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Our education system is perpetuating socio-economic inequalities

Thesis Statement

"The education system of Pakistan is perpetuating socio-economic inequalities because inadequate educational standards lead to enhance socio-economic inequalities."

Outline

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Essay

Quaid-e Azam highlighted the importance of education in these words, "Education is a matter of life and death for our nation." The education system of Pakistan is perpetuating socio-economic inequalities because inadequate educational standards lead to enhanced socio-economic inequalities. The education system of Pakistan has some shortcomings which are reasons for perpetuating socio-economic inequalities such as escalating gender inequality, rising unemployment, deepening poverty, aggravating child labour, soaring inflation, exacerbating over-population, etc. The education system is not satisfactory. It is divided into different types, i.e. public, private, NGO-based, madrasah. The quality of education is not same and advanced in these different types of institutions, so it lacks opportunities for the prosperity of country. In this way, education system does not meet the desired standards of effectiveness. Some solutions such as to increase allocation of budget for education, to execute Single National Curriculum (SNC), etc. can work to improve the education system of Pakistan in order to curb socio-economic inequalities.

Education system of Pakistan consists of different modes of learning.

There are different types of institutions like public, private, NGO-based and madrassah that provide education to students. The majority of the students are gaining education in public schools. The private schools are further categorized as: low-fee private schools and high-fee private schools. The number of students in low-fee private schools are high as compared to high-fee private schools - that have elite class students. The madrassah is another source of education where students get Islamic education. According to Pakistan Institute of Education, number of public institutes are 176184, private institutes are 137234, NGO-based schools are 2000 and madrassah are 43613 in Pakistan. These different institutions provide varying education to students that perpetuate socio-economic inequalities in Pakistan. Lack of quality education is another drawback of education system. Some other issues i.e. gender disparity, lack of trained teachers, and outdated infrastructure persists posing significant barriers to achieve a equitable education system. It is an urgent need to tackle these crisis, so that socio-economic inequalities can be removed.

Gender Escalating gender inequality is a socio-economic issue due to

ineffective education system of Pakistan. The illiterate people do not know the importance of gender equality. These people often suppress women. Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Index, and 161st out of 191 countries on the Human Development Report's 2022 Gender Inequality Index. Cultural norms often prioritize boys' education over girls', leading to higher dropout rates among females and fewer opportunities for them to acquire essential skills and knowledge. Some girls have familial issues to get educations; it is because of gender inequality. The lack of female teachers and safe educational environments further discourages families from sending their daughters to school. Civil's rights and other needs are often neglected. They are being violated and harassed. Gender inequality must be addressed to prevent socio-economic inequalities.

Rising unemployment is a socio-economic inequality due to ignoring education system. The illiterate people face hardships and difficulties to get job. Likewise, education at different strata is not helpful for everyone to gain job. The illiterate people has not awareness to do a suitable job. On the

other side, literate people has a lot of opportunities to find a good job. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan 2023-2024, "The rate of unemployment in Pakistan stands at 6.3%, with 4.51 million unemployed population. Many graduates possess outdated curricula that do not align with current industry demands, resulting in a mismatch between the skills of the workforce and the needs of the employers. Additionally, high dropout rates and inadequate vocational training limit the pool of qualified candidates, leading to higher unemployment rates, particularly among youth. So, poor education can rise unemployment in Pakistan. Unemployment must be limited to control socio-economic inequalities.

"Deepening poverty is a socio-economic inequality due to weak education system. Many people of Pakistan do not get education that leads to deepening poverty in the country. With inadequate access to quality education, many individuals, particularly in rural areas, are unable to acquire the skills necessary for better-paying jobs. The poverty rate in the country has reached 39.5 percent, according to Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). A child belongs to poor family

has not enough resources to get education. This cycle is going on and poverty increases in Pakistan. As a result, families are trapped in poverty, unable to improve their socio-economic status, which perpetuates a broader pattern of economic stagnation and inequality in the country. So, inequality lies between poor and rich people. Poverty must be eliminated to prevent socio-economic inequalities.

Aggravating child labour is a socio-economic inequality in Pakistan because of ignored education system. People do not know the importance of education and urge their children to work. These children do not get enough knowledge; in turn, they feel inequality as compared to those who get proper education. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), about 3.3 million children are trapped in child labour in Pakistan. The poor education system aggravates child labour by failing to provide accessible and quality education, forcing many families to prioritize immediate economic survival over schooling. In areas where educational facilities are lacking or of low quality, children are often compelled to work to support their families, as the opportunity cost of

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schooling, becomes too high. These situations lead to aggravate child labour. Child labour must be diminished to improve socio-economic inequalities.

Soaring inflation is a socio-economic inequality due to subpar education system of Pakistan. People do not know the meaning of inflation and they pay more than the original price of a product. On the other side, the illiterate people has not any initiative to control and act against inflation. As per IMF, inflation rate (average consumer prices) in Pakistan is 24.8%. This inefficiency can lead to over output in key sectors, driving up production costs, and subsequent prices for goods and products. Additionally, as the prices of economy struggles to produce a skilled labour force, reliance on imports increases, further straining the economy and contributing to inflation. Inflation should be lessened to control socio-economic inequalities.

Exacerbating population of Pakistan is a socio-economic inequality due to flawed education system. The uneducated and less-educated people do not know the exact meaning of over-population. They do not realise the negative effects of over-population for

themselves and for the country. On the contrary, educated people prefer to think on the issue of population and participate to control the population. According to Pakistan Census data, total population of the country stands at 241.49 million with an annual growth rate of 2.5 percent. The inadequate education system of Pakistan significantly exacerbates population growth by failing to provide essential knowledge about family planning, reproductive health and socio-economic impacts of overpopulation. Limited access to quality education, particularly for women and girls, results in low awareness about contraception and reproductive rights, leading to higher birth rates. Overpopulation should be controlled in order to restrict socio-economic inequality.

Intensifying debt crisis is a socio-economic inequality due to insufficient education system. The people of Pakistan are not able to earn properly and contribute for the progress of Pakistan. With the increasing number of illiterate people, employment along with other resources is getting short. In this situation, the government focus to take debt. It leads to intensifying debt crisis.

According to CICC data, "Pakistan external debt reached 130.4 USD billion in March 2024, compared to 131.4 USD billion in the previous quarter." With a significant portion of the population receiving a subpar education, the country struggles to attract foreign investment and foster innovation, resulting in lower tax revenues and economic stagnation. It yields national debt crisis by limiting the development of a skilled workforce essential for driving economic growth and increasing productivity. Debt crisis must be lowered to avert socio-economic inequality.

Declining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a socio-economic inequality because of stagnant education system of Pakistan. FDI is an amount of investment that invested by a foreign country for the purpose of business. As education standards is low in Pakistan, most foreign countries feel reluctance to invest in Pakistan because of short labour who have expertise in the work field. In this situation, FDI is getting short in the country. According to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2023, FDI inflows to Pakistan ^{stood} at USD 13.4 billion in 2022, down by 37.6% year-on-year. Inadequate infrastructure, low literacy rates and

a malignant alignment between educational curricula and market needs results in a talent pool that is often ill-prepared for professional challenges. This not only deters foreign investors but also raises concerns about the overall productivity and competitiveness of local industry, ultimately leading to a reluctance to invest in the country. FDI should be increased to overcome the socio-economic inequality.

Growing income disparity among masses in the country is a socio-economic inequality in Pakistan. It is due to poor education system of Pakistan. The students in Pakistan do not get quality education. There is a divide in education curriculum among different schools. The urban-areas students have more opportunities to earn more income, while the students belong to rural areas do not seek opportunities to earn in a good way. The difference between public and private education is also cause to growing income disparity. According to World Bank Database reports, the top 10% of Pakistan's households earn 42% of the country's income, the bottom 50% earn only 12%. This disparity creates a significant divide between those who can afford quality education and those who cannot, leading

to unequal economic opportunities. As a result, the wealth gap widens, with educated individuals securing better-paying positions while uneducated workers remain trapped in low-wage jobs, reinforcing the cycle of poverty and hindering economic growth. Income disparity must be solved to reduce socio-economic inequalities.

Expanding urban-rural divide is a socio-economic inequality due to unreliable education system of Pakistan. There is no equal provision of education in urban and rural areas. The students belong to urban areas find opportunities such as infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, institution, etc. to learn in a more cooperative way. On the other hand, the students belong to rural and backward areas have not facilities to gain attractive education. So, the students of these two communities do not gain equal resources in their life. According to 7th Population and Census 2023, the rural population is 61.18 percent of total population of Pakistan, while the urban population is 38.82 percent. The urban areas are more developed because the inhabitants of these areas have enough knowledge and awareness to prosper their environment. The rural population, on the other hand,

have not ideas to develop their villages. This discrepancy leads to higher literacy rates and skill development in cities, while rural population remain largely uneducated and underserved. Urban-rural divided should be filled to curb socio-economic inequalities.

Increasing corruption is a socio-economic inequality due to inappropriate education system of Pakistan. The uneducated people do not realise corruption. They have not potential to control corruption. Moreover, the curriculum in schools lacks the topic of corruption. Students do not visualise corruption as a socio-economic inequality. The educate people not only control corruption, but they also encourage people, including public and private sector officials, to lessen the corruption. According to Transparency International, Pakistan has a score of 29 in 2023, meaning to ranks 133 out of 180 countries. Many individuals enter the workforce without a strong understanding of governance and moral responsibility. They have insufficient focus on critically thinking, ethics and civic education. This educational deficit can perpetuate a culture of corruption as individuals prioritize personal gain over public service. Corruption must be removed in order

to curb socio-economic inequalities.

Deteriorating health is a socio-economic inequality because of low levels of education system of Pakistan. The illiterate people do not know how blessing is a health. They do not pay attention to focus on their health. They drink contaminated water and unhealthy food. It brings health crisis in Pakistan. On the other side, educated people are fully aware to use healthy food for their better life. Mostly diseases are increasing in illiterate people that is an indicator to show deteriorating health. Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) reported that Pakistan had reported 2745 new dengue cases by September 2024. A lack of quality education often results in low health literacy, which hinders individuals' ability to make informed decisions about nutrition, hygiene and disease prevention. This gap contributes to the spread of preventable diseases, poor maternal and child health, and inadequate access to healthcare services. The condition of health should be improved, so that socio-economic inequalities can be curbed.

Lacking E-learning is a socio-economic inequality due to deficient education system of Pakistan. The illiterate

people in the country are not able to use properly the internet and technology for E-learning. The internet is only a source of entertainments for them. Paul Levinson said, "Online learning can be a lifeline to those who have obstacles, such as geographical distances or physical disabilities." Moreover, far-flung areas of Pakistan have not proper coverage or signals to use internet. On the other hand, developed areas people use internet frequently for E-learning. Limited infrastructure, especially in rural areas, restricts students' access to reliable internet and digital sources. There is a lack of trained educators who can effectively implement E-learning strategies, compounded by out-dated curricula that do not incorporate modern technological advancements. Increasing use of E-learning is helpful to reduce socio-economic inequalities.

Surgong religious discrimination is a socio-economic inequality in Pakistan due to low demands of education system. The people with less education or no education do not know the true sense of religion. Infact, they use religion for personal interests. The religious sects are surgong on Pakistan. For example, the major religious sect in Pakistan is Sunni Islam, which is

practiced by app 85-90% of Muslims, while the Shia Islam is followed by 10-15% of the Muslim population. The different sects are involved in blame-game and they criticise with each other. Islam is the major religion in Pakistan and it does not allow anyone to do these activities. The education system often exacerbates religious discrimination through its curricula and institutional practices which can promote sectarian biases and marginalise minority groups. Furthermore, public schools frequently lack inclusive policies, making it difficult for students from different religious backgrounds to receive equal treatment. Religious discrimination must be removed to balance socio-economic inequalities.

Emerging language issue is a socio-economic inequality in Pakistan due to divided education system. The different provinces have different views provinces with respect to language. For example, there is a language controversy in Pakistan over English-Urdu and Urdu-province-based languages while 70.8% people speak Urdu language. Every province want to promote its language rather than national and international language such as Urdu and English. Similarly, it is a conflict regarding language to set curriculum in education.

The education system of Pakistan contributes to significant language issues by promoting a one-size-fits-all approach that often prioritizes Urdu and English over regional languages. Additionally, the lack of trained teachers who can effectively teach in local language exacerbates the problem, as many students struggle with the medium of instruction. Language issue should be solve to manage the socio-economic inequalities.

The education system of Pakistan can be improved by increasing the allocation of budget for education. When budget is increased for education, it could create more opportunities for the betterment of quality of education. There are many insufficiencies in education system, like poor infrastructure vacant seats of teachers, shortage of stationary, drinking and sanitation water problems, the strength of students, etc., due to shortage of budget for allocation. The enough budget allows the government to focus on education system in an appropriate way. The government has embarked Rs. 103781 million for Education and Services in the Federal Budget for 2024-2025, that is nearly 2% of the GDP. With more funds, schools can improve facilities, provide essential learning materials, and

adopt modern technology, which can make learning more engaging and effective. Additionally, increased budget for education can support the recruitment and professional development of qualified teachers, ensuring that students receive high-quality education and instruction. It can incentivize people to send their children to schools. So, it is optimistic strategy to remove socio-economic inequalities.

Single National Curriculum (SNC) is a good initiative to improve the education system of Pakistan. SNC is an initiative aimed at standardizing the education curriculum across the country, to ensure that all students, regardless of their educational backgrounds, receive a uniform quality of education. SNC can provide quality and equal education to all. When different strata of people get same education, they can find equal opportunities to get a job. Moreover, SNC is also helpful to solve the issues of curriculum, syllabus and language. Lilian Katz, a professor in UK, said, "Curriculum should help children make deeper and fuller understanding of their own experience." By providing a standardized curriculum, all students, living in different areas of the country, would have access to the same quality of education and

learning outcomes. This initiative can help bridge the gap between private and public schools, fostering a more cohesive national identity and reducing disparities in educational attainment. SNC can also tackle the issues of class difference and conflict of provinces over curriculum. So, execution of SNC is helpful to normalise the socio-economic inequalities.

The implementation of policy on education can improve the education system of Pakistan. There is a lack of policy implementation in Pakistan due to which education system is not working appropriately. Some policies are being properly implemented while others are changed from one government to another government. The implementation of policies not only improve the education system, but also produce positive vision for Pakistan. It can create a sense of responsibility among state and people to increase the literacy rate. Alexander Khonrod, Russian scientist, said, "An idea is nothing. Its implementation everything." Additionally, policies that promote inclusivity and equity help to bridge gaps in educational attainment among different socio-economic groups. Ultimately, robust policy implementation fosters a culture of continuous improvement leading to better educational

outcomes for all students in Pakistan. It should be duty of government to implement policies regarding education in a true manner. In this way, socio-economic inequalities can be eliminated.

Counselling of parents is a good idea to improve the education system of Pakistan. Most parents are not agree to send their children, especially girls, to schools. They do not realize the importance of education that is very crucial for grooming of their children. The illiterate people face difficulties in their life; it is only due to avoidance of education for children. Ernest Istook, US politician, highlighted the role of parents in gaining education as, "Education begins at home and I applaud the parents who recognize that they - not someone else - must take responsibility to assure that their children are well educated." When parents receive guidance on the importance of education, effective study habits and emotional support, they become more empowered to continue positively to their children's learning experiences. Additionally, counselling can address cultural and social barriers, that may hinder educational progress, promoting a more supportive environment for students. Therefore, the counselling of parents

brings awareness in the society to send their children for schooling. So, it is an essential step to get rid of socio-economic inequalities.

The training of teachers is a method to improve the education system of Pakistan. The untrained teachers do not know how to teach and prepare students. They cannot teach in a way that raise intelligence and intellectual capabilities in the students. The training of teachers is important to enhance their tempo in teaching. They could also get experience through training. ^{National} Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) Pakistan stated that, "Total 28 number of education programs are operating for teachers training education in Pakistan." Well-trained teachers are better prepared to adopt innovative teaching methods into the classroom and address diverse learning needs effectively. Moreover, ongoing training programs promote a culture of continuous improvement among educators, encouraging collaboration and the sharing of best practices. The students also like to learn from trained and experienced teachers. This method is hopeful to curb the socio-economic inequalities.

The education system of

Pakistan falls short of the expected standards. It perpetuates socio-economic inequalities such as intensifying debt crisis, declining Foreign Direct Investments, growing income disparity, expanding urban-rural divides, increasing corruption, deteriorating health, etc. These socio-economic inequalities are detrimental to Pakistan as they create significant divides among the population of the country. The education system negatively impacts both the people and the government, as it fails to produce meaningful results. The flawed education system is not conducive for the development of the country. Some solutions such as to implement policies, to counsel parents, etc. can be ^{adopted} to improve the education system of Pakistan. The socio-economic inequalities in Pakistan can be curbed by attaining high standards and quality education.