

A Critical Analysis of Education System of Pakistan.

Outline:

(A) Introduction

Thesis Statement: While improvement of infrastructure, quality education in private schools, and resource efficiency are notable strengths of Pakistani education system, insufficient facilities, poor education standards in public schools, and increasing polarisation hinder its overall progress. Therefore, reforms in this sector are imperative.

(B) Education System: Progress and Strength.

- 1) Improving educational infrastructure.
- 2) Public-Private partnership to improve quality education
- 3) Premium education system of private schools
- 4) Internationally recognised universities.
- 5) Emphasis on implementation of technology in education.
- 6) Resource-efficient education system of religious seminaries.

(C) Challenges and flaws in education system.

- 1) Infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate all
- 2) Substandard quality of education.
- 3) Deficient examination system.
- 4) Social factors like higher drop out rates, preventing student from pursuing higher studies.
- 5) Low-quality technical education system.
- 6) Polarised education system.
- 7) Higher gender gaps in rural areas.

7) Recommendation / Way forward.

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- 1) Increase spending in education
- 2) Incentives Encourage parents of low-income households to send their children to school through incentives.
- 3) Improvements in quality of technical education.
- 4) Regulation of religious seminaries.

E) Conclusion :-

Despite the progress, many challenges remain. A comprehensive approach to combating child-labour is required, involving political will, economic development, and international cooperation. The road to a child-labour-free world is long and difficult, but with determination and international cooperation, it is possible to achieve this goal.

Essay:-

makes it obligatory

The Article 25-A of the constitution of Pakistan compels the state to provide free and compulsory education to all of its citizen between the ages of 5 and 16. Enacted through 18 Amendment on April 16, 2010, this provision came nearly 16 years after independence, underscoring a delayed yet necessary acknowledgement of the state's role in education. However, despite more than a decade since its implementation, literacy rate remains alarmingly low, and quality of education remains inadequately dismal. Given these realities, it is essential to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of education system of Pakistan, and propose reforms to enhance its efficiency. The system is divided into three broad categories: the Madrasah system, public schools, and private schools. While improvement of infrastructure, quality education in private school, and resource efficiency are notable strengths, insufficient facilities, poor educational standards in public schools, and increasing polarization hinder its overall progress. Therefore, reforms in this sector are imperative.

To begin with, Pakistan's educational infrastructure is making progress, which is a key factor in assessing the quality of education. The country has made significant improvements in this area. For instance, according to educational statistics, the number of schools has increased from 316,816 in 2018 to 399,909 in 2024, reflecting a 10% growth. Moreover, all schools in Punjab and Islamabad now have access to clean drinking water and washroom facilities, further highlighting the improvement in Pakistan's education infrastructure. These positive changes demonstrate Pakistan's education system's commitment to enhancing its educational facilities and providing better learning environment for students.

Additionally, Pakistan's education system also includes a public-private partnership network. According to Pakistan Educational Statistics, currently, 10,000 public schools are operating through public-private partnerships, enrolling 150000 students. This network plays a crucial role in addressing educational inequalities in under-funded and hard to reach schools. For example, Teach for Pakistan, a non-governmental organisation, provides quality education in government schools. It offers teaching faculty, graduated from top institutes, where there is shortage of teaching staff. Thus, state-public-private partnership play a key role in improving education.

~~Besides this, Pakistan has a robust private education system. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics, there are more than 160,000 private institutions in the country, with student enrollment accounting for 46% of the total student population. These schools provide quality education, and may follow international education systems like Cambridge and Oxford. The integration with international curricula makes them one of the strengths of Pakistan's educational system.~~

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Moreover, Pakistan has a network of internationally recognised universities that offer quality education to students pursuing higher education. According to Times, for instance, a total of 47 universities from Pakistan were included in the Times Higher Education World University ranking. Among them, Quaid-e-Azam is ranked between 600 and 800, followed by several others ranked between 700 and 800. This network of universities positions Pakistan's education system to compete globally.

In addition, Pakistan's education system has integrated technology into its framework. The implementation of technology has now become a new imperative for a robust educational system. Given this necessity, Pakistan has integrated online education in its higher education framework. For instance, Virtual University of Pakistan, an HEC recognised online university, has produced over 107,000 graduates in 2021. This fact underscores such facilities are useful in provision of quality education in underdeveloped areas. Therefore, implementation of technology in educational sector has changed the quality of education in country.

Lastly, Pakistan has a resource efficient educational system. Apart from public and private schools, religious seminaries have proven to be most resource efficient. These institutions operate without any investment from the government or private sector. Instead, they cover their operational cost through charity. According to Pakistan's Educational Statistics, 2022-23, there are 64,417 functional seminaries across the country, providing free education to 3,316,423 students. Given the socio-economic conditions, this educational system is akin to a boon for marginalised segment of society. Therefore, cost-efficiency is a key aspect of Pakistani educational system.

As Pakistani education system has its own strength, one should also analyse its weaknesses that hinder its efficiency.

Firstly, the current infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate the large population. Pakistan has one of the highest youth population in the world, with 29% of population is between 15 and 29 years old. This large population can not be accommodated by the existing infrastructure. Moreover, the situation is even worsen in rural areas. As a result, according to Pakistan Maths Alliance report, 38% of school aged children are out of school. This underscores the inadequacy of the infrastructure to support such a large population. Therefore, insufficient infrastructure is keeping a significant portion of population away from school.

Additionally, there is a substandard quality of education in public schools. Unlike private schools, where the quality of education is commendable, public schools lack well-qualified teaching staff and proper monitoring systems, which contribute to the decline of educational standards. The result of these deficiencies are reflected in World Bank's Learning Poverty Report 2021, which states that 77% of school going children in Pakistan cannot read and comprehend age-appropriate text by the age of 10. This highlights the poor quality of education in both public and low-cost private schools. Therefore, while private schools offer quality education, the overall standard of education in both public and private institutions is often subpar.

Moreover, the country's education system is plagued by a deficient examination system. While examination systems like Cambridge and O-levels are available, the majority of students sit for the board examination. The boards suffer from an inadequate paper checking system, with a shortage of qualified examiners. For instance, a research conducted by IBA Sukkur in 2017, highlighted that the BISE has major technical flaws in its paper checking system, coupled with a flawed assessment process allowing teachers to do that, which allows examiners only 5-36 seconds per question to grade papers. Apart from this, cheating culture is prevalent in board examinations. For example, according to news reported in Dawn, in 2019, Commissioner of Hyderabad took strike against cheating, which resulted in a 50% passing rate. As examinations are integral part of examination systems, their substance and nature highlights the weakness of Pakistani education system.

Apart from this, a significant number of students are unable to pursue higher studies. As poverty is a prevalent social canker in Pakistani society, many students dropout to support their households financially. Furthermore, there is a lack of scholarships and incentives to encourage impoverished students to continue their studies. Resultantly, according to Pakistan Educational Statistics 20-21, the dropout rate between primary and middle school is 49% of total gross input ratio. This highlights the failure of country's education system to provide equal opportunities for students from all socio-economic background.

Additionally, Pakistan's technical education system is of low quality. Technical education is crucial segment of education, as it generates a skilled workforce for the industry and helps reduce unemployment. However, the country's technical education system suffers from an outdated curriculum. To illustrate, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) highlighted the issue in its 2021 report arguing that curriculum is misaligned with the job market, leaving graduates unprepared. Moreover, the sector is also suffering from the lack of funds. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Pakistan allocates only 1% of its total budget to technical education. These examples highlight the technical and managerial flaws in technical education.

More importantly, the current educational system is highly polarised. As Pakistan's educational system comprises of 3 segments: the madrassahs, public schools and elite private schools, each segment serves to accommodate students from different backgrounds. The elite private schools, due to their high fee structure, serve students from affluent background, public schools serving the middle class, and madrassahs primarily attended by the poorest segment of society. This segregation leads to an acute polarisation in the educational system due to differences in the quality of education and curricula. To provide evidence, Maleeha Lodhi in 'Pakistan Beyond the Crises State' argues that, "The education sector of Pakistan ends up producing three distinct cohorts from within Pakistani youth, each quite cut off from the other". This distinction perpetuates polarisation, allowing only limited number of students to attain quality education and contribute to economy.

Lastly, the education system has not achieved full gender parity. The number of male students outnumbers female students from primary education to higher education. For instance, according to ~~Open~~ Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-23, the gross enrollment rate for girls at primary level was 72% in 2023, while the net enrollment rate for girls and secondary level was 37% in 2023, showcasing a 35% dropout rate.

On the other side, male dropout rate was 20%. Moreover, the gap is wide more wide in rural areas, due to cultural hindrances and social stigmas. This highlights the patriarchal culture in country's educational system.

Despite having strengths and showing certain improvements, Pakistan's education system suffers from significant weaknesses. Therefore, it is essential to take necessary steps to put it on the right track.

Firstly, the government must increase the share of its spending on education. Currently, the spending on education is far below international standards. For instance, the government spends only 2% of its gdp on education, which is less than the 4% target. By increasing educational spending, the country can address issues like insufficient infrastructure, sub standard quality of education and deficient examination system, all of which are directly linked to financial constraints. Therefore, increasing education spending would effectively address the infrastructural quality of education and problems related to examination.

Moreover, the country must implement specific schemes to encourage low income households to send their children to school. For example, government can link social service programs or offer incentives to low income families, contingent upon sending their children to schools. To illustrate, the Benazir Income Support Program includes a conditional cash transfer component that encourages families to send their daughters to school by providing financial incentives. Programs like this should be scaled up, as they can effectively address issues such as high drop-out rates and gender gaps in Pakistan's education system.

In addition, state must ensure quality technical education system. Technical education is crucial for reducing unemployment and providing skilled output for the economy. Aligning technical education with industrial needs is essential for the sector's growth. For inspiration, one can look to the India's National Skills Qualification Framework, which has successfully aligned vocational training with industrial requirements on a large scale. Therefore, updating the curriculum to align with modern industrial needs is vital for enhancing the quality of technical education.

Lastly, the madrasa education system requires urgent reforms. The curricula they have been teaching are misaligned with the needs of modern economy, leaving many students unemployed.

in contemporary job market. To address this, reforms such as Single National Curriculum is crucial. It envisages the alignment of curriculum of all three education system. While the process of implementation of it is slow, reforms like these can effectively curb polarisation in education system.

In retrospect, Pakistan's education system has made improvements over time and has its own strengths. Its infrastructure has developed been developing, and public private partnership, along with private schools ensures quality education across the country. Internationally recognised universities and an emphasis on the implementation of technology further enhances the quality of higher education. Additionally, the Madrasa system provides free education in impoverished and remote areas without burdening the government, ensuring continuity of education. However, the education system faces significant challenges that undermine its strength. The infrastructure, albeit growing, remains insufficient to accommodate the large population, resulting in an increasing number of out of school children. Moreover, the quality of education in government schools, along with outdated examination and board systems, affects the overall quality of education. The lack of incentives and scholarships has led many students from poor backgrounds to discontinue their studies, making attainment of higher education a distant dream. Additionally, the Madrasa system's curriculum does not align with modern demands, leaving many students unemployed. Lastly, a significant gender gap persists, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, after critically analyzing

the Pakistani education system, it is imperative for Pakistan to increase its ~~education~~ spending, encourage low-income households to attend school through incentives, regulate religious seminaries to align the curricula with modern demands, and reduce polarisation in education.