CHAPTER 1: POSITIONING IN THE FIELD OF RESEARCH – RESEARCH AGENDAS AND DESIGN

In this chapter, I came up with three sub chapters: Chapter 1A- *Articulating my Research Problem;* Chapter 1B- *Theoretical Positioning of my Research Questions;* and Chapter 1C- *Drawing of my Research Design*. In Chapter 1A, I am presenting my research problem of *culturally disempowering*[1] nature of teacher education and research practices in the context of Pakistan. In Chapter 1B, I have presented a theoretical positioning of my research questions. Similarly, in Chapter 1C, I conceptualized my research design.

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[1] Culturally disempowering means the educative practices limited within a narrow view of curriculum as content/subject matter, discrete set of tasks and concepts, and cultural reproduction images (Schubert, 1986), which lead the teachers to use one way flow of information (without focusing interactive ways to teaching/learning) to achieve some limited learning outcomes based on lower order thinking skills required to reproduce text for promotion to next grade levels (Alam, 2013). This means that such educative practice that ignores the importance of balancing educational activities with that of cultural activities (embedded within sociocultural settings) in order to bring the experiences of real life situations into classroom activities so as to enable learners to make better sense of their learning. This further develops a gap between the lives outside classroom with the lives inside classroom situation. Because the content do not respond to the local cultural values, customs, language, and many other facets of real life outside the learning environment.

Secondly, bureaucratic mindset of people in administrative and academic circles in schools, colleges and universities seem to impose activities of teaching/learning rather facilitating learners to participate in educative matters. Such practices under top-down approaches to leadership in educational institutions by creating a controlled environment nonconductive to engage teachers/learners in meaning-centered education (Kovbasyuk & Blessinger, 2013).

CHAPTER 1A: ARTICULATING MY RESEARCH PROBLEM

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

In this chapter, I am going to discuss my research problem of *culturally disempowering nature of teacher education and research practices in the context of Pakistan.* In this autobiographical

> The universe is made of stories, not atoms
> - Muriel Rukeyser

excavation, I came up with narratives of my lived experiences as a student, computer instructor/teacher, vice/principal, teacher educator/research supervisor and research coordinator. These multiple selves enabled me to understand my research problem and agendas to address them with an unconventional approach to my research inquiry.

Teaching as 'Re/telling/Transmitting'

It was early 1970s when I opened my eyes in a princely state of Hunza, Pakistan. The state was losing its status and becoming a simple, yet maintaining its territorial identity of the country bordering with China across Silk Route, now called Karakorum Highway, the

Altit Fort Hunza

8th wonders of the world. Slowly, I grew to school age. I was admitted in a public school where my teachers taught Urdu texts by translating them into Brushaski, my mother tongue, to make me (and my fellow students) understand the lesson. I remember the 're/telling' method of teaching could not help me and my fellow students to make sense of the texts with that of our real life around us. With such a self-disengaged didactic pedagogical practices disconnected from socio-cultural life setting, we became habitual in punishment for disturbing teachers during their translation.

I was wondering why my teachers were not converting the lessons into stories, poems and parables so that we could understand it better rather translating it word by word in a different contexts. Perhaps, I did not see any connection in my village life outside my classroom with what I was taught in the classroom. Probably, this led me to think 'Cannot there be interactive methods of teaching other than transmission and translation of text?' I remember that transmission and translation of words and sentences could only help to know superficial meaning of a language that was new to me (Bachmann-Medick, 2009). Perhaps, telling stories could better help us to engage in learning and that could help us to exercise creative faculties of our mind.

> A kind of behaviorist pedagogy 'Traditional instruction, such as the typical lecture-based session … often involves delivering as much information as possible as quickly as possible. The lecture method was one of the most effective and efficient ways to disseminate information and has often been used for this end (Major & Palmer, 2001, p.1)

We were familiar in listening stories from our grant parents and other elders in our world. At that time, in the village life there was no televisions at home, inns, and other public places like hotels etc., and I remember that only a few people had radios and tape recorders for news and entertainment. Perhaps, those were privileged people including my father who had a radio, and my uncle who came with a tape recorder from Karachi. There was no library, no social media, newspapers and other facility for in/formal ways of learning. Our life outside the school was totally different from the bookish life that we were habituated at school. Whatever we were taught in school that was expected to reproduce in the assessments.

Exam as a Bureaucratic Means for Promoting Students

Probably, the purpose of exam was just to identify students' achievement in the text and to decide whether the students in questions were fit for the next grade. However, the school would hardly pay any attention to overall learning in the part of the students. Therefore, at the end of each academic year (till my grade V) we participated in the oral exams for all subjects except mathematics which demanded paper-pencil test. Could the 'oral' and 'paper-pencil' test really addressed my all learning experiences? This question hit my mind frequently in later stages of my life. In our school exams, our teachers asked us questions from the course/text books. Our role as students were to memorize the lessons and poured it on our exam paper. I still remember the way me and my friends would gather in groups near our neighborhood to memorize lessons from the books to prepare for the exams.

Students with only a superficial approach to learning aim at remembering and repeating subject matter knowledge in detail and by heart in order to achieve high scores in exams. Students with a strategic approach aim at succeeding in their university studies by focused and organized learning and with strict schedules and regulation of their own learning (Vesterinen, Toom & Krokfors, 2014, p.3).

I remember, in later stages of my life, I related my learning at school with my life in community and I realized that rote memorization at school at my school did not help me in any other ways except to pass school exams. I was severely afraid of some possible humiliations which I would face in my family and community in the case of being failed in the exams. The school would announce exam result in our assembly ground. We would keenly appear with our parents to notice the result. Those students whose name were not announced in the 'pass' list were taken as 'failed' ones. The failed one then felt great humiliation and appeared to be much more depressed.

These experiences of my school pedagogy particularly at the time when I was in my primary school provoked me to raise question like, Why did my teachers at school not imply some other ways of teaching and assessing us? In this way, I got through my primary education and admitted in a secondary school in another village. Unlike my previous school experiences, I faced written exams for the first time in this new school. Our teachers in this new school taught us in the same way as we were taught in our

SAHE's Rashid said, "Children already know roughly 3,000 words by the time they go to school. So, in most of Punjab, if you're teaching in a language that's different than Punjabi, they are not learning to think in any language (ICG, 2014, p 12)

primary school.

I however happened to be the part of a discourse during my secondary school education in which I was not only oriented for linking my learning at school with 'pass' and 'fail' notion of education but also linked my education with getting a job in my life. My parents encouraged me frequently to go to school regularly and get education for future career. My uncles and other family members engaged in good jobs which also inspired me that it is my education which would brighten my life by creating job opportunities. At my school, on the other hand, my teachers often induced us to work hard for good life. I then grew with the insight that my education is for my 'good' life. Without observing my parents, teachers and relatives' notions of 'good life' then I had started the journey of education for the 'unknown' good in life. Perhaps, the notion of such unidentified 'good' in life motivated me to continue my school education. I thence attended schools and colleges with my full spirit despite the humiliations and fear of being failed, the burden of travelling long distance from home to schools and heavily loaded school bag.

When I now see these phenomena (fear of being failed, memorizing texts for exam, etc.), I realize that perhaps these were some disempowering practices embedded in the culture of teaching during my school time. While observing the way of schooling as such with inquirer's eye view now I realized that I was the part of very complex process of learning in my school which I , however, internalized subconsciously into my mind set then. The way I internalized education in general and the assessment in particular during my school and college life induced me, as a researcher, to question- *Why were the practices of assessment limited in the notion of 'pass' and 'fail'? Why did they not come up with possibly more progressive and alternatives way of assessing students' learning achievement? What might be the reasons that they keep beating the same drum (books as curriculum) with the same sticks (translation method of teaching) to produce the same music (exams as to announce pass/fail)?*

Curriculum as Textbooks

My school and schooling experiences provided me an understanding that textbooks are the main source of knowledge (i.e., as written curriculum) for teachers to

'Curriculum is a social construction that results from a set of decisions; it is written and enacted and both facets undergo constant Change as contexts evolve' (Porfilio, Gorlewski, Gorlewski, 2015, p.3)

transfer to their students. That might be the reason that teachers themselves were forced to transfer the bookish knowledge with their own version of translation method (Rehman, 2011; Williamson, 2013).

With this experience of getting education, I joined a college for intermediate studies (F.Sc. in Mathematics – grade 11 & 12). However, there I got a different teaching/learning environment. Teachers in all subjects would give lectures and would provide written notes to their students to prepare for a centralized annual exam. There as

well, I experienced some other problems. For example, there was English as medium of instruction, which for me as a climber (learner as climber) was as hard as climbing on Rakaposhi and K2 (the famous mountains in our region) without more supportive and effective kit.

There, I realized that I was passing a very challenging life in college. During my school my teachers taught me in Urdu, as a medium of instruction whereas in college I had to face English as a medium of instruction. This sudden change in the medium of instructions made learning difficult during my college life. Our teachers delivered lectures and we as students heard of them patiently (Harden & Crosby, 2000). The classroom lecture could not helped me and my fellows to understand the topics. Our teachers would give us notes on the topics which they taught us. I memorized the notes thinking that it would help me to pass exams. Such text based teaching and learning in college again became so much monotonous and harder for me.

Then, I came to realize that learning at college level was much harder than at school level. In my later days I questioned myself whether the teaching/learning at school and college was really helpful to me. Was it essentially harder or it was made harder? The one way flow of information as a method of teaching at schools and colleges was based on transmission and translation of texts gave me the image of curriculum as textbooks and written documents/notes (Porfilio et al., 2015; Williamson, 2013). That is why I call this state of *education as informing* and/or *informative paradigm* of education. In this way of teaching process teachers habitually transmit information to the learners. Teachers play the role of informers and/or the discriminators of knowledge. Perhaps, this

hegemonic image of Teaching Learning Practices (TLPs) remained for a longer period of time throughout my university experience as well.

As I went to the university to do my graduation in Mathematics (B.Sc.), I would notice some teachers/lecturers with some notes in their hands. Unlike school teachers who never entered the classroom with prepared notes, university lectures would be with notes but ironically they would rarely look at their notes to teach. Unlike annual examination at school/college, I had to appear in the biannual examination (a semester system) at university. This biannual exam at university provided me with a kind of relief in the sense that I did not have to memorize the lessons of whole academic year at a time.

Perhaps, I must have realized that the whole process of education from school to college was being operated within the notion of: *knowledge as something to transfer*, *assessment as just for promoting* students to upper grade level, *curriculum as textbooks*, the 'content or subject matter' (Schubert, 1986) as guideline for teachers to follow in order to impart education to learners. Thus, arriving at this stage of my experience, I begin to ask questions like: c*annot there be alternative shape/image of curriculum? , how can the students' ethno-cultural identities be acknowledged and incorporated into curriculum* (Parker, 2016)?

Serving as a Community Worker: My First Border Crossing

"he who leaves his home
in order to seek knowledge
he is in Allah's path
until he returns (to his home)"
(*At-Tirmidhi, Sunan, An-Nawawi, Riyad As-salahin*)

Perhaps, by the time, I must have developed my aim of education to help my own community children by rendering my services as a teacher. I was planning to be a

computer teacher. My sense of being a teacher in my future career made me think frequently that how would I enable (my possible future students) with a new skill in computer courses in my village. Arriving at this stage of my exposure, I begin to reflect on my university experience that reminded me of my professors'/lecturers' way of delivering lectures by using a dais (i.e., stage) which also asserted teaching as 're/telling'. This approach to imparting education imprinted an image in mind that teaching is a one-way flow of information from teachers to students. Perhaps, it was my perception that guided me to become a computer teacher. Since computer subject was a new course at times in my community, I thought that I would be unique source of knowledge disseminator in computer course.

My aim of being a computer teachers encouraged me to join diploma course in computer diploma along with my B.Sc. studies at university. Resultantly, this skill in computer along a university degree helped me to start working as a computer instructor during 1996-97 at Karimabad Computer Centre Islamabad- an Ismaili community project to educate the members under computer literacy program. This was my first part-time formal job. I was basically taking this job only for my pocket money and hence this turned to be my services to community.

I grew up along with my service to community. This provided me an opportunities to serve the others with love and care. The sense of love, care and contribution for community betterment was un/consciously embedded to my values and aim of life. For example, while working as boy scouts leader and engaging in activities of developing

humility such as reciting Ginan[2], since my childhood, it enabled me to realize the
importance of service to humanity and its relation with peace of mind.

  I can understand how such a socio-communal engagement with teaching/learning in all forms of education (in/formal and non/formal setting), especially while being engaged with communal life setting, can influence learners like me (Chapman, Randell-Moon, Campbell & Drew, 2014). I came to realize that how un/knowingly I was inspired s the notion of service to humanity, especially for the people within the community who were in need of support. Perhaps, for me the notion of helping others was embedded within the belief that serving humanity during a limited temporarily life in this physical world can enable to get a good life in everlasting world of souls in return.

  The values that I cultivated through my community service encouraged me to serve those who were in severe needs. I thus decided to give up the idea of living comfortable life in capital city for the sake of the people living in the remote villages of the country. I decided to establish a new computer institute in Hunza with one of my friends. I shared this idea with my elder brother who was/is a software developer expecting some kind of help from him. He not only encouraged me but also gifted me a printer and a desktop computer at that time for the purpose. There, I along with my friend managed to purchase four more computers and started training the people/learners that carried high regard within our society- at individual and institutional level.

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[2] A kind of mystic rhymes and Irfanic (gnosis) kalams, the verses of poems from spiritual view point – how can one connect self with Allah to seek His love through good His remembrance and good deeds, for example, reciting His Holy names, and serving humanity with care, love and humility.

Perhaps, it was really very challenging to meet all the expectations of the community with limited resources. Nevertheless, our determination to provide computer education to learners was so high that it kept us active till the end of the project life in

> '[O Allah, I seek refuge with You from knowledge that is of no benefit, from a supplication that is not heard, from a heart that does not fear (You) and from a soul that is not satisfied].'
> (Sunan Ibn e Majah, Book of Sunnah, Hadith no 250)

2001. There, I closely felt that dedicated services to community, care and love for others was *rewarding spiritually* (giving me an internal peace of mind with the bliss and feelings of lighter – with less material want but more 'lust' for helping others with a satisfied soul). Arriving at this point of my soulful inquiry, I question, 'How can I live my higher values, and yet enjoy my profession (Whitehead, 1993)?

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Serving as Vice Principal in a Community School

It may be the year of 1998 in which elderly people in my community requested me to teach computer and science subjects to grade IX and X. I then began my career then as an instructor/educator and also as a vice principal in a Community English Medium

School. It was my first job as a vice principal in one of the community schools established

at that time.

I vividly remember that during mid 1990s there came a shift in thinking of local

people to send their children in English medium schools rather sending to public schools

where the Urdu language was medium of instruction. Community based English medium

schools with co-education (together boys and girls) were opened, managed and run by the

community through school management committees (Qutoshi & Khaki, 2014). For this

development, I give credit to the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (AKESP) that

was contributing to girls' education, the least focused segment of the society. As our

society was, and it is still so to some extent , a male dominated society where girls

were/are given least importance in education and decision making process in daily life.

The AKESP brought a revolutionary change in such thinking of the common people

(Pardhan at al., 2014) in Pakistan and then people realized to send their daughters to

schools.

The significant changes in the minds of people in general about inclusive

education caused to breed the need of coeducation. Community schools thus were opened

to provide equal opportunities for both boys and girls. Though physical environment of

the schools were improved to some extent, teaching/learning conditions still were waiting

for a rigorous improvement in AKESP schools (ibid). Teaching and administrating for

around three years in the school and living in my community gave me another

opportunity to reflect on my past, present and envision my future.

My Way of School Leadership as Controlling

I remember myself as a vice principal of a community based English medium school where, perhaps, I was trying to control teachers and other staff during my routine activities of *administrating* the school affairs. I argue that the metaphor of *principals as 'toothless tigers'* (Bana & Khaki, 2015; Khaki, 2005) could not be a general representation of principals. I as a school administrator enjoyed authority to make decision on school issues at my own conscience. My intention was to improve learning conditions of the school. But, my way of performing leadership was authoritative. My effort for improvement in schools gave me images that I was a caring principal but my way of leading school provided me a sense that I worked as an interventionist (i.e., to keep an eye on the teachers' work and advised from time to time) (Shafa, 2003).

Arriving at this point of inquiry, I begin to reflect on my own teaching and school administrating practices. I realized that I had been more 'authoritative' kind of a school principal in the way that I would exercise authority strictly while dealing with teachers and students to accomplish our learning goals (Orlando-Barak, 2010, p. 65). Here, I begin to ask the research question: *How does a dictating leadership promote conventional images of 'teaching as sending information' and 'assessment as add-on activity'?*

Later on, I came to realize that serving community with little skills, low level of qualification and less exposure may be a limited level of service to self/others. I therefore decided to leave the existing job and relocate myself in a big metropolitan city for higher education. I left Hunza for Karachi saying goodbye to everyone at my home, school, and to my friends in society. I was then feeling something strange that it was *my first border crossing*.

Earning as Learning: My Second Border Crossing

Initially I had to teach tuitions to survive in Karachi. Later, I joined a community based school. As a cooperative school principal I got an opportunity to work with AKESP and the Institute for Educational Development, the Aga Khan University (AKU-IED), Pakistan. I remember that there were few schools which were called cooperative schools. Those schools would provide a facility of research lab for the social science researchers of AKU-IED to carry out their research work in areas of teaching/learning, assessment, school leadership and management. In return, the staff of such schools could receive training at certificate to masters' level professional teacher education/training to improve TLPs in their respective schools.

Arriving at this stage, I began to feel that getting a chance to work with my own community setup in my area of interest could be a kind of blessings for me to get a source of earning with learning. This school was like a cultural assortment (children from many cultural contexts). Most of the children and staff members in the school were from a community that came to Karachi from all over Pakistan, and also as refugees from Afghanistan for better life opportunities. It was therefore a big challenge for me in leading such a complex multicultural setting in my school (Qutoshi & Khaki, 2014). Arriving at this stage of my journey, I began to reflect on my past experience of administrating a community school in my native village, which gave me an idea to bring changes in school and schooling.

After making keen observation of the school affairs (teaching, learning and administrating conditions) for around two months, I came with a plan to bring a change in the school. It was probably a collaboratively developed five-year Whole School

Improvement Plan (WSIP 2001-06[3]). I involved all the key stakeholders of school like managing committee (including parents representatives), local education board (a sister institution working with AKESP to oversee school activities) and local council[4] and started working consistently for around six years with this plan.

Yet Another Border Crossing

While working as a cooperative school principal, during my collaboration with AKU-IED, I got opportunities to do many certificate level courses and an Advanced Diploma in Educational Leadership from AKU-IED. I also got a chance to study a six-month certificate level course from Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization London. During this very productive time in my personal-professional lifeworlds, I did two Masters degrees- one in International Relations from Karachi University and another in Education and International Development from Institute of Education University of London, UK. There, I enjoyed face-to-face classes of my degree requirement with powerful learning while staying for five months in London.

I still remember the amazing moments of serving *my beloved community* as a part of my *Volunteer Services*[5] at the Ismaili Center London. I developed a powerful insights upon inclusive culture during my five months stay in London. I began to feel that the community there was having good life with better facilities as compared to the community in Pakistan. This feeling enabled me to think about 'how I can improve (Whitehead, 2015) my services to the community at different levels including the

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[3] Whole School Improvement Plan (WSIP 2001-06) that I, as a principal and honorary secretary (to the board of directors of the school management committee) developed with a vision to improve teaching, learning and management practices in the *Community School* Karachi Pakistan.

[4] A governing institution within Ismalili community under regional and national council for Pakistan

[5] A well-organized team of young boys and girls working to provide honorary services to community in everyday Jamati (community) activities at Ismaili Centre Kingston London.

school?' While working in volunteers I got many good friends, and some of them even offered me to work with them there. But my *intention* was to accomplish the goals of WSIP2001-06 that could not attract me to stay in London and work within that rich community setup rather I preferred to serve my less developed community in Pakistan.

Soon after I completed my course requirements, I left London for Pakistan and rejoined the school. Although I was regularly in contact with the people in the school through emails, I felt the importance of my physical presence as a leader in my school especially for my own mental satisfaction and also for energizing my co-workers. I begin to think about how I can improve my activities in school with the new ideas which I got from UK visit. Perhaps, WSIP2001-06 was a challenging project in the sense that I had to engage rigorously with this for five years continuously. This intense engagement enabled me to re/vitalize my embodied values (intention of doing good for others, humility for humanity, care of self and others with ecological consciousness, love and peace) of my personal- professional life words).

Leadership as a spiritual practice. For me, leadership is not simply leading people to accomplish a shared goal in our lives (e.g., projects like the WSIP2001-06) rather it appears to be a spiritual practice of being and becoming. I couldn't forget the emotional moments – a kind of spiritual enlightenment at the time of completion of the project and handing over to the chairman of the school management committee. I remember that the chairman appreciated my efforts overwhelmingly. I felt myself that my little services to the community was seemingly less significant for that recognition.

Honestly speaking, I did not contribute my services to the school for the sake of appreciation; but it was the 'inner world' of my delicate 'I' as a leader that was spiritually rooted in my 'heart and consciousness' (Cole, 2008, p.21) which inspired me from inward to perform the way I did for the school. The feelings of my being as a community member and also as a leader of the school were attached with my heart, mind and soul. Perhaps, it was not mere a political or religious duty to perform but rather my selfless work for the sake of the 'work' itself.

I view spirituality and religion as two different things. To me, spirituality seems to be an inner feeling of goodness whereas religion appears to be a social institution that believes in sect. Here, I want to say that spirituality is not to be taken in a religious sense; it is a way of describing our thinking, being, becoming and doing that contribute to sustain and enhance both individuals and organizations (Sokolow & Huston, 2008, p.20). In this sense, I am asserting Charaniya (2012) who claims spiral relationship among the culture, spirituality and religion that contribute to forming human identity. I thus sense spirituality as a complex phenomenon that needs to be understood in a contextual framework of one's identity.

While exchanging views on spirituality, Jan-e-Alam Khaki[6] explains it in this way, 'spirituality is not one thing for all; it is subject to different interpretations, depending on different perspectives. As such, there is no one universal outlook, but plurality of meanings and approaches. ' He views spirituality in terms of 'relations' between human and the world around 'without necessarily referring to a metaphysical being.' Perhaps, in religious traditions, spirituality is rooted in, or has a reference to a higher being(s)

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[6]An educationist and a scholar of Islamic studies

within the norms and values of that religion. He continues, 'even within religious communities, spirituality refers to many things including mysticism, Sufism, and Irfan (gnosis). 'Perhaps, it appears to be a pluralistic outlook within the context of Muslim tradition and beyond it. Widening the meaning of spirituality and having an inclusive outlook, he argues that, 'spirituality in any form sensitizes us from seeing self and others as means to an end rather than end in themselves in order to develop consciousness and enlightenment (J.A. Khaki, personal communication, January 16, 2016).

For me, religion and culture can influence spirituality; yet it seems something higher than those influencing phenomena. I thus would like to explain spirituality as a link between my inner self and the cosmos- a transcendental emergence of my being. This feeling I have experienced many times in my life while performing my school leadership. I unfolded and articulated my inner self in the form of love, care, compassion and selfless service while performing my leadership for the community school. My performance as school leadership as such provided me an insight that spirituality in the form of love, care and selfless service can be vital for school improvement.

Working as 'Social Protection Coordinator': Being Aware of Gender Issues

Soon after completing the community school project and joining United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as Social Protection and Gender Focal Person[7] for a very difficult area at Shangla, in Swat region near Afghan border, I began to feel that I got another unique opportunity to know about different cultures. I felt that this opportunity enabled me to help the vulnerable people living in those remote and hilly

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[7] As a coordinator I was closely working in areas of social and gender related protection of vulnerable children due to devastating *earthquake of 2005* in 9 districts of Pakistan. My role was to assess the quality of services especially in the field of education and report on regularly basis to policy making bodies and contacting emergency services to ensure access to basic needs to these children.

areas while accessing facilities for their children to basic education. I engaged in

assessing and reporting the nature of facilities available for earthquake affected people

living in the camps. I observed that children in camp schools were facing some gender-

related problems on their way to accessing education in the camp schools.

As a social protection coordinator and gender focal person, I visited different sites- places and people- and tried to understand problems and issues of vulnerable people with reference to social protection and gender issues in the whole district. In so doing, I prepared a profile of the district that enabled me to share the status of gender related issues and to recommend for improvement. Perhaps, that exposure enabled me to understand and contribute to developing a national level policy for protection of vulnerable people. The policy was being formulated in collaboration with UNDP.

My role performance as a social protection coordinator and also as a gender focal person in developing national level policy in relation to gender issue provided me an understanding that I can re/sensitize my learners in the classroom in relation to social protection and gender focused cases. I as a social activist learned that I can bring awareness among my community people regarding social protection and gender issues particularly through social interactions and discourses. Though working with UNDP was a wonderful experience in terms of my learning and earning, I resigned it for developing myself as an academician where I would enjoy my all inside-out.

Performing as a Teacher Educator/Research Supervisor

I joined Torabora University (TU) as *an Assistant Professor. The financial*

benefits that I received from my university was not as prominent as the one which I

enjoyed during my job in UNDP. Yet, I remained content with limited financial benefits in

return of my service to the university because working in a university setup as a teacher

educator was my interest that continuously kept me growing throughout my academic

career. Fortunately, I had to teach some subjects in the university like Instructional and

Communication Technology (ICT) in Education and Computer Literacy that were related

to my experiences in life. It was possibly a good beginning of my university job

particularly in a very bureaucratic administrative setup which I never experienced in my

life before.

During my job in the university as a teacher educator I came to realize that a fixed

image of *curriculum which asserted curriculum as a subject matter/written document* and

also *a set of discrete tasks* was in practice. While working with the other teacher

educators in the university, I realized that there was hardly any space for me to

re/conceptualize curriculum (Karseth & Sivesind, 2011; Porfilio et al., 2015; Schubert,

1986) within a particular socio-cultural context to enable learners to think and link

beyond the classroom, their real life situation. Perhaps, such a limited view of *curriculum*

as an informing document could not enable me to develop a curriculum based on my own

experiences of teaching/learning within the context to make better meaning of 'learning'

(Fuchs, 2009). I came to realize myself as a tool to be handled by a *guided curriculum*

content as informing as pedagogical practices to accomplish some predetermined learning

outcomes. This realization led me to ask a question like, '*In what ways has the nature of*

informative curriculum been colonizing me and other teacher educators in Pakistan?'

Except ICT in Education, Computer Literacy and Educational Technology, I also

experienced the teaching of Philosophy of Education, Assessment and Evaluation, and

Educational Leadership and Management, to name a few. The exiting tradition of

university teaching encouraged me to cover the specified teaching contents in the given time frame. I thus began to feel that I had to work within a culturally imposing environmental setting of the university till the completion of my probationary period.

While working as a teacher educator in the university I came across many challenges of one-size-fits-all images of *curriculum. Curriculum as content*, *a set of discrete tasks* and *cultural reproduction* (Schubert, 1986) were some images of curriculum that strictly governed classroom pedagogy, learning outcomes and also assessment practices. I hence realized that such view of curriculum perhaps was the source of limiting the views towards teacher education research and it also gave me an impression that curriculum as an objectivist agenda. While working in such an imposed pedagogical framework, my experiences as a mentor, teacher educator and/or research supervisor led me to think on linear and partial view of teacher education. This made me appear with some questions on five key thematic areas which I am going to discuss in Chapter 1B in detail.

Working as Reforms Implementer

While working with curriculum development team, attending workshops and conferences on teaching, learning and research, and attending a month long training course for professional teacher educators[8], I got many opportunities to strengthen my notion of challenging the status quo in TLPs. Perhaps, this experience helped me to reflect on my own contributions at university level teaching and research engagements and enabled me to question like- How can I better help my students in their learning?

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[8] A special course on professional teacher education focusing on effective pedagogies for culturally diverse learners in which teacher educators from 13 countries around the globe attended at Etisalat Academy Dubai back in 2010

How am I improving the way I am teaching (Whitehead, 1989, p.1, 2015)?' These questions appeared to be more fruitful in developing my own capacities in facilitating my learners.

My personal and professional world of works caused me grow with some queries and led me to make a plan for my doctoral study. However, it was mandatory to complete first three years of service at the university to go for study. At the same time, I was also engaged with reforms activities which led me to think seriously about the changes which I was experiencing within my cultural and academic settings. While working for reformative curriculum I came with the concepts that pedagogy as a *somehow student centered approach[9], assessment as 'for' learning.* I also came across many *holes of reforms* in teacher education in Pakistan such as: least attention towards improving the practices of teacher educators, centralized curriculum as an agenda of cultural reproduction, curriculum as a set of discrete tasks and imposed program of learning outcomes (Ali, 2011). The reformative curricular program also highly focused on physical resources development which were necessary but utterly insufficient to meet the purpose of transforming teachers.

Perhaps, working under reformative agenda with limited freedom caused me perceive *reforms as an externally-imposed activity.* I, as a teacher educator, could not provide the target learners with multiple opportunities to develop their creativity and critical thinking skills. Consequently, I had to limit myself within this narrow view of educational reforms that articulated only limited changes in the given frame of pedagogical praxis.

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[9] Somewhat learner centered teaching with many limitations i.e., lack of resources, lack of administrative support to work with leaner centered activities and time constraints etc.

Possibly, the limited freedom under reformative practices in my professional lifeworld encouraged me to question my role as a communicative leader- the leader who involve into activities within somehow humanistic paradigm. This view enabled me to realize that a communicative leader should possibly possess democratic, participative, collaborative and coordinative characteristics while leading student teachers and other co-workers in educational environments at school and university (Ali, 2011; Johansson & Begley, 2001). I came to realize that this perceived notion of my role as a communicative leader seems not to be that much effective within a packaged view of improvement in teaching/learning conditions under reform (Hart, 2009).

While reflecting on my engagement with reforms as a teacher educator/research supervisor, it provided me with an opportunity to re/think and revise all those questions which I encountered during a more bureaucratic *culturally imposed and disempowering environment* within efficiency paradigms (of informing nature). Arriving at this stage of self-reflection, I come up with the revised questions which I have discussed in 'Chapter 1B' in detail.

From the standpoint of my role as a teacher educator at university, my research questions not only guided me to understand the agenda of reforms but also enabled me to critique the limitations of reforms agenda in teacher education in Pakistan. While working on improving teaching in line with student centered approach (see Chapter 4B) and using assessment as 'for' learning as a formative assessment along with a conventional approach to *assessment as an add-on activity* (Luitel, 2009) (See Chapter 5B), I came to realize that reforms agenda can only give a temporary relief to existing problems with superficial improvements. However, with a limited freedom as a teacher

educator, I had to experience changes under reforms that I had to practice un/willingly (Ali, 2011). With this learning, I decided to proceed for higher study to develop my own capacities so as to better contribute to the entire process of TLPs. The bureaucratic way of working in a university set up under tailored made rules at TU made me wait for more two years to proceed for a doctoral study abroad with pay leaves.

Travelling for the Quest of Knowledge: Yet Another Border Crossing

After joining the School of Education, Kathmandu University, Nepal for my PhD and having close interactions with my supervisor and other professors during an advanced qualitative research course, I began to critique on my limited views of epistemic plurality (e.g., quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods) that I embraced with reforms agenda. While discussing research agenda with my supervisor and other professors I cultivated analytical, imaginative and critical sense to overview my personal and professional discourses to generate an idea to carry out my PhD research.

In a teaching/learning environment, the process of re/thinking, re/viewing, reflecting and critically looking at self/others (Qutoshi, 2015a, p.1) in the context of my project not only helped me to revisit my methodology but also enabled me to come with narratives of my life worlds. I crafted narrative of my multiple selves within the educational institutions where I engaged as a teacher, vice/principal at school since 1997 and also as teacher educator and research supervisor at my university since 2008. This critical re/construction process of 'being and becoming' led me to look at my purpose of research that has been towards improving my own capacities in order to influence my

own learnings, and to see the influence of my learning on others to whom I have been

engaged with in my professional contexts (Whitehead, 1989, 2014, 2015).

Meditative Practices as Ways for Nurturing my Embodied Values

Every person has a story;
and every story has to offer a lesson.
(Pranis, 2014, p.2)

I have also a story and it has a lesson for self and others. Interestingly, the process

of being and becoming with critical re/construction of multiple

identities of self ('I's) reconnect my inner self (personal world) through

my regular practices of *Dua* (the remembrance of Allah). My self-exploration comes up

with a meaning to nurture humility and spirituality that plays a significant role in my

personal and professional lifeworld. Here, I feel that it is important to share with my

readers about the way I experienced spiritual nurturing in my life. To me, spirituality

cannot be limited only to our religious, cultural and social activities of life but it possibly

goes beyond such practices. The purpose of my meditation (Dua) is to cultivate humility

for humanity, and surrendering to Almighty Allah by seeking His love, care and

blessings. To this end, one needs to have good intentions by following the 'right path-

Siratal Mustaqeem' so as to develop 'Taqwa- piety' (avoiding all harmful- forbidden

things to self/others) because the dignity of human being is only within Taqwa, and it

comes through good deeds and remembrance of Allah by following His path.

My way of cultivating spirituality helped me explore understanding,

emotions/sensations and develop Taqwa within me. As a part of my inner-calling for

spiritual experience, I came across with the practice of Vipassana (a kind of Ugha).

Initially, I was a bit reluctant towards the kind of *chilah* (10 days practice of meditation).

Soon I came to realize that this practice does not need to follow any recitation/ verbalization and it also does not fall within any form of religious beliefs. For me, it appeared to be a scientific way of observing sensations on my body.

My experience shows that Vipassana meditation is a universal practice (for every human being) to raise consciousness. I begin to feel that the very interesting characteristic of this meditation seems to be beyond the worldly boundaries. It reminded me of Iqbal's concept of Khudi (the self-knowing) and how to empower it with practices of purity (Nor & Bahroni, 2011). With its regular practice, I begin to feel that it is helping me in developing my concentration (building healthy emotions) not only in my worldly activities but also in my regular practices of Dua. Without following any rites and rituals, it empowers me with humility by simply focusing on moment to moment sensations (arising and passing away) throughout the body that ultimately leads me into realm of deep consciousness.

Arriving at this point of experience, I begin to realize that such spiritual practices seem to be a means of transformation at personal level that must have facilitated me in my transformative journey with this doctoral project. This realization makes me grateful to Nepal for providing me multiple ways of consciousness that I experienced in my life. Perhaps, it could not be possible if I was unable to come to this peaceful country for the prime purpose of my study as a researcher/teacher educator in search of morphing self/beyond in the field of teacher education and research practices.

Writing as/for Understanding Multiple Selves

I am writing autobiographically, and it puts me in a process of framing identity, re/constructing and re/shaping my multiple selves. It makes me vulnerable un/wittingly

and provides me with a space to bring multiple selves into surface that was long been hidden. Writing in such a way helps me narrating my histories, cultures and social identity. It also helps me reflect on my fragmented memories one after another which I had in different stages of life.

While narrating such memories of my multiple selves, I adopted *'inquiry as a meditative practice'*. In so doing, I detached myself 'outwardly' from my family and friends (living thousands of miles away) and un/knowingly it connected the self 'inwardly' and spiritually through my feelings, emotions and thoughts with everyone and beyond. Entering into a space like this, I start feeling that I am not a researcher/teacher educator, a meditative practitioner/Ughaist all the time: I am a son, a father, a husband, a brother, a friend and so on and so forth. The list of my identities (the selves) is long and the priorities are changing moment to moment, yet the purpose of transformative journey seems to be constant.

Closure and my Way Forward

In this chapter, I have come up with a number of research agendas and related research questions in order to understand my research problem of culturally disempowering and a narrowly conceived nature of teacher education and research practices in Pakistan with somehow technical interest of education (Habermas, 1972). In so doing, I have explored my own experiences as a student, teacher/instructor, vice/principal and teacher educator/research supervisor, and raised deep seated issues and problems related to the practices of teacher education in Pakistan. I came with the key themes of my inquiry as dictating leadership styles, a narrow view of curriculum images, teacher-centered pedagogical approaches, and limited view of learning outcome to assess

research practices inspired by epistemic singularity/absolutism. This inquiry led me to experience a reformative period and thereby establishing the significance of these agendas with my visions for a broader view of teacher education and research practices. In the next chapter, I am positioning myself within research literature and tend to link my lived experiences with multiple ways to raise consciousness in order to improve personal capacities towards experiencing transformation at self/beyond.