

## Studying the Problems and Concerns of Educational Managers in the Education Organization in Mazar Sharif- Afghanistan

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### ABSTRACT

One of the main factors in effectiveness of educational management is diagnosis of the problems in front of educational managers. If the educational managers of Education Organization have enough knowledge of daily challenges and concerns, their management will be more effective. By proposing this hypothesis that the main problems of educational managers in Mazar Sharif is related to the structure of educational system, lack of professional management and lack of accurate curriculum, the present study deals with this issue. This study has been done through mixed method and makes use of library sources and field study through interview with some authorities and trainers. The results of this study can help the educational managers in Mazar Sharif including, enhancement of collaborative management, centralized management, stability in management, and training.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational System, Managers of Education Organization, Collaborative Management, Bureaucracy, Management Stability, Decentralized Management of Human Force and Reduction of Bureaucracy

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, management is one of the most important factors in survival, growth and development in various dimensions of a society. The need to management and leadership is tangible and critical in all fields of social, economic and political activities. This demand is very significant especially in educational systems since education has essential role in the society and its survival and effective management and leadership is the prologue of preparation and implementation of effective and qualified educational programs.

Compared to other managements, educational management requires the experience and power of learning along with the ability to correct the decision-making regulations of educational managers. This management can influence the improvement of employees' activities and thus, improvement of the quality of the organization's production.

Educational management course should be locally investigated like other courses of human sciences to be able to study it proportionate to the philosophical and social infrastructure dominating society. In every society, diagnosis of the threats, challenges and problems in front of educational managers is very significant for fulfillment of effective management and qualitative improvement of educational system since it is possible to search for educational opportunities by diagnosis of the problems of educational structure.

Unfortunately in most parts of Afghanistan, the issues related to educational management and logical strategies for these managers have not been considered much despite the urgent need to this issue. Thus, managerial approach faces with serious problems both in qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Some factors such as official corruption, stylish attitude, and priority of relations to regulations, lack of attention to professionalism and careerism of the school are more reflective of personal impressions and subjectivism rather than encouraging the application of educational management. Thus, a number of educational managers in Afghanistan lack scientific attitude and incline.

### 2. Statement of the problem

It mentioned previously, insufficient attention to educational management in educational institutions of Afghanistan is one of the factors preventing development of scientific infrastructures and the main barrier for qualitative growth of education in this country. Lack of expertise, weakness in scientific capacity and un-professionalization of educational managers are the main challenges of educational system in Afghanistan. Furthermore, official corruption and priority of relations in educational institutions have challenged more the presence of honest and sympathetic managers. For example, it sometimes happen that management positions in education organization are mainly assigned based on affiliations and sometimes through positions' buy and sell. Thus, manipulation of legal regulations and assignments of managers based on relations in educational centers are the serious problems of educational field in Afghanistan. It is obvious that study and investigation of the current status in educational management is a critical factor for diagnosis of the problems of educational managers. Undoubtedly, the study of this issue can help us by more diagnosis of challenges that prevent cultural development in the country. In the present study, the problems and issues of educational managers in educational

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institutions of Mazar Sharif have been studied, however, the conditions that educational institutions have in Mazar Sharif can be extended to other cities of Afghanistan.

### 3. The significance of the study

To achieve effective and qualitative management, the study of the factors that prevent effective management is very significant. Thus, diagnosis of challenges and barriers of educational management is one of the ways for development of education and enhance the new managerial structure in this area. Concerning the rapid quantitative growth of education in Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>, the qualitative study of the educational management is very significant. Thus, to enhance the educational fields in schools, the authors and researchers should pay attention to precise diagnosis of the problems of educational managers who are the “curriculum developers and leaders” of this area.

Furthermore, since education is a good ground for weakening of people and changing essential infrastructures in society, the study of the problems of educational managers, scientifically and theoretically, plays an effective and significant role in scientific- cultural development and local knowledge production. Thus, it is important for the studied issue.

### 4. Research background

Based on field studies and direct contact of the researcher with scientific centers especially universities, i.e. Balkh University (state university), Arya University, Molana University and Sa'adat higher education institution (Non-Governmental Universities), president of Balkh and some schools, it was found that so far no scientific study has dealt with the problems and issues of educational managers in Mazar Sharif.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

In this study, mixed research methodology has been study. Scientific study can be divided into four categories in terms of approach and materials including mixed method, “mixed method is such that the researcher uses both library resources and the approach and attitudes of other authors and scholars and direct observations and personal notes. In this method, deep interviews, questionnaire distribution, texts’ content analysis, discourse analysis are used along with the existing approaches and theories in science” [1].

### 6. Research hypotheses

- The main problems of educational managers in Mazar Sharif relate to the structure of educational system, its programs and methods.
- It seems that there is a meaningful relation between the quality of education and presence of official corruption in educational institutions of Mazar Sharif.
- Educational institutions in Mazar Sharif lack scientific-based management. It seems that this is due to lack of professionalization and bureaucracy of educational management in Mazar Sharif.

### 7. Research objectives

**7.1. The main aim:** the investigation of the problems of educational problems of the managers of education organization with the aim of fundamental and essential change in educational structure and curriculum development in Mazar Sharif

#### 7.2. Secondary aims:

- Fundamental change in education management of Mazar Sharif
- Change in quality management in education of Mazar Sharif
- Provision of practical solutions for authorities to change the attitudes and balance educational approaches.

## 8. The study of essential definitions and concepts of the study

### 8.1. Definition of management

In an advanced society, the objectives of an organization cannot be fulfilled without accurate plans, coordinated and regular institutions and control of collective activities. Thus, it is possible to define management as science and art of coordinating leadership and control of collective activities to fulfill the goal or shared goals.

The scholars of management have proposed various definitions for management, some of them are as follow:

Management means data collection and regulation for performing organizational tasks [2].

Management means the coordination of human and material resources to achieve organizational objectives [3].

In another definition, management means creation or provision of a proper environment for organizational people toward organizational objectives (ibid). One of the branches of management is educational management, thus, in this section, the educational management will be defined and the tasks and approaches in this field will be discussed.

### 8.2. Definition of educational management

Educational management generally means planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, supervising and evaluating the education process. However, management specifically refers to:

<sup>1</sup> Now, in Afghanistan, 11.5 million students go to school, 42% of which are girls

- Educational management is the process of coordinating the human talents and utilization of environmental conditions for educational goals.
- Educational management is the social processing that requires creation, maintenance, motivation, controlling and unifying human and material forces that officially and unofficially form and organize in a unit system to fulfill the educational objectives and aims.
- Educational management, guidance, social working and creation of a proper environment for educational activity.
- Concerning what was mentioned so far, educational management usually is considered with its special meaning, i.e. management of that part of activities of educational organizations that directly is associated with education and learning including the activities related to educational programs, materials and textbooks, materials and educational instruments, guidance and educational consultant, complementary educational activities, teachers and students' affairs [4].

### **8.3. Significance of educational management**

Education in each country is the best instrument for changing values and behaviors and makes the individuals prepare for social, economic services and individual welfare proportionate to their talents and wishes. Thus, from the last century, no country has passed development and progress procedures without development in educational institutions and educated and experienced educational managers. Nowadays, it is the age of management and leadership and the success of institutions and organizations largely depend on the efficiency and effectiveness of management.

The structure of educational system in each country includes a collection of demands of official organizations of that country and the performance of education system that is the responsibility of educational managers is not only important in terms of economic and social progress but also in terms of the effect that it has on occupational mobility and expectations it has determining significance. By increase of the number of students in different educational levels, establishment of new educational centers and schools, the employment of more teachers and more investment becomes significant. On the other hand, the significance of decision making, policy making, improved quality and creation of equal educational opportunities for everyone made the role of educational system management more obvious (ibid).

### **8.4. Aims of educational management**

In every society, the main aim of education is to train every individual according to the pattern of cultural, political, religious and social values of itself and nurture an appropriate individual to the society. The objectives of education play three main roles in educational management: first it directs the education process, secondly, it creates the motivation for movement and activity and thirdly, it creates criteria for control and evaluation of educational activities. Educational management should first know the objectives of education investigate and use them. The followings are some of these activities:

- Attention to individual differences and helping the discovering of students' talents.
- Making desired human relations and mutual respect between manager and members of educational organization.
- Guiding the members of organization of diagnosis and better perception of objectives
- Guiding, cooperating, helping, reinforcing and supporting the members of educational organization
- Cooperation of individuals in decision making and making shared responsibilities in educational organization
- Diagnosis of demands and solving problems of students to achieve educational objectives
- Helping to improvement of education process
- Helping the individuals in educational organization to achieve the objectives of education.
- Providing the desired facilities for creation and innovation with the aim of the intellectual growth of organization's member
- Coordinating between resources and activities of educational organization [4].

### **8.5. Triple management skills**

Robert Katz has classified the demands of managers to human, perceptual and technical skills. Skill refers to the abilities of individuals that are reflected in performance and tasks. Skill means the ability to effective use of knowledge and personal experience.

Human skill: it means the ability and power of working with people in performing tasks through them. In this skill, the managers are able to perceive the motives of employees and use their demands in effective leadership.

Perceptual skill: it means the ability of understanding the total complexities of the organization and the imagination of all elements constituting work and organizational activity as a unit in system. In other words, the ability of perception and diagnosis of the fact that various functions of organization depend on each other and change in each section necessarily influence other sections.

Technical skill: it means the ability and knowledge in performing certain special tasks whose prerequisite is skill in application of special techniques and instruments and practical competency in behavior and activity. Technical skill is obtained through education, training and experience. Managers usually learn these skills in training courses such as knowledge, planning methods, budgeting, control, accounting, finance etc. The obvious feature of this skill is that it is possible to achieve the highest degree of competency and expertise in it. The managers with this skill are able to receive

information and analyze the organizational issues and prepare plans and offer solutions concerning the organizational objectives (ibid).

### **9. Functions of educational management**

Henry Fayol, the first individual who has divided the management duties, believes that the essential managerial tasks are:

- Control: it means caring about the fact that whether all programs and operations are done according to regulations or not.
- Planning: it means determining the objective, findings and building ways and instruments that makes fulfilling the goals possible and prediction of the works that should be done in future.
- Organizing: it means the allocation of individuals, resources and facilities between individuals and various units of organization.
- Coordination: it means the unification of all facilities and material and human resources and activities that are necessary for organizational goal [5].

### **10. Specification of educational manager**

According to the majority of the authors of educational management, educational manager should have full knowledge of management and its principles and theories; he should have some specifications such as:

- He should perceive mutual relations between school, family and society and don't ignore them when performing his tasks
- He should be familiar with the thoughts and theories of management and leadership and use them properly
- He should have informed and scientific attitude as educational manager
- He should have technical, human and perceptual skills in management
- He should know the methods and techniques of teaching
- He should benefit from physical, mental and personality health
- He should have sufficient knowledge in educational sciences and psychology and can guide the teachers
- He should know the educational system of his country and be informed of its historical revolutions
- He should be informed of the philosophy, values, objectives and aims
- He should be informed of the multiple educational, cultural and social responsibilities and tasks
- He should have at least five years of educational experience [4].

### **11. The definition of educational management in national documents of Afghanistan**

Educational management means the process of effective use of material and human resources in organizing and planning to achieve organizational objectives and educational institutions for development and enhancement of knowledge

### **12. The responsibility of educational managers in executive realm of ministry of education of Afghanistan**

Some of the tasks and duties of educational managers of schools in Mazar Sharif according to reform of civil services concerning delegation of competencies and their responsibilities have been considered in the regulations of ministry of knowledge, including the following:

- Adjustment of Public Policy of Ministry of Education according to constitution and education law
- Monitoring and controlling law and regulation Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
- Developing and improving the quantity and quality of finance and administrative regulations for modern education based on constitution
- Preparing report to the Minister (minister, deputy).
- Implementing the orders of the minister (ministers, deputy) in accordance with law and regulations.
- Practical guiding and participation in general budget of ministry
- Practical tips in constitutional structure of Ministry of Education according to reform
- Presenting budget to Minister for approval
- Defending the budget and constitution to ministry of finance and the Bureau of the Finance Ministry found [6].

### **13. Views on management education in Mazar Sharif**

Concerning the study of various resources on the issues and problems of education management of educational managers that is done in Mazar Sharif, the problems of office of schools have been classified as follow:

Some of the scholars believe that the biggest challenge of desired management in Afghanistan and specifically in Mazar Sharif is lack of knowledge and expertise in management. The social structures and traditions in the society are one of the other serious problems that prevent the educational managers from working. In this regard, Patman [7], the deputy of ministry of education of Afghanistan claimed that "due to social traditions, people don't send their daughters to the schools with male teacher and certainly the girls' deprivation from education is a challenge on the way of development of equal and balanced education in the country and a weakness of education and big challenge on the way of educational managers". In addition, lack of professional teachers, insufficient textbooks, educational materials and classroom in schools are the other problems of education and the challenges of educational managers. Patman [7] says that from

175000 teachers in 12000 schools of Afghanistan, only 35000 are professional teachers and others have been employed based on “extreme need” of schools while they have not enough education for teacher.

In a private interview of the researcher with some teachers of Mazar Sharif, Nadimeh Mousavi, a teacher in Mazar Sharif said: “lack of teacher in schools has made more students to be present in classes”. According to him, based on the criteria of ministry of education, there should be 40-50 students in a classroom while practically the number of students in classrooms exceeds this number. She said that high number of students in classrooms decreases the quality of education seriously and this is a serious challenge of educational managers and management”.

Soroush is another teacher in Mazar Sharif who says that, “The level of education and skills of teachers is so low that cannot satisfy the needs of “professional education”. Another teacher proposes textbook deficiency and educational materials in Mazar Sharif as the main factor for lack of proper management and adds, “lack of textbook is a general problem”. This teacher who did not want to disclose his name said, “the textbooks are not available on time and when they arrive, there are some deficiencies in their publication”. According to him, there are some mistakes in typing, layout and size of these books.

Some others believe that most problems originate from structural and official system. Unfortunately, violations and official corruption lead to people distrust and lack of effective efficiency of managers’ activities in educational institutions. Diagnosis of barriers and the problems of educational system that stop the process of development is necessary. Diagnosis of these problems helps us in achieving solutions and outlooks. It worth noting that some of the main problems that theoretically and practically are present in our educational system and are discussed are:

#### **14.1. Centralization and centralized educational system**

One of the educational specifications of Afghanistan that is influenced by cultural, historical and political background of our country is centralization that is a cultural challenge on the way of knowledge development and efficiency of management in educational system. Centralized educational system is a system where authority is low and most decision makings are by the high managers of organization and in ministry of education. In centralized educational systems, the general educational system is governed by a central organization. The authorities and final responsibility are on the highest position in the hierarchy of system since in such system, decision makings and planning are top-down, creativity and innovation are not valued and the individual differences are not considered; thus, in this system, educational managers don’t have any role in education. In this kind of system, development of knowledge is done through imposed approach and the role of creativity of educational managers would decrease.

#### **14.2. Bureaucracy**

Weber considers theory of bureaucracy in search of values for standardization of the organizations’ activities within the constant regulations and training of specialized and expert human force that execute the regulations. In addition the benefits that this theory has for organization, it also has negative effects including stiffness and inflexibility, personality solidity, self-orientation, displacement of target and instrument [8].

It seems that education system based on bureaucracy cannot be a creative and dynamic educational system and the natural talents of managers and their abilities in confronting with constant educational and official regulations prevent them from the growth and the creativity that they have. Thus, bureaucracy is a main challenge and a serious problem in front of educational structure of Afghanistan.

#### **14.3. Management instability**

One of the main problems of education system in Afghanistan is management instability. It seems that the assignment of educational managers (from minister to the head of school) depend on the political oscillations of society, so the management course of managers is so short and this contradicts with educational planning with long term nature. In management system, an individual is fired and another one is replaced for it, it is the natural right of new manager to take the management system from the previous one; however, the experience of the previous manager is not transferred and this creates weakness in management.

#### **14.4. Inattention to quality and efficiency**

One of the main problems in education in Afghanistan is lack of quality and effectiveness in educational system. The educational system that in its planning just pays attention to quantities and ignore the quality and efficacy of programs will lag beyond development in addition of failure to fulfill real objectives of education. However, educational planning such as any other planning has qualitative and quantitative dimensions and extremes in one of these dimensions means inattention to other one.

### **15. Management strategies in change of education structure**

To remove the problems in education system, paying attention to the following strategies and components facilitates the change process in education system and facilitate it:

#### **15.1. Collaborative management**

Philip Combs in *Global Crisis of Education* claims, “if it is supposed that a revolution happens in education, this should begin with education management [9]. He considers the main problem of educational problems in educational management.

One way to make changes in educational management and revise it is application of collaborative management. In the wide organization of education, the problem of planning, organizing, coordination and evaluation make the need to collaborative management double. Collaboration in big organizations such as education is a strong device for management that organizes most inter-organizational problems. The first revolution in management was emergence of science of management. The second revolution was the separation of management and the third revolution was collaborative management. Collaborative management means involving the employees of an organization in goal setting, decision making process and planning.

By collaboration of employees, it means all activities that increase the responsibility of employees in decision making process and its aim is to reduce the conflicts between managers and employees through involving the employees in decision making process [10]. Collaboration of employees and their support of educational managers in organization help the enhancement and development of education process. If in educational institutions, the spirit of collaboration becomes alive and soliloquy and monologue are prevented, the ideas of all employees are considered, the education of Afghanistan will qualitatively grow and the cultural utilization will increase.

Collaboration of employees has economic, social and mental objectives. Economic collaboration leads to qualitative and quantitative increase in organization. Socially, collaboration decreases the conflict through enhancing cooperation between parties. Mentally, the establishment of collaboration system in management makes the value of human factor to be recognized in organization and more attention to be paid to human aspect of work that leads to employees' satisfaction [11].

It is natural that if the penetration and responsibility of the employees of educational system in decision making and planning processes increase, the conflicts between educational managers and employees would decrease and motivation for effective work in them will be created and proper ground for development of knowledge and enhancement of education will be provided. Thus, for development and change of educational structure in Afghanistan, generally, and in Mazar Sharif, specifically, the incline toward collaborative management in educational system is very important, the incline that in today's world has included not only the educational systems but other entities in society.

### **15.2. Management Stability**

Higher levels of management largely are affected by political behavior of higher levels and their moves are more influenced by political interaction. Since in this world, effectiveness and quality in educational institutions are subject to long-term planning, management stability is a determining factor in this context. As it was mentioned, change of management during political oscillations of society imposes irreparable damage to education organization and the quality of its activities. At the other level of management that is executive, it intends the stability of management. In other words, change in higher levels of management is about two times more than operational changes and this shows that higher levels of management have accepted that the experiences of managers of operation should not be influenced by political approaches [12].

Instability in management directs the attention of managers to short-term and quantitative objectives and prevents the educational system from long-term and qualitative objectives. The other point is extreme changes and displacement of managers in governmental positions, it means, rather than making the strategic system and management face with environmental changes, it deals with the managers' change in responding to environmental changes (*ibid*). Here, it should be noted that the ratio of political instability in higher levels of society to instability in educational management in Mazar Sharif is one of the main problems of schools in this city, that is, mismatch of long-term and strategic programs.

As previously mentioned, management stability has close relation with long-term planning. It means that a manager can better implement his goals and programs in organization during the time. For example, if the head of school is not changed every year, he can better show effectiveness in long term. The other benefit of stability in management is prevention of deficiencies, otherwise, new managers always repeat the experiences of previous managers in short term and in this way, the time and capital of organization will be wasted and of no use in long-term planning of organization. Thus, stability in management is one of outlooks and main strategies of education structure in Mazar Sharif. The investigation of interviews has indicated that one of the main concerns of educational managers in Mazar Sharif schools is the feeling of lack of occupational security and instability in working schedule of educational managers of this city and the authorities should pay attention to this.

### **15.3. Quality management**

Quality management in education is one of the other categories that accelerate the movement of educational system toward development and change of education structure and emphasizes creativity and innovation and performs continuous evaluation of activities, plans and performance of educational system as feedback. Thus, the inherent benefit of quality management in schools is very obvious. Emphasis on constant improvement of comprehensive quality management prepares the ground and provides the possibility of usually responding in improvement of education. Undoubtedly, paying attention to quality management that is something missed in the education system of Mazar Sharif can provide good ground for knowledge development and positive change in the structure of educational system.

### **15.4. Decentralized management**

Since in the contemporary world, the main source of business is not capital and equipment but knowledge, information and ideas, the organizations incline toward revival of structure and smaller central organization. Generally, the structure of organization is moving toward decentralization and inflexibility. The incline of philosophy, objectives and activities of educational institutions from centralization toward decentralization lead to delegation of authority to

subordinates and significantly influence the quality of work in educational organizations. This change of education has the following positive features:

- Consideration of individual differences
- Attention to demands, conditions and local and regional facilities and implementation problems
- The possibility of bottom-up interaction or mutual relation between managers and planners and executors of program
- Consideration of decision making in lower levels of educational organization
- Consideration of creativities, innovation and freedom of action [13].

Paying attention to decentralized management in education to make change in the structure of education in Mazar Sharif is a serious significance that the higher level authorities and decision makers should consider and take actions to implement.

#### **15.5. Reduction of bureaucracy**

One of the serious challenges of educational managers in Mazar Sharif is the bureaucracy in educational institutions that prevents more success and innovation of educational managers in this city. The scholars of education system believe that if the educational system seeks innovation and emphasizes on quality, it should unavoidably balance and modify most official regulations since due to inherent specifications, bureaucracy cannot nurture creativity and innovation and in most cases sacrifice quality for quantity. Reduced bureaucracy in education facilitates the ground for creativity and collaboration and this is another revolution for development of the knowledge of educational system.

The other point in this area is that by reduction of most strict official regulations in education, the educational managers can freely and flexibility provide proper ground to encourage the students and teachers to produce knowledge and enhance the education infrastructure.

#### **15.6. Attention to training of human force**

As previously discussed, lack of professional teachers is one of the barriers on the way of education development and one of the daily problems of educational managers in the city that is a serious threat on the way of the schools and educational system. Undoubtedly, of strategy is to make change in the educational system, accurate planning for promotion of scientific level and behavior of human force in education. If in educational system, the teachers pass training courses and at the end of courses have not precise evaluation of knowledge and their conclusions are not used in decision makings, how should we expect that in these courses, learning happens? Secondly, if anything is learned, how should be expect that it is applied and improvement happens in performance of individual and organization?

### **16. CONCLUSION**

Education in Afghanistan in the country, generally, and in Mazar Sharif, specifically, face with various problems in the official structure and educational nature and this problem has made the educational managers of Mazar Sharif face with challenges in implementation of educational planning and elevating the quality. These problems including centralized structure, governing bureaucracy, management instability and effective management have surrounded the educational system and prevent knowledge development in improvement in education. These problems are mainly rooted in culture, history and policy; especially the political structures and strained relations in offices and more precisely the presence of corruption in offices have penetrated in educational management that made the educational managers in Mazar Sharif face with many problems.

To overcome these problems, collaborative management, centralized management, stability in management, quality management, training of human force and reduced bureaucracy can be mentioned. The findings obtained from approaches toward quality of education showed that most concerns of authorities concerning the problems of educational managers include: lack of expertise- oriented management, the presence of improper structures and social traditions, lack of professional teachers, lack of textbooks and materials, technical deficiencies in textbooks and failure to provide textbooks punctually and finally, the presence of official corruption are the main the challenges on the way of educational managers in Mazar Sharif. Concerning what was mentioned, the authorities of educational system in Mazar Sharif should focus on improvement on quality of education in this city and more important, they should make use of the findings of this study in short-term and long-term to provide the ground for development of knowledge of enhancement of educational system in this city. It worth noting that to enable the educational managers and create good opportunity for improvement of condition, diagnosis of barriers and attention to political bodies and authorities are considered serious and significant.

#### **17. Suggestions**

To tackle the educational problems and barriers, the managers of education in Mazar Sharif and to improve the qualitative status of education structure of this city, the following are recommended:

- Collaboration culture and collaborative management to remove the problems of educational managers in this city should be created and enhanced.
- The bureaucracy should be reduced in the country and for implementation of educational programs and policies.
- Educational managers, the head of education and schools should be selected based on competency and knowledge.
- Educational system should exit centralized form and accelerates decentralization to enable the educational managers to create innovation and creativity in educational system.

- Management stability should be always considered when assigning managers.
- Quality management in education should be used.
- For increase of capacity and professional knowledge of teachers, the quality of textbooks and on time delivery of textbooks should be considered.
- To promote managerial knowledge, educational managers and their material and intellectual welfare should be considered.

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