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Education Sector In Pakistan and Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Introduction

Thesis statement

Despite Pakistan's commitment to achieving SDG's, the education sector of Pakistan has limited access, lacks quality education, faces gender disparities and underfunding. Alining completely with SDG 4,5 provides a pathway for inclusive, equitable and quality education for all.

2. Current situation of education sector and implementation of sustainable development goals in Pakistan.

(i) limited access to education.

(ii) Education sector lacking quality education.

(iii) Gender disparity: A persistent challenge in Pakistan

(iv) Insufficient funding for

Education sector.

3- challenges in achieving sustainable development goals for Education sector in Pakistan.

4- Pathways to achieve sustainable development Goals in education sector of Pakistan.

(i) Increased investment in education sector to provide quality education

(ii) Introducing teachers training programs to cope up with traditional methodologies of teaching

(iii) Focusing on girls education to promote inclusivity in education sector.

(iv) Leveraging technology to bridge the gaps in access to education.

(v) Emphasizing lifelong learning in line with SDG-4.

5- conclusion.

Pakistan spends 2.1% of its GDP on Education while the required target is 4-6%. The education sector in Pakistan faces numerous challenges which are closely aligned with the United Nations sustainable development Goals particularly SDG 4 which states that "Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life long learning opportunities for all." Current situation of education sector of Pakistan is far below the ratio proposed by UN. The education sector of Pakistan faces many problems such as limited access, poor quality, insufficient funding, and gender disparity. These problems are due to many reasons including political instability and governance issues, socioeconomic barriers and cultural and social norms. However, all is not lost and collective efforts can turn

the tide. A comprehensive policy of reforms can bring a change in current education sector of Pakistan and align it according to the objectives of sustainable development Goals.

The access to education in Pakistan is limited. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan, around 22.8 million children (aged 5-16) are out of school. This represents 44 percent of the total population in this age group, making it one of the highest rates of out-of-school children globally. Moreover, there is a stark difference in education access between rural and urban areas. The literacy rate in urban areas is 77.3 percent compared to 54.4 percent in rural areas highlighting regional disparities in access to education. So the objective of education

for all lags behind.

Another hurdle in the progress of education sector of Pakistan is the lack of quality education. Higher Education institutes in Pakistan are producing adults with degrees rather than skills. According to the planning commission of Pakistan, less than 6 percent of the youth population acquires any technical skills, among which only 2 percent practically implement it. Moreover the absence of efficient research culture hinders the socioeconomic problem-solving approach further declining the quality of education in Pakistan and further promoting the gap from SDG's. According to the International association of universities, Pakistan constitutes only 0.49 percent of the world's total standardized research documents.

A lack of quality education produces youth without skills

which further puts a strain on economy through unemployment.

Sustainable development goals include inclusivity and education for all yet gender gap in education sector of Pakistan is reflected. Especially, women participation in higher education remains lower due to social norms and economic barriers. According to Economic survey of Pakistan The overall literacy rate in Pakistan is approximately 62.8% with a significant gender gap. The male literacy rate stands at 71.6% while the female literacy rate is just 53.4%. A report by Global partnership for Education indicates that only 20% of the girls who enroll in primary education complete their secondary education in Pakistan. This is different from the boys who have completion rate of around 30%.

these gender disparities further exacerbate in rural areas.

In sufficient funding has always been a major issue in the development of education sector of Pakistan. Pakistan spends less than 2% of its GDP on education while the ratio set by UNESCO is 4-6%. Most of the problems of education sector are because of poor investment in education sector making it not fulfill the objectives and standards of standard development Goals.

majority of schools of Pakistan are devoid of basic facilities of drinking clean water, electricity, functional toilets. The percentage stands at 36 percent. Also the majority of the education budget is allocated to primary education, often leaving little for higher education and vocational training.

In 2023, only about 18% of

the total educational budget was earmarked for higher education institutions.

Current situation of education sector and the implementation of sustainable development goals show that Pakistan needs lots of improvements but what are the hurdles and challenges in its path to achieve SDG's.

There are many challenges for achieving SDG's in education sector of Pakistan. Political instability along with weak governance issue hampers the development in education sector. Frequent changes in leadership lead to inconsistent policy implementation and a lack of long term commitment to reforms. Poverty remains a significant barrier to education in Pakistan. Many families cannot afford the direct and indirect cost of schooling, such as uniforms, books or transportation.

along with poverty, there are not adequate financial resources, so it becomes difficult to build the necessary infrastructure, recruit qualified teachers and implement reforms. Last but not the least deep-rooted cultural norms in Pakistani society often prioritize boys' education over girls. Early marriages, child labor and conservative attitude towards women role also prevent many girls from going to school.

However, all is not lost and Pakistan can still improve its education sector and reach to the proposed ratio of development by Sustainable Development Goals.

First of all, to improve the education sector of Pakistan and to include inclusivity in it, investment in the education sector should be increased. The government should gradually increase

the education budget to at least 4% of GDP to improve educational infrastructure and access. Increased investments in higher education can also improve the quality of education by fostering research and innovation. Research based education rather than crammed up knowledge will prepare the youth with skills. Also special funds should be allocated for underserved regions of Sindh and Balochistan for quality education.

Improving the quality of education and in turn achieving SDG's in education sector require better teacher training programs, ensuring teachers are well-equipped to deliver lessons effectively.

Only about 40% of teachers in Pakistan are adequately trained, according to the Pakistan Education Statistics report. Increased funding for teachers training programs to ensure that all teachers

meet professional standards and they can introduce curriculum reforms which would emphasize critical thinking, digital literacy, and life skills is necessary for the progress of education sector in Pakistan. Because teachers are the builders of nations and classrooms decide the future of nation so a good and talented teacher is the backbone of developed education sector.

The Education sector in Pakistan can be made successful by focusing on girls education. The 5th goals of SDG's states that "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls." so to cope up with these goals girl education should be promoted. This includes implementing policies that protect girls from child marriages, and increase their

enrollment and new retention in schools. Establishing scholarship programs specifically for girls, and those belonging to low-income families can help reduce the gender disparities. Many societies and cultures require female teachers for girls so increase the recruitment of female teachers.

Educational technology can play a transformative role in achieving SDG 4 in Pakistan. Online platforms such as e-learning, mobile learning apps and digital classrooms can help bridge the gap in access to quality education especially in remote areas where traditional schooling is not feasible. Students can learn at their own pace and schedule, accommodating those who may have work or family responsibilities. This can prove to be very beneficial for

about a significant change
and move Pakistan on the
path of educational prosperity
and inclusivity in education.

These reforms include increased
funding, spending on teachers
training programs, focusing on
girls education and emphasiz-
ing life long learning as
stated in sustainable develop-
ment Goal number 4.

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