs-mentor nexus specific to each setting. Some factors influencing partnerships may be only specific to certain context i.e. factors relative to a certain institution (Sim, 2010). Now the researchers and educators are looking for new and effective models of teacher education (Moore, 2003). The circumstances call for the research on collaborations and partnerships by education faculties (Arthur, Davison & Moss, 1997; Serebrin & Ryz, 2004; Youens & Bayley, 2004). The issues of collaboration and conducting research for collaboration are known to researchers as Sim (2010) has enumerated:

> *The different institutional 'cultural politics'; time demands; teachers focus on their own practice; and insufficient preparation by faculty members with teacher participants in the theoretical underpinnings of a project. Historically, experiences of many schools' relationships with universities have bred professional suspicion of academics--particularly in relation to research. Teachers have often felt used by researchers, whereby they view the academic as benefiting from the work but not the school or its participants.* (p. 9)

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Current Study

It has been established that the effective teachers have influence over learners' achievement, which are the product of effective teacher education programme [TEP] (Manzar-Abbas & Lu, 2013). Any TEP has two main components; the theory or course work and the practice or practicum. Practicum is the most influential factor but has been neglected by Pakistani educators and researchers, and hence is almost a missing factor in policy making. There is a disconnection between the CSs and TEIs. The lack of collaboration exists both on personal and institutional level. And without cooperation, thinking about goal achievement is just daydreaming (Agaoglu & Simsek, 2006).

In Pakistan there no serious endeavour has been made by both at government and institutional level. The current paper investigates the problems and issues of collaboration between the GCETs and cooperating schools (CSs) and communication between the practicum participants (mentors, STs, TEs, CSs' heads), so that this study may become the foundation for the development of proper mechanism for collaboration between faculties and schools.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Procedure

The concurrent mixed method design was adopted to investigate the problem. The design was adopted for triangulation and for a "thorough understanding"(McMillan, 2012, p. 325) of the problem under study. There are 33 GCETs (Male 28; Female 5) in the Punjab province. At the first stage 14 male GCETs were selected as clusters from the three geographical regions using stratified sampling technique (Northern, Central, and Southern Punjab) of the Punjab. (table 1)

Table 1. Sampled clusters on regional basis

Region	*Total*	*Female*	*Male*	*Sampled*
Northern	9	1	8	4
Central	11	1	10	5
Southern	13	3	10	5
Total	33	5	28	14

From every cluster ten TEs (teacher's educators cum supervisors) were selected randomly. Hence, the survey was distributed to 140 sampled participants but 126 (90%) TEs responded to the questionnaire. **Table 2. Participants' frequency on gender, in-service training, and qualification basis**

	Gender		*In service training*		*Qualification*		
	Male	Female	Yes	No	Master	M. Phil	PhD
Frequency	98	28	117	9	105	16	05
Percentage	78	22	92.86	7.14	83	13	04

Average age of the participants was 45.69 years with 8.3standard deviation (SD). The frequency distribution of participants on the basis of gender, in-service training, qualification, and teaching experience; overall and to B.Ed. classes has been given in the tables 2 and 3.

Table 3. Teaching experience of participants; overall and teaching B. Ed

Teaching Experience		*<1 year*	*(1-3) years*	*(4-6) years*	*(7-10) years*	*10> years*
B. Ed.	Frequency	36	24	18	46	02
	%age	28.6	19	14.3	36.5	1.6
Overall	Frequency	9	8	4	91	14
	%age	7.1	6.3	3.2	72.2	11.1

Setting

When Pakistan came into being the teacher trainer schools were called as normal schools, then from 1978 these were renamed as Colleges for Elementary Teachers (Siddiqui, 2010, pp. 39, 44). Among 176 teacher education institutes (public 148; private 28) throughout Pakistan (Academy of Educational Planning and Management, 2009), 33 GCETs (female 5; male 28) are situated in the Punjab province.

The province of Punjab is divided into three geographic divisions; Northern, Central, and Southern (table 1). GCETs are administratively under the auspices of Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), but academically affiliated to University of Education (UE) Lahore. DSD is also responsible for the in-service teachers' development in the Punjab.

Formerly, the GCETs were offering primary teaching certificate (PTC) and certificate in teaching (CT). After the inception of UE in 2002, all the GCETs were given under the supervision of UE and asked to offer B.Ed. and then M.Ed. classes. This study was delimited to B.Ed. one year programme only. A practicum model was developed by the joint venture of UE and CPBEP in 2009 named scaffolding model. This model was first adopted by UE and GCETs but then, this model was abandoned by the UE but the DSD has implemented this to GCETs, which is, in most of the GCETs, implemented. The scaffolding model offered yearlong integrated practicum experiences extended over at least seven weeks (University of Education-CPBEP, 2009).

Data Collection

Two research instruments were used for data collection; questionnaire and semi-structured interview.

Questionnaire was tailored according to the objectives of the study by the researchers themselves. Before finalization, the questionnaire was pilot tested and two experts were consulted for the validation of items to the study objectives. The participants were asked to rate their responses according to five point rating scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Total 22-itmes survey was finalized containing statements about; role clarity, awareness about each others' expectations, coordination and cooperation between the participants, and value of practicum perceived by the participants. The reliability analysis revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was .92.

The semi-structured interview was conducted to the coordinators and a purposefully selected supervisor from every cluster. Some of the sample questions asked from the participants was;

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how do you coordinate with the CSs? What kind of problems do you face during collaboration with the CSs? What are the communication problems faced by the participants? How can we make communication and collaboration effective between the participants and institutions respectively etc.

The surveys were sent to the GCETs two weeks before visiting the institutions for interview. The participants were given two weeks for survey completion. Appointments had been taken from the participants. The participants were convinced for keeping their information confidential and they were allowed to quit the study any time they wanted. The questionnaires were collected by hand and the interviews were recorded with participants' consent.

DATA ANALYSIS

Two kinds of data were collected using qualitative and quantitative techniques. For quantitative data analysis, both descriptive (percentage, mean, and SD) and inferential (t-test, one way ANOVA) statistical techniques were used. The software SPSS version 17 was used for the purpose. The qualitative data analysis, started just with data collection. The data were transcribed, coded, and categorized for pattern identification (Manzar-Abbas and Lu, manuscript submitted). By the constant comparison (McMillan, 2012, p. 299), the procedure was reiterated from one to other interview and inter-GCETs also (Volante, 2006). Data were given to two experts for external audit for credibility check.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative data analysis

In the survey the participants were asked to response over four variables; role clarity, communication and collaboration gap, awareness of expectations, and practicum value. The findings revealed that there was lack of roles clarity unawareness of each other's expectations especially the supervisors were unaware of both the mentors' and STs' expectations. Communication gap was another problem between STs and supervisors (see table 4).

Table 4. The percentage of participants disagreeing in greater number

Statements	*D*	*U*	*A*
STs' clarity about their roles	66	6	28
Mentors' clarity of role	58	14	28
Supervisors' clarity about mentors' role	60	16	24
Mentors' clarity about supervisors' role	51	13	36
STs' clarity about supervisors' role	47	16	37
Clear communication between supervisors and STs	43	17	41
Supervisors' clarity of STs' expectations	46	14	41
Supervisors' clarity of mentors' expectations	45	12	44
Overall satisfaction about current practicum	44	21	35

STs= Student Teachers, **D**=Disagree, **U**=Uncertain, **A**=Agree

The table 4 reflects that the practicum participants were not clear about their own roles and about the others' roles. Same is the case with expectations. The study respondents were supervisors, who opined that there was communication gap between STs and supervisors. Respondents showed overall dissatisfaction for practicum model. These results verify the findings of our own study done for UE campuses (Manzar-Abbas, manuscript submitted). In many countries (i.e. America, Canada, UK, Australia) a practicum handbook is printed and provided to each practicum participant. Of course, the written communication is much better than just oral communication. Hence, the TEIs should develop a practicum handbook which may consist of practicum objectives, participants' roles and expectations, evaluation procedure and criteria, practicum standards, and regulations of CSs and should be provided to every practicum participant. In Azeem's (2011) study only 22% STs replied that they were informed of CSs rules and regulations.

Overall inferential analysis disclosed that the differences existed only for expectations and role clarity. For expectations the participants differed on B.Ed. teaching experience basis. One way ANOVA revealed significant differences between the groups at alpha level .05 [F (4,121) =2.53, p=.04]. For further investigation post hoc Tukey HSD illustrated that <1 year (M=20.06, SD=4.98) experienced participants differed significantly (p =.049) from 7-10 years experienced participants (M=16.85, SD=5.45) over expectations clarity.

For role clarity the one way ANOVA reflected that the difference between the groups existed on qualification basis, which was significant at p< .05 [F (2,123) =4.06, p=.02]. Post hoc Tukey HSD showed that the difference between PhD (M=10.20, SD=3.19) and Master (M=16.78, SD=4.93) degree holders was significant at p=.014 and between PhD and M.Phil (M=16.25, SD=6.16) was significant at p=.05, where Masters and M. Phil both perceived that practicum participants were more clear about their own and others' roles during practicum.

Role clarity and expectations awareness are inter-related variables. If one is not clear about his role or others' role, how is it possible to do justice with his role and how is it possible to know others' expectations? And same is with the expectations awareness because without knowing others' expectation in an organization it is impossible to build a relationship of trust. The finding that less experienced (<1year) TEs are much contented than that of much experienced (7-10 years), is important and it may be investigated further. It may be because the <1 year experienced TEs were still unaware of the situation and the experienced knew the situation better. Secondly, the novice TEs might be much motivated and hence they had positive perception and the more experienced TEs might have lost their interest and motivation. The negative perception of high qualified TEs calls for further research because the PhD qualified TEs were only 5 in number which might be a limitation for this finding.

The gender-wise analysis depicted that the cohorts differed for only two items; "supervisors are clear about mentors' role", and "STs are clear what mentors expect from them". For supervisors' clarity of mentors' role both the cohorts disagreed but the intensity of disagreement of female supervisors (M=2.18, SD=0.82) was higher than their male counterparts (M=2.59, SD=1.12) where t (124) =2.15 was significant at p<.05 (p=.04). For STs' clarity of mentors' expectations, t-test showed significant difference [t (124) =2.15, p=.03] between the cohorts where the female participants disagreed (M=2.64, SD=0.99), while males agreed (M=3.12, SD=1.06).

It is noticeable that the study participants were supervisors and still both the genders disagreed that "supervisors are aware of mentors' role". Actually, they might be the role definer of the practicum participants including mentors but they are unaware about their role, which implies a weak connection between TEIs and CSs. The literature reports that supervisors should have a good working relationship with mentors and should help STs

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during practicum (Beck & Kosnik, 200, 2002; Moody, 2009). But the females had negative perceptions as compared to males. The large number of participants was male (98) as compared to females (28), which might affect the finding but still the study raised a question for further exploration. Even the large number of STs is females and hence they go to girls' school, which means female TEs are the supervisors and they know better about the mentors there.

The analysis on participants' qualification basis exposed that the participants differed significantly for three items shown in the table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA results showing significant differences on overall qualification basis

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
CS heads' clarity of role	Between Groups	12.69	2	6.35	4.93**	.009
	Within Groups	158.51	123	1.29		
	Total	171.21	125			
Supervisors' clarity of mentors' role	Between Groups	6.52	2	3.26	2.93	.052
	Within Groups	136.99	123	1.11		
	Total	143.50	125			
Communication between supervisors and STs	Between Groups	9.05	2	4.52	3.31*	.040
	Within Groups	167.88	123	1.37		
	Total	176.93	125			

**The value is significant at alpha level .01; *The value is significant at alpha level .05.

Table 6. Tukey HSD for overall qualification

Dependent Variable	*(I)*	*(J)*	*Mean Difference (I-J)*	*Std. Error*	*Sig.*
CS heads' role clarity	Master	PhD	1.581**	.520	.008
Supervisors' clarity of mentors' role	Master	PhD	1.162*	.483	.046

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The above table illustrates that one way between the subjects ANOVA identified significant differences about three items but the post-hoc Tukey HSD revealed that significant difference existed only for two items; "CS heads are clear about their role in practicum" and "supervisors are clear about mentors' role". For both the items, Master candidates (*M*=3.18; *SD*=1.13 & *M*=3.13; *SD*=1.14 respectively) reflected better clarity than that of PhD candidates (*M*=1.6; *SD*=.89 & *M*=2.00; *SD*=1.41 respectively).

For both the statements the PhD qualified participants disagreed but Master qualified agreed. Here again the number of PhD qualified may matter but still it may be indication that the higher qualified have negative perception about the statements and they are not satisfied with supervisors' and CS heads' roles.

Experience-based analysis disclosed that the study subjects differed significantly only on B.Ed teaching experience basis over five statements while there was no significant difference on the basis of overall teaching experience. Among these five statements two were about role clarity, two about expectations awareness, and one about collaboration between CSs and TEIs (see Table 7).

Table 7. ANOVA showing significant difference on the basis of B.Ed. teaching experience

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
STs' role clarity	Between Groups	12.34	4	3.09	2.21	.072
	Within Groups	168.77	121	1.40		
	Total	181.11	125			
Mentors' role clarity	Between Groups	12.38	4	3.09	2.28	.065
	Within Groups	164.55	121	1.36		
	Total	176.93	125			
Mentors' clarity of STs' expectations	Between Groups	20.39	4	5.10	4.19**	.003
	Within Groups	147.10	121	1.22		
	Total	167.49	125			
STs' clarity about mentors' expectation	Between Groups	13.17	4	3.29	3.14*	.017
	Within Groups	126.80	121	1.05		
	Total	139.97	125			
School-varsity collaboration	Between Groups	12.74	4	3.19	2.42*	.052
	Within Groups	159.13	121	1.32		
	Total	171.87	125			

*The value is significant at the .05 level. **The value is significant at the .01 level.
STs= Student Teachers, **CS**= Cooperating Schools

Table 8. Tukey HSD Teaching Experience for BED Classes

Dependent Variable	*(I)*	*(J)*	*Mean Difference (I-J)*	*Std. Error*	*Sig.*
STs' role clarity	<1 year	1-3 years	.889*	.311	.040
Mentors' role clarity	<1 year	1-3 years	.917*	.307	.028
Mentors clarity of STs' expectations	7-10 years	<1 year	-.792**	.245	.014
		4-6 years	-.903*	.307	.031
STs' clarity about mentors' expectations	7-10 years	<1 year	-.675*	.228	.030
		4-6 years	-.814*	.285	.039

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level. STs= Student Teachers

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The post-hoc Tukey demonstrates that the differences were significant only for four statements; two for role clarity and two for expectations. For inter-institutional collaboration, difference was not significant. For role clarity the differences existed between <1year experienced and 1-3 years experienced participants. The difference was significant at p=.04 for STs' roles clarity and at p=.028 for mentors' role clarity. For STs' role clarity both <1 year experienced (M=2.89; SD=1.14) and 1-3 years experienced (M=2.00; SD=.89) participants disagreed, while for mentors' role clarity <1 year experienced (M=3.00; SD=1.27) remained undecided but 1-3 years experienced (M=2.08; SD=.93) participants disagreed. For mentors' awareness about STs' expectations, participants with 7-10 years (M=2.65; SD=1.18) of B.Ed. teaching experience differed significantly from the participants having <1year (M=3.44; SD=1.00) of B.Ed. teaching experience (p=.014) and from participants with 4-6 years (M=3.56; SD=1.20) of B.Ed. teaching experience (p=.031). Regarding STs' clarity of mentors' expectations, the participants having 7-10 years (M=2.63; SD=1.04) of B.Ed. teaching experience differed significantly (p=.030) from the participants having B.Ed. teaching experience <1 year (M=3.31; SD=0.92) and that of 4-6 years (M=3.44; SD=1.20) of experience (p=.039).

Here, we can see that the more experienced TEs had more negative perceptions. For STs' role clarity both cohorts disagreed but for mentors' role clarity, participants with <1year of experience remained undecided and the participants with 1-3 years of experience disagreed. For both of items mean score of <1 years experienced participants was higher. It might be because these participants still did not experience practicum experience. But for the other two items which are about awareness of others' expectations, 7-10 years experienced participants had lower mean scores than <1 year and 4-6 years experienced participants. It is also an important finding which raises an important question for the researchers, whether the perceptions of TEs about their role clarity and awareness of others' expectations have any link with the BE.d. Experience or not, if have, which kind of link exists. As experience effect over efficacy has been researched since long and yet not decided (i.e. Demo & Gibson, 198; Guo *et. al.,* 2010; Guskey, 1987; Ross, Cousins & Gadalla, 1996; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Qualitative Data Analysis

There emerged six basic themes after analyzing interviews of the participants, which are described below.

School Faculty's Distrust over Sts

The findings of the study disclosed that the school heads and faculty don't trust STs, hence, they don't welcome STs to their schools. Almost all the participants were in the view that the CSs don't welcome STs. For example, a supervisor said, "*the heads are sometimes reluctant to welcome the student teachers and also they don't allow us to teach board classes like fifth, eighth, and tenth classes.*" Because the DSD supervises GCETs and also it is responsible for in-service training and teachers' assessment, so the participants disclosed that the school faculty suspects that STs will observe their activities. It may be one of the reason for not welcoming the STs as one of the supervisors said, "Teachers *are not aware and they think that the STs observe them to give their report to the department.*" It indicates failure of communication between TEIs and CSs. The TEIs were unable to convince CSs about their objectives as there is communication gap so the schools think that the STs interrupt their schedule and they don't trust STs' teaching competence. A supervisor expressed, "*they think we interrupt their schedule and the other thing is they don't trust STs' teaching.*"

The trust deficit is a practicum issue and is a cause and a result of weak relationship between TEIs and CSs. Our recent study in China also found that mentors don't trust STs' teaching (Manzar-Abbas & Lu, manuscript submitted). The TEIs and government should take some measures to satisfy the CSs for STs because without it, it is impossible to achieve practicum goals. The researchers emphasize that school mentors have pivotal role in guiding the STs during practicum (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 2009; Shute, 2008).

Practicum Value

One of the results of coordination gap is school faculty's apathetic attitude towards practicum. The school faculty, including mentors and heads undervalue or don't value the practicum. They think it just wastage of time. A supervisor opined, "*without incentives the teachers and school heads are not interested in the practicum and sometimes don't cooperate and say that it is wastage of their class time*." If the practicing sites will not be sincere and motivated to do the job how is it possible to achieve practicum objectives. Majority of the participants opined that the school input to practicum is almost nil. A coordinator explained:

> *Family school heads don't know the importance of the practicum and were hesitant to welcome the STs. Then we tried to motivate them for practicum even then some of them were not ready to accept STs. We accessed EDO office and got order for STs' placement.*

The other coordinator said, "*The school faculty doesn't value practicum. They take practicum just as a time killing activity and don't want to receive STs*" That's why the schools don't give STs periods of their proper subjects as was indicated by a supervisor, "*Most of the times schools give STs just adjustment periods*".

The foregoing and this both findings are complementary to each other and second to each other. If mentors don't value practicum then they will not be interested in guiding and accepting the STs for practicum. Gujjar, Ramazan, and Bajwa (2011) also have the view that in Pakistan practicum is taken as time killing activity. Quantitative data also endorsed this finding as 58% of participants agreed that mentors are unaware of their roles during practicum. It may imply that there is weak liaison between TEIs and CSs (Ali, 2011). Hence, a strong nexus between the institutions may change the situation. TEIs can build trust relationship and also create awareness about the practicum value in CSs.

Government Involvement

To decrease or fill the cooperation gap, all the participants were in the view that Government should play her role at two levels; legal and administrative. On legal level, the government should make some rules and regulations to bind district administration and the schools to cooperate with the TEIs. A supervisor expressing his opinion says, "*Government has to take initiative to implement the practicum. There should be some legal cover and the EDO or DSD should make it sure to make mentors follow the principles*." The government role is so compulsory that some of the coordinators tried to make good cooperation with the schools at their own but the response was not much encouraging. One of the coordinator had the opinion, "*There should be orientation session for Mentors but it is only possible if government is involved otherwise the teachers will not cooperate*". The other coordinator explained, "*We called a meeting of family school heads but 33% of the heads did not attend the meeting and some others sent their representatives, which shows their negative attitude and disinterest in practicum.*" Because of disinterest of schools and uncooperative behaviour of schools and local government administration, all the participants had view that the government should make some legislation and make schools and district administration cooperate with the TEIs. A coordinator demanded that, "There *should be some rules to force*

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DEOs, AEOs or EDOs to coordinate with us and before practicum they should issue a letter to the family schools cooperate with GCETs."

The government may play a role at two levels; one at policy and regulation formation level and second, the role of a liaison between TEIs and CSs. Besides this the government may play a role in keeping standard and ensuring quality of practicum experiences administered at different places and institutions. In some of the countries, the government is playing a role in practicum standardization and administration; like Turkey (Agaoglu & Simsek, 2006). The government may formulate some standards for the involvement of school teachers as mentors (Volante, 2006) and bound TEIs to give proper orientation to mentors (Knowles, Cole and Presswood, 1994; K. M. Zeichner, 1996). The literature reports that the mentors should help STs (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Williams, 1994) and give proper feedback (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2004).

Gender as an Issue

In the study the gender also emerged as a practicum issue. As there is a worldwide trend that more females are joining to the teaching profession as compared to other professions and hence, the number of female STS is more than male STs. We studied male GCETs even then the number of female STs was dominant in every GCET. In male GCETs the dominant or, in some cases, total faculty was male. As one coordinator described:

> *In the GCETs most of the faculty is male but the students are mostly females. In one GCET the number of STs is 300 and 250 are females while only 50 STs are male. In our college 80% are females. So when allocating schools we have to choose 80% girls schools for females STs.*

This difference caused problems during practicum. The female STs are sent to girl schools and the number of female supervisors is too small, therefore, male supervisors have to be appointed for supervision. The male supervisors have problems to visit STs in the girl schools. One of the coordinated indicated this problem in these words:

> *When our supervisor or coordinator goes to a female school to visit or to guide STs, there are some social problems. Because the school faculty become embarrassed or worried and don't cooperate with us. The faculty mentor can't sit in a female school for the whole day. It is impossible.*

Even one of the coordinator indicated that "*In female schools, the male supervisors are not allowed to enter the school.*"

Because the Pakistan has a specific cultural identity. The value-stuck people have a strong adherence to values. This stiffness is obvious, especially, in rural and southern areas of the province. The understudies GCETs were male institutions but the females' enrollment was thrice more than males, because the teaching is lost choice by the males in Pakistan (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 33). So the supervision issue was really a problem for the TEs. As the large number of faculty in male GCETs is male, so for supervision, male supervisors are appointed in girls' schools. We suggest that not only strong collaboration with CSs is needed but the responsibility of mentoring might also be given to the school teachers, as is being practiced in lot of countries (Moody, 2009); China, America, UK, Canada, Singapore etc. In Pakistan, the input by school teachers in guiding the STs is nil. If a mentor teacher takes interest in the practicum, s/he does it only at him/her self interest. Azeem (2011) found only 15% class teachers guided STs during practicum.

Coordination Gap between Teis in One Locality

The study disclosed that if there were more than one TEIs in one locality, coordination gap existed between the TEIs. This cooperation gap caused problems for STs and CSs, because all the TEIs sent their STs at the same time to the CSs and, hence, the CSs hesitated or, in some cases, denied to accept the STs in their schools. This problem was highlighted especially in the southern Punjab area. A coordinator indicated that, "*One of the problems is this that all the universities i.e. BZU, EU, AIOU, and Sargodha offer practicum experiences at the same time. So it is impossible for the school heads to accommodate all the STs in their schools.*"

This issue has been reported in those regions where more than one teacher training institutions were existed. This finding guided us to suggest a regional level committee and regional level government involvement for collaboration between the teacher education institutions and CSs. Because without cooperation between TEIs at regional level, it is impossible to coordinate well-planned practicum experiences. And just formality of practicum is of no use (McIntyre, Byrd, & Fox, 1996).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study concluded that there was dearth of proper collaboration between the TEIs and CSs. The practicum participants are unaware about their roles and others' expectations. The CSs don't trust STs' teaching. Male supervisors can't guide female STs in girls' schools. Practicing school faculty undervalues practicum. If there are more than one TEIs at one locality, it demands proper coordination between all the TEIs and CSs for planning practicum experiences, otherwise, there may be rush of STs in some CSs and it will be difficult for CSs to accommodate STs. Government should play its role not only in policy formation and building some standards for practicum experiences but also as a liaison agent to build collaboration between TEIs and CSs.

The study has implications for policy makers and TEIs to know problems and issues of practicum. To investigate collaboration problems, this study is a seminal work in Pakistani context. The coordinators and triad of the practicum can incorporate the findings of the study to plan their practicum activities. The heads of TEIs and CSs can take study findings as a feedback to enhance the collaboration between the institutions. The study has also raised some important questions for the researchers like; what is the link of B.Ed. teaching experience to the TEs' perceptions about practicum and collaborative activities. How these perceptions change with the increase in teaching experience. The influence of gender factor over TEs' perceptions about practicum experience may also be an interesting variable for study in Pakistani context.

The study was delimited to just GCETs in the Punjab province, hence, the results generaliability to GCETs in other provinces, or other TEIs, both private and public needs special consideration. The study only sampled TEs so, the findings regarding STs, mentors, and CS heads should be taken with special consideration. All the stake holders' representative sample in the study might affect the findings. So the researchers can administer studies selecting a representative sample of all the stake holders to verify this study and to further investigate the problem.

Study suggests that the roles and responsibilities should be communicated in black and white. Many universities in the world have printed practicum handbooks which are helpful in better communication. Government should develop some rules and regulations to involve schools in practicum and to make them cooperate with TEIs. The TEIs should also take certain

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measures to strengthen collaboration with the CSs. The mentor teachers may be given orientation to the practicum, and they may also given some incentives; in the form of certificate or in any other form. Only the involvement of effective role of mentors may solve the problem posed by the study; the male supervisor cannot supervise female STs in girls' schools. For strong collaboration both schools and TEIs have to struggle (Villers & Mackisack, 2011). For localities where more than one TEIs are present, practicum coordinators may formulate a coordination committee of coordinators of TEIs and CS heads, which may include the local education administration like EDOs or DEOs to plan practicum experiences to overcome problems specifically, the over crowdedness of STs.

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