

Editorial

Preparing Quality Teaching Force for Early Childhood Education

Teaching at Early Childhood Education (ECE) level is a theme of research and practice around the globe. There are plenty of standards based on different frameworks that focus on quality teaching at ECE level. In developing countries, especially the ones facing fast growing population and having a huge number of out of school children, what to speak of quality teaching, the minimum standards of teaching to pre-schoolers are not met. Pakistan, being one with such background, and where ECE is in nascent phase faces more critical challenges in ECE teaching like shortage of ECE trained teachers, lack of accreditation and certification in ECE, absence of quality standards for ECE teaching, absence of reliable monitoring and implementation, weak governance and policy-led guidelines, lack of properly supervised teaching practice, and lack of access to quality early childhood education. Despite the Constitutional right as mentions article 25-A, “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law”, and being signatory of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 that asks for SDG-4 i.e. ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’, and provincial commitments in papers, ECE in Pakistan is not getting consistent Government support and adequate funding. Many initiatives were taken i.e National Action Plan for Early Childhood Development; The Early Childhood Care and Education Policy; The ‘Educate a Child’ initiative; The Punjab Education Foundation’ Preschool Program; The Madrassa Reform Initiative; National Curriculum Early Childhood Care and Education, and initiatives of the Punjab Government are welcoming steps to address the issue but a long journey is yet to be covered. To improve the situation, basic step is to prepare quality workforce for ECE teaching. This will start transforming the societal trends towards preschool education. The government should create environment that must invite and develop collaboration with national and international non-government organizations to prepare quality teaching force for ECE.

Moreover, improving teacher training, increasing resources, and promoting greater parental involvement can all play a role in enhancing the quality of ECE teaching. Bringing better ECE teachers in the public institutions is directly linked with student teaching experiences and field work during teacher preparation in early childhood education programs. Further, practical ECE lab in early childhood education course,

developmentally appropriate practices and learner-centred pedagogy can prepare a better ECE teaching workforce. Instead of one or two months ECE training, long field-based experiences can bring better results. By taking these initiatives, Pakistan can ensure that its future generations are equipped with the skills, knowledge and lifelong learning needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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To cite this article: Muhammad Athar Hussain (2022) Preparing Quality Workforce for Early Childhood Education: Editorial, *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, 6(2), 1-2,