

EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: HURDLES AND SOLUTIONS.

OUTLINE:

1. Introduction:

Thesis Statement: The situation of education system in Pakistan is nonetheless on the brink of disaster. Ill-organized policy-making, economic and social strains make it challenging for the country to meet international education standards.

However, comprehensive strategy in accordance with to indigenous problems can facilitate the beneficiaries to contribute in betterment of the country.

2. Outlook of Education System in Pakistan.

3. Challenges of Education in Pakistan.

- a, Poor quality of education in terms of outdated syllabus prevent the youths to compete at international platforms.
- b, less number of teachers allocated in comparison to total number of students.
- c, Inefficient teaching practices makes it challenging for the teachers to meet emerging trends.
- d, lack of financial funds and Assistance to education department of Pakistan.
- e, language barrier in communication with teachers and understanding of academic curriculum.
- f, Tripartite domains in Education system

of Pakistan i.e. Private, Public and Madaris systems.

g, Distance-related issues for students to access educational institutions.

h, High rate of drop outs and out of school childrens due to poverty.

i, Gender disparity ~~challenges~~ in educational access.

4. Solutions for hurdles in Education of Pakistan.

a, Budget Allocation according to the recommendation of United Nations.

b, Merit based recruitment of teachers through centralized testing service.

c, Single National Curriculum in the country considering diverse social groups and opportunities.

d, Training and capacity building of teachers on International Standards.

e, Translated curriculum in various indigenous languages for easy understanding.

f, Facilitation of Private-Public cooperation in Education system.

g, Skills and vocational training of students meet informal education.

h, Scholarship opportunities for poor and marginalized students.

5. Implications of Efficient Education System in Pakistan.

- a, Qualified human resource and development ✓
- b, Educated youth participates in economic development of the country. ✓
- c, Better rationale due to efficient education prevent youth from illegal and criminal practices. ✓
- d, Improved education will lessen class and gender discrimination, contributing to social development. ✓

6. Conclusion.

Humans always try to overcome problems and come out solutions to those concerns. Similarly, when societies are grappled with common problems, individuals collectively strive for remedies. When these effective strategies are repeated to thwart social issues, they emerged as social institutions. However, if dents appear in already established institutions, people try to overcome those hurdles and invent innovative ideas to address those challenges. Education in Pakistan is also one of those social institutions.

which is facing same trajectory. The ill-structured educational system of the country makes it challenging for policy-makers to cope-up with the emerging menace. Poor quality of curriculum, teachers, infrastructure, resources and accessibility pushes the society to drive effective solutions.

Comprehensive plan with inclusive strategy to address financial, social and political challenges will help Pakistan to rejuvenate its educational institutions. This will ensure qualified human resources and improve social

development of the country in coming years.
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contribute in betterment of the country.

Education in Pakistan illustrates very grim picture. Many students are unable to access education in most parts of the country. Despite Article 25-A of constitution that obligates the country to provide free and compulsory quality education to children of the age group 5-16 yrs, the current literacy rate of Pakistan remains at 62.8pc (Economic survey, 2022-23).

Another side of the coin depicts the power struggle related to policy making of education in the country. After 18th Amendment, the key subject of education has been devolved to provincial governments. The lack

of collaborative approach between both sanctions create jeopardy and disharmony to address fundamental issues. However, centralized policies with equal participation at federal and provincial level can avert the established challenges.

Poor quality of education in terms of outdated syllabus is one of the main challenge for the country. The lack of up-to-date curriculum inclusive of modern ideas and techniques do not let students to show their abilities. For instance, Class 9 computer Science textbook published by Sindh Textbook Board taught a curriculum outdated around 20 years. The chapter on Microsoft Windows lists Windows 98, Windows 2000 "now available for use". Despite the fact that grant Tech suspended these softwares 10 years ago. It was after keen efforts of internet influencers "Waqar Zaka", who addressed this issue and achieved major success by pushing the government to publish new

updated books. The challenge of poor quality of education in Pakistan still looms large above the students, who are deprived of latest information.

In addition to this, teachers are also not equally allocated in proportion to rising number of students. Every human has certain limitations and one cannot override his restrictions. Enforcing teachers to teach huge number of students will not only overburden them, but also impede learning process of students due to lack of attention, focus and communication. According to Economic survey 2021-22, there are only 1.8 million teachers in the country in comparison to 55.3 million enrolled students. Therefore, less number of teacher allocated in the country to meet the increasing enrollment challenges the efficient execution of educational policies in Pakistan.

Not only the number of teachers but the inadequate teaching practices of already allocated teachers are ^{also} hampering the qualified education in the country. Teachers are unskilled, untrained and unaware about the emerging global practices. Sindh government recently advertised more than 46,000 vacancies for Primary school teachers and Junior elementary school teachers. The recruitment test was on the basis of elementary school curriculum. Despite this low bar, only 1250 candidates managed to pass. Eventually, department had to lower the passing marks below 45pc, just to fill the large number of teaching vacancies. The poorly qualified teachers with unstandardized teaching practices gravely indent the education in the country.

Moreover, lack of financial funds and assistance to education department in the country is another reason for its flagging nature. Lack of funding for proper infrastructure, resources, students support, training of teachers blocks the revitalization of dwindling education department.

Economic Survey 2022-23 reports that Pakistan is only utilizing 1.7% of GDP on education, despite urgent needs of intervention. Thus, Pakistan is investing subpar monetary funds on education, which is adding pressure against its sustainability.

The purpose of education is to ~~provide~~ better understanding and rationale through effective communication. But if the challenge lies at core initial step, students are devoid of essence of education. language barrier in communication with teachers and understanding of academic curriculum pushes the students in deep water.

The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, with several other regional languages as well. However, the medium of education in most of country is in English. Educators worldwide had advocated that literacy in second language should not be introduced until a child is competent in speaking, reading, writing

the first language because this hinders, rather than supports, learning of additional languages. Hence, multilingualistic approach from the beginning of education harbors language barrier in effective learning process.

The education in Pakistan is also grappled with three tier system. Tripartite domains i.e. Public, Private and Madaris system in education divides the students and engraves resentment against each other. The poor conditions of public schools in the country prevent students to catch up better opportunities compared to well-educated students of private sector. Many students from Madaris do not find any fit once they complete their education due to outmoded and traditional educational approach used in seminaries, that refuses and rejects the inclusion of modern subjects. Thus, trilateral division of education in Pakistan further strengthens the division in better access and opportunities of education.

Distance-related issues for students to access educational institutions is another challenge for the country. Many remote areas do not have facility of educational institutions, due to which students have to travel long distances for education. Recent cable car incident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Battagram area highlights Pakistan school accessibility crisis. Education in Pakistan is facing huge challenge related to easy accessibility in remote areas of the country.

Furthermore, poverty also adds up to increase drop-out rates in the country. Many students leave institutions at primary level due to lack of financial assistance, accessibility and better educational opportunities. The wreck caused by climate disasters, economic, social and political crisis disrupts the smooth learning process of students in Pakistan. Recent state shows that

around 23m students in age group 5-16 years are currently out of school in the country (Pakistan Institute of Development Economics - PIDE, 2023). The curse of poverty hinders better future of students. In Pakistan and challenge education system of the country.

Apart from economic concerns, deep rooted gender disparity issues also challenges the educational experience of students in Pakistan.

Gender discrimination and stereotyping perpetuates prejudice against certain genders. Patriarchal society of Pakistan do not let female students to be equally intellectual, rational and expressive in their ideas. Due to which educational opportunities for females in the country are restricted in several regions.

Recent census of Pakistan 2023 depicts huge gap between literacy rate of male with 72.5pc and females with 51.8pc. The gender based discrimination in education alarms several concerns for equal educational opportunities.

However, there is still hope for the country to avert these challenges with effective strategies. Budget allocation according to the recommendations of United Nations should be topmost priority. Pakistan is investing minute monetary funds on education, which hampers efficient infrastructure, technological advancement and other resources. United Nations advocates for atleast 4-6% of GDP of the country on Education for better human development. Therefore, proper and adequate financial assistance should be given in Education.

Another key solution for quality education is recruitment of teachers on merit basis. Prevalence of meritocracy in allocation of teachers will promote competency and quality of teachers. In this regard, introduction of licensing exam for teacher to teach in institutions could be a breath of fresh air. Recently, Sindh government introduced Pakistan's first licensing test in 2023.

for teachers in the province. Thus, every province in the country should try to recruit teachers on merit based process of centralized testing service.

In addition to this, Single National Curriculum could bridge the gaps of tripartite education system in the country. Pakistan recently launched single curriculum in 2022 for the whole country upto primary level. This initiative should be extended to the higher levels as well. Initial phase of collaborating inclusive curriculum promotes equality, integration and narrows wide gaps between rural and urban population. However, the execution of single National curriculum should be considered after thorough analysis of diverse social groups and opportunities. This will diversify the nature and scope of education system in the country.

Without proper training of teachers, proper execution of quality education could not be implemented. Capacity building and service training of teachers should be done to meet international standards. Teachers should be rotated in different institutions to widen their horizon and communication skills considering students from different background and regions. Turkey launched a policy for their teachers to have a compulsory service tenure ^{of 2-3 years} in rural areas, this effectually translated in their improved human development index 2015. Hence, in-service training, subject specific programs and framing collaborative learning communities will improve education in Pakistan.

Moreover, the challenge of communication gap in education could be addressed through translated curriculum in various indigenous languages for easy understanding. Better acknowledgment

of modern ideas and perspectives can be leveraged through familiar languages. Education in mother tongue is a key factor for inclusion and quality learning, and it also improves learning outcomes and academic performance (why mother-tongue based education is essential, UNESCO, 2022).

Interpretation of standard syllabus in diverse languages will avert learning restrictions and blockades.

Moreover, inadequate governmental policies in education should be better pulled out through public-private partnership. Areas where government is unable to meet the demands of students due to several political, economic and social strains, private cooperation should be considered to avert these challenges. Private institutions could improve reach, ~~and~~ quality of educational institutions with better infrastructure, services and innovative techniques. Hand-in-hand

approach between government and private corporations will help the country to effectively transmit its educational policies.

The education does not only mean learning through formal institutions. Informal education through skills and vocational training centers provides better opportunity for effective translation of learning objectives. The practical approach of the education through capacity-building and training of students will build discipline, ethics and moral principles. In this regard, Prime Minister youth skill development program, and Technical and Vocational education training are good steps to improve social empowerment, employment, civic engagement and well-being of students. Strengthening the aptitude and intelligence of students along with informal education should be granted in the country.

The challenge of poverty, which restricts student to gain higher education could be countered through awarding scholarships. Need-based financial aid should be implemented in every institutions for deserving, differently-abled, orphans. Pakistan is already offering many scholarships to the poor students, but that is only cold comfort for the students. The University of Management and Technology, which has been recently ranked as No. 1 Private Sector University of Pakistan by the Times Higher Education Rankings 2023, is one of such example that offering top scholarships ranging from partial to fully funded awards. Various categories of financial opportunities for students will give them surety to row their own boat.

All these steps taken in right direction will soon turn the tides of Education in Pakistan.

Efficient education system in Pakistan will engender qualified human resource. The qualified and talented youth is the prerequisite for national

development. It will not only impact individual's life but has ripple effect on national political, economic and social arena. Pakistan recently ranks 161 out of 192 countries in Human Development Index (United Nation development program, 2023). It has gone down by seven slots in the ranking due to insufficient education, health and income indicators. Systemic and well-organized education in the country will pave the way for better lifestyle and well-being of people.

Moreover, educated youth can actively participate in economic development of the country. Innovative ideas and diverse opinion from young generation will open new ways to analyze and comprehend indigenous solutions. The declining entrepreneurship, industrial growth and employment rates necessitate the need for empowered youth through education. According to recent labour force survey 2020-21, out of total youth

population (aged 15-24 years) were neither enrolled in school, employed or trained (NEET) and this translates into 37% of NEET recorded in the country (Gallup Pakistan, 2023).

Involving half of the country's population in education will promote and boost economic conditions of the country.

Qualified education will enhance the rationale of young generation, which can be interpreted in declining illegal activities. In order to gain societal goals quickly, youth indulge in criminal or illicit pursuits. Qualified education will install social ethics and recognized means to pursue goals in the society. This will prevent them to avail any immoral measure. Social contract theory also illustrates that social bonds formed in educational settings can act as deterrent to deviance. Thus, admitting students to good school will harbour educational goals, resulting in less engagement in deviant behaviour.

In addition to this, improved education will lessen class and gender discrimination, contributing to social development. Providing educational opportunities to every group or gender will ensure sense of inclusivity and security. This would promote peace, prosperity and equality in the equality. In 2023, the countries i.e. Norway and Iceland were ranked among the top countries that have higher level of gender equality with 0.91 and 0.91 scores and also topped in social development indicators throughout the world (Statista, 2023). The improvement in education of the country correlates with social and cultural development of Pakistan.

In summation, every challenge can be tracked and averted with focused approach and determinations. Education in Pakistan is already between the devil and the deep sea. This

lurching journey can be controlled with comprehensive strategy covering all aspects of policy-making, financial funding, resource allocation and keen determination. All these initiatives will empower students to be self-aware and self-conscious and contribute to the progress of the country. There is always light at the end of the tunnel. Despite many challenges of accessibility, availability and inclusivity of education in Pakistan, continuous struggle to overturn these hardships will bring better results for the country.