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Educating Dropouts in Rural Areas: Capacity Building of Teacher Trainers

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Abstract: *This study was designed to explore the effectiveness of training, which was arranged for the capacity building of trainers of teachers. These trainers were further responsible for the training of teachers who were teaching dropped out girls in the rural areas of Pakistan. This capacity-building training consisted of the trainers' professional development and subject knowledge enhancement. The training sessions were monitoring and evaluation, communication skills, Gender and protection, adult psychology, and teaching techniques of language, science, and mathematics of elementary level of education of dropped out learners. All 125 trainers were selected for obtaining the responses. It was mixed-method research, and data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data results revealed that the training workshop sessions remained very fruitful for trainers, and it increased their learning about the teaching profession and teaching to dropped out students in marginalized areas.*

Key Words: Dropped Out, Education, Capacity Building, Trainer Training

Introduction

Training and capacity building of teachers plays a vital role in enhancing students' learning and classroom practices, and it contributes positively to the school's overall progress as it refines the teaching pedagogy and brings proficiency in the mastery of the subject. According to [Imig and Imig \(2007\)](#), "nothing is more vital to a learner's educational accomplishment than a highly trained educator." The capacity building of teachers is essential to tackle not only classroom problems but also let teachers aware of the emerging trends in teaching-learning ([Hatam, Iqbal & Habibunnabi, 2016](#)). Capacity building of teachers is directly linked with their professional development and improvement of teachers' classroom practices.

Dropout is a universal problem, and around 263 young children of school-going age are out of school. Pakistan, a developing country, is one of those countries facing this problem, and about 7 million children do not have entree to primary

education in which the rate of girls is higher compared to the boys ([Haq, 2013](#)). The role of a teacher is critical in restricting the rate of dropped out at the elementary level of education. In this regard, training and enhancing teachers' capacity about the teaching profession and dealing with students is essential as it positively impacts the retention of students ([Harwell, 2003](#)).

The capacity building of teachers has a close relationship with the learners' dropped outs rate, so in this regard, training was arranged for the trainers of teachers (Master trainers) who were responsible for the training of teachers of dropped out students under the educational program of dropped out learners. The primary purpose of the training was to enhance the capacity of teachers through master trainers as it was difficult to approach all 9000 teachers who were teaching to dropped out learners in the far-flung areas of Punjab province. Therefore, the master trainers were selected from these areas purposefully and

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provided training to equip them for disseminating the same training to teachers. This training was conducted for 12 days through different sessions with different groups of master trainers. The training was carried out to strengthen the capacity of trainers for learning the skills of community mobilization for girls' education, broaden the knowledge of gender protection and discrimination, know about adult psychology, and help the learners solve their social and psychological problems. Teaching different subjects of elementary school education and its pedagogy was also part of the focused training.

Numerous studies have shown the positive effect of teachers' training programs on trainees' professional development and practices ([Wahlgren, 2011](#); [Goldschmidt & Phelps, 2010](#); [Beltzer, 2003](#)). Capacity building is referred to the continuous professional development of educators about their knowledge, skills, and attitude ([Malik & Jumani, 2014](#)). Teachers are the backbone of any educational system, and the motivation and retention of children and youth in educational institutions are linked with the quality of teaching. The capacity building allows the teachers to cope with new situations and the existing local situations and help the teachers modify their teaching according to the demand and needs of the learners ([Ganser, 2000](#)). While the researchers kept the importance of capacity-building regarding improvement of teachers' practices in view, they conducted the research to find out the effectiveness of the training program, which was arranged for the capacity building of trainers of teachers who were responsible for the training of elementary level teachers of the educational program of dropped out students.

Objectives

To identify the effectiveness of capacity building training of master trainers of dropped out girls' education programs.

Literature Review

Students' dropout is a severe problem for any nation. It refers to suspending education for economic or other circumstances, and it also means withdrawing school instruction without finishing fundamental primary and secondary education levels. Students' out-of-school problems are confronted by all advanced and

emerging nations across the globe. The dropout rates had been extraordinarily high, even for the primary level students in developing nations ([Graeff-Martins et al., 2006](#)).

Referring to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, amongst South Asian nations, there were 5.6 million primary, 5.4 million junior secondary, and 9.8 million senior secondary school-aged children out of school in Pakistan. Even though Pakistan had confirmed its statutory commitment through the 18th Amendment; to offer free of cost and obligatory schooling to all children matured five, it still stands the moment the most significant figure of primary level dropout children within the globe, after Nigeria (UIS, 2017).

This is additionally one of the highest school dropout rates within the world. Overall levels, the dropout rate is most extreme at the secondary school level (in particular 9 and 10 class), and around 14.5% of children drop out of secondary classes (age 14-16) in rustic zones ([ASER-Pakistan, 2017](#)). In Pakistan, the dropout rate of children at the primary level is 33%, which is extreme. Less enrolment and a high dropout rate at the primary level hurt the nation's education rate ([Government of Pakistan, 2017](#)).

According to [UNICEF \(2018\)](#), in Pakistan, around 22.8 million children between age group 5-16 were out of school, demonstrating to 44% in this age group. Within the Sindh territory, about 58% of children were not enrolled in the school, and a stunning circumstance was reported in Baluchistan, where 78% of the children had never gone to the school. More than 9.2 million children were out of school in Punjab, out of which 5.03 million were young girls and the remaining 4.17 million were boys in provincial and urban ranges separately. Pakistan is among the poorest states, having the most elevated rate of school dropouts at 38.5%

In South Asian nations, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, dropout rates were reported too high. Specifically, in the Pakistani scenario, pupils' dropouts' rate was 50% for both genders ([Khan, Azhar & Shah, 2011](#)). In Bangladesh, 45% of children enrolled in first-grade drop out prior to their primary school accomplishment ([Government of Bangladesh,](#)

[2009](#)). Moreover, 40% of students dropped out of their education in India before finishing their middle-level schooling ([Bajoria & Braunschweiger, 2014](#)). This problem is grimmer in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

[Khan, Azhar, and Shah \(2011\)](#) investigated the reasons for girls' dropouts in rural areas of Pakistan. Investigators identified the powerless financial position of families as the most crucial cause of dropping out from school at the primary education level. Research also explored parents' and pupils' interests, the demise of parent/s, and little investment in girls' education. [Islam and Pavel \(2011\)](#) stated the pressure of schoolwork as the most critical reason that caused pupil dropout in Bangladesh. More specifically, financial issues were the second most chief feature, and migration was the third factor. A study conducted by [Hunt \(2008\)](#) described the reasons for children dropouts, such as poor fitness and nutrition or insufficiency of inspiration to study. In both researches, economic difficulties were stated as a standard and critical reason for pupils' dropout in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Whereas in China, the majority of the learners in rural areas drop out their studies since they were unhappy with their studies, lack of basic amenities in schools, unexciting instructional methods, restrictions on the unrestricted use of the library, science labs was also not equipped with apparatuses and small in size as compared to class size, and inaccessibility of computers in schools ([Arifi, Kryeziu & Nelson, 2013](#)).

[Choudhary \(2015\)](#) evaluated the causes of dropouts in the Pakistani context and, more imperatively comparative investigation of the reasons for students' dropouts universally. Financial problems, parents' reluctance, remoteness and dearth of basic amenities, lousy quality of the education, insufficient school building and environment, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate medium of instruction, negligence of educators, and safety problem in girls' school were found as foremost reasons of children dropouts in different states. [Shah, Haider, and Taj \(2019\)](#) grouped factors triggering dropout as socio-economic, physical, topographical, teacher associated, family allied, teaching-learning resource-related, managerial connected, children related, and services in institutions related aspects.

In the Pakistani context, numerous scholars inspected how to diminish students' dropout levels. Furthermore, outstanding efforts have been made towards inclusive education by acclimatizing instructional practices and approach through various capacity-building programs, i.e., training workshops of master trainers of dropped out areas. In this line of thinking, [Farooq \(2013\)](#) also debated that this wide-ranging design of teacher preparation programs, the magnitude, and the excellence of education could be warranted for this fruitful struggle can increase the growth of humanity and contribute the robust and progressive entities in society. [Behlol, Akbar, and Shahid \(2017\)](#) studied the influence of the interventions carried out by the National Rural Support Program (NRSP) for capacity building of School Councils (SCs) in Government Primary Schools of District Bhakkar. Results indicated a significant impact of SC on the quality and access of schooling in providing managerial, monetary, and academic care to primary institutions.

Methodology

This research study was based on a mixed method research approach. A similar mixed method design was adopted to carry out this research. The study sample was all 125 master trainers of the education program which was launched for providing elementary education to the girls of marginalized areas of Pakistan. The program's basic purpose was to educate 9000 girls in Chakwal and Vehari under nonformal education program with condensed and integrated curriculum. The duration of the program was three years, and the study period was 2.5 years. The selection criteria of learners for the program were those dropped out girls who could not complete their elementary education level. Teachers were appointed to teach these dropped outs in learning centers daily according to the available time, which suits the learners as these learners were also engaged in earning activities for their livelihood. The program was implemented for three years. The students were taught and assessed according to the schedule, which consisted semester system comprised of 4 months, including examination and result declaration.

The master trainers were selected for the program from the remote areas of Vehari and Chakwal of Punjab, where the program was

implemented. These master trainers were responsible for the training of teachers in the field. The purpose of selecting maser trainers for the program was to select the trainers with high qualifications in the relevant areas of Punjab who could further train the teachers for teaching to dropped out girls in the far-flung areas of Punjab. Therefore, all these master trainers were included in the sample of this study. The training was divided into two components. One component was based on the capacity building of trainers regarding the understanding of motivational and psychological aspects of dropped out girls, while second component was purely based on the teaching techniques for teaching to dropped out learners. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed for data collection from the respondents. Interview plan was also prepared for taking in-depth information about the training sessions. Validity and reliability of the instruments were ensured through expert opinion and pilot testing. Data were collected from all 125 master trainers and were analyzed through percentages.

SPSS-16 version was used for quantitative analysis, for qualitative data interview guide was developed to focus on the main questions. This guide has contained the areas of contribution of training in a job, Gender and education, the role of locality in education, communication skills and monitoring and assessment. According to the guide, the master trainers were interviewed for 25- 30 minutes. Qualitative data were analyzed under the inductive method through thematic analysis. First, the interviews were transcribed then themes and sub-themes were derived. Coding was done. After that, themes were analyzed and merging sub themes and themes was done based on similarities. The detail of qualitative analysis is under section of qualitative analysis.

Results

Quantitative data were analyzed, and percentages of the responses were calculated. The following is the representation of the quantitative data:

Table 1.

S.No	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Training enhanced capacity for teaching to dropped out learners	74.6%	15.1%	3.8%	2.0%	4.5
2	Content of the training help in motivation of learners	73.1%	15.9%	4.3%	3.7%	3.0%
3	Enhance learning for solution of local problems	72.5%	12.3%	7 %	5.7%	2.5%
4	Enhance capacity for interactive teaching	71.8%	15.9%	5.5%	6.3%	1.5%
5	Training enhanced capacity for monitoring and dropped out learners' evaluation	69.3%	10.1%	9.9%	6.2%	4.5%
6	Learn development of schedule making for teaching to dropped outs	70.6%	20.9%	3.4%	1.9%	3.2%
7	Improve communication skill	79.8%	10.1%	1.9%	4.7%	3.5%
8	Training session is helpful to guide in practical field	81%	7.8%	6.9%	2.7%	1.6%
9	Enhance capacity regarding gender and education	78.6%	11.7%	6.9%	2.8%	0%
10	Enhance capacity about adult psychology	88.5%	5.4%	2.8%	1.9%	1.4%

S.No	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	Learn how to retain dropped out learners in learning centers	77.9%	15.6%	4.5%	2.0%	0%
12	Enhance capacity of community mobilization for dropped outs education	80.6%	11%	5.5%	1.9%	1%
13	Training motivates for education of marginalized communities	81.7%	13.5%	4.2%	0%	0.6%

The analysis of the above table reflects that 88.5% of the respondents were of the view that the training remained very fruitful for increasing their capacity about the adult psychology, 81.7% of the respondents were agree for the option that the training has enhanced their capacity for motivation of community for the education of dropped out learners. Similarly, 81% of the respondents agreed that training sessions had developed their capacity for guidance in the practical fieldwork, and 80.6% respondents agreed that their capacity for mobilization of community skills is enhanced. after training, 79.8% of respondents agreed to enhance communication skills and 77.9% respondents agreed to enhance their capacity for retaining learners in the learning centers. In comparison, 78.6% of respondents agreed that training increases their capacity for training about Gender and education. 74.6% of respondents agreed that the overall training enhanced their capacity for teaching to dropped learners, and 73.1% agreed that training contents enhanced their capacity for motivating the dropped out learners, while 72.5% agreed that training increased their capacity for solving the local problems of dropped out learners. Furthermore, 71.8% of respondents agreed that their capacity for interactive teaching had been enhanced, and 70.6% agreed to enhance the capacity for making and scheduling the activities of dropped-out learners. In comparison, 69.3% agreed that training sessions enhanced their capacity to monitor and evaluate dropped-out learners learning.

The qualitative analysis of the data was carried out through thematic analysis. Interviews of the respondents were recorded, transcribed, and the following themes were derived from it.

Role and Responsibilities

The training participants argued that the capacity-building training realized their responsibilities as master trainers, and it contributed a lot to work performance as realization of responsibilities would help them work in the field with motivation. Respondent A said, "I think this training was a good chance that showed me the true spirit of self-responsibility as a master trainer/trainer of trainees, and it enabled me to how I can perform different tasks related to my job as a dedicated worker."

Gender and Protection

The trainers reflected that knowledge about Gender and its protection is fundamental as it can help us guide teachers about the importance of gender equality and protection. They said that many misconceptions about Gender and protection had been cleared in our minds, and our opinion about Gender and protection has become positive now. One respondent said, "Gender and protection are two important aspects of teaching to dropped out girls. As these girls live in marginalized areas, so they do not have much knowledge about their rights and gender discrimination and being trainers, we can disseminate this knowledge with them as our capacity is developed through this training now".

Community Mobilization

Community mobilization owes an imperative part in educating the dropped out girls. The knowledge and skills of community mobilization pave the way for learners to reach learning centers. This process gives confidence to the parents, and the community that work for girls' education is for the welfare of their community. One of the trainers said that "Mobilizing communities for education

and especially for girls' education is a difficult task in those communities where literacy rate is meager. However, this training through a participatory approach enhanced our capacity to convince and sensitize the communities for the importance of girls' education".

Adult Psychology and Communication

Psychology in teaching is critical, but it becomes crucial for dropouts. Knowing the psychology of dropouts and adults contributes to good communication as it helps to reach the bottom of many problems. This aspect of psychology not only accelerates communication but also learning. The training participant stated that "The sessions on the psychology were exciting. It increases our knowledge about teaching to dropped out learners, and it helps in understanding the level of learning of dropped out and their motivational aspects. The concept of Andragogy was quite new for me".

Teaching Strategies and Evaluation

Training on teaching methodologies is essential for the teachers' professional development. The knowledge of different teaching strategies and techniques enhances students' learning and helps the teacher plan their lessons effectively. Evaluation of learning also provides feedback to learners, and they improve their learning with the help of teachers. The respondents viewed that "sessions on teaching methodologies were useful, and we learn different teaching techniques for teaching to dropped outs. Besides that, the training enhanced the capacity for monitoring and evaluation of learning components of learners and the overall planned lessons daily".

Discussion

This study has articulated the effectiveness of capacity-building training of master trainers of dropped out girls' education programs. Results have shown positive views about capacity building initiative on the part of respondents, i.e., enhanced capacity for interactive teaching, Gender, and education, community mobilization for girls' education and adult psychology, training content was relevant and motivated the participants, training sessions were helpful and guided trainees about the practical field, solution of local problems, improved communication

skills. Participants learned various strategies to retain dropped outs in their learning centers. Moreover, the respondents viewed sessions on teaching methodologies as very useful and exciting. Capacity-building training sensitized participants about their responsibilities as master trainers. It contributed a lot to work performance as responsibilities helped them work in the field with greater motivation. Besides that, the training enhanced the capacity to monitor and evaluate learning components and the overall process of dropouts' personality development.

To sum the outcomes of this study are in line with the previous research studies ([Farooq, 2013](#); [Behlol, Akbar & Shahid, 2017](#)), which advocated the effectiveness of training programs in supporting quantity and quality of education in deprived areas. Similarly, different studies have shown the positive effect of teachers' training programs on trainees' professional development and practices ([Wahlgren, 2011](#); [Goldschmidt & Phelps, 2010](#); [Beltzer, 2003](#)). The capacity building of teachers is essential to tackle classroom problems and let teachers be aware of the emerging trends in teaching and learning ([Hatam, Iqbal & Habibunnabi, 2016](#)). This aspect of professional development is also aligned with this research study. The role of a teacher is significant in restricting the rate of dropping out at elementary level of education. In this regard, training and enhancing teachers' capacity about teaching profession and dealing with students is essential as it positively impacts the retention of students ([Harwell, 2003](#)). Teachers have fundamental role in preventing dropped-outs of students from school and the intervention of the teachers in this regard is essential along with their professional training ([Christenson et al., 2001](#)). This research shows the importance of the capacity building of teachers for the retention of students inside the educational institutions which is highlighted by the results of the current research.

Similarly, [Lund, Reese & Boody \(2013\)](#) also highlighted that the teachers could play a better role in understanding dropped out factors. So better understanding of dropped outs process and its factors needs professional training of teachers and the current study reflected the importance and value of teachers' capacity building. Therefore, the teachers' training need to focus on the dropped out the issue during pre-service and

in-service training programs to overcome this issue.

Conclusion

This research study concluded that the training positively influenced the capacity building of teachers' trainers, increasing their knowledge about motivation and community mobilization. As teaching to dropped outs is different from teaching to students at formal schools, teachers' capacity must be enhanced through training, based on the components of teaching strategies and adult psychology and understanding the local problems of communities. The research also depicted that the training has enhanced the capacity of trainers of teachers about communication skills and monitoring and evaluation of students' learning.

Recommendations

Based on this research study, the capacity building of teachers of dropped-out educational programs is recommended because it has a positive effect on the teachers' performance of dropped-out learners and may increase the retention rate of these learners inside learning centers. Furthermore, these pieces of training may be arranged quarterly to strengthen teachers' capacity for an effective teaching-learning process. The programs may be launched both on the government level and on the part of communities with the collaboration of educational institutions to educate the dropped outs in the rural areas. These educational programs need to be designed to tackle the basic livelihood needs of local communities in the form of skill-based education. They are educating dropped out need to be addressed by all members of society through a collaborative approach.

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