

Practice Question

Critically analyze the challenges faced by Pakistan's education sector and suggest viable reforms to improve the literacy rate and quality of education?

1/ Introduction

Education is marked as the backbone of a nation's progress. Pakistan has a five tiered education system. It faces challenges due to regional disparities, poor infrastructure, gender gap and outdated curriculum. However, the education system can be improved by increasing education budgets, promoting Meritocracy and encouraging girls education.

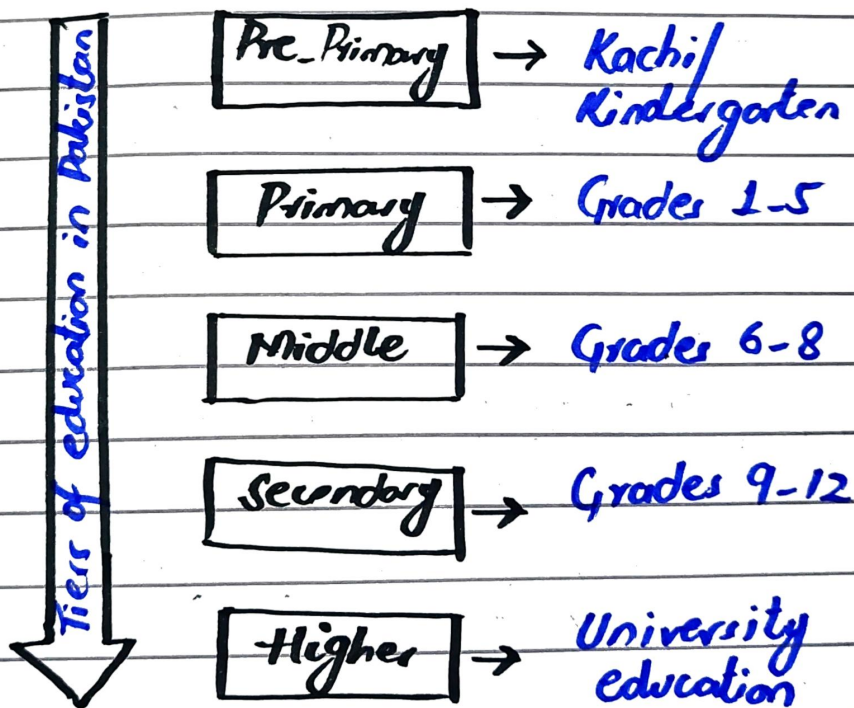
"Pakistan's education system produces degrees, not knowledge"

Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy

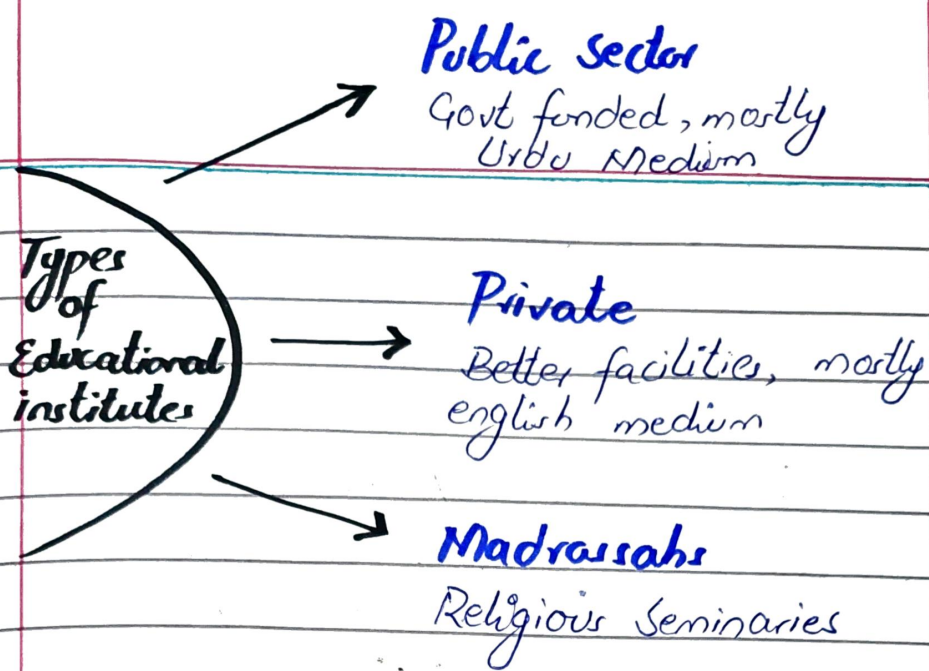
2/ Education System in Pakistan - An overview

(2A) Structure of Education System in Pakistan

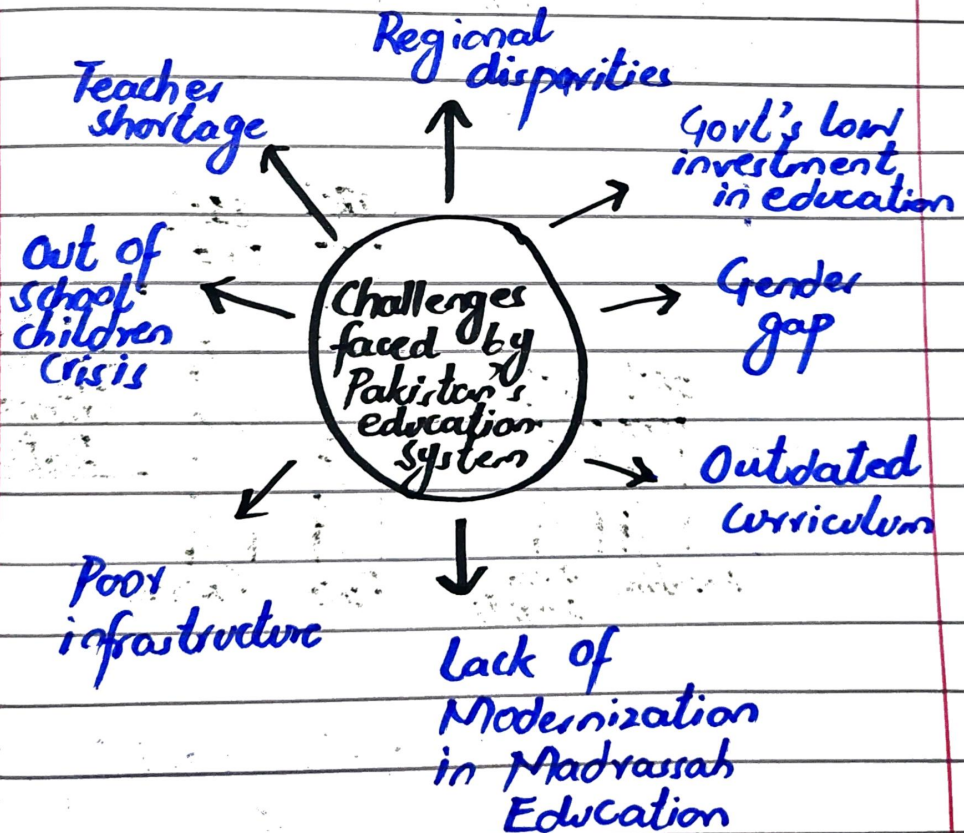
Pakistan follows five tiered education system.



(2B) Types of Educational institutional in Pak

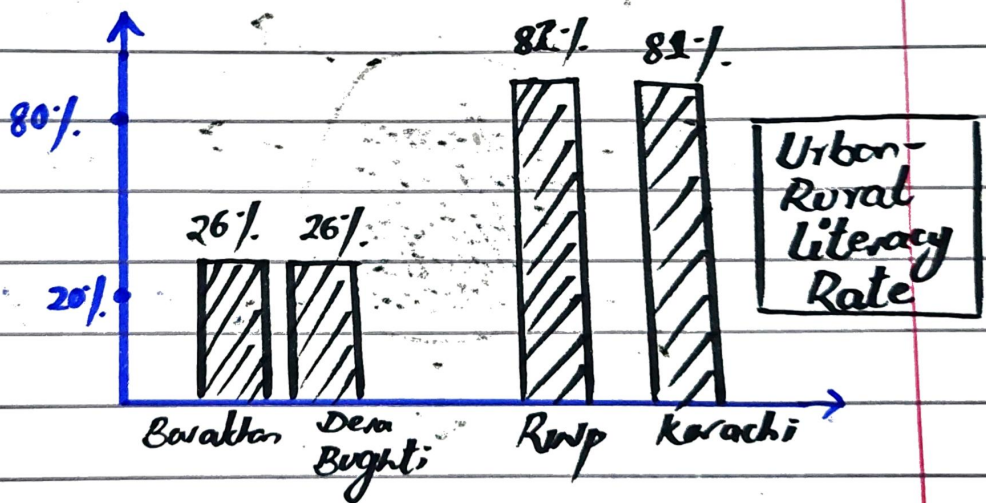


3/ Challenges faced by Education System



(3A) Low Literacy rate and Regional disparities

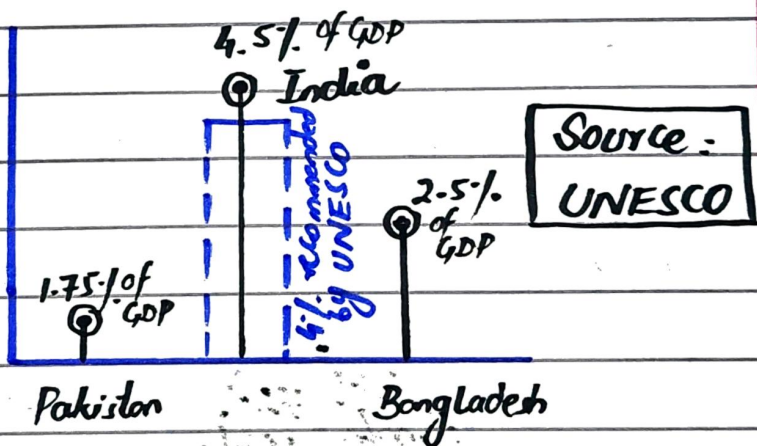
The low literacy rate in Pakistan is due to the regional disparities in Pakistan. **Punjab** has high literacy rate of 66%, whereas **Balochistan** faces low literacy rate of about 41%. Moreover, Urban centers have high literacy rate due to better infrastructure than rural areas.



Source : 2017 Pakistan
population and
housing census

(3B) Government's Low investment in Education

Pakistan spends very low on education. As per UNESCO, no country can make a progress, if it spends less than 4% of GDP on education. Pakistan spends only 1.7% of GDP on education.



(3C) Out of School Children

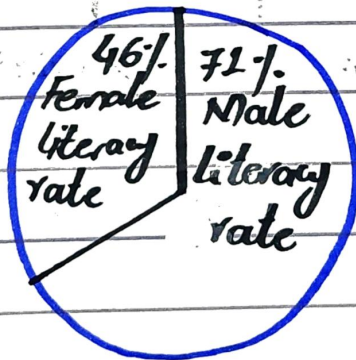
A majority of children in Pakistan is out of school, due to poverty, child labor, early marriages and fewer schools in rural areas.

About 22.8 million children are out of school in Pakistan.

Source: UNICEF

(30) Gender gap in Pakistan - low female literacy

Girls in Pakistan are out of school due to social restrictions, early marriages and fewer female schools.



Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2023

Pakistan is 2nd highest in the world in terms of out of school girls.

UNESCO Report

(3E) Lack of Modernization in Madrasah Education

Madrasahs are the religious seminaries. They provide free religious education and often offer boarding.

As per Wafaq-ul-Madaris, there are more than 35000 Madrasahs in Pakistan. But Madrasahs in Pakistan lack science, mathematics and technology subjects.

(3F) Outdated Curriculum in Public schools

Another problem faced by the education system is the outdated curriculum. Most of the private schools have modern english medium syllabus, but public schools have an outdated curriculum.

(3G) Poor infrastructure of schools

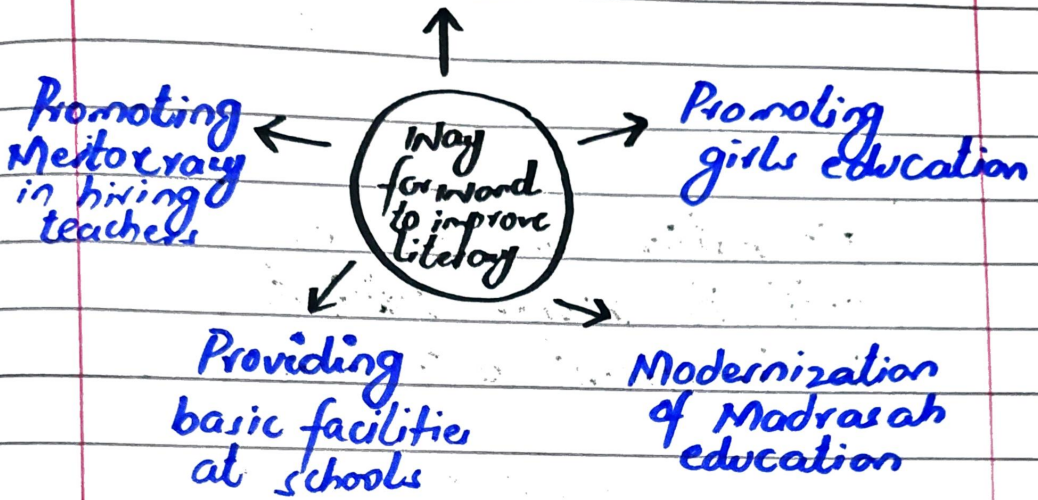
About 50% of government schools in Pakistan have poor infrastructure. They lack basic facilities like clean drinking water, toilets and electricity.

(3H) Teachers Shortage in school

There are not enough teachers in the schools for number of students. As per UNESCO, teacher to student ratio should be by 1:30. But in Pakistan, it is one ratio 44: one teacher for 44 students.

4/ Way forward to improve literacy rate in Pakistan

Investment in education sector



(4A) Investment in Education sector

Government of Pakistan should invest in education sector. The investment should be increased from **1.7%** of GDP to atleast **4%** of GDP, as recommended by UNESCO.

(4B) Promoting girls education

The education of girls is as crucial as of boys. More female schools should be opened. There

should be awareness programs to overcome societal norms. As it is highlighted by Quaid-e-Azam.

No nation can prosper,
until its women participate
in development as of men

(4c) Providing basic facilities at schools

Basic facilities including clean drinking ^{water}, toilets, and cleanliness should be ensured at schools.

(4d) Promoting Meritocracy while hiring teachers

Sometimes teachers are hired on basis of political connections. Meritocracy should be ensured, while hiring teachers.

(4E) Modernization of Madrasah education

Madrasah education should be modernized, introducing science, mathematics and technology.

5/ Conclusion

The literacy rate in Pakistan is low, as education system in Pakistan faces many challenges. These challenges include regional disparities, gender gap, out of school children and poor infrastructure. Government can overcome these challenges by investing more in education, improving the infrastructure and providing basic facilities at schools.