



Sindh govt presented whitepaper on teacher licensing; AKU-IED, Durbeen and STEDA lead the way

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'The state of a country's education system is directly reflective of its quality of teaching' – a thought echoed by all speakers at the ceremony presenting a whitepaper on the need for introducing teaching licenses in Pakistan.

"We need teaching licenses, not only in name but to actually increase professionalism in our teachers, thereby elevating their status! Licensed teachers will become a ray of hope for improving student learning outcomes for our generations to come," said Dr Sajid Ali, Amir Sultan Chinoy Associate Professor at AKU-IED, who along with Afaq Ahmed, is primarily responsible for the research and development of the whitepaper.

Organised by the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), in collaboration with Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority (STEDA) and Durbeen, the whitepaper was unveiled in the presence of Sindh Minister for Education Syed Sardar Ali Shah at the AKU auditorium in Karachi. Stakeholders from academia including many teachers, and public and private sector representatives attended the event.

Addressing the gathering, the minister said: "I am convinced that teaching licenses can help us improve the quality of education. Teaching should have a license just as other professions like medicine, law, nursing, and engineering do. This will also improve the status of teachers." Furthermore, the minister promised that if AKU-IED, Durbeen, and STEDA join hands to prepare a draft bill for nationwide teacher licensing, he will personally table it in the provincial cabinet and take it to the provincial assembly.

Co-founder Durbeen, founder of Zindagi Trust, and panelist, Shehzad Roy, said: "We are aiming for structured reforms because teaching is a science. We want teaching to be treated with the same respect as any other profession. Just as you would not want a mediocre doctor treating a loved one, you cannot possibly hold a mediocre teacher responsible for your child's brain development. It just cannot be done."

During the panel discussion, Roy informed the audience about the education minister's initiative to approve the creation of a new cadre of licensed teachers in government schools. These teachers will start at a higher pay scale, relative to the normal teacher recruitment track, whereby one doesn't need a teaching degree to become a teacher.

Thanking the minister for his continued support in bringing about meaningful teacher reforms, Roy hoped that the incentive of starting their government employment at a higher grade than the average teacher will motivate aspirants to choose to get licensed, thereby bringing about a meaningful impact on teacher licensing.

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Other esteemed panelists included the Director of Training and Assessment, Sindh Education Foundation, Government of Sindh (GoS), Shahpara Rizvi; and Chairman National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education, Dr Muhammad Memon. They discussed how teaching licenses can help improve the preparation, recruitment, and retention of quality teachers.

In his concluding remarks, AKU-IED Dean, Professor Farid Panjwani highlighted the role of teaching licenses in determining what constitutes good teaching practice that results in the best learning experience for our students.

AKU-IED, over the past three decades, has been preparing professionals for leadership roles in education. Informing education policies and practices and improving schools in under-served and hard-to-access areas. It aims at making valuable and relevant contributions to improving the quality of education in Pakistan.

GoS' STEDA was established to oversee and regulate teacher education activities and to maintain the standards of the training and training providers.

Dirbeen is a non-profit organisation working to improve public schools in Pakistan through developing par-excellence teachers for public schools.



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