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Critical Analysis of Education System in Pakistan.

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Introduction:

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"

(— Nelson Mandela)

The role of education in shaping a nation is beyond disputable. Education builds knowledge, character, sense of national identity and eventually fate of nation. For country like Pakistan, which is surrounded by external challenges and dealing with internal dispute on daily basis, a robust education system is a necessity to join the ranks of developed countries.

Unfortunately, despite more than seventy decades of independence, our education system is still marred by flaws,

such as structural insufficiency, chronic underfunding and policy's inconsistency.

Literacy rates are alarmingly low, female students barely get the access to educational institutes in remote areas, and curriculum often fails to prepare the students for

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the demand of globalized world. A critical analysis of Pakistan's education system, reveals both the achievements and the shortcoming, highlighting the urgent need of reforms.

Education as a foundation of national development:

The progress of nations like, Singapore, China, Finland, India^{and} South Korea illustrates that sustainable investment on education sector leads to economic prosperity, social stability and political maturity.

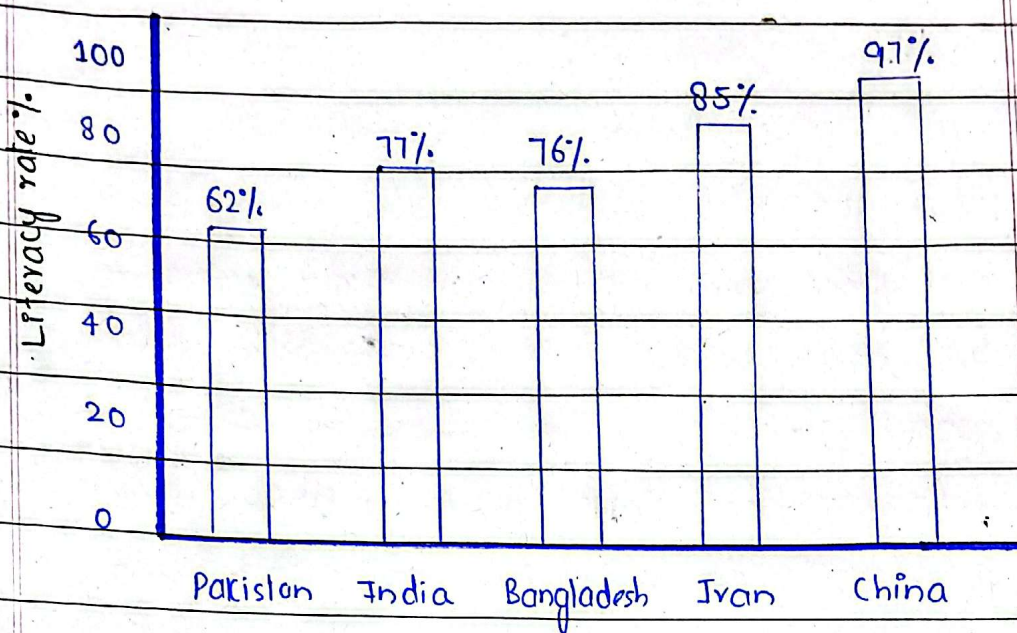
According to UNESCO, countries who invest 4-6% of their GDP on education, experience, high productivity, sustainability, innovations and reduced poverty levels.

Pakistan however, has consistently allocated less than 2% of GDP to education, which is one of the lowest in the world.

This under-investment directly explains why Pakistan lags in the Human Development Index, ranking 164 out of 196 countries (UNDP, 2024)

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••• Literacy rates in South Asia & East Asia (2024).

Historical Background of Education in Pakistan:

At the time of independence in 1947, Pakistan inherited a very weak educational infrastructure with a literacy rate merely . At that time to illustrate the importance of education to nation, M. Ali Jinnah said;

“There is no doubt the future of our state can and must depend heavily on the kind of education we provide to our children, and the manner in which

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we make them a future people from Pakistan".

(- Muhammad Ali - Jinnah).

Since 1947, successive governments have launched numerous education policies and five year plans such as National Education Policy (1979), Education Policy (1998-2010), and the National Education Policy (2009). All these policies had promised "Education for all", but we failed to implement these policies in successive manner. Political instability in the state, change of regime and lack of continuity has further weakened the progress of educational programs in Pakistan.

Current status of education System.

Pakistan's education system is fragmented into multiple streams:

Primary & secondary education: Dropout rates are high in primary and secondary education sector in Pakistan. According to UNICEF reporting around "22 million" children remain

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out of school, which is second highest figure across the globe.

Higher education: Governed by higher education commission, higher education has expanded quickly, but in this sector, the quality of education is still questionable. Our graduates are not able to compete globally. There is innovation in our research sectors.

Post graduate students, who are doing searches, are just copying internationally available data. There is lack of both technology, and intellectual studies, which is causing hurdles in innovation based studies.

Public v/s private sector:

The public sector caters to the majority but suffers from poor quality, private sector is somehow filling this gap by providing ~~edu~~ quality education. But here affordability creates hurdle. They are providing better education but are affordable only to rich.

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Madrassa System:

Madrassas are mostly providing religious education. But often teach Curricula not aligned with modern needs.

Along with it, many sect related disputes are originating from our madrassa's which are accelerating in numbers day by day. Various types of abuses

happening in a few madrassas are also shattering the trust of parents.

Now a days, we are in a serious need to develop reforms regarding disciplinary issues in madrassas so that parents do not feel reluctant while sending their children there.

Technical and Vocational education:

Technical and vocational sector in Pakistan is severely under developed, despite Pakistan's need for skilled labor to compete globally. Even, the graduates from of professional degrees lack technical training in their respective field. which, is making

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Our youth very incompetent across the world.

Strengths of the System:

Despite flaws, Pakistan's education sector has shown resilience. Literacy has improved from 16% in 1947 to 62% currently. The private sector is playing crucial role by filling gaps left by the government, and women's enrollment in schools and universities has increased.

Distance learning institutions like Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University have expanded access. Furthermore, technology driven initiatives such as smart classrooms and e-learning platforms are gaining momentum.

Constitutional Provisions on Education in Pakistan:

Article 25-A (Right to Education).

The Constitution said, "the state shall provide free education to all children of age 5-16 in such a manner as

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may be determined by law." Despite the constitutional guarantee, Pakistan still has over "23 million" out of school children.

Article 37(b) - Principle of policy :

"The state shall, "remove illiteracy and provide free education within the minimum possible period". This article puts the responsibility on the state to eradicate illiteracy and ensure secondary education accessibility.

Article 38(d) promotion of social and economic wellbeing :

The 'State shall, " provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens.

Major Challenges :-

Poor Access & Enrollment:

Pakistan has over 26 million children out of school, the second highest figure in the world. Rural girls are the most affected in this regard, with net enrollment rates far lower than

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urban boys.

Decentralization at federal government but
Centralization at province level.

18th Amendment delegated education from federal to province, some 12 years ago, however, provinces failed to delegate it further to local government. In Brazil, the main responsibility for the delivery of education upto lower secondary, lies with the local municipalities. While the state and federal government, put in resources, ensure standardisation and so on. The Bulk of work of managing schools, teachers and resources, is done at local level.

Teacher shortage and training deficits:

The world bank notes that Pakistan faces a shortage of qualified teachers, and many existing teachers lack modern pedagogical training, resulting in rote memorization rather than critical thinking skills.

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Curriculum and Relevance:

The Curriculum is outdated and often fails to equip students with 21st Century skills. UNESCO highlights that Pakistan's Curriculum prioritizes rote learning over creativity, problem solving and digital literacy.

Infrastructure deficiencies:

The Pakistan Education Statistics report (AEPAM, 2021-2022) reveals that 40% of schools lack electricity, 35% lack clean drinking water, and 29% have no boundary walls, affecting both attendance and learning environment.

Consequences of Weak education System:

The failure of Pakistan's education system translate into national weaknesses. A poorly educated workforce limits economic growth and keeps Pakistan dependent on foreign aid. The Multiple education system foster social inequality and intolerance. Moreover, Pakistan's low global competitiveness discourages foreign

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investment. Ultimately, the weak education system prevents Pakistan from achieving sustainable development.

Recommendations for Reforms:

- Increase budget allocation to 4-6% of GDP.
- Revise Curricula to emphasize skills; STEM, and Civic values.
- Train teachers professionally and recruit on merit.
- Standardize Curricula across public, private, and madrasa streams.
- Establish vocational centers to meet labor market demands.
- Expand digital classrooms and online learning.
- Ensure girls equal access to education.
- Build a research culture in universities.

Conclusion:

In sum, Pakistan's education system is at crossroads. Despite some progress, chronic weaknesses threaten the country's socio economic future. Unless the education

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becomes the state's top priority, Pakistan will continue to struggle with poverty, inequality, and backwardness. A comprehensive reform agenda focusing on inclusivity, quality, and innovation is the only way forward. With political will and societal commitment, Pakistan can transform its education system into a true engine of national development.