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Topic: Give a Critical Analysis of Education System of Pakistan. Is it Possible to Reform the System?

### Outline

#### A. Introduction

1. While some gain immunity, education must ensure accountability for all
2. Role of education system in developing nations

#### 3. Thesis statement

#### B. Overview of Pakistan's Education System in its Present Form

#### C. Critical Analysis of Education System of Pakistan

##### 1. Structural inequalities undermining Pakistan's education system;

- a. Wide gap between public and private schools

##### 2. Persistent quality gaps in teaching and learning outcomes;

- a. Lack of teachers training
- b. Rote memorization dominates over critical thinking

##### 3. Curriculum outdated and irrelevant to modern needs;

- a. Lack of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and digital literacy



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4. Large number of out-of-school children;  
a. Poverty and child labor prevent enrollments

5. Gender disparities and cultural barriers in education;

a. Cultural norms restrict girls from going to schools

6. Chronic underinvestment crippling education development;

a. Low budget allocation (around 2% of GDP)

7. Ineffective assessment and examination system;

a. Exam fail to evaluate creativity or analytical skills.

D. Reforms that can Transform and Revitalize Pakistan's Education System

1. Strengthening governance to ensure transparency and accountability;

a. "Punjab's School Monitoring Program"

2. Modernizing curriculum to meet contemporary national needs;

a. Implementation of Single National Curriculum

3. Upgrading teachers recruitment, training and professional standards;

a. "The Punjab Educator's Training Program"

4. Expanding equitable access to education for all social groups;

a. Reducing urban rural gap.

b. NGOs like "The Citizens Foundation"



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5. Improving infrastructure and learning resources;

a. Building well equipped classrooms and laboratories

b. Providing libraries, computers and digital tools

6. Promoting girls' education and cultural inclusion;

a. Educating families to send girls to school

7. Increasing funding and efficient utilization of resources;

a. Raise education budget to 4-6% of GDP

b. Ensure proper allocation and monitoring of funds

E. Conclusion

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### Essay:

At the time when Pakistan debates the 27<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, granting sweeping powers and immunity to top military leaders, the urgency to reform its education system becomes ever more critical. How can democratic institutions truly thrive if future generations are not educated to question, think, and hold power to account? Education is the backbone of any developing nation, as it equips citizens with knowledge, skills, and values necessary for economic growth. A strong education system fosters innovation, reduces inequality, and empowers individuals to participate meaningfully in governance. However, in contrast, weak education systems like that of Pakistan faces multiple challenges which include structural inequalities, governance failures, low allocation of budgets for education, and outdated curriculum. Yet, targeted reforms such as upgrading teacher recruitment, improving infrastructure, and enhancing assessment and evaluation systems can make it possible to transform the education system of Pakistan into



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a more equitable, efficient, and forward looking framework.

Pakistan's education system includes primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education levels. All the above mentioned levels are delivered through public schools, private institutions and madrasahs.

The literacy rate of Pakistan is around 55%. With a gender gap of about 20%, and 25.37 million children are out of school as reported in the Dawn. The education system of Pakistan faces number of challenges, but despite government's initiatives, Pakistan's education system continues to struggle with inequality, outdated pedagogy, and inadequate infrastructure.

Starting from the critical analysis of Pakistan's education system, firstly, structural inequalities play a huge role in undermining Pakistan's education system. These inequalities create a wide gap between public and private schools, urban and rural areas, and also in between girls and boys. Students of elite schools of Islamabad and Lahore are



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~~enjoying modern facilities, well trained teachers, international standard curriculum.~~

Whereas, students of rural schools often lack basic infrastructure, textbook and classrooms. Such inequalities perpetuate social and economic divides, restricting opportunities for million of children belonging from rural areas. Hence, structural inequalities deeply affect Pakistan's education system and hindering its way towards effective system.

Secondly, persistent quality gaps in teaching and learning outcomes play its part in the degrading education system of Pakistan. Rote memorization dominates over critical thinking in classrooms. Problem solving skills are rarely emphasized. Maximum number of teachers lack adequate training, and classical teaching method fails to engage students in the classrooms effectively. According to Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)<sup>in</sup> 2022, over 50% of Grade 5 students cannot read at Grade 2 level. This highlights the system's struggle to provide basic competencies. So,



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persisten quality gaps hinder students development.

Thirdly, Pakistan is trying to advance with outdated curriculum which is irrelevant to fulfil modern needs. Critical thinking, digital literacy and STEM subjects are ignored in many schools. Before introduction of Single Nation Curriculum (SNC), students belonging from rural area and government schools had less exposure to computer skills leaving them unprepared for technology driven education and career. However, advancing require modern and updated curriculum that can prepare student for modern challenges. Therefore, outdated curriculum leaves students unprepared for modern challenges.

Fourthly, a large number of students and children are out-of-school. The reason behind this is poverty and child labor. A lot of parents are unable to afford school expenses of their children which lead these children to child labor to earn money and fulfil their basic needs. UNICEF report that about 25.37 million



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children are out of school (2025). And mostly of them are in districts like Tharparkar and Dera Ghazi Khan. The large out-of-school children not only limit individual potential but also hinder national development, as million of students grow up without skills and knowledge needed to participate in the economy & society.

Not only structural inequalities, persistent quality gaps, outdated curriculum, and large number of out-of-school children is weakening the education system of Pakistan, but also gender disparities and cultural barriers are playing its part in weakening the very system. Cultural norms in many cities, specifically in rural areas, restrict girls from going to school. They only let girls educate till grade 5 due to lack of schools, early marriage, and societal restrictions. This limits women's participation in higher education and the workforce. However, educated girls have a profound impact on society as Napoleon said, "Give me an educated woman, and I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation."



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Moreover, chronic underinvestment in the education sector is crippling education development of Pakistan. Pakistan allocates around 2% of its GDP to education, far below the international standards. The less allocation of funds is leading toward poor infrastructure, lack of learning resources, teacher shortages, and ultimately low quality of education across the country. Many schools, especially in Balochistan and Sindh rural operate without electricity, desks, clean water for drinking, or even without teachers, limiting both enrollment and learning outcomes. Therefore, insufficient funding limits opportunities for students, demonstrating that increased and well-utilized investment is vital.

Last but not the least, ineffective assessment and examination systems fail to evaluate creativity or analytical skills. Over-reliance on the rote memorization means students often score high marks without basic understandings. This demonstrates that gaining high marks is the sole goal of student not conceptual clarity. Many students perform poorly



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in basic conceptual tests despite high board exam scores, demonstrating the system's failure to nurture analytical and creative skills.

Having examined the critical weaknesses of Pakistan's education system, it becomes clear that these challenges are interconnected and deeply entrenched. Without targeted interventions, the system will continue to fail, perpetuating social and economic disparities. Therefore, it is imperative to identify and implement comprehensive reforms that address these issues, improve access, enhance quality, and prepare students for the demands of modern, knowledge-driven society. The following section outlines the key reforms that can transform and revitalize Pakistan education system.

To begin with, strengthening governance to ensure transparency and accountability is essential for improving learning institutions. Weak administration hinders effective school management. Strengthening school monitoring, reducing political interference, and using digital attendance systems can improve transparency. The Punjab's



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School Monitoring Program shows that improved governance can reduce teacher's absenteeis, improve essentials for school, and improve overall school performance.

In addition, modernizing the curriculum and integrating digital literacy can equip students with 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pakistan's curriculum often lacks critical thinking, creativity and practical skills. The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is a step forward, but it requires continuous revision to stay globally relevant and aligned with modern learning standards. Updating textbook, including STEM subjects, and teaching digital skills can bridge the gap between education and job market requirements.

Moreover, strengthening and upgrading teacher recruitment and professional development is essential. Pakistan needs a merit-based system for hiring qualified teachers, supported by continuous professional training.

Introducing modern teaching methods, classroom management training and digital skill workshops can significantly improve learning outcomes. The Punjab Educators' Training Program provides professional development through workshop,



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digital modules, and instructional teachers. Such initiatives improve teaching practices and subject knowledge, particularly in rural areas where teacher quality is historically weak.

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Furthermore, expanding equitable access to education for all social group is another reform that increases possibility of revitalizing Pakistan's education system. Million of children, especially in remote areas, remain out of school due to distance and lack of facilities. Reducing urban rural gap in education sector can help in expanding accessibility to education. For example, the citizen foundation runs thousands of purpose-built schools in low income and rural communities, offering affordable and high quality education where government schools are scarce. Their success demonstrates how targeted initiatives can improve access and reduce educational inequality.

Another key reform is improving infrastructure and learning resources. Improving school infrastructure is essential for creating an environment where meaningful learning can take place. Building well equipped classrooms



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and laboratories enhances students attendance, concentration and retention through practical experiments, especially in rural and underprivileged areas where public facilities are often missing.

Similarly, providing libraries, computers and digital tools helps bridge the digital divide and equips students with research skills, literacy exposure and technological competence required in the modern world.

Equally important, addressing gender disparities must be prioritized by promoting girls' education and cultural inclusion. Girls face cultural restrictions, safety concerns, and lack of nearby schools, leading to high dropout rates. For tackling the cultural restrictions, the district administrations and local NGOs can play a vital role by educating families about the importance of girls education in modern world. Moreover, seminars regarding this issue can also be arranged in which families can be educated about this very issue.

Lastly and most importantly, increasing funding and efficient utilization of resources is crucial. With Pakistan spending around 2% of



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its GDP on education, schools struggle with inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of teaching materials. Increasing the budget to 4 to 6% of GDP is the call of moment. This increase will not only improve the infrastructure, but will also help in building laboratories and computer labs which is the cornerstone of progress in 21st century. Moreover, ensuring transparent utilization can also improve infrastructure, provide essential resources, and reduce regional inequalities.

Beginning of the end, Pakistan's education system is deteriorating and failing to meet nation's needs and faces multiple, interconnected challenges including gender disparities and cultural barriers in education sector, ineffective assessment and examination systems, and large number of out-of-school children. However, the system is not beyond reforms. Targeted measures such as modernizing curricula, increasing funding and efficient utilization of resources, and strengthening governance to ensure transparency can transform education in Pakistan. With



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sustained political will and long-term policy continuity, education can become a foundation for national development, social justice, and democratic progress. As John F. Kennedy once said, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education," emphasizing that Pakistan's future depends on meaningful educational reforms.

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