



THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN: A RECIPE TO DISASTER?

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ABSTRACT:

Education is the matter of life and death for any country. Unfortunately, Pakistan has not been able to develop a stable, up to date and just education system in the country till now. From 1947 to 2023, many major steps have been taken by the government but its implementation has been poor and unsatisfactory. A detailed analysis of all the problems in our education system has been discussed below. Also the immediate solutions to these problems have also been provided.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN:

Before the creation of Pakistan, the subcontinent was the under the order of British Empire as a colony. When Pakistan came into being about 85 percent of population was illiterate and this ratio was much higher in the rural and far-flung regions of the country in all the provinces. The lower rates of the illiteracy were because the British Imperialists didn't equally invest for education across the sub-continent rather they had varying policies for various nations like Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The important events in history for development of educational system have been discussed below. Immediately after the independence government emphasized on calling National Education Conference to increase the country's literacy ratio. From the day of birth to 2017, one educational conference and eight education policies have been made to increase the literacy ratio of the country and improve the skills of people.

1. National Educational Conference 1947:

The first educational conference was held in November 1947, founded by the father of nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In this conference different committees were formed for the fair implementation of the conference objectives. The Primary and Secondary education committee were formed with the objective to ensure the national system of education that shall be based on strong foundations of free and compulsory primary education. In this policy, first five years were suggested for planning, recruitment of the teachers and training and sixth year was suggested to make 500,000 people literate. Twenty years were confined for universalization of primary education in this conference. Beside this, two five year plans were also adopted for improvement in primary education. (1)

2. National Education Policy 1959:

This education policy is recalled as "Report of the Commission on National Education 1959" (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education, 1959). The education policy was presented on January 5th, 1959, during the regime of President Muhammad Ayyub Khan. In this commission, education was made compulsory up to 10 years of age and equal rights were established for both males and females. Further, this commission focused on the character building of the students, science and technical education, and establishment of new universities, research at university

level, religious education at primary, middle and secondary levels, and combination of 25% internal and 75% external evaluation in examination system. (2)

3. *National Education Policy 1970:*

This policy is also called as the “new education policy” which was formed during the era of President Yahya Khan on 26th March, 1970. The important characteristics of this education policy were to highlight the importance of science and technology education, ideological orientation, to develop a decentralized system of education administration and formulate national education units. In this policy, 1980 was decided to achieve the goal of compulsory universal free primary education. Taking the data from the census, this policy claimed that in 1961, 100 million people were illiterate in Pakistan in which 90 percent were belonged to the rural regions while 10 percent were from urban areas (Government of Pakistan, 1970). (3)

4. *National Education Policy 1972:*

This policy was proposed by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on 29th March, 1972. The stress of this policy was kept on the ideology of Pakistan, equality in education and free and universal education for both males and females up to class 10th, development of personality, and formulation of science and technical education. Among the all other policies of education, this was one of the best for the improvement in education in a real sense. (4)

5. *National Education Policy 1979:*

This policy came into being in October 1978, during the regime of President Zia-ul-Haq and the work plan was announced in February 1979. During this policy a “National Education Conference” was organized in 1979 for reviewing the existing education system of the country. The goals which were discussed in this conference were to promote science and technical education and provision of equal opportunities for both males and females in getting education. Urdu language was made medium of instruction and males and females education was decided in separate environments. (5)

6. *National Education Policy 1992:*

The plan for this policy was decided during a “National Education Conference” which held in April, 1991 in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Federal Minister of Education. All scholars, scientists, writers, teachers, newspaper editors, and lawyers presented their proposals in preparation of this policy. After in-depth conversation about different proposals, in December 1992 this policy was announced. The suggested goals for this policy were the promotion of Islamic values through education, betterment in female education, curriculum according to the demand of the day, and most important, they expanded the span of graduation and post-graduation. (6)

7. *National Education Policy 1998-2010:*

This policy was designed in January 1998 during the reign of Pervez Musharraf and it was announced in March 1998. In this policy, Quranic principals and Islamic practices were made integral part of the education system. Further, their goals were universal primary education,

provision of basic educational facilities and opportunities to the people of the country. The basic aim of this policy was the expansion of basic education for the purpose to ensure opportunity for higher education. (7)

8. *National Education Policy 2009-2015:*

This policy was formulated in Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) government and considered different from the previous education policies. The planning of this policy was started three years before its official announcement and different seminars and meeting were conducted to make it more effective to achieve the educational goals in a better way. Different stakeholders took part in its designing and presented their precious suggestions. Further, this policy focused on early child education (ECE) which was historically ignored in the other policies.

9. *National Education Policy 2017-2025:*

This policy was implemented during the regime of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) and announced by the Federal Minister of Pakistan. The main focus of this policy was to increase the number of public-sector colleges and universities in the country. They focused on virtual education and suggested to increase the number of virtual universities. It was also suggested that we should facilitate the private sector universities in their establishment. More sub-campus of colleges and universities should be opened to make better access for the students at their door steps. (7)

DRAWBACKS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN:

Pakistan has not been able to establish a stable and up to date education system since its creation. The current scenario of education system prevailing in Pakistan is the bequest of the education imparted in prepartitioned British India. The current situation of unrest fiasco prevailing in the country is primarily due to the flaws in the educational system of Pakistan. A detailed analysis evaluates the following drawbacks:

1. *Outdated Curriculum:*

Curriculum is the power through which a nation mobilizes its youth to play role in its progress and prosperity. Outdated curriculum implemented on the country for more than 75 years now has rusted the potential of the youth. Despite Pakistan having 64 % youth of the total population, Pakistan is still struggling to become economically stable. One of the major reasons behind is the lack of research. Moreover, the non-seriousness of the policy makers is also the cause behind still in use outdated curriculum. (8)

2. *Conservative teaching methodology and Lack of Research:*

The poor and conservative teaching methodology of the teachers is also the recipe to disaster. The cramming culture is deeply rooted in the educational system. This culture kills all the motivation to understand and apply the concept in the students. The conventional and conservative approach of teachers to just stick to the bookish terminologies. The students are never motivated to think out of the box. Lack of Research is also slowly poisoning the enthusiasm of our youth to compete internationally.

3. *Poor supervision and accountability system:*

No proper check and balance or computerized attendance system of teachers has been implemented in the public sector educational institutions. According to a research carried out by the education departments of Punjab and Sindh in 1998, approximately 700 primary and secondary schools and 18,000 teachers were found "ghost" or hoax in Punjab and 340 schools and 7,000 teachers in Sindh. These "ghost schools," existed on papers only. The infrastructure was mostly located in rural areas, that was primarily to be used as schools was either dilapidated due to negligence or have been converted into animal sheds or was encroached by the mafia for the local landlords. Thousands of "ghost teachers" have been drawing salaries from the education departments. They are not doing teaching since there are no functioning schools. (9)

4. *Dispute between Urdu and English as Official language:*

Pakistan a land of diversifying cultures and multilingual country, has been thriving to establish an English language in Education Policy (ELEP) since its creation. The two important languages spoken in the country that are considered crucial for political, economic and social development of the country are English and Urdu. Although Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and English functions as the official language, the balance between the two of them has not yet been determined. This is leading to constant tug of war between the respective linguists. (10)

5. *Division of Education system:*

The Educational system of Pakistan has been divided into two classes:

- Public sector educational institutions
- Private sector educational institutions

The worst and deprived condition of the public sector institutions has paved the way for the private sector institutions that has now developed into a mafia. This mafia now plays its role to prevent the correction of the quality of public sector institutions so that its business keeps running. As a result, parents are left with no option other than to pay hefty fees of these private sector institutions to impart their children with quality education. This has all been made possible by the collaboration of the feudal with those in power to prevent meaningful educational reforms from being implemented in the country.

6. *Provincial ethnicity and quota system:*

Diversity across Pakistan is very rich. The provincial language of the respective province is also the compulsory part of its educational system. This also paves way to differences among the people to prove the superiority of their provincial language. Moreover, the quality of education also varies widely among the provinces. The quota system in spite of many advantages results in the situation that highly professional and qualified teachers cannot be appointed in the backward areas where the quality of education is very poor.

7. *Low budget allocation and lack of resources:*

The amount allocated for the development of public education expenditure in national budgets has been raised in many regional countries but it has decreased in Pakistan. According to the report of International Crisis Group, Pakistan is among the only 12 countries in the world that allocates less than 2 percent of its GDP on education. Approximately less than fifty percent of the funds allocated for development expenditure of the Ministry of Education at the federal level are originally used. A major cause behind the ineffective use of funds is their difficult financial allocation and release system. The province lacks the financial resources to achieve the goal of universally primary education. (11)

Since the year of independence, Pakistan is allotting a very less portion of its GDP on education. It is well known to the whole world that Pakistan like many third world underdeveloped nations, Pakistan is facing extreme financial problems. The government allots only a mere amount of the total annual budget for development of education. The current government has also decided and promised to apportion a meager 4 % for the next fiscal year. Perhaps, this promise is due to that The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), proposes that every underdeveloped nation should allocate at least 4% of its total GDP for education. Chad, one of the poorest nations in the world, has allocated 6% for education in its budget. (9)

8. Alarming dropouts:

Due to extremely poor management system of schools there is no proper discipline in schools and other educational institutions which is constantly increasing the number of dropouts of students annually. This condition has worsened to such an extent that there are now approximately 40 lac students out of school due to drop out in Pakistan. One of the reasons behind this is the punishment system in schools, poor motivation or unattractive school environment and also due to careless parenting by the parents [11]. Poor financial condition, child labor and lack of resources is also one of the reasons for dropout from schools. An estimated 30 percent of children having admitted in primary education only reach to the matric level. This trend in Pakistan has further increased the low literacy rate as well. Only 30 percent of the students who enroll in primary education only reach to their matriculation exam. (8)

9. Poor system of examination:

The proper education system must ensure proper validity and assurance of the procedures used in the examination system. The main reason of examination is to depict the educational capability of students. The examination system of Pakistan is not only poor and antique but it also does not have the capability to depict the performance of the students effectively. It does not test the students in all fields of learning. Moreover, the system is influenced by external and internal factors which have promoted the environment of illegal practices such as unfair means and cheating. As a result, the examination system influences rote learning and cramming which damages the role of high intellectual power of learners in the education process such as critical thinking, reflection, analytical skills and others. It does not evaluate the actual capability and performance of students. (8)

10. Educational Policies:

A number of educational policies have been implemented from time to time by corresponding governments in the history of Pakistan for betterment but due to lack of implementation and carelessness, but all resulted in vain. Major policy decisions are taken under pressure from strongest influential group or by the political leaders for their own political development rather than keeping in view the important needs for the country. Little or no research is done on the implementation of these policies and their long term costs. Similarly, there is no sense of cooperation between the federal and provincial governments which further results in poor policy implementation. It is also said that the nonseriousness of government is proved by its lack of consultation with the private stakeholders. Teachers have also not been added in the policy making process. (11)

11. Multiplicity of Education System:

Unfortunately, the education system of Pakistan has not been able to establish the golden principle of one and equal system of education for all. We have a very divisive education system which has created a huge gap among the nation and penetrated deeply into our culture. Thus different tiers have been created in our system over a period of 60 years to facilitate the hold of the elite over the governing of our nation. The saturation and multiplicity of education system have led to social division among the people leading to conflict of interest and ideas. The education system has been classified into two classes:

- **Cambridge Education system:**

This education system imparts the “O” and “A” levels curriculum instead of Pakistan’s domestic and outdated curriculum to the children of feudal. As a result, the students of this education system have little or no awareness of their religion and culture. It is leading to a huge gap among the people leading to different mindset development.

- **Pakistan Secondary Education System:**

This education system is imparted in the private and government schools, one for the middle class society and other for the poor. The system within the reach of the middle class has medium instruction in English and the other one imparting education to the poor is in Urdu. The children from these institutions, if they are fortunate enough to score good grades and meets the parental financial condition go to the colleges of their preference and the remaining either become clerk, cashiers, sales person in a shop or worker in the factory or any other work as written in their fate. (11)

IMMEDIATE MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN:

- Digitalization of the education system
- Free and quality education ensured for everyone
- Thorough upgradation of the curriculum

- Motivating research studies
- Bridging gap between multiple education system
- Strict implementation of the educational policies
- Increasing the educational budget
- Evaluation of the teachers' performances annually
- Efforts for development of national language
- Appointment of well qualified and young teachers in the government institutions.
- Provision of scholarships for deserving students to minimize dropouts.

CONCLUSION:

Though the educational system of Pakistan is still struggling, the system can still be improved by taking firm and progressing steps as it is said that where there is a will there is a way.

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