

Critical Evaluation of Current Education System in Context of Socioeconomic Development in Pakistan in the Light of Best Practices around the World: way forward

Umara Khan¹
Dr. Muqem-ul-Islam²

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Abstract:

The evolution of Pakistan's education system dates back to the British Era, with influences from earlier Hindu and Muslim traditions. The system includes both public and private institutions, with significant disparities in quality and accessibility. British colonial education aimed to instill Western values and create a workforce for administrative functions, leading to a persistent divide between secular and religious education. Despite success in specialized fields like medicine and engineering, the system faces challenges such as a theoretical focus, commercialization, and inadequate infrastructure. Recommendations include hands-on skill development, uniform and compulsory education up to the intermediate level, addressing societal changes, integrating moral values, improving teacher education, and increasing investment in the education sector.

Key words:

Education system, British Era, Secular education, Skill development, Educational inequality

¹ Belongs to Pakistan Administrative Services of Pakistan and currently posted as Director General (GDA), Hazarah Division, Khyber Pukhtun Khawa, Pakistan

² Faculty Advisor

Introduction

The roots of the present education system in Pakistan can be traced back to the British Era and even earlier sources, including the Muslim rulers of India, and before that, the Hindu system of relations between a teacher and a student. However, the predominant elements are those of the British Era. The present system consists of educational institutions in both the public and private sectors. Some of the institutions are elitist with respect to the fee structure and teaching staff³.

The purpose of education during the British Era was to inculcate modern (Western) values in the target population. The rulers needed the requisite HR to run their institutions and governance system at the lowest levels. They were successful in this regard, but this laid the foundation of the problem we are facing at present. Secular and religious studies began to traverse divergent paths. This could have been addressed by bringing about harmony between the two, but the issue remained unaddressed and the rift continued to grow over time, becoming a persistent issue in our times.

Problem Statement

The current system of education in Pakistan evolved during the pre-partition British Era. There have been reforms over time, but recently there have been significant social and economic changes in Pakistani society which warrant corresponding changes in the education system. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the present system of education in the country with reference to these changes and in comparison, with the best practices in education in other parts of the world.

Research methodology

The research method used for this study was qualitative. Data was taken from books, magazines/periodicals, newspapers, and electronic sources, all of which are secondary sources. Thus, the study is archival in nature. Some of the analytical tools used were Institutional, PESTLE, and Gap analysis.

Present System of Education in Pakistan

British Legacy

After the creation of Pakistan, the structure of state institutions remained the same as it had been in the pre-partition British Era of United India. In some cases, even the personnel remained the same. For example, the Armed Forces

³ (Shallwani, 2014)

retained the British officers in all three branches – Army, Navy, and Air Force. Education was no exception to the rule. In many parts of the country, especially the Eastern Wing, the teachers were Hindus and Christians. The situation had to remain so for quite some time after the creation of Pakistan. It took a lot of time to bring about reforms and changes to the system. These changes were slow and gradual. In one way, these arrangements were useful in providing continuity and avoiding a collapse and breakdown, but on the other hand, the colonial legacy remained a stumbling block in the way of actual change and reforms. There were two types of institutions at the time of Independence: institutions in the public sector for the common people and some elite institutions for the gentry, and some of the same arrangements have been there till today.

Reforms Over Time

The need for reforms was felt since the creation of the country. The first Education Conference was held from November 27 to December 1, 1947, in Karachi. The Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam, stressed the need for scientific and technical education in the country. He emphasized that the world was changing rapidly and the nation had to follow suit. As a result of the conference, several committees were formed to reform the system prevalent at that time. These committees included committees on adult literacy, primary and secondary education, and so on⁴.

During the Ayub Khan Era, an Education Commission was formed for policy recommendations. The Commission published its report in 1959. Several reforms were introduced in light of the recommendations of the Commission. These included compulsory education up to the age of ten, focusing on gender equality in education, the inclusion of religious education at the primary and secondary levels, and technical and research education at higher levels⁵.

National Education Policy 1970 was another important document which contained many of the recommendations of the 1959 Commission. The main areas of focus were postgraduate and higher education. Area study centers were established in the existing universities. Centers of Excellence were established in different universities. Universities were strengthened by the recruitment of new staff and an increase in the salaries of staff. However, the policy could not be implemented due to war with India and the separation of East Pakistan from the Federation⁶.

⁴ (Raza, 2010)

⁵ (Nazir, 2020)

⁶ (Mahmood, 1997)

In 1979, the Military Government of Zia introduced several reforms. The main stress was on religious studies, which were made compulsory up to degree classes. Pakistan Study was also made a compulsory subject up to degree classes. New universities and colleges were established in different parts of the country. During the 1990s, the same policies continued without any change.

An important change was witnessed during the time of Pervez Musharraf. Under the leadership of the well-known educationist Dr. Ataur Rahman, several reforms were introduced, including the establishment of the Higher Education Commission and the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission.

Organization Under the Present System

Legal and Policy Framework

Article 25A of the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides that, "the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by law." Then, there is The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2012 of the National Assembly of Pakistan, which accepts the right of every child to education, irrespective of gender. Earlier, there was The Education Act of 1974, amended in 1992, prescribing compulsory education between the ages of 5-14 years and free secondary education for students in the age bracket of 10-18 years.

After the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan in April 2010, education became a provincial subject. There is the National Ministry of Education and Manpower Training looking after the affairs of education in the Federal Capital Territory⁷.

Operational Level

At the operational level, the apex bodies are the Provincial Departments of Primary & Elementary and Higher Education, headed by the Administrative Secretaries under the supervision of Ministers of Education, Elementary or Higher Education as the case may be.

Under the supervision of the Departments, there are Directorates of Education (Primary & Elementary, Higher, Technical) as the case may be. The Directorate is the enforcement hand of the Government at the Provincial, Regional/Divisional, and District levels with different attached and subordinate offices. At the grassroots level, there are educational

⁷ (schoolvisor, 2021)

institutions – Primary, Middle, High, and Higher schools, Degree colleges, and Universities as the case may be.

Evaluation/Examination System

The evaluation system for the purpose of certificates and degrees awarding are the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education and the Universities. There are several Boards within a Province or a Division. These are autonomous bodies supported by laws and rules. At present, there are some 32 Educational Boards in Pakistan⁸.

Examinations at Bachelor and higher levels are conducted by the Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions in the public and private sectors. There are 177 universities in both the public and private sectors in Pakistan⁹. The examination at Bachelor and Master levels is mostly written with a portion dedicated to oral examination called Viva Voce. The examination system in Pakistan is not consistent with the requirements of present times. The stress is on rote-learning rather than the capacity for understanding and analyzing. Every student is supposed to study biological or physical sciences at the Intermediate level. There is little scope for humanities and social and economic sciences. The latter are opted by students who don't get an opportunity to study the biological or physical sciences. The result is that there is a lack of talent in these latter branches of learning. In competitive exams, posts sometimes remain unfilled due to the non-availability of suitable candidates.

The paper is mostly of subjective components called questions, which means an essay has to be written as an answer to every question. This takes away the objectivity from the system of evaluation. One or two questions are based on an objective pattern which tests the real knowledge of the examinees. This portion has to be increased to test the real knowledge and make the system objective and scientific. In the current times, students have been awarded 1100 plus marks in papers of 1100 Marks! It seems as if those were the greatest geniuses ever born.

Religious/Madaris/Seminaries

These institutions are mostly non-profit organizations where children from poor backgrounds are sent for the purpose of religious education. These institutions have their own Boards and Exam-conducting institutions. There are estimated to be as many as 35,000 such institutions in Pakistan. The

⁸ (BISE Boards Intermediate and Secondary Education in Pakistan, 2022)

⁹ (Corners, 2022)

Federal Ministry for Education & Manpower Training has established a Directorate General of Religious Education (DGRE) which has so far registered some 5,000 institutions since 2019¹⁰.

All the evils of our Education System can be observed in Religious Education, too. There is no stress on understanding and analytical thinking. The most favorite technique is learning by rote in which the teacher acts as a receptacle of knowledge from whom the students take their share. This is not a good system. The best system will be the one where the stress is on the capacity to think and reflect. This element of thinking and reflection is lacking in both the secular as well as the religious education systems in Pakistan.

Another downside of Madrassa education is that the student is subjected to harsh treatment by the teachers and senior colleagues. The younger ones are made to collect alms and meals for the inmates of the seminary. Thus, the begging student loses the sense of self-respect and human dignity.

However, in most cases, the problem is blown out of proportion by the West and the secular elements in Pakistan. These seminaries serve some useful purposes as well. The children of poor families, if not looked after in the religious seminaries, will be a far greater problem. Where will they go, and what will they be doing all the time if there are no seminaries? They may become a part of some other undesirable situation. Moreover, the students enrolled in Madaris are less than 1% of the total enrollment. They constitute 0.7% to 0.9% of the total enrollment in the country¹¹.

Current System in Terms of Skills/Learning Levels

This section deals with the levels of learning or skill levels. These levels have been designed for various age brackets. Thanks to the understanding of psychology, this part of education remains identical in most systems of education in both the developed and developing world. Pre-schooling starts at the age of 3-4 years, and primary education starts at the age of 5-6 years.

Elementary/Basic Literacy

Elementary education is imparted in primary schools in the public and private sectors. The age bracket for students is 5-12 years. This level of education is free and compulsory. Pakistan has 150,129 primary education

¹⁰ (Abbasi, 2021)

¹¹ (Andrabi, 2005)

facilities, of which 88% are in the public sector and 12% are in the private sector. Total enrollment is 18.751 million, and some 5 million children are out of school, of which 60% are girls and 40% are boys¹².

High and Higher Secondary

This level of education is from class 6 to class 12. There are 48,300 middle schools in the country (class 6-8), 32,000 high schools, and some 6,000 inter-colleges. Total enrollment at the middle level is about 8.3 million, at the high school level it is 4.5 million, and at the secondary school level, it is 2.33 million for 2020-21¹³.

Higher Education/Graduation and Post-Graduation

After intermediate, there is a 4-year Bachelor of Science/ Arts program or a 2-year associate diploma. Bachelor programs are offered by degree colleges and universities.

Research

After Bachelor Programme a student may opt for MS/MPhil and then Ph.D. These programmes involve research and an MPhil Degree would require two to three years of studies. A Ph.D. would require another two to three years or more. There are some 174 Public and Private Sector Universities in Pakistan¹⁴.

Current System of Education (Subject Matter)

General Education

The most common type of education with respect to subject matter is general education. At the primary/elementary level, the student learns what may be termed as functional literacy, including reading, speaking, and writing. At the higher and higher secondary levels, most students opt for humanities and liberal arts, or in other words, languages and social sciences. Here, the choice is not optional but often compulsory. Such an education has its own values, like creating civic sense in students, but the problem is that there are very few job opportunities for graduates of such programs. They typically seek clerical or teaching jobs. This type of education can provide jobs for a minority of students only.

¹² (Yousafzai F. , 2022)

¹³ (Yousafzai A. , 2022)

¹⁴ (Lane, 2022)

In the field of general education, individual subjects include social sciences, physical and numerical sciences, and so on. For example, a scholar may complete their bachelor's degree with chemistry as a major and pursue MS, MPhil, or Ph.D. in some branch of chemistry. However, only a limited number of students may be able to find jobs, as their qualifications are general and not applied.

Specialized Education

In Pakistan, specialized education starts after intermediate or twelve years of schooling. Fields of specialized education include medical, dental, engineering, agriculture, and other specialized fields. Specialized education programs last four to five years, after which a student earns a bachelor's degree in the respective specialization, such as medical or engineering. Specialized education in the country is somewhat better than other branches of education. The main fields of specialty are discussed in the following sections.

Health Sciences

There are 122 medical colleges in Pakistan, with 48 in the public sector and 74 in the private sector¹⁵. After qualifying intermediate with biological sciences, a student gets admission to a medical college after passing the prescribed tests. The medical bachelor degree is called MBBS in Pakistan. After four years of education, there is an additional year of practical education in a teaching hospital, called a house job. After the basic course, MBBS, most doctors pursue further studies in specialized branches such as surgery, medicine, dermatology, and urology. In most medical colleges, there are also courses in dentistry, called BDS.

The condition of medical education is in somewhat better shape. However, the commercialization of medical education in particular, and education in general, makes it impossible for poor students to get education in medical colleges. Moreover, doctors graduating from these colleges often focus more on recouping their investment than on serving humanity, making treatment costly in the country. Besides medical education, there are institutions providing four-year study programs in allied health sciences such as pharmacy, nursing, and diagnostic sciences.

¹⁵ (Urooj, 2022)

Engineering Education

Another important branch of specialized education is engineering. There is a four-year bachelor's program in various branches of engineering such as civil, mechanical, and electrical. There are 174 engineering universities/colleges in Pakistan¹⁶. Engineering education in Pakistan mostly covers the classic areas of study. Most institutions produce batches of civil, mechanical, and electrical engineers yearly, with little regard for job prospects. As a result, many engineers remain jobless in the country. Many students go abroad in search of jobs, often finding employment unrelated to their studies. There is a pressing need to update the curriculum and align it with current job market demands.

Technical Education and Management Sciences

Technical education is another important area of education in Pakistan. Technical education may be classified based on the duration of the program. After matriculation, a student may enroll in a two-year program leading to a diploma.

Another branch of this education is management sciences and commerce education, which includes subjects like accounting, finance, and banking. Examinations for the four-year program are conducted by universities. This type of education is valuable in terms of job prospects and market demands.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Environmental Sciences

Agriculture, forestry, and environmental sciences are important branches of education serving humanity. Agriculture strives to improve food security. Pakistan, being an agricultural country with a suitable climate and soil, has several prestigious universities offering four-year graduate programs after intermediate.

However, agriculture education in Pakistan is conservative and based on classical studies, with a lack of research and innovation. As a result, food security is not ensured, and a significant amount of wheat has to be imported due to below-optimal production.

¹⁶ (Lane, 2022)

Animal and Biological Sciences

Like other specialized sciences, animal and biological sciences offer four-year graduate programs. Courses include Doctor of Veterinary and Animal Sciences and similar programs. Livestock is an important component of the agriculture sector, contributing more than 50% to agriculture.

Other Branches of Specialized Education

Besides the mentioned branches, there are other specialized fields such as nuclear engineering, metallurgy, marine sciences, and more. Education in Pakistan faces several issues, including a lack of innovation and outdated curricula. Course revision must be a priority in every field of education to keep pace with changing times.

Special Education

There are many physically challenged children in Pakistan. The government addresses their needs through schools for children who are blind, deaf, or have other debilitating conditions. In Punjab, there are 288 institutions for special children. In Sindh, there are 54 institutions for physically challenged children¹⁷. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there are 18 institutions, and in Balochistan¹⁸, there are 11 institutions for physically handicapped children¹⁹. There are also schools for handicapped children in three major cities of AJK. These institutions are mostly in the public sector, but there are also private sector institutions.

Adult and Non-Formal Education in Pakistan

Besides formal education, there are measures for adult education for those who missed schooling when they were young. Past projects include "Nai Roshni Schools" from the 1980s. Currently, the prison departments teach basic literacy skills to inmates so they may become useful citizens after serving their terms of punishment²⁰.

¹⁷ (Tahirkheli, 2022)

¹⁸ (Wonders, 2022)

¹⁹ (Disabilities, 2020)

²⁰ This is based on personal observations of the author when he served as Inspector General Prisons G-B.

Education in Other Parts of the World

Education has been one of the most important objectives of all civilizations. It broadens the perspective of humanity and guides individuals toward better and enlightened lives. A study of ancient civilizations reveals that teachers have always been treated with respect and honor. In current times, the importance of education has further increased due to the complexities of modern life.

Education System of the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, education starts after the third birthday of a child. This is called preschool and extends to the age of five. This stage prepares students for primary school, which is divided into two stages. The first is from age 5-7 and is called Key Stage 1. The second phase starts at age 7/8 and goes to 11/12 years of age. This education is compulsory and is provided by the government or private sector. There may be community schools based on partnerships between local communities and the government²¹.

Secondary education is for students aged 11/12 to 15/16. On the basis of this education, students are awarded the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Such education is provided by government schools or academies, which are privately funded schools. This education is followed by further education (FE). This two-year course is offered by universities and colleges. The next stage is higher education (HE), which includes postgraduate diplomas and doctorate degrees.

Medical and engineering²² education are some branches of specialized education. This kind of education starts after secondary education/A Level. In medical education, two years are foundation studies, while the next three to four years are practical education in community-based hospitals²³. The literacy rate in the United Kingdom is 99%²⁴.

Education System of the United States of America

In America, the first formal stage of schooling is primary/elementary education for ages 5-12, followed by secondary schooling up to the age of 16/18. This education is compulsory and is provided by the federal

²¹ (database, Education System in the United Kingdom, 2022)

²² (UCAS, 2022)

²³ (SI-UK, 2022)

²⁴ (UNA-UK, 2021)

government, especially for the poorer classes. This education may also be provided by the private sector or community-based schools.

After 12 years of schooling, students may opt for higher studies in engineering or other fields. This is a program of five or more years. There are some variations among the systems of different states. Higher education is acquired in universities or various disciplines of the university, such as schools of medicine²⁵. The national literacy rate in the USA is 99%²⁶.

Education System of India

India is our eastern neighbor and remained under British hegemony like Pakistan. Both countries have some identical problems, but India has more developed and mature institutions than Pakistan. They have a stable democratic system, which is a great advantage in their favor. Their education system, like ours, evolved during the British era. Presently, the education system of India is more or less similar to that of Pakistan. There is primary education, divided into two parts: lower primary for ages 6-10 and upper primary for ages 11-12. This is followed by high school for ages 13-15 and then secondary education for ages 16-18²⁷.

Then, there is tertiary education, the first stage of which is the bachelor program, spanning 3-5 years with an option to exit. The second stage of higher education is research, culminating in a doctorate. Drastic changes were introduced through the National Education Policy 1920. The area that witnessed the greatest changes is the bachelor program, which now includes two years of applied/practical education. If a student opts to exit after this period, they will have some skills to utilize²⁸. The national literacy rate in India is 72.23%²⁹.

Education System of Some Other Countries

The system of education in Bangladesh comprises three stages. First is primary education, which has a duration of eight years. Then, there is higher and secondary education of two years each. Higher education is taught at colleges and universities. There are colleges for medical and engineering

²⁵ (Council, 2018)

²⁶ (Review, 2022)

²⁷ (Bus, 2022)

²⁸ (ILO, 2022)

²⁹ (Review, 2022)

studies³⁰, making the system quite similar to that of Pakistan. The national literacy rate in Bangladesh is 74.66%³¹.

In Sri Lanka, the first level of education is primary education for ages 6-11, followed by middle/junior secondary for ages 12-14, secondary/senior secondary for ages 15-16, and post-secondary/advanced level for ages 17-18. This is followed by two years of vocational diploma from technical colleges, leading to employment. At the tertiary education level, there is a Bachelor of Arts/Science program, which is a three-year course, followed by a master's program, which is a two-year program. A doctorate is the final stage in education, taking 2-3 years of study³². The literacy rate in Sri Lanka is 92.38%³³.

Comparison with Pakistan: Similarities and Dissimilarities

A comparison of the systems reveals certain areas of similarities but also some differences. Every society prioritizes certain areas to be addressed first and foremost. Certain areas need constant improvement. Important areas are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Important Areas of Similarities

Regarding levels of education, there are few differences between the system of Pakistan and those of the other countries studied above. Formal schooling starts at the age of five in most of the countries, including Pakistan. Similarly, the levels of education, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary/higher education, are nearly the same. The number of years required at every level is the same, with only slight differences between Pakistan and the countries under reference.

Important Areas of Dissimilarities

There are certain areas of difference. In most of the systems discussed above, such as Sri Lanka, India, the UK, and the USA, there are 1-2 years of compulsory practical education before a student is awarded a bachelor's degree. This is not the case in Pakistan. Technical and practical components of education enable a student to earn a livelihood after leaving education. In

³⁰ (database, Education System in Bangladesh, 2022)

³¹ (Star, 2022)

³² (database, Education System in Sri Lanka, 2022)

³³ (Macrotrends, 2022)

Pakistan, a student will require some skill, such as a diploma in computers or a certificate in teaching, to find a job. In other words, education in Pakistan is theoretical and generalized.

From the discussion above, it is clear that education in Pakistan is formal and generalized. There is a lack of professional and skill-based activities in the education system of Pakistan. As a result, we produce large batches of bachelor's and master's graduates every year without job skills. So, after sixteen years of education, a person will still require some skills to enable them to get a job in the public or private sector.

The mushroom growth of educational institutions in the private sector has led to a decline in the standard of education. Now there are degree holders, but real knowledge is lacking.

Changing Situation in Pakistan

There have been significant changes in Pakistan over time. The problems faced by today's society are not the same as they were twenty to thirty years ago. The changing scenario has its own problems and opportunities. In the past, agriculture used to be the main support of the country, employing a large portion of the workforce. But now, there are other competitors. A considerable portion of the labor force goes out of the country to seek jobs, and the foreign exchange they send back is the main support of many households, especially in rural areas.

There has been a significant increase in population, leading to new social and economic issues. The investment in the information sector of the economy, especially telecom, has produced a number of linkages, giving rise to new jobs and opportunities. However, problems have also increased, such as cyber crimes and street crimes like phone snatching. The enormous growth in population necessitates more educational institutions. However, institutions alone are not the solution. There needs to be an overhaul of textbooks and instructional materials.

Social Issues

There has been a rapid increase in population and a rush towards major cities, creating new social problems. The development of media, especially social media, has produced awareness in the large youthful population of the country. The divide between rich and poor has increased exponentially, creating a sense of deprivation among the poor. The hygienic and sanitary conditions in parts of the cities where the poor live are pathetic, creating dire health issues in those areas. This sense of deprivation has led to an increase

in crime rates. Purse and phone snatching is a common scene on the streets of major cities.

Another important issue is the radicalization of Pakistani society. Even educated people can be led by religious and political demagogues. So, one day you may witness a mob lynching someone over a pretext of religion or ideology. The killing of a Sri Lankan factory manager in a sports goods factory in Sialkot recently is a notorious case that speaks volumes about the harm done to society by this process of radicalization. Discrimination based on creed, caste, and even gender are other important issues. The literacy rate of the female population is lower in comparison to males. This discrimination is more significant in urban areas, where most of the population lives. According to UNESCO, the adult literacy rate in Pakistan is 59.13%, further bifurcated into 71.12% for males and 46.47% for females, showing a significant gap between genders³⁴.

Other social issues include child beggary, corruption, poverty, smuggling, child labor, and drug abuse, to name a few.

Economic Issues

Economic issues in the country have worsened over the last several years. The first important issue is stagnation in the production sectors of the country. Neither agriculture nor manufacturing is showing any signs of improvement. From production mode, the economy has shifted to service mode, mainly consumption-led growth, with imports several times more than exports. During the financial year 2021-22, imports were worth \$80.02 billion, while exports were worth \$31.76 billion³⁵.

The agriculture sector has been hit by climatic conditions over the last couple of years, including heat waves and recent monsoon floods. A shortage in agricultural produce is a more serious problem. It not only jeopardizes the food security of vulnerable classes but also exerts pressure on the meager foreign exchange reserves of the country because the required food items have to be imported, which is costly for the already struggling poor.

Frequent outages of electricity and gas are causing significant problems for manufacturing. Moreover, the high overhead charges make Pakistani products less competitive, hindering rapid export growth to keep pace with the increased rate of imports. Similarly, there have been changes in traditional

³⁴ (countryeconomy.com, 2022)

³⁵ (PAKREVENUE, 2022)

sectors. The information technology sector has expanded tremendously over the last two decades, requiring different skill sets and approaches.

Education in the Context of the Changing Scenario

Given the social and economic problems, there must be reforms in the education system. The functional literacy approach will not be enough. New skills, commensurate with the requirements of modern times, must be included in the syllabus.

Similarly, a larger population must be provided with education. The old classroom and blackboard concept must change. Multimedia and audio/video visual aids must be used to convey lessons to a much larger audience.

Moreover, classical disciplines of sciences and arts will not fulfill our needs. There have been interdisciplinary approaches, like biotechnology, requiring different skills and approaches. Thus, we need to bring reforms into our education system to make it compatible with the needs of the time.

Issues and Challenges

Education in Pakistan faces some serious issues and challenges that need attention. Some of these are discussed as follows:

There are issues with enrollment at the primary level. As was pointed out earlier, there are some five million students who are not enrolled. It is said that 60% of them are female students and 40% are male students.

According to one estimate, the dropout rate in Pakistan is about 7% of the total enrollment³⁶.

The commercialization of education has led to the stratification of education. There are different institutions and syllabi for common people and elite classes.

Gender-based discrimination in education is another major problem³⁷. More female children are out of school than their male counterparts.

³⁶ (Yousafzai F. , 2022)

³⁷ (Kamal, 2022)

Lack of spending on education is another problem in Pakistan. The main chunk of resources goes to debt servicing, operational expenses, and defense of the country, leaving little to be spent in social sectors like education.

The literacy rate is very poor. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23, the literacy rate is 63%. Perhaps, we are better off in comparison with Afghanistan only in this region.

Another issue in the Pakistani education system is waywardness and lack of direction. A student may go on earning degree after degree without any direction or destination. In most cases, the process abruptly comes to a halt after a person gets a job.

Infrastructure is poor and in need of repair. Institutions are established, and no heed is paid to their maintenance until they start crumbling down.

The system of evaluation is faulty. It encourages rote learning and cramming and discourages true learning.

Analysis

Institutional Analysis

It has been pointed out earlier that education is the constitutional right of every child in the country and that the government will provide for the same as per law. After the eighteenth constitutional amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, education has become a provincial subject. The governments at the provincial level have established institutions responsible for policy guidelines, preparation and development of study material at various stages/levels of education, implementation through the operational arm of the government, and evaluation and feedback. Every chain in this elaborate structure has its own rules and values, some of which were discussed in detail in the preceding sections.

PESTLE Analysis

Political Aspects

The political system in Pakistan is democratic to some extent, at least the institutions are there. There is political will to support the establishment and strengthening of educational institutions because politicians need to canvass for votes. Moreover, they wish to have some leverage in the shape of offering

some jobs, which necessitates the establishment and staffing of educational institutions.

Economic Aspects

The economic health of the country is not very good, but there is pressure from different quarters to provide for education. Therefore, there are expected to be greater funds for education with the passage of time. Similarly, non-profit organizations and donors are also expected to contribute to education. So, on the economic front, there are some good prospects.

Social Aspects

Our social values and norms have a positive outlook on education. Although there is a shift to materialism in current times, the importance of education cannot be denied. So, the social norms are also in favor of education. The use of unfair means in examinations and cramming are potential social threats, but there are positive aspects as well. The rapid urbanization and tremendous increase in population are likely to exert pressure on the present infrastructure, but the private sector is also investing in education, which is a positive social indicator in this regard.

Technological Aspects

Technology has become a part of education. Online courses and the internet are supporting education in many ways. There may be use of teaching aids that technology has made available. So, this is likely to have a positive effect on education.

Legal Aspects

There have been acts of parliament to provide for education in the country. The legislature is expected to take measures to ensure quality education for all in the country. Currently, education is a provincial subject, and provincial legislatures have passed certain laws in respect of education and related matters.

Environmental Aspects

Pakistan is one of the countries most affected by climate change. The changing pattern of weather may have a negative effect on education. Schools had to be closed due to COVID-19. However, we may expect improvement in the

environment by sensitizing people about environmental issues through education.

Gap Analysis

The National Education Policy Framework 2018³⁸ prioritized four areas of focus:

1. Decreasing the number of Out Of School Children (OOSC)
2. Uniformity in Education Standards
3. Improving the Quality of Education
4. Enhancing Access to and Relevance of Skills Training

A glance over the system in all parts of the country reveals a significant gap between the policy objectives and the actual outcomes. A large number of school-age children are out of school. There is stratification of education in all parts of the country, with elitist institutions for the rich and government schools for common people. Similarly, the informal sector, like religious seminaries, has courses diametrically different from those in both public and private schools. In most cases, they work at cross purposes, defeating the objective of bringing about uniformity in the education system in the country.

Similarly, there is a great difference between the desired quality and the quality produced. Skills are also irrelevant to job markets and industry. So, there is a significant gap between policy and practice in the field of education in Pakistan.

To bridge the gap, we will require a lot of effort and many resources. The work must be started on a war footing. It must be approached with the same urgency as polio, COVID-19, or dengue. Only then can we expect some improvement.

(Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018)

Conclusion

The issue of floods in Pakistan presents a complex and multi-faceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and proactive governance response. The impacts of floods are not only limited to immediate damages but also have long-term consequences on agriculture, livelihoods, and food security. The frequency and intensity of floods have been exacerbated by climate change, making it imperative for Pakistan to adopt adaptive measures and invest in early warning systems.

³⁸ (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018)

Several challenges hinder effective flood management, of which the primary challenge is the lack of coordinated efforts among various stakeholders. The responsibility for disaster management is spread across multiple national and provincial authorities, leading to overlapping functions and potential gaps in response. There is a need for a joint effort involving all stakeholders, including the government, armed forces, civil departments, and local communities, to pool their resources and expertise to effectively mitigate the impact of floods.

Moreover, low literacy rates in flood-prone rural areas hinder the dissemination of early warnings through traditional media channels, including face-to-face interaction, although it's time-consuming. A mass awareness program utilizing various communication channels and technologies could significantly enhance preparedness and response.

The issue of constructing water reservoirs also poses a significant challenge due to political considerations and disagreements among different provinces. Resource mobilization and distribution during flood relief operations are other pressing challenges. The availability of relief goods is limited, and the infrastructure disruptions caused by floods can impede the transportation of aid to affected areas. Relying heavily on international aid is not a sustainable approach in the face of donor fatigue.

Developed countries have shifted their focus from flood control to flood resilience, emphasizing nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, and water conservation. Implementing sustainable urban drainage systems, nature-based solutions, and rainwater harvesting could help mitigate the impact of floods.

The challenges of floods in Pakistan demand a cohesive and forward-thinking governance response. Strengthening coordination among stakeholders, enhancing early warning systems, improving water management, and adopting nature-based solutions are essential steps towards effective flood mitigation and resilience. Addressing these challenges will not only reduce the immediate damages caused by floods but also contribute to long-term sustainability and better adaptation to a changing climate.

Recommendations

1. Development of an early warning system that can disseminate information to all segments of the likely-to-be-affected population is the need of the day. There exists an elaborate system of an early warning system followed by NDMA and PDMA's, but to plug the gap of communication between the government and society, social mobilization is also required. If electronic and print media fail in spreading the word, face-to-face methods of sensitizing

about impending disaster can be managed, as exemplified by recent efforts of district administrations of Charsadda and Nowshera.

2. The early warning system will not suffice in mitigating the disaster but will help in relocating the vulnerable population and saving their precious lives. However, it is important to map out all vulnerable areas in Pakistan and start efforts to protect these areas through bio-engineering structures as well as relocating important and strategic installations to safe areas before the flood season.
3. To minimize damages to bridges and crops in watershed areas, all waterways and water channels need to be cleared from encroachments, whether permanent or temporary in nature. The flash floods cause maximum damage to these areas, and water is diverted to housing areas as the natural flow of flood water is perturbed. In this regard, a task force needs to be established by the provincial governments to clear encroachments and at the same time take measures to pursue the cases properly at judicial forums for removing hurdles in operations.
4. The Ministry of Climate Change and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through joint collaboration, may start a program for global awareness about the impact of global carbon emissions on Pakistan. Instead of doing it in a campaign mode, it must be a recurring process. Moreover, as the global aid regime is now focused on the European theatre and other areas of humanitarian assistance, a strong diplomatic outreach is required so that the scenario of Pakistan is showcased to the world.
5. In order to ensure food security and to ensure that the marketable and exportable agricultural products, i.e., the Cotton crop, are protected, it is important to take measures to save them. As Pakistan has GSP plus status, and in the absence of mitigating strategies, the GSP status might fail to produce the desired result. Floods of 2022 have damaged the cotton crop significantly. Moreover, to cater to the feeding requirements of the displaced population, it is imperative to adopt strategic stocking of essential food items. To protect the food baskets, it is recommended that zonal planning is carried out, restricting the developer mafia from converting agricultural lands into housing societies, and to implement the planning in such a way that all sectors of the economy are catered for.
6. The mapping of flood-prone areas needs to be supplemented by a workable and well-thought-out logistics plan. It can be done by establishing relief warehouses in safe locations in or in the vicinity of flood-prone areas so as to provide quick relief in times of flood, which otherwise becomes a longstanding logistics issue as rails, roads, and bridges are affected. Furthermore, as the local administration is the first responder in case of any

disaster, capacity building of the office of the deputy commissioner is also required by technological support in the form of gadgets.

7. The capacity of Rescue 1122 needs to be enhanced, and equipment must be provided to them according to the scale of the disaster. Rescue 1122 is accustomed to urban disasters, so it is imperative to increase their capacity to deal with mega disasters. This can be done through joint exercises with all stakeholders, including the Pakistan army and Pakistan Navy, so that a collaborative response can be made in case of disasters.
8. Urban flooding is frequent now and casts doubts over the existing status of municipal services; therefore, it is imperative to clear all sewerage lines from encroachments, and cleaning is required before every monsoon season. Moreover, keeping in view the collaborative prospects, it will be in the fitness of things if Rescue 1122, Municipal Administrations, and civil society collaborate and find solutions through collective wisdom, creating ownership. The city's infrastructure must be made keeping in view the possibility of urban flood, and hence provisions to be made for escape channels for floodwater. Local Governments, C&W, and nation-building departments have to collaborate for a sustainable solution.
9. In order to increase public participation, create a spirit of ownership, and boost social mobilization, it is recommended that the Civil Defense mechanism be made functional by the respective home departments of each province so that a workforce is available in times of disaster. The civil defense volunteers and workers must be compensated and trained well in modern techniques of disaster management.
10. The aid distribution must be on merit and devoid of any political mileage. Evidence-based distribution and maintaining a state-of-the-art monitoring and implementation mechanism are required to ensure this.

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