

“ETHICAL ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON TEACHER EDUCATORS’ AND STUDENT TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS”

Nuzhat Mushtaq^{*1}; Syeda Sana Atique²

^{*1,2} M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Education, Iqra University, Karachi, Pakistan;

^{*1}mushtaqnuzhat14@gmail.com; ²sana.atique@iqra.edu.pk

Corresponding Author: *

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ABSTRACT

Ethical issues are recurrently created in Teacher Education. The purpose of this research was to disclose the perceptions of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers in relation with the implementation of ethical values and facing ethical issues at Teacher Education Institutes. In this qualitative study, Phenomenological research design was applied. Ten Teacher Educators and Twenty-seven Student Teachers participated from Three reputed Private Teacher Education Institutes of Karachi through semi structured interview and Focus group discussion to share their unique experiences respectively. The gathered data were analyzed by Thematic analysis. After the data analysis six themes and eleven sub-themes have been emerged. Intrinsic motivation is an integral part of a person's capacity to follow professional ethics. Teacher Educators faced lack of proper appreciation due to which turnover was increased in the institutes. On the other hand, student teachers feel discomfort from an inappropriate behaviour of Teachers Educators. It has been recommended that HEC should make a strategic plan to address ethical issues at Teacher Education Institutes.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Professional Ethics in Education, Teacher Education, Code of Ethics, Ethical Issues.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research topic

Ethics is the collection of moral norms that direct the behaviour and attitude of an individual. It is subset of philosophy which is related to moral values of humans who conduct according to right or wrong and good or bad reasons (Alotaibi & Muramalla, 2018; Fayaz et al., 2023). Some of the studies have reported respect, responsibility and integrity as part of workplace ethics should be included in the code of conduct. These three elements make teachers effective and successful professionals (Mooman, Ali & Lashari, 2023). It was recommended in the study that Teacher Educational Institutes should focus on communicating professional ethics in the context of workplace norms (Shahzadi, et al., 2020; Lashari et al., 2023). There is a need at Teacher Education Institutes to design courses of Ethical philosophy for Teacher Education Programs. In addition to this simultaneously set the code of conduct for teaching

profession in order to maintain ethical flexibility at workplace for Teachers (Teacher Educators) and Students (Future teachers) (Lashari et al., 2023). This strategy is evident to support professional practice and increase quality teaching. This leads to exploring ethical issues in the classroom and outside the classroom. Eventually it will be useful for the Teachers to develop encouraging environment within the institute that is essential for building effective teaching and learning process (Khan, S. N et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

Poor Ethical practices by the teachers are creating stress and effecting their job satisfaction and spoiling their performance (khan, 2020). In appropriate professional practice of teachers at institutes triggers anxiety, job fear, decline in performance and affects students' learning as well.

Ethical problems are initiated negatively by interactions of teacher with students and with colleagues. (Khan, et al., 2020). Higher Education Institutes are ranked according to their set professional code of conduct and standards. Teacher Education or professional training institutes are associated with the production of future teachers as student teachers, need to consider perception and experiences of both student and teacher regarding workplace ethics and their issues. (Shahzadi, et al., 2020)

Thus the gap has been found that the Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers' perception about the implementation of Ethical values at institute has not been very much focused in Pakistan, there are lots of studied has been done on the professional ethics and role of teachers but no attention has been given to the Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers' perceptions that what are their experiences regarding the implementation of ethical values at institute and what kind of interactions they have between them.

Therefore, this has taken an importance to explore the perceptions of the Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers towards implementation of ethical values of institute and expose to the ethical issues.

Research Objectives

Main objectives of the research are as follow:

1. To explore the perceptions of Teacher Educators towards Ethical values of the Institute.
2. To investigate the interaction of Teacher Educators with Student Teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

RQ1. What are the perceptions of Teacher Educators towards Ethical values of the Institute?

RQ2. What is the interaction between Teacher Educators and Student Teachers in relation with the implementation of Ethical values at Institute.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework has been considered as the important component and a key support which gives a strong base and importance to the research (Creswell, 2013). The present study is linked to MacIntyre's Moral theory, which gives a meaningful base and supports the present study.

MacIntyre's Moral Theory

According to MacIntyre's Aristotelian tradition human life is considered as social with respect to nature. In order to justify the moral responsibility and authority, the generous individualism search moral rules to make them able for doing correct decisions morally. According to MacIntyre belongings, virtues, and their relation have distinguished position. (Higgins, C., 2003).

MacIntyre's Moral Theory and Professional Ethics

According to MacIntyre's Moral Theory, the nature of professional ethics is related to teacher's motivation and their identification. Observation and inquiry Revealed the understanding of teaching not only as a service but as a choice of teachers for their success and satisfaction. Under any profession, person's desires and their area of interest matters as what they want to become?

Important suggestion of this open and practical theory, particularly instinct needs a basic recognition of professional ethics. This theory helped the professionals to apply moral values under the concept of professional ethics in relation with rules of professional conduct and inquiry of moral issues at workplace. At workplace professionals need to understand the good of the individual or society at large. If we go through MacIntyre's concept as moral virtues, then this thought will not be difficult to comprehend to conception of workplace ethics (Lashari et al., 2023). Rather than overview the rules with deontologists or results with utilitarian's theory recalls another way, the virtue, of making sure that workers perform the correct deeds by others. (Higgins, 2003).

Kant's Theory on Ethics

Kant believed that there is a single obligation, which he called the "categorical imperative", and is derived from the concept of duty. The theory culminates in

ethical issues management (Bukhari et al., 2023). As the senior-level practice of public relations, ethical issues management can lead to a more credible reputation for the organization and the field of public relations (Shaikh et al., 2023). Public relations, and therefore issues management, contribute to the effectiveness of the organization when conducted symmetrically (Bowen, 2004).

Professional Ethics, Teaching and Teacher Education

Ethics at workplace includes certain 1) standards that have been implemented and approved by organization; 2) the readiness of personnel to be busy in discussion with organizational units; 3) Ethics are applied as procedures and instructions for making connections among all staff of any organization. In the same way the teaching profession also requires the same ethical values applied at workplace. It is necessary for the guidance of teachers (Bushra et al., 2024). Ethical values make bonds among individuals in social, moral and legal aspects. Teaching ethics are used as reference for teachers to behave in and out of the educational surrounding. Due to this reason, it is said that teaching ethics are bonding (Kusumaningrum, D. E et al., 2019).

Professional Ethics and Personal Ethics

Professional ethics and personal ethics are related. Teachers who were asked for the professional and personal domain of ethics, they showed their point of view that focus on rules and values. In application point of view, values and rules of ethics are internal motivation and direction (Caetano, A., & Silva, M. D. L., 2009).

Professional Ethics and Teacher's Role (Teacher Educator)

Like other professions, the profession of teaching is also changing day by day. The teacher is responsible to do many things at a time. It is mandatory that a part from academics and professional knowledge, they should also be concerned with workplace ethics. (Shahzadi, U et al., 2020). Good for all environment at workplace can be ensured when workers implement code of conduct. For implementation, it is necessary to acquire knowledge and practice skills in order to create conducive teaching and learning platform. (Bartlett, 2019)

Educational institutes plan and design their code of conduct for the betterment of educational process as well as environment of workplace. Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan developed the

concept of primary rules of ethics that are related to morality, conduct and behavior to produce productive atmosphere in the institutes of Higher Education. (Shahzadi, U et al., 2020)

Ethical Issues

In Slovakia, under ethical concerns prospective teachers were dishearten with their career choice, unsatisfactory about Teacher Education and fee structure of institute. Novice teachers felt difficulty to handle challengeable students and new demand at workplace regarding workplace performance. (Gluchmanová, M., 2017). Ethical problems also initiated outside of the classroom that include academic autonomy. It was discussed that most noticed ethical problems and conflicts develop due to colleague mis interactions. (Rich, J. M., 1985). It was identified that certain values should be kept in control to avoid the conflicts among teachers: These values are defense against damage, respect for integrity, respect for autonomy, justice, authenticity. For instance, teachers are involved in discussing students' families, underestimate school policy, favoritism, ignoring students' choices about course content and learning strategies, disrespect of coworkers and publically taunting the students. (Gluchmanová, M., 2017). Collegial lack of enthusiasm here refers to collegial negativity. It was assumed that student teacher shared their experiences about those teachers who talk about other teachers in negative way and leg pull. (Lindqvist, H et al., 2021).

Within Pakistani Context, It is an extra opportunity which is provided by someone, in teaching profession, it is found among teaching staff from heads and administration. In some cases, heads favour certain special teachers and give them free hand in meeting deadlines, performing tasks and taking leaves. (Rose, A., 2021) In appropriate professional practice of teachers at institutes triggers anxiety, job fear, decline in performance and affects students' learning as well. Ethical problems are initiated negatively interactions of teacher with students and with colleagues. (Khan, S. N et al., 2020).

Methodology

Research Philosophy

The research process for qualitative research is evolving. (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N., 2016). Qualitative research provides researchers

basics to examine problem with reference to the communication with participants. (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). This study employed a qualitative research approach to probe the phenomenon of perceptions of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers towards the implementation of ethical values in relation with exploration of issues at Teacher Education Institutes of Karachi private sector. It was pointed out that the qualitative research method is intended to increase keen thoughts of definite phenomenon through manner, judgment, and emotions in making meaning on the phenomenon that What is the experience of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers regarding the implementation of ethical values and facing ethical issues at institute.

Research Purpose

This study was an exploratory study in which Perceptions of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers were explored towards implementation of ethical values in the institutes. Furthermore, the purpose of exploratory study was to ascertain experiences of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers about their interaction in relation with ethical values and ethical issues in the institute.

Research Design

The present study employed Phenomenological Research Design, which explores the same lived experiences of the people regarding the same phenomena. In this study, phenomenological approach helped the researcher to get reliable data about the workplace ethical issues faced by Teacher Educators at Teacher Education Institutes and how they implement the ethical values at institute.

Data Source

In this research study Data source was primary. Data was collected through Participants i.e. Teacher Educators and student teacher from Teacher Education Institutes private sector.

Target Population

The participants were purposefully selected based on a minimum experience of five years and maximum of ten years in order to elicit solid responses from the participants. Ten Teacher Educators and Twenty-seven Student teachers from the ADE (Associate Degree of Education) Programs of Three Teacher Education Institutes of private sector were taken. Purposeful sampling allowed the

researchers to have rich information required to satisfy the research questions.

3.8 Sample Size

In this study ten Teacher Educators and twenty-seven Student Teachers were selected from three private Teacher Education Institutes.

Data Collection Techniques/ Tools

Interview

For the data collection, the researcher asked open-ended semi-structured questions to the Teacher Educators about their lived and unique experiences in their contexts. Semi structured interview is one of the powerful instruments for data collection in qualitative research. The purpose of selecting semi-structured interview was that the researcher has a proper interview guide to follow and have flexibility to ask questions in between to gather in-depth data on the perceptions of Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers towards ethical values and interaction between them at institute.

Focus Group Discussion

Data was collected from ten Teacher Educators through semi-structured interviews and twenty-seven student teachers through three focus group discussions of three private Teacher Educational Institutes in Karachi. Twenty-seven Student teachers were divided into three focus groups and asked for their perceptions about the interaction of Teacher Educators with student Teachers in relation with the implementation of ethical values. An e-mail was directed to the potential participants seeking their consent for participating in a research study. Upon receiving the consent, each participant communicated and a suitable setting and time was decided for the interview. Preceding the interview, the researcher asked the participants to fill in a demographic form of applicable background data. Data collection instrument like interview protocol and focus group discussion interview was designed by a researcher itself. This instrument was shared with three research experts for attaining more confidence in the phenomenological research. Unimportant or unhelpful questions were deleted after reviewed by experts to keep the process crisp.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was done as Teacher Educators and Students teachers were selected

belonging to ADE. Teacher Education Programs of three Private Institutes of Karachi.

Data analysis Technique

Data analysis involved the following steps:

1. First, the data obtained from the individual interviews and focus group was transcribed to get an overall idea.
2. Next, noteworthy statements and phrases connecting to the phenomenon were pulled out from each transcript.
3. Connotations and meanings depending on the interpretations of the researcher are then framed from the important statements.
4. Then the meanings are structured into themes, theme clusters, and theme categories by placing data into a table form.
5. A color-coded system was used for analysis to highlight recurring themes or categories. Then, an in-depth and comprehensive descriptive analysis is written of the experience and phenomena will be formed. (Brown, J et al., 2006).

Ethical Consideration

1. Participants were asked for consent prior to research. They were able to withdraw at any point of time.
2. The names of participants were changed while putting data into software in order to make sure about their anonymity.
3. The research objectives were clearly communicated to the participants.
4. Data collection methods and procedures were shared with the participants.
5. Transcription of the interviews were shared with the participants.

Three verification methods were used to maintain the validity of data i.e I. literature notes, II. Return to one or more participants for cross checking, III. University members and experts.

(Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N., 2016). In order to find out consistency/ inconsistency of findings in terms of trustworthiness researcher has been done member checking and thick description of respondents' views.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis has been completed according to the specified process of the Creswell and Poth (2016). After the transcription of the data the Researcher started the thematic analysis process. The data has been collected by doing Semi-structured interviews with the help of interview protocol and focus group discussions and the themes & sub themes as textual description have been produced from the interview and focus group discussion transcription and by thematic analysis process the themes have been created as structural description and the all process has been deliberated below.

With the help of the themes and sub themes the researcher has written the "textual description" a brief responses has been written in which it has been addressed that what the respondents of interview and focus group discussions have experienced towards the Ethical issues in Teacher Education Institutes and which kind of effects they have faced, all the themes and sub themes have been discussed in the textual description. After textual description, the next step was to formulate structural descriptions in which it has been discussed that how the respondents have experienced the situations and how do these situations happened and further what is the reflection of the Researcher on the study setting or the literature review. Lastly, at the end of the textual description, Researcher has written about the core of the experiences in the shape of paragraphs that what were perceptions of the Teacher Educators towards ethical values implemented in different situations and ethical issues have been written in the form of conclusion or the findings.

Frequency distribution of the demographics

Table# 1(A)

Frequency distribution of the demographics (for Interview)

Respondent	Year of teaching Experience	Gender	Qualification	Professional qualification
TE1	9	Female	MPhil	M.Ed
TE2	10	Female	Ph.D.	M.Ed.
TE3	8	Male	Ph.D.	B.Ed/M.Ed
TE4	10	Female	Ph.D.	B.Ed.
TE5	5	Male	MPhil	MA/Education
TE6	5	Female	MSc	M.Ed.
TE7	5	Female	MSc	B.Ed.
TE8	5	Male	MSc	M.Ed.
TE9	5	Female	MPhil	M.Ed
TE10	10	Male	Ph.D.	M.Ed

Table# 1(A)

Frequency distribution of the demographics (for Focus Group Discussion)

Respondent	Year of learning Experience	Gender	Academic background
FG1	2	Female	ADE
FG2	2	Female	ADE
FG3	2	Female	ADE.

Result

The present research shows that this study guided two research questions which were about perceptions of Teacher Educators towards Ethical values of Institute and what is the interaction between Teacher Educators and Student Teachers in relation with implantation of Ethical values at

Institute. For the data collection the researcher used open ended interview questions by asking ten questions which were related to the direction of the Research questions. The results have been presented in this section by research questions and themes and subthemes which have been derived from the interview and focus group discussions (see Table 2).

Table #2

Research Question Themes and Subthemes

RQ	Themes / Sub themes
What are the perceptions of the Teacher Educators towards Ethical values of Institute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional ethics Rules and regulations Moral standards • Personal ethics Behaviour and interaction among staff Ineffective environment Intrinsic motivation • Favoritism • Lack of appreciation • Boundaries in Teacher Educator- Student Teacher Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Boundaries • Cultural Boundaries • Emotional Boundaries • Focus on exhibiting and managing integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work for acceptance and mutual respect • Be honest, committed and loyalty
What is the interaction between Teacher Educators and Student Teachers in relation with the implementation of Ethical values at Institutes?	

Discussion of the Themes and sub-Themes

Professional Ethics

Majority of the respondents shared that professional ethics are different norms and set standards of certain ethical values that are implemented in any institute. According to **TE9**, “professional ethics are moral standards that person must follow like dealing with students and colleagues.”

Rules and Regulations

According to the **TE9**, “it is defined as the moral code that guides the behavior to the employees with respect to what is right and wrong in regards to conduct the decision matter like ethical values for the workplace it should be necessary”.

Moral Standards

Moral standards are basically related with human behaviour that is said to be right or wrong in different perspective. **TE2** and **TE8** stated that,

“moral standards are guidelines that have for the kinds of behaviours they consider to be ethically acceptable and unacceptable”

Personal Ethics

Furthermore, **TE4** expressed that, “, personal ethics are set by you it’s your personal settings that you follow, it’s my line of action and I don’t cross this line and I am not letting one to cross them.”

Behaviour and interaction among staff

TE9, stated, “if we feel that the specific teacher always does that thing, miss interact or do backbiting or pass conversation from here and there so other teachers be aware about him/ her and avoid to communicate with her/ him.”

Ineffective Environment

Environment in any educational institute where teacher training takes place play an important role in relation with workplace ethics. If ethical values and moral standards are not followed

properly, the environment become ineffective for teachers, students and heads as well. In view of **TE2** and **TE9**, “Misunderstandings among colleagues due to lack of communication and instruction properly it will create negative things among them. Professional life suffers and hurdles will come.”

Intrinsic Motivation

TE6 shared that, “I am a kind of person who become motivated intrinsically, I do work and follow values of institute because I feel myself comfortable to implement it, it's not meant that it is same for all.”

Favoritism

TE4 expressed that, “when you have been passed your struggling phase at workplace so automatically, they favor you on different places and at this moment new comers consider this favoritism and negativity is created in new inducted teachers about senior ones.”

Lack of Appreciation

TE8 shared that, “it gives motivation but on same place any kind of appreciation also doesn't exist.”

Boundaries in Teacher Educator – Student Teacher Relationships

Relationship of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher is pious. There are certain boundaries that our respondents like Teacher Educators and Student Teacher both shared with different experiences. **TE1** shared that, “Whatever I teach I give examples of real life. But my students don't know too much about personal life. Even I don't like to stay connected with student without any valid reasons. Respondents of **FG1** discussed, “ST 4: Here our relationship with teacher gets developed who are very kind and they don't even scold us even we are on mistake, they easily forgive as compare to those who always scolding so we also avoid to talk to them. The polite nature of teacher really does matter of the teacher.”

Communication boundaries

FG3 expressed that, ST 1: “We get proper guidance. Like recently, I have clash with my teacher. I have just said normally a sentence but she took that sentence very seriously. She got angry and scold me but later she explained me that if you want to keep your word, you have to say that thing in a proper way. She said the way you say it just because of it I have shown my reaction on it.” ST 7: “Some students get

demotivated because teacher say that you are not good in learning you will get failed, your way of writing is not good, you are very dull. Learn from that student. So in this way student gets demotivated from inside that I am not good enough and that teachers is praising other student.”

Cultural boundaries

In view of **FG3**, ST 9: “One time it happened with me when I was on training. So, I asked students about their culture and they all start fighting according to them this fight happened because I asked about their culture.”

Emotional boundaries

FG1 discussed, ST 7: “Teachers are not giving that much time that student build up good relation with them. Even if students want to make it but some teacher keep the distance so student don't go beyond it.” ST 4: “Actually, it happens that even if we texting them on the occasions like Eid so the old teachers are not replying to us so that really down our motivation.”

Focus on exhibiting and managing integrity

FG1 shared, “one of our teachers doesn't listen to us carefully when we are addressing our problems and after that make restrictions on that.”

Work for acceptance and mutual respect

FG3 explained, ST7: “In institute, student do have their respect. If there is no one will listen to them they (student) will feel that I have no respect. In institute it should be happen like that every student's opinion should be listen and encouraged”.

Be Honest, Committed and loyal

FG2 discussed, ST3: “Here it is happened like that if we have personal issue and we tell them that like our problem can come in front of everyone without mentioning our name. They cooperate with us in this way. They discuss in that way the problem is discussed with the class and the problem also resolved, everything gets settle down.”

Discussion

After interpretation of the data the findings directed that professional ethics comprised of certain rules and regulations and moral standards which are the key requirement of the institutes. These rules and norms are set by organization of the institute that bound the employees to follow it. According to

Vitolla, F (2021) professional ethics has code of ethics which is a formal documentation in which certain guidelines are provided to the employees and shareholders that has to be implemented in the institute. Respondents shared that there is lack of proper appreciation for Teachers Educators in the institute, in few places' appreciation is found up to lesser extent but no incentives are given to the teachers. Teachers whose performance is triggered by appreciation, leave the job in case no appreciation. Vitolla, F et al (2021) shared that appreciation and rewards are essential part of teaching and learning process, in the absence of appreciation employees become demotivated towards their performance. Turnover is increased. Respondents of the interview stated that Teacher Educators educate student teachers without keeping in mind any culture difference among them, they trained all the students with justice but some student teachers from different background try to dominate on others, this creates cultural barrier. Focus group shared that novice teachers takes time to mingle with culture of present institute. Khan, S. N et al., (2020) also mentioned that few Teachers show willingness to share different cultural aspects on occasional days in the class in order to expose different cultures to the students. If students respect all the cultures, they can better communicate, respect and cooperate with other. According to the respondents of interview emotional attachment between teacher and student make the teaching and learning decorum towards negativity or positivity. Emotional involvement is effective when there are certain limitations and the element of respect is found. Focus group shared that old teachers and novice both have no interest to get attached emotionally with students as old has less enthusiasm to involve in students and new has fear to be mingle with students. According to Lindqvist, H (2019) mentioned that Trainee teachers have emotions like anxiety, distress and desperateness which are managed by Teacher Educators by coping strategies. Respondents of interview described that If teachers follow the ethical values of institute, they can inculcate those values to students, then these students being a future teacher transfer this ethics to their students. Everyone has its own ideology about ethical values, it is not necessary to match with ethical and moral values of institute. Focus group mentioned that teachers who do not listen students carefully and show negligible behaviour, make them feel disrespected. Few teachers are committed and

loyal to them and maintained integrity in profession. According to Shahzadi, U et al., (2020) professionalism is lie under the umbrella of loyalty, commitment, honesty and respect for others.

Conclusion

After the interpretation of the data the findings reveals that professional ethics is organized by an organization and set moral standards by an institute. On the other hand, personal ethics are beliefs and internal moral structure of a person which can be reflected in profession. Intrinsic motivation is an integral part of a person's capacity to follow professional ethics. The findings suggested that Every Teacher Educators has its own ideology regarding the implementation of ethical values that is not necessary to align with the ethical values of institute but integrity, commitment, loyalty and mutual respect with Student Teachers are the essential part of professional Ethics.

Limitations and future direction

The current study had some limitations which are mentioned below, and these must be covered in future researches.

- 1) This research was limited to share the experiences of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers of Private Teacher Education Institutes so in future the researcher should focus to receive data from the other members like administration and Management and broaden the research area.
- 2) This present research was limited to only a small sample of the participants due to less time so in future the researcher should take more and more participants to know their perceptions towards the implementation of the ethical values.
- 3) The study revealed that data was collected from only three private institutes of Karachi, Pakistan so in future the researcher should increase the sample size of the research to cover other institutes too.
- 4) The study has no findings about public sector institutes so in future the researcher should focus on knowing the perceptions of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers of Public Teacher Education Institutes.

Recommendation

The research result and conclusion deliver this recommendation which are given below:

- 1) The study recommended that there needs to be a program where the Teacher Educator is accountable for both his or her own ethical behaviour and the ethical growth of the Student Teacher.
- 2) There must be a strategic plan to address ethical issues at Teacher Education Institutes.
- 3) The findings showed that there is lack of awareness and reluctance in the implementation of ethical values at institute, thus the HEC bound Teacher Education Institutes to arrange mandatory workshop on workplace ethics for Teacher Educators, Student Teachers and Administration.

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