

DECENTRALIZATION IN EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HIGHER SECONDARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Education, particularly secondary and higher secondary education is the clinch pin of the educational system. It plays an important role and provides turning point to the students for their next academic career or job opportunities to those who do not continue their future education and join the workforce. In Pakistan different efforts have been made to decentralize education at local level e.g. through Devolution Plan 1999 the responsibility of secondary and higher secondary education was shifted to the district governments. To improve the education system through local involvement a number of initiatives were taken. The role of Principals of secondary and higher secondary schools has been very crucial in the process., Being the head of the institutions they were involved in the activities like academic planning, budgeting, staff evaluation, and resolving staff problems etc. The present study was designed to assess their performance and identify the problems, which they face while working under the new system. The study aimed to: i) assess the performance of the Heads of Higher Secondary and secondary schools under devolution plan and, ii) identify their problems under the new system. The population of the study comprised 1360 heads. A sample of 34 % was drawn. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. The study concluded that the performance of the Heads of Secondary/higher secondary schools was good in Punjab, KPK and Sindh. While in Baluchistan, the performance of heads was comparatively weak. However, in areas, like financial and administrative issues, staffing and training the heads were facing problems in all the provinces. The study recommended devolving complete financial and administrative powers at institutional level particularly in the province of Baluchistan.

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Introduction

Before the partition of the Sub-Continent, various efforts were made to introduce local government system to ensure public participation, e.g. establishment of Municipal Corporations, was one of the steps in this direction. These efforts continued until 1909. The purpose of the local government, a lower level of governance, was to ensure that the governance is brought to the grassroots population to give its members a sense of involvement in the political processes that controls their daily lives. The Royal Commission on the Decentralization of Powers in its report published in 1909 provided village communities with powers for the administration of local affairs. The Acts of 1919 and 1935 were the initial legislations to make local bodies truly representative. During the period from 1935 to 1947, due to political efforts, the impact of local institutions remained marginal. After 1947 a 5-tier system of councils operating at the union council, tehsil, districts, divisional and provincial levels, was introduced in Pakistan, under the Basic Democracies Order of 1959. In the fifties, the American sponsored community development program, "V-AID program" was initiated. This program was focused on village, agricultural and industrial development. Thereafter, the Basic Democrats carried out the task of community development, particularly the development of the rural community at the local level. That system focused on the economic growth and political consciousness among the masses. The system was abolished by the government in 1972 and another type of model i.e. Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) was initiated. However, up to the year 1979 no local government operated. The political government of that time continued IRDP on adhoc basis. In the year, 1979 local government institutions were formed by direct election of the councilors. This system was comparatively better than the Basic Democracies. Under this system, the public servants were made subordinate to the chairman of the district council. The local government of 1979 merely provided support for the military government through the elected local councilors and hence lost the interest of the public in the system. Therefore, it could not work properly after 1989. In the year, 1999 when Musharraf took over the government, National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) was established to propose a decentralized system. A new era of decentralization started under the Devolution of Powers Plan 2000. NRB prepared and presented the devolution plan in May 2000. Under this plan, the powers were

decentralized at the local level. This plan revived Zia's three-tier system of local governance of 1979. Under the present devolution plan, the local government bodies especially the district councils and the tehsil councils are assigned more powers and functions than their counterparts have in the past.

The devolution plan provided top down approach to meet the needs of the local community. The purpose of the plan was to serve the common interests of the people at the local level and safeguard their fundamental rights so that they feel free in discharging their usual activities under the new system. The plan also provides a system of accountability of the public representatives in all the public matters. However, the major flaw in the devolution plan is by passing the provinces. Principally powers should first have been devolved from the centre to the provinces and from there further down to the district's, tehsil's and union council's level. There is a need for proper adjustments and modifications in the working of the system. Under the devolution program, the community further needs to be empowered at the grass root level in planning and management of education, mobilization of the resources and their utilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the education system.

Decentralization of Education

There is a global trend of decentralizing education systems. Most of the countries are experimenting with or contemplating some form of decentralization of education. This process transfers decision-making powers from the central government to the local level and to the schools. The extent of transfer however varies, from administrative decentralization to much broader transfer of financial control to the regional or local level. The decentralization in education has taken place in the 1990 in many countries. Comparatively, the decentralization was more rapidly proceeded in Latin America and Eastern Europe, whereas, several countries of Asia have only initiated the decentralization policies (<http://www.answers.com/topic/decentralization-and-education>)

Decentralization process transfers decision-making powers from the central ministries of education to districts governments, local government, communities and schools. While describing educational decentralization Fiske (1996, p. 21), is of the opinion that "educational decentralization is a complex process that deals with changes in the way that school systems go about making policy, generating revenues,

spending funds and training teachers, designing curricula, and managing local schools". There has been a preoccupation with decentralization in the policy discourse about education, particularly among the developing nations. The process of decentralization in education substantially improves the efficiency, transparency, accountability and responsiveness of service provision as compared with the centralized system.

Decentralized education provision promises to be more efficient, reflect local priorities, encourage participation and eventually improves coverage and quality. Decentralization of education system demands harmonization of a complex set of functions, for primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal education (<http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/decentralization/English/>)

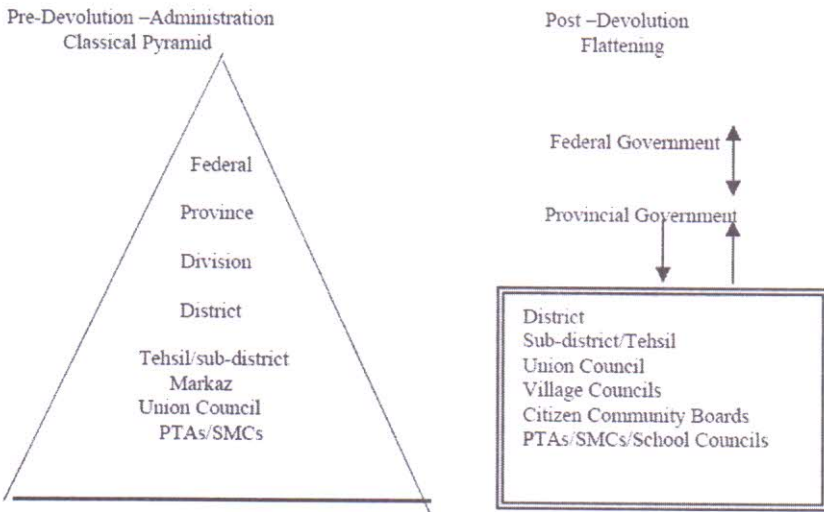
Many countries of the world particularly developing countries initiated the process of decentralization of education system to transfer power and decision-making authority to the local government. This has empowered the community and its representatives who are the actual stakeholders to make decisions for implementing and improving education system at grass root level. The implementation of educational decentralization reforms can be either rapid or slow. Legislative or constitutional changes immediately transfer responsibilities from national to lower level of government requiring administrative capacity to manage the system well.

Educational Decentralization in Pakistan

The education system of Pakistan has passed through different stages. As per provision of the constitution of Pakistan, education is a provincial subject. Provincial governments are involved in its launching and implementation. However, still the Ministry of Education, at Federal level, has to deal with some of the important functions nationally. These functions include: designing curricula up to class XII, formulating educational policy, coordinating educational activities at provincial level and finally dealing and disbursement of the grant in aid, donations and loans from different donor agencies and countries to the different educational institutions within the country. Each of the provinces has a provincial ministry of education headed by its provincial minister for education and assisted by the provincial secretary of education. The Provincial secretariats are responsible for policy making and looking after other relevant affairs in their respective provinces. In this respect, all the provinces have a uniform system, however, at district level and

below there are variations among the provinces. Presently, at the district level under decentralization program, the district education management is responsible for primary to higher secondary education. However, there are variations in the district management structure among the provinces. A comparative view of the pre and post devolution scenario is presented in the following figure.

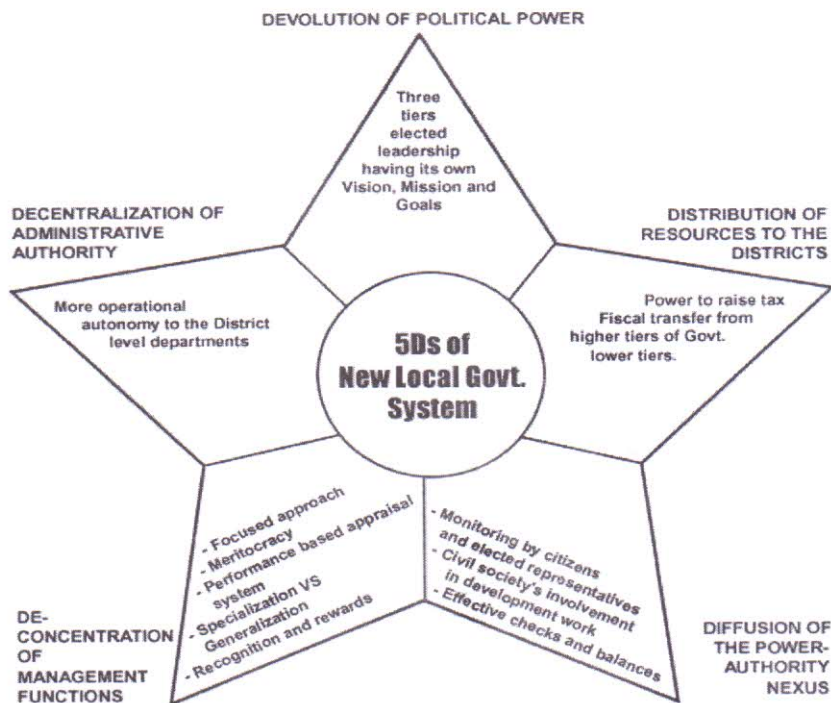
Figure 1: Pre-Devolution and Post-Devolution Scenario



Source: UNESCO Seminar on EFA implementation: teacher and resource management context 2005

The devolution Plan 2000 provides the implementation framework for education sector reforms. The local governments have been empowered under the plan to deliver education. Devolution of Power Plan has transferred responsibility for delivering education to local governments. The district level of government got more powers to plan and manage the education budget. The district governments are in a position to monitor and evaluate their own plans. This plan is based on five fundamentals: NRB, (2000, p.1) "Devolution of power, decentralization of administrative authority, deconcentration of management functions, diffusion of power-authority nexus, and distribution of resources to the district level. It is designed to ensure that the interests of the people are served and their rights safeguarded (NRB, 2000: 1). Devolution plan and local government ordinance provided that each district may compose of eleven departments. Administrative decentralization was followed by political decentralization. New organizational structures were proposed.

Consequently, the Plan proposed to address these issues by introducing a model described as 5Ds, which is explained by the following diagram (NRB, 2000).



The efforts of decentralization of education are not new. Different policies and plan of the government of Pakistan in one or another way addressed the need of decentralizing education. In this context, the recommendations of UN Inter-Agency Mission, (1995, p. 2) are quotable which suggest “moving the management structure from highly centralized and government – managed operation to one that supports a true partnership of the government, communities, non-governmental organizations and private sector and brings more of the decision making to the schools/villages and the districts”. Key institutional characteristics of devolution are outlined in the Local Government Plan 2000. Executive District Officers manage the education, literacy, and information technology departments. The Ministry of Education prepared a list of proposed provisions in the year 2000. The list included: I) protecting the budgets for education in district government; ii) establishing mechanisms for implementing the Compulsory Primary Education Acts; iii) integrating special needs within Education Departments; iv) rethinking

the separation of the education. In the way of implementation, there are variations in administrative and other issues across the provinces. These variations and differences are due to the difference in the history, education trends, topography and local culture of the provinces.

With the devolution of powers in the year 2000, the major responsibilities of imparting primary, secondary and higher secondary education have been shifted at the district level. However, the responsibility of higher education still lies with the provincial and federal government. Despite the devolution of powers the federal government still plays a very crucial role in matters such as: formulation of national education policy, changing and updating the Basic Pay Scales of the teachers and other staff working at these levels of education and specially to design a national core curriculum for all the districts of Pakistan.

The provincial governments retain primary responsibility for pre-service teachers training and share responsibility for in-service training with the district governments. The Provincial Departments of Education are headed by Education Ministers and senior civil servants i.e. Education Secretaries who are assisted by additional and deputy secretaries. The provincial education department is responsible for teachers' training (pre-service and in-service training) at Regional Institute of Teachers Education, to ensure easy access of the students to schools, to influence the federal government for preparing and developing quality curriculum and to set criteria to determine the qualification of the teachers for their appointment.

Secondary Education

Secondary education is the most effective stage in the entire educational system. Different educational policies, and other related official documents made numerous recommendations/proposals to uplift the secondary education in Pakistan. It occupies the most critical position in any system of education. Secondary education has the unenviable privilege of occupying the midway position; between primary and further education as a structure, between child hood and adult hood as to its clientele, and as to its content, between pure and applied knowledge. The position of secondary education in any society is generally paradoxical. It is expected to play a transitional role between basic education and further education as well as play a terminal role by providing necessary

manpower for the development of the country. Quddus (1990, pp. 184-185) has rightly mentioned that:

Secondary education is the most critical stage in our entire educational organization. During the vital period of secondary education, the objective should be more inclusive, embracing the needs and problems of adolescent life the most sensitive period of individual development.

In Pakistan, this cycle of education spans over four years. The children of 13 plus are admitted to Grade IX. The medium of instruction in the institutions in rural areas is Urdu. However, in private schools based in towns, cities and some schools in the public sector, the medium of instruction is English. In most of the secondary schools, middle education is also imparted. Parallel to these schools the public and private sectors have managed another stream of institutions known as cadet colleges and public schools. These are supposed to prepare cadets for Armed Forces etc. The high school children stay for two years in classes IX and X. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education conducts the examination and awards a certificate of secondary school to the successful candidates. The participation rate at high school was about 22 percent in 2000-2001 of which, 24 percent students were male and 20 percent were female. Vocational Education is normally offered in high schools. In the vocational stream, training in a variety of trades is offered so that after completion of the program the students can get jobs as carpenters, masons, mechanics, welders, electricians etc. There are 498 vocational institutions with an enrolment of about 88 thousand in 2001-2002. Bhatti (1987, pp. 315-316) has enlisted the following objectives of secondary education:

1. Recognition of the secondary education as a complete stage in itself and so designing the curricula as to equip the students intellectually, physically, morally and vocationally for a full life.
2. Full development of the individual by relating teaching to the needs and interests of adolescent, having a common core of subjects to ensure imparting certain basic skills and developing character through a new concept of teaching which instead of emphasizing memorization, leads to development of mental skills, aesthetic and spiritual values and focuses on character building.
3. Provision of meaningful options to enable the students to select courses suited to their aptitudes, interests and requirements.

Higher Secondary Education

The higher secondary stage also called the “intermediate stage” is a part of the college education. Two types of independent institutions, Higher Secondary Schools and Intermediate Colleges, provide higher secondary education. The intermediate colleges in all the provinces are now working under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. This program is a pre-requisite for university education. Higher Secondary Education consists of classes XI to XII. (<http://www.cssforum.com.pk/css-compulsory>). During two years stay in this cycle of education, a student, at the age of 16 years, can opt for general education, professional education or technical education. The Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) conduct the examination and award a Certificate of Higher Secondary School Education (HSSC). In the light of different policies, all schools were to be upgraded to higher Secondary Schools. However, there was little success and many problems emerged in the implementation of the policies. To overcome the problems, this system is being introduced gradually. In the provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoon Khwah, and Sindh about 795 higher secondary schools are functioning with an enrolment of 0.101 million students (AEPAM, 2005-06). However, in Baluchistan, there is no higher secondary school.

Role of Heads in Secondary School

The role of Head directly affects school processes and school outcomes. The head’s not only looks after daily working management of the finances and resources of the school but also bridges the boundaries between the school and the external environment. In the present situation, head plays the role of a facilitator, Goldring, (1997, p.3) indicates that:

Heads integrate, facilitate and coordinate the many aspects of the internal functions of the schools, so that goals and visions can be realized. They are not only concerned with what but also with how. Heads are not simply facilitators of instruction attending to the content and method of students’ learning but they are also facilitators of the work of teachers.

A secondary school’s head has to play multiple roles. According to Govinda (2002, pp. 212-213) following are some of the main roles which a secondary school’s head has to play.

Academic Administration

Under academic administration, the curriculum management activities hold an important place in school administration. These activities include implementation of curricular calendar, framing of timetable, timely and effective curriculum transaction, continued and comprehensive evaluation of students through examination, and organization of co-curricular activities. Beside these activities, the heads are also involved in the activities such as: giving admission to students, handling students and teachers union, work allocation, checking absenteeism, making alternate arrangements, seeking cooperation, supervision and quantity and quality assessment of teacher's work, need identification for capacity building and making arrangements for continuous professional education and training of the teachers.

Financial Management

Finances include generation, mobilization, allocation and timely utilization of resources, monitoring and evaluation of expenditures. It is notable that at secondary level, despite the availability of accountants and clerks, the head has to devote more time than normally expected, on financial management. The head has to spend considerable time in supervising the work of accountants since they do not have specialized training in the field of financial management, it takes a lot of time to understand, follow and then supervise the related work. Due to their lack of training in financial management, the heads are often skeptical about spending the available funds, which affects the smooth flow of school activities. This generates demand for financial management training.

Material Resource Management

Material resource management is another responsibility of the head. At secondary level, keep up of material resources takes a lot of time of the heads. Heads have no power to incur expenditures as and when required. The system has budgetary rigidity and for any change, the heads have to seek the permission of the higher authority.

Community Linkage

The most important function of the head is to establish linkages with the community to ensure enrolment, seek teaching help from able individuals of the community. All these functions require a lot of effort on the part of the heads. It is notable that the issues such as dealing with

admission pressures, discipline problems, political and administrative pressures and restoring school credibility in the eyes of the public, consume most of the time and effort of a secondary school's head. Therefore, heads should be trained in individual and group interaction, developing linkages and relationship with the community, managing financial affairs as well as looking after routine administrative matters.

Decentralization and School Effectiveness

Decentralization has improved school effectiveness in many ways. The under mentioned improvements through decentralization are based on the findings of a number of different individual and international studies of reforms in developing countries.

1. It improves the quality of inputs to school.
2. It increases the relevance of programs and helps in matching program content to local interests.
3. It helps to introduce innovative programs.
4. It results in making a wide range of options available to the students.
5. It helps to reduce the inequalities in access to quality education.
6. It enhances learning outcomes.
7. It results in efficient allocation of resources.
8. It helps to make efficient utilization of resources.
9. It enables to align the programs with employers' requirements.
10. It also results in making use of information about issues, problems or innovations.

Shami and Waqar (2007) have also mentioned that district governments are now involved in taking different decisions under the decentralization. The decision making process has been shifted from the centre to the local level. The purpose is to achieve the objectives of education effectively and efficiently through good governance by local bodies. Decentralization in education has permitted the community and its representatives to involve themselves in decision-making and implementation process for improvement of schools under the new system.

Methodology of the Study

The study was descriptive in nature. The objectives of the study were i) to assess the performance of the Heads of Higher Secondary and Secondary schools under devolution plan, and ii) to identify their problems under the new system. The population of the study comprised

1360 heads of higher secondary schools in three provinces i.e. KPK, Punjab and Sindh and secondary schools in Baluchistan. A sample of 34 % was drawn as per sampling frame given below. Data was collected through structured questionnaire. About 75% questionnaires were received back by the researcher. The questionnaire was developed after thorough study of the related material and keeping in view the role and responsibilities of Heads of Higher Secondary/Secondary Schools at Institutional level. After professionally updating, the questionnaire it was pilot tested on 40 Heads of Higher Secondary Schools not included in the sample. The purpose of the pilot testing was to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The finalized questionnaire was then administered through different research assistants. The research assistants were mostly M.A and M. Phil graduates from AIOU, they were briefed and given training in data collection prior to the field study. The filled questionnaires were checked, cleaned and codified by striking out ambiguous and contradictory responses. The data were organized and presented in tabular form. For the statistical analysis of the data percentage were calculated.

Table 1
Sampling Frame of Heads of
Higher Secondary/Secondary Schools

| Province | Population | Sample | Rate of Return of Questionnaires |
|--------------|------------|--------|----------------------------------|
| Punjab | 386 | 154 | 116 |
| KPK | 238 | 95 | 76 |
| Baluchistan | 568 | 114 | 80 |
| Sindh | 168 | 100 | 76 |
| Total | 1360 | 463 | 348 |
| Total Sample | - | 34% | 75% |

Data analysis

Table 2
The Present System is Proving to be More Helpful in
Planning Education at Institutional Level

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 80 | 69% | 15 | 13% | 21 | 18% |
| KPK | 54 | 71% | 07 | 9% | 15 | 20% |
| SINDH | 54 | 71% | 09 | 12% | 13 | 17% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 43 | 54% | 16 | 20% | 21 | 26% |

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents of all the provinces agreed with the statement i.e. "The present system is proving to be more helpful in planning of education at institution level".

Table 3
Under the New System the District Management Involves you in Taking Major Policy Decisions about Education

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 54 | 47% | 19 | 16% | 43 | 37% |
| KPK | 28 | 37% | 14 | 18% | 34 | 45% |
| SINDH | 37 | 49% | 17 | 22% | 22 | 29% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 34 | 42% | 12 | 16% | 34 | 42% |

Table 3 indicates that about 50 percent respondents from Sindh and Punjab agreed that under the new system the district management involved them in taking major policy decisions about education. However, a majority of the respondents from KPK disagreed or was uncertain about the statement. Whereas only 42 percent of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement and an equal percentage of respondents disagreed with the statement.

Table 4
The EDOs and DEOs Provide Guidance to you on Administrative and Financial Matters of your School

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 68 | 59% | 18 | 15% | 30 | 26% |
| KPK | 48 | 63% | 07 | 9% | 21 | 28% |
| SINDH | 51 | 67% | 17 | 22% | 08 | 11% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 32 | 40% | 28 | 35% | 20 | 25% |

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents from Punjab, KPK and Sindh, agrees that the EDOs and DEOs provided guidance on administrative and financial matters of their school. However, only 40% of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement the rest were either uncertain or disagreed.

Table 5
**Frequency of your Usual Visits to the Edo's/
 DEO's Office for Getting your Problems Resolved Has Decreased**

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 62 | 53% | 22 | 19% | 32 | 28% |
| KPK | 29 | 38% | 15 | 20% | 32 | 42% |
| SINDH | 40 | 53% | 22 | 29% | 14 | 18% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 35 | 44% | 26 | 32% | 19 | 24% |

Table 5 reveals that 53% of the respondents from Punjab and Sindh agreed with the statement i.e. "Frequency of your usual visits to the EDOs and DEOs office for getting your problems solved has decreased". Only 43% of the respondents from KPK and Baluchistan agreed while the rest either disagreed or were uncertain about the statement.

Table 6
**Under The New System the Process of
 Release of Funds Has Become Faster**

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 59 | 51% | 27 | 23% | 30 | 26% |
| KPK | 51 | 67% | 12 | 16% | 13 | 17% |
| SINDH | 25 | 33% | 20 | 26% | 31 | 41% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 38 | 47% | 17 | 20% | 25 | 31% |

Table 6 depicts that the majority (67%) of the heads from KPK agreed with the statement. 51% respondents from Punjab agreed that under the new system the process of release of funds has become faster. A comparatively smaller percentage (47%) of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement while an even smaller percentage (37%) of respondents from Sindh agreed that the new system has helped to improve the process of release of funds. In fact, a comparatively higher percentage (47%) of heads from Sindh disagreed.

Table 7
The Preparation of School Developmental Budget Has Simplified Under the New System

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 58 | 50% | 27 | 23% | 31 | 27% |
| KPK | 45 | 59% | 13 | 17% | 18 | 24% |
| SINDH | 28 | 37% | 25 | 33% | 23 | 30% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 36 | 45% | 18 | 23% | 26 | 32% |

Table 7 indicates that the agreement of the respondents in Punjab and KPK is clearly towards the statement i.e. "The preparation of school developmental budget has become more simplified under the new system". While in Baluchistan, 45 percent respondents agree with the statement the rest were either uncertain or disagreed with the statement. However, a comparatively smaller percentage (37%) of the respondents from Sindh province agreed with the statement.

Table 8
The New System Has Resulted In a Better Supervision of Educational Activities at the Institutional Level

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 61 | 52% | 25 | 22% | 30 | 26% |
| KPK | 36 | 47% | 15 | 20% | 25 | 33% |
| SINDH | 37 | 49% | 20 | 26% | 19 | 25% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 27 | 34% | 21 | 26% | 32 | 40% |

Table 8 shows that about fifty percent respondents in Sindh and KPK agreed with the statement. The agreement of slightly more than fifty percent of the respondents' from Punjab was towards the statement i.e. "The new system has resulted in better supervision of educational activities at the institutional level". While only 37% respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement. There were more (40%) who disagreed with the statement.

Table 9
You are more Independent in Decisions Making Regarding the Improvement of Instruction in Your Institution

| Province | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 56 | 48% | 24 | 21% | 36 | 31% |
| KPK | 29 | 38% | 16 | 21% | 31 | 41% |
| SINDH | 33 | 43% | 19 | 25% | 24 | 32% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 34 | 42% | 23 | 29% | 23 | 29% |

Table 9 reveals that from each province less than fifty percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. In fact, from Sindh less than 40 percent of the heads agreed that under the new system they are more independent in decisions making regarding the improvement of instruction.

Table 10
You are in A Better Position to Implement the Rules and Regulations in the School

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 57 | 49% | 25 | 22% | 34 | 29% |
| KPK | 43 | 57% | 14 | 18% | 19 | 25% |
| SINDH | 41 | 54% | 15 | 20% | 20 | 26% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 27 | 34% | 32 | 40% | 21 | 26% |

Table 10 presents that comparatively higher percentage of the respondents in KPK and Sindh, agreed with the statement i.e. "You are in a better position to implement the rules and regulations in school". Whereas in Punjab 49 percent agreed with the statement. Most of the respondents from Baluchistan however, were uncertain about this statement.

Table 11
You Are Now in A Better Position to Solve the Problems of Your Staff at Institutional Level

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 65 | 56% | 20 | 17% | 31 | 27% |
| KPK | 49 | 64% | 09 | 12% | 18 | 24% |
| SINDH | 44 | 58% | 15 | 20% | 17 | 22% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 40 | 50% | 19 | 24% | 21 | 26% |

Table 11 shows that more than 50 % of the respondents from Punjab, KPK and Sindh agreed with the statement i.e. "You are now in a better position to solve the problems of your staff at institutional level". Whereas 50 percent of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement, 24 percent were uncertain and 26 percent disagreed.

Table 12
You Are in a Better Position to Make Necessary Changes in Curriculum According to the Local Needs

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 39 | 34% | 25 | 22% | 52 | 44% |
| KPK | 49 | 64% | 09 | 12% | 18 | 25% |
| SINDH | 14 | 22% | 17 | 26% | 34 | 52% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 36 | 45% | 14 | 17% | 30 | 38% |

Table 12 presents that the majority of the respondents from KPK agreed with the statement. Forty-five percent of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement. However, a comparatively higher percentage of the respondents of Punjab and Sindh each (44% and 52% respectively) disagreed with the statement.

Table 13
You Are in a Better Position to Ensure the Implementation of Curriculum in Your Institution

| Province | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 57 | 49% | 17 | 15% | 42 | 36% |
| KPK | 43 | 54% | 18 | 24% | 17 | 22% |
| SINDH | 25 | 33% | 16 | 21% | 35 | 46% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 40 | 50% | 18 | 23% | 22 | 27% |

Table 13 presents that the agreement of the respondents in KPK, Baluchistan and Punjab is towards the statement i.e. "You are in a better position to ensure the implementation of curriculum in your institution". A comparatively higher percentage (46%) of the respondents of Sindh disagreed with the statement.

Table 14
Getting Teachers in the Relevant Discipline for Your School Has Become Easier

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 47 | 62% | 16 | 21% | 13 | 27% |
| KPK | 36 | 47% | 16 | 21% | 24 | 32% |
| SINDH | 32 | 42% | 18 | 24% | 26 | 34% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 33 | 41% | 30 | 38% | 17 | 21% |

Table 14 depicts that the majority of the respondents from Punjab agreed with the statement i.e. "Getting teachers in the relevant discipline for your school has become easier". In the other three provinces, less than 50% heads agreed with the statement.

Table 15
You Are Facing Problems in Connection with in-Service Training of Your Teachers

| Item | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 62 | 54% | 28 | 24% | 26 | 22% |
| KPK | 52 | 60% | 15 | 17% | 19 | 23% |
| SINDH | 41 | 54% | 14 | 18% | 21 | 28% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 39 | 49% | 23 | 29% | 18 | 22% |

Table 15 depicts that the agreement of the majority of the respondents in all except Baluchistan, provinces is towards the statement i.e. "You are facing problems in connection with in-service training of your teachers"

Table 16
You Have More Time to Provide Guidance to Your School Staff

| Province | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 71 | 61% | 16 | 14% | 29 | 25% |
| KPK | 50 | 66% | 16 | 21% | 10 | 13% |
| SINDH | 41 | 54% | 14 | 18% | 21 | 28% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 39 | 49% | 23 | 29% | 18 | 22% |

Table 16 depicts that the agreement of the respondents in all the provinces except Balochistan is towards the statement i.e. "You have more time to provide guidance to your school staff".

Table 17
Frequency of Service Related Problems Faced by the Employees of Your School Has Decreased

| Province | Agree | | Un-Certain | | Disagree | |
|-------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| PUNJAB | 54 | 47% | 28 | 24% | 34 | 29% |
| KPK | 39 | 51% | 15 | 20% | 22 | 29% |
| SINDH | 39 | 51% | 17 | 22% | 20 | 27% |
| BALUCHISTAN | 31 | 39% | 25 | 31% | 24 | 30% |

Table 17 shows that in KPK and Sindh a comparatively higher percentage of respondents (51% in each) agreed that service related problems of the employees have decreased. While in the province of Punjab and Baluchistan comparatively low percentage (47% and 37% respectively) of respondents agreed with the statement the majority was uncertain or disagreed.

Table 18
Problems Identified By Heads While
Implementing Devolution Plan N=348

| S. # | Statements | Frequency | (%) |
|------|--|-----------|-----|
| 1 | Political interference in students, admission and evaluation | 290 | 83% |
| 2 | Local representatives interference in institutions | 282 | 81% |
| 3 | Political interference in the institutions | 278 | 80% |
| 4 | Class size needs to be reduced | 245 | 70% |
| 5 | Lack of financial powers | 245 | 70% |
| 6 | Lack of physical facilities | 218 | 63% |
| 7 | Lack of science teachers | 215 | 62% |
| 8 | Heads evaluation be honored instead of final result | 198 | 57% |
| 9 | 5th and 8th classes examination at district level | 196 | 56% |
| 10 | Lack of coordination between parents and institutions | 172 | 49% |

Table 18 reveals the problems mentioned by the Heads in implementing the Devolution Plan. The majority (more than 80%) of the respondents have indicated that political interference in the matters such as admission and evaluation is a problem in implementation of the devolution plan. A majority of the respondents (70%) have also indicated the large class size and lack of financial powers as problems. Sixty three percent of the respondents have mentioned that lack of physical facilities and science teachers (62%) are hurdles in implementation of the plan. Fifty-seven percent respondents opined that evaluating teacher's performance on the basis of head's opinion rather than on their class results was a problem. 56% mentioned the holding 5th and 8th class examination at district level as a problem. Forty-nine percent have indicated that lack of coordination between parents and the institutions was causing problem in implementation of the plan.

Findings

1. The majority of the respondents of all the provinces were of the view that the present system was more helpful in planning education at institution level.
2. A considerable percentage of the respondents from Sindh and Punjab were of the view that under the new system the district management involves them in taking major policy decisions about education. However, a comparatively higher percentage of respondents of KPK disagreed with the statement. 42% heads of Baluchistan agreed with the statement while an equal percentage of heads disagreed and 16% were uncertain.
3. In Punjab, KPK and Sindh the respondents opined that the EDOs and DEOs provided guidance to them on administrative and financial matters of their school. A lesser percentage of the respondents of Baluchistan agreed with the statement. Similarly in Punjab, and Sindh 53% respondents in each of the two provinces opined that the frequency of their visits to EDOs and DEOs offices to seek help to resolve problems, has decreased. In Baluchistan comparatively lesser percentage (47%) agreed with the statement while in KPK a higher percentage disagreed with the statement.
4. In Punjab, KPK and Baluchistan a comparatively higher percentage of the respondents opined that the system of release for funds has become faster under the devolution plan. The respondents of Sindh however, disagreed with the statement. Similarly, the respondents in three provinces i.e. KPK, Punjab and Baluchistan were of the view that the preparation of school developmental budget has become simpler under the new system. The respondents of Sindh however, disagreed with it.
5. A higher percentage of the respondents in three provinces i.e. Punjab Sindh and KPK were of the view that the new system has resulted in better supervision of educational activities at the institutional level. Less than 40% of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with it while the rest were either uncertain or disagreed.
6. The respondents of Punjab Sindh and Baluchistan reported that under the new system they feel more independent to take decisions regarding the improvement of instruction in their institution. The greater percentage of respondents of KPK disagreed with it.

7. The respondents of Punjab, KPK and Sindh were of the view that they were in a better position to implement the rules and regulations in school. However, only 33% of the respondents from Baluchistan agreed with the statement, the majority was uncertain
8. The respondents in all the provinces opined that they were in a better position to solve the problems of their staff at institutional level.
9. A clear majority of the respondents of KPK was of the view that they were in a better position to make necessary changes in the curriculum according to the local needs. Similarly, a comparatively higher percentage of the respondents from Baluchistan were of the same view. However, the majority of the respondents of Punjab and Sindh disagreed with this statement. As for the implementation of the curriculum is concerned a comparatively higher percentage of the respondents of Punjab, KPK and Baluchistan were of the view that they were in a better position to ensure implementation of the curriculum in their schools. However, the respondents of Sindh disagreed with this statement.
10. The majority of the respondents of Punjab agreed that getting teachers in the relevant discipline for their school has become easier. However, a comparatively lesser percentage of the respondents of the other three provinces shared this opinion.
11. The respondents from all the provinces opined that they were facing problems in connection with in-service training of their teachers.
12. The respondents of all the provinces opined that they have more time to provide guidance to their school staff under the new system.
13. The respondents of Punjab, KPK, and Sindh opined that frequency of service related problems faced by the employees of their school has decreased. However, only a small percentage of the respondents from Baluchistan seemed to think so.
14. The heads of Higher Secondary and Secondary School of all the provinces reflected different problems they faced while working under the new system. A large majority of the respondents indicated that political interference in the institutions, interference of local representatives; large class size and lack of financial powers were the major problems they were facing after the implementation of the new system. More than sixty percent respondents mentioned the problem of lack of financial powers and physical facilities. A considerable number of the heads mentioned

that more weighting given to head's evaluation of their teachers instead of teachers' class result; lack of coordination between parents and institutions, interference in students' admission and evaluation were also creating problems in smooth administration.

Conclusions and Discussion

The present study was designed to assess the performance and problems of heads of secondary and higher secondary schools under devolution plan. The study concluded that the heads of all provinces have problems regarding in-service training of their teachers. There was no mechanism for the in-service training of the secondary and higher secondary teachers. They were in a position to solve the problems of their institution's staff at their own level. Implementation of the rules and regulations under the new system was easy for them. The heads have the opportunity to implement the curriculum in their institutions and the new system has been helpful in planning education at institutional and district level. As a result of decentralization the heads of higher secondary and secondary schools in Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh were actively involved in the decision making process at district level. However, in KPK the heads do not think they are involved in major decision-making. The EDOs and DEOs of Punjab, KPK and Sindh extended guidance to the heads on the administrative and financial matters but in Baluchistan the heads' do not get this guidance from the district management. The heads' problems in Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan were addressed promptly therefore, frequency of their visit to the district educational management was decreased. In KPK the heads do not think that decentralization has changed the situation in this regard. Under the new system, in KPK, Punjab and Baluchistan, the system of release of funds has quickened and preparation of developmental budget has become simplified. However, in Sindh the heads do not feel any change in this regard. The supervision of educational activities at institutional level has comparatively improved under the new system in Punjab, KPK and Sindh and the heads were independent in taking decisions regarding improvement of instructions in the secondary and higher secondary schools. In Baluchistan the institutional supervision has not improved and heads lacked authority in improving instructions in their institutions. Getting teachers in relevant disciplines in schools was easy for heads of Punjab and KPK province. However, in other two provinces i.e. Sindh and Baluchistan the heads still faced shortage of teachers.

Recommendations

1. Formal guidance on administrative and financial matters may be provided to the Heads of secondary schools in Baluchistan. Necessary steps may also be taken to ensure better supervision of educational activities at the institutional level in Baluchistan. For better working of secondary schools, the EDOs in Baluchistan may prepare proper monitoring schedule to check the working of these institutions on monthly, fortnightly or weakly bases. A regular media campaign may be launched to promote community involvement in educational activities in Baluchistan. It would help in improving quantitative expansion at secondary level in the province. Service-related problems of all the employees (teaching/non teaching) of Baluchistan may immediately be resolved. For this purpose, the district level management needs to adopt proper mechanism.
2. Training in school development plans, budget preparation, service matters of the staff, maintenance of accounts, paper setting and evaluation, liaison with the community and their representatives, computer skills may be provided to the heads of secondary schools in Baluchistan and higher secondary schools in other provinces. More optional/elective courses may be planned and launched at secondary and high secondary level. These may be decided according to the demand of the society and present trends.
3. The respondents of KPK need to undergo training in understanding their independent role for the improvement of instructions in their institutions. In KPK and Baluchistan, EDOs may ensure the solution of problems of the heads of secondary schools. This would help them in concentrating more on their work in their institutions.
4. In Sindh, the district educational authorities may take actions for quick and timely releases of funds to Heads of Higher Secondary Schools so that their educational activities in each financial year do not suffer. Moreover, the preparation of school developmental budget may further be simplified in Sindh. The district educational management of Sindh and Baluchistan may ensure that the teachers of the relevant disciplines are provided to Heads of concerned institutions.

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