

## Quality versus Quantity in Pakistan's Education System

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In the 21st millennium the world is witnessing advancements in technology , health , infrastructure and education. Education Sector is responsible for provision of basic education to children and young adults. It is a system based upon a classroom with a mentor who teaches or instill knowledge in the students . Over the decades the classroom infrastructure remained the same throughout the world with some minimal changes . Pakistan too follows the world trends in education but is far behind if standards are compared with other developed countries. Pakistan is largely focused on quantity of education by increasing enrollment ratios overlooking the need of standardized parameters and quality needed in the system.

Before 1947 , Aligarh Movement shaped the mentality and enforced Muslims of India to attain knowledge just like their Hindu countrymen. Sir Syed established schools and colleges based upon the British Education Systems. After Independence it was inherited by Muslims of Pakistan and is followed throughout . The founders of Pakistan were aware of the significance of education and even made attaining basic education a necessary part of children up till age 16 in the constitution of Pakistan . Throughout 77 years , different educational policies were made to improve the system which made a little change . Currently , less than 3 % of GDP is allocated to education sector in Pakistan which presents a precarious situation.

There are four different education systems adopted in Pakistan . Public sector institutions are managed by the provincial government and provides free education to the students . Private sector education in form of schools, colleges and universities are regulated by common individuals . Madrassa system provides Islamic education in form of Qur'an teaching to the students it is operated by funding and support from the

government authorities. Elite schools are schools that are run by elite community and reserved for children of elite. It also includes schools that are registered under the British Council. All four of them are equally important to the country.

Even after 77 years, British ways are deeply ingrained and en-rooted in our education systems. English is adopted as an official language and curriculum is based on English language. It is believed that the students who have better English Speaking skills are superior to the other students who are not proficient in English. Even though Urdu is the mother language it is restricted to only two subjects: Urdu and Islamiyat. There is also a perception that Urdu is an inferior language and is not useful. Even in professional areas, English is demanded and testings are mostly based on this language. The colonial mindset and inferiority complex is evident in education sector.

Pakistan education system is a subject of provinces and every province independently make or follows policies without federal intervention. 3% of total GDP which is allocated to education half of it is reserved for Punjab given its sizeable population and the lowest being for Balochistan. This creates a difference in policy making, infrastructure and opportunities creating an atmosphere of mistrust between provinces and federal. Even after policy making, its implementation is forsaken due to political intervention or lack of resources sacrificing the quality needed in this sector.

The core strategy adopted or a learning technique traditionally practised in Pakistan is rote learning where the students choose to memorize facts, numbers, concepts without critically thinking or evaluating it. This fixes their mindset by thinking in same way and avoiding thinking out of box. Around the world the learning is done with different ways by engaging student in practical ways then theoretical memorization of concepts which produces students with high IQ and critical thinking. Unless a multidimensional approach is adopted to curb this rote learning, the quality and progress in the education department wouldn't be achievable.

Another issue or problem education system is facing is non uniform and unstructured reforms. This is evident from the fact that every board has a separate curriculum and books for its students. They take different exams with different standards creating a polarized society and preventing progress needed in this sector. Single National Curriculum was put forward as a solution to curb this problem and enhancing the quality of education. The other problem compromising quality is leaking of papers to powerful students which creates a disparity and sense of inequality for hard working students.

The quantity means literacy rate and enrollment of students. Every province has a different literacy rate with Punjab having the highest rate at about 60%. This creates a sense of disparity among the provinces and provokes disintegration between federal and provinces. The literacy also varies in urban and rural areas. Cities have high number of school with standardized teachers and infrastructure while the countryside has barely access to public sector schools with low number of schools enrolled and high dropout rates. It is reported that almost 7 out of 10 children are out of school due to poverty.

The other factor which elucidates the quantitative aspect is the employment turnover of the students who got education in this system. Students having a good quality education in a specified degree for example in computer sciences, IT sector, Management studies are more likely to land a job in

different departments while students with biological sciences hustles for a job and have a limited area of opportunities such as in research and academics. MBBS and BDS students also face this problem due to saturation of doctor jobs . This presents an alarming situation of education system where lot of students after attaining higher education are jobless . This large number of educated unemployed youth suggests that the focus is entirely on the number of enrolled students then educating them necessary skills required in the professional life.

Additionally , Pakistan's education system is primarily focused on attaining basic education , getting graduated and pursuing higher education , a loop where it can only have a scope in academics .It is believed that almost 90% of scholars adopt academics as their profession after completing Mphil or PhD . This suggests a lack of skills required for the other professional jobs in market . Technical education is adopted by few to none by graduated students and only follows the pattern of their seniors in the academics. Technical education can fill the gap by providing necessary skills like fine arts , computer learning , to students so that have a number of options after graduation .

The other problem which defines the quantitative aspect of education system in Pakistan is focus on covering the syllabus which is a detailed sets of aspects of every subject which are sometimes unnecessary . This provides us the aspect that in the education system , quality is compromised over quantity . Teachers are inclined to complete the syllabus immediately without concerning the understanding of the students . The long curriculum drains students and make them uninterested in the subjects which can be helpful in the future . Without a structured curriculum , the education system of Pakistan can not improve.

Lack of resources in some part of country may explain why the enrollment rate is low there . Every school needs a space , teachers , electricity , furniture , stationary to run . Without these quantity or literacy rate is unachievable . This also presents neglect of provincial government and the corruption which may explain why lack of resources are frequent in the system . Even the Financial Aids reserved for education are not employed usefully for the betterment of students and schools . Unless there is equal distribution of resources , enrollment rate and literacy rate will stay at 60%.

Pakistan a developing country is faced with several issues regarding quality and quantity in education system . Without structured organization , well planned curriculum , long term policies , equally distributed resources , well maintained and quality infrastructure , standardized teaching and testing , it can't progress in the education department and will lag behind in education on international forum. Without overlooking quality and ensuring quantity maintaining a balance between both both aspects can help in long term.