

# Education in Pakistan: A Malady or Remedy?

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," said Nelson Mandela. This truth has guided humanity for centuries. Education has always stood as the foundation upon which civilizations rise, shaping individuals into agents of progress and societies into centers of innovation. Throughout the evolution of human societies, education has remained an anchor of transformation, driving moral, social, and economic development across generations. Nations that prioritize

education flourish in knowledge and development, while those that neglect it remain trapped in cycles of poverty and regression. In Pakistan, however, education presents a troubling paradox. Despite its recognized importance in the Constitution of 1973, the system is marred by inefficiencies, inequities, and systemic weaknesses. While the government has taken measures to improve access and quality - such as introducing single national curriculum and expanding enrollment programs - these reforms often fall short in addressing the deep rooted structural and administrative flaws. As a result, education in Pakistan continues to be a malady under the weight of a crumbling system. Education in Pakistan is a ~~mal~~ malady because of its structural flaws, limited access to quality education, lack of teacher training programs, and curricula that are not aligned with global trends. It continues to mirror administrative inefficiency and social inequality, failing to evolve into a system that empowers individuals and drives national progress. Thus, education in Pakistan is a malady, not a remedy.

of a country. The role of education in the development has long been recognized, but it gained renewed global significance in the 1980's, when organizations like UNESCO and The World Bank identified education as the foundation for sustainable development and human progress. Education plays a



pivotal role in shaping a nation's economic, social, and intellectual strength. It serves as a catalyst for growth and innovation, promotes social mobility, reduces poverty, and builds human capital vital for global competitiveness. In today's knowledge-driven world, education remains the most powerful force for national transformation and development.

The forthcoming paragraphs will expound on how education in Pakistan is a malady.

To begin with, the first reason why education is a malady in Pakistan is due to the structural flaws of the education system. After the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the constitution, education has become a provincial subject, granting each province the authority to design its own policies and curricula. This shift has led to fragmentation, inconsistency, and lack of coordination across provinces. Every region now follows a different syllabus, creating disparities in learning standards and assessment criteria. Consequently, there is no unified vision for national education, which divides the education system in Pakistan, weakening the overall quality and coherence of the system. Hence, the education system in Pakistan is a malady due to the structural flaws within its framework.

Secondly, education in Pakistan is a malady due to limited access to quality education. Millions of children,

especially in rural areas, are deprived of schooling, while those who do attend often receive substandard instructions lacking in modern resources and critical learning. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics Report (2024), only 5% of children have access to quality education, and higher education enrollment remains limited to 12% of youth nationwide. This continues to widen the gap between the privileged and the deprived. Thus, education in Pakistan remains a malady due to limited access to quality education.

Thirdly, education in Pakistan is a malady due to social exclusion rooted in gender discrimination. Deep-seated cultural traditions and financial constraints prevent millions of girls, especially in rural and marginalized communities, from accessing education.

In a report of UNESCO and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, nearly 22.8 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 are out of school, with female literacy at only 45.8% compared to 69.5% for males. This persistent inequality not only limits women's potential but also weakens the nation's overall growth. Hence, education in Pakistan remains a malady because of social exclusion based on gender discrimination.



Similarly, education in Pakistan continues to be a malady because of the lack of e-learning opportunities and digital infrastructure. In an era defined by technology, the absence of digital access severely limits students' ability to learn, connect, and compete globally. According to the Higher Education Commission (2023), only a fraction of universities and schools, primarily in Punjab, have the infrastructure to support e-learning, while provinces like Balochistan and Sindh lag far behind. Thus, education in Pakistan remains a malady due to the lack of e-learning opportunities and digital infrastructure.

Equally important, education in Pakistan remains a malady due to the lack of effective teacher training programs. Teachers are the cornerstone of any successful education system, yet in Pakistan, many lack professional skills and pedagogical knowledge needed to deliver quality instruction. The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (2022) highlights that most teachers rely on rote learning rather than fostering critical thinking among students. Hence, the lack of teachers training program continues to ~~undamine~~ be a malady for education in Pakistan.

Moreover, outdated and irrelevant curriculum further adds to the malady of education in Pakistan. The existing syllabi focus heavily on rote memorisation rather than analytical, creative, and

practical learning, leaving students ill prepared for modern challenges. According to the British Council Report (2021), Pakistan's curriculum does not align with global trends or the evolving needs of the job market, resulting in a workforce that lacks innovation and adaptability. Thus, the persistence of an obsolete curriculum continues to be a malady of the education in Pakistan. Lastly,

~~In addition to this~~, weak monitoring mechanisms further aggravate the malady of Pakistan's education system. Inefficient administration, lack of accountability, and political interference have led to ghost schools, mismanagement of funds, and inconsistent policy implementation. According to Transparency International Pakistan, nearly 20% of allocated education budget goes unutilized or mismanaged annually. Thus, weak monitoring mechanisms remain a malady for Pakistan's education system.

Despite these facts, it is often argued that education in Pakistan serves as a remedy than a malady. Supporters of this view claim that significant progress has been made in expanding access to education in Pakistan. Some of the major arguments supporting this view point are discussed below.

The first significant argument of the opposite view is that education in Pakistan



is a remedy because it is made compulsory under Article 25-A of 1973 Constitution, which guarantees free and compulsory education for all children aged five to sixteen. This provision reflects the State's intent to promote equality and national development through education. However, structural flaws still persist, which hinders the realization of this constitutional right. Hence, education in Pakistan continues to be a malady, as systemic weaknesses overshadow its potential as a tool for progress.

The second major argument of the opposing view is that education in Pakistan is a remedy because the government has increased teacher recruitment across provinces. This expansion demonstrates efforts to strengthen the educational workforce and improve classroom learning outcomes. However, the lack of proper teacher training and professional development programs has limited the impact of this initiative. Therefore, education in Pakistan continues to be a malady, as quantity has been prioritized over quality in teacher recruitment.

The third argument is that education in Pakistan is a remedy because the curriculum has been expanded to include more subjects and learning areas. This effort is seen as a step towards aligning education with contemporary global standards. However, the quality and relevance of the

Curriculum remain outdated and poorly structured, focusing on rote memorization rather than practical learning. Thus, education in Pakistan continues to be a malady, as the expansion of curriculum quantity has not translated into improvement in its quality.

Following this brief review of how education in Pakistan is a remedy, the next section will examine the recommendations to strengthen education in Pakistan.

Firstly, to strengthen education in Pakistan, there is an urgent need to adopt a unified national curriculum that ensures consistency and equality across all provinces. Finland's education model exemplifies the success of a unified and inclusive curriculum. By maintaining consistent national standards while allowing flexibility in teaching methods, Finland has achieved one of the highest literacy and learning outcomes globally. Thus, to strengthen education in Pakistan, adopting a unified national curriculum is vital.

Secondly, to strengthen education in Pakistan, it is crucial to enhance teacher training and invest in digital infrastructure and e-learning systems. South Korea's e-learning initiative revolutionized its education system by ensuring digital access for all students, fostering innovation, and improving learning efficiency. Similarly, Pakistan can transform



its education landscape by prioritizing digital inclusion and technological advancements in schools and universities. Therefore, to strengthen education in Pakistan, investing in digital infrastructure and e-learning is essential.

Thirdly, to strengthen education in Pakistan, it is essential to promote gender inclusivity. Bangladesh's Female Stipend Program successfully improved girls' school attendance and reduced dropout rates by offering financial incentives and community support. Similarly, Pakistan can achieve greater educational equity and national progress by empowering girls through inclusive education policies. Hence, to strengthen education in Pakistan, promoting gender inclusivity is vital.

To conclude, it is fair to assert that education in Pakistan is a malady, not a remedy. It is plagued by structural flaws, unequal access, gender discrimination, lack of teacher training, and outdated curricula that fail to meet modern needs. Despite constitutional guarantees and numerous reforms, the system continues to struggle with inefficiency, poor governance, and fragmented policies that hinder national progress. Only through sincere reform and sustained commitment can education evolve from a malady to a remedy for Pakistan's education system, but this remedy still remains a distant reality. Thus, education in Pakistan remains a malady.

burdened by deep rooted inefficiencies and outdated practices that prevent it from fulfilling its true purpose as a force of empowerment and progress.

