

Public Schools in Pakistan: Disguised Murderers

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“Education is preeminently a matter of quality, not amount.”

Henry Ford

Introduction:

Are the public schools in Pakistan providing quality education? (Rehman, 2014) The problems associated with the education system of Pakistan are lack of adequate budget, lack of implementation of education policies, flawed examination system, poor physical facilities, lack of teacher quality, directionless education, outdated curriculum, corruption, and poor management and supervision. All these problems transform the education system offered in public schools of Pakistan into a poor one.

This research will explain the scale of these problems and the extent to which these are troubling the students associated with this education system. Although the education system offered in public schools of Pakistan costs cheap, its inferior condition has negative effects which outweigh its positive ones. Such adverse effects are murdering personalities and creativity, along with many other skills, and also depriving students of gaining a quality education. This research would provide an in-depth analysis with the help of supporting evidence to verify an inadequately managed education system in Pakistan and justify its atrocities against innocent students.

This paper will discuss each specific problem individually with its unfavorable outcomes for the students as well as a word of advice to implement a solution.

Analysis:

(a) Lack of Adequate Budget:

The purpose of a stable budget is to provide the best possible educational opportunities for every student receiving an education. The budget also reflects the government's ability to manage the financial affairs of the education sector.

However, the Pakistani government still underestimates the education sector in terms of the financial budget being allocated. (Anonymous, education-budget-of-pakistan, 2020) 2.3% of the GDP was spent on education in the fiscal year 2019-20, which is the lowest in the region. Such a designated budget is the lowest as assessed by global benchmarks with set targets (15-20% of the total budget and 4% of the GDP). As compared to the adjoining regional territories, Pakistan's progress in major educational indicators, such as literacy rate, gross enrollment ratio, and expenditure on education, has been a constant.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Public sector spending (As % of GDP)</i>	<i>Literacy rate in (%)</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Public sector spending (As % of GDP)</i>	<i>Literacy rate in (%)</i>
Bangladesh	2.6	55.0	Nepal	3.2	57.9
China	-	93.7	Pakistan	2.1	57.0
India	3.3	-	Srilanka	...	90.6
Indonesia	3.5	-	Thailand	4.5	-
Iran	5.2	-	Vietnam	5.3	92.5
Malaysia	4.7	92.1			

Source: World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO, FBS, Ministry of Education

(Image is taken from researchgate.net)

(Zarif, 2014) With public spending on education as a percentage of GDP amongst the lowest in some of the developing nations, as shown above, the outcome regarding literacy levels is not surprising. While the literacy rate has shown some gradual improvement over some time from a global perspective, Pakistan's indicators on this front continue to rank at the bottom end of international rankings. To reason against this anomaly, Pakistan is a developing country but from an international viewpoint, its literacy was previously ranked 142nd in the world (Government of Pakistan, 2000) and in 2014 it was ranked 159th out of the 174 nations of the world.

(Anonymous, how-budget-cuts-impact-schools, -) Students from poorly-funded schools do not get hands-on experience with the resources required to help them reach their full potential. Budget cuts prevent public schools from gaining access to facilities such as updated textbooks, modern technology, art material, extracurricular activities, and transportation. As a result of limited funding per pupil, the student-teacher ratio is affected leading teachers to teach classes with an unusually large number of students. Due to finance, students do not enjoy their proper education rights although they pay fees for it.

The government could increase its spending on the education sector. It could commit to designating at least 20% of its budget to education by reprioritizing and rationalizing spending in other sectors.

(b) Lack of Policy Implementation:

(Vishwaroop, 2022) Education policy refers to the laws that govern the setting up and running of educational institutions. Educational policies are the instruments that keep the educational framework of

the institutions in check by providing guidance for effective operation. However, these should be regularly updated for stable national progress.

(Shaheen, 2018) Policy strategies are essential for the successful implementation of a policy and the achievement of the planned objectives. The vast analysis of the data shows that there is a lack of direction and consistency, poor institution-community relationships, increased corruption, and a lack of visionary leadership at a lower level. Policy formulators and implementers also demonstrate no dedication and commitment as well as they receive no training. This happens due to no follow-up and no accountability for them.

Inefficient operation of the running educational policies causes the following problems for students, management, and educational institutes: compliance is not maintained, cost optimization becomes difficult, the learning environment is not safe, a dull learning culture is promoted, and equality and diversity are discouraged.

All stakeholders may be involved in policy formulation and implementation for a better understanding, bridge of trust, and strong coordination between the schools and the inspectorate. The accountability system may be strengthened to decrease corruption, favoritism, and nepotism. Utilization of available resources may be effectively planned to overcome financial constraints. The policymakers and implementers may be trained to enhance their theoretical knowledge in skills in better administration, management, and coordination. Such effective measures will convert policy implementation into a well-developed system.

(c) Flawed examination system:

(Fatima, 2022) The main objective of examinations is to check whether the students have grasped the conceptual knowledge or not. Exams also teach students to think and analyze critically, and develop skills such as grit, persistence, determination, self-assessment, and how to overcome failures. Thus, the examination system has a major part in the teaching-learning process.

(Rehman, 2014) The examination system of Pakistan is not only outdated but it also does not have the quality to evaluate the performance of learners comprehensively. The examination system of Pakistan tests only the memory of students instead of evaluating them in all aspects of learning. As a result, rote learning is promoted which negates the role of the high intellectual power of learners in the education process such as critical thinking, reflection, analytical skills, and so on. It is not a true reflection of the performance of students.

This examination system kills the creative and self-evaluation skills of students and weakens their decision-making powers transforming them into confused individuals. Instead of making open-minded

leaders of tomorrow's Pakistan, it makes narrow-minded workers ready to serve others, and such people never succeed in life.

(Kalhoro, 2021) The education boards could work with the government to provide a standardized world-class examination system. Assignments and question papers could be set in such a way that triggers creativity in students instead of rote learning. The curriculum objectives could also be kept in mind when setting question papers, so that students are also aware of the criteria they would need to possess before their examinations. Teachers could be trained regarding assessment methods and the syllabus shortened so that teachers focus more on the academic grooming of the students than the worry they do regarding the time they need to finish the syllabus in a hurry.

(d) Poor Physical Facilities:

(Anonymous, Importance-of-School-Facilities-in-Education, -) The facilities of a school impact the overall learning process as well as the mental and physical growth of the students such as their academic performance, health, behavior, engagement, and learning.

What facilities are lacking in your school?	Frequency	
	Missing	Available
Swings	704 (90.1%)	77 (9.9%)
Educational toys	691 (88.5%)	90 (11.5%)
After school assistance in teaching	628 (80.4%)	153 (19.6%)
Financial assistance	596 (76.3%)	185 (23.7%)
Sports equipment	575 (73.6%)	206 (26.4%)
Educational scholarships	255 (71.1%)	226 (28.9%)
Lawns	503 (64.4%)	278 (35.6%)
Teaching aids	499 (63.9%)	282 (36.1%)
Play ground	372 (47.6%)	409 (52.4%)
Suitable furniture for students	280 (35.9%)	510 (64.1%)
Furniture for teachers	215 (27.5%)	566 (72.5%)
Toilets	197 (25.2%)	584 (74.8%)
Fans	191 (24.5%)	590 (75.5%)
Drinking water	168 (21.5%)	613 (78.5%)
Electricity	153 (19.6%)	628 (80.4%)
Shady trees	140 (17.9%)	641 (82.1%)
Boundary Wall/Fences	134 (17.2%)	647 (82.8%)
Writing boards	98 (12.5%)	683 (87.5%)
Building	63 (8.1%)	718 (91.9%)
Free books	39 (5%)	742 (95%)

(Farooq, 2013) The table above (taken from researchgate.net) shows that the facilities like swings, educational toys, after-school assistance in teaching, financial assistance, play material, educational scholarships, lawns, and teaching aids were missing in most of the schools while other facilities like free books, buildings, blackboards, boundary walls, shady trees, and electricity were available in most of the schools of the respondents. It verifies that facilities which play a more significant role in a student's educational experience were mostly absent as reported by the teachers.

With a poor environment around, the student is unable to concentrate on learning and gets distracted easily. Unsatisfactory ventilation systems worsen the health of students, and limited sports facilities discourage the future athletes and talents of Pakistan from nourishing.

The government could develop a sufficient expenditure plan to provide public schools with all the necessary facilities required for a proper education experience for a student.

(e) Lack of Teacher Quality:

Teacher quality is essential to maximize the potential of students and enable them to graduate as academically successful and well-rounded young adults.

(Anonymous, public-schools-40-teachers-received-no-training, 2016) Most public-school teachers do not use modern strategies in the teaching-learning process and lesson planning which renders them incapable of handling difficulties faced by students and even themselves. Teachers encourage cramming of the materials by students without any conceptual understanding. A survey conducted by Alif Ailaan showed that almost 58 percent of government school teachers had no knowledge about the national curriculum, while 73 percent had not experienced any assessment techniques courses during their pre-service training.

Due to this problem, a vast number of students are misguided academically and fail their exams. Ignorant teachers also degrade the values of the students and as a result, they become incompetent during the challenges of their lives.

The government could invest in providing quality teacher training. The management of public schools could only hire teachers and staff who are motivated to teach and are serious about their jobs.

(f) Directionless Education:

Education lights up your future, shapes thoughts and decisions, and guides you towards your ambitions and a better life. Therefore, students should receive an education that points toward these beliefs as a destination.

(Rehman, 2014) The Pakistani education system has failed to develop stable political and social grounds among its people due to being weak and directionless. The system is not unified and due to being more focused on general education, no skilled manpower arrives at the market which leads to increased unemployment as the specialist job demand is not met.

Due to this, the development of thinking, reasoning, and creativity of students is not being polished and they are confused about the path they would take making their lives meaningless and without a purpose.

The education department could revise the national curriculum and provide teacher courses to guide the education system towards a specific and comprehensible point.

(g) Outdated Curriculum:

(Strickey, 2021) An effective curriculum follows a well-planned structure to provide quality education to students through teachers, institutional staff, and community stakeholders as well as highlights the core competencies, learning outcomes, and standards the students must meet before advancing to the next level.

In Wales, the purpose of every school's curriculum is to support children and young people to be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Curriculum for Wales: overview | GOV.WALES <https://gov.wales/curriculum-wales-overview>

However, the present but old and traditional educational curriculum of Pakistan does not meet the modern standards of education and research and forces the learners to only memorize information without developing the personality and mentality of the individual as a whole. (Khan, 2021) Muhammad Abdullah Khan says, "One of the pressing problems of our country's education system is the outdated curriculum. I am in high school, and the syllabus that we're being taught is around 15-20 years old. There are so many outdated topics. There is no harm in learning about things of the past. But these topics should be short. On one hand, the world is focusing on making robots while on the other hand, we are stuck in the past."

Pakistani students and young professionals lack essential work ethics, team collaboration qualities, sense of purpose, and critical thinking. Hence, they are not able to compete with their international peers in this modern era of technological advancement which shatters their confidence, hope, and future.

The government could take an initiative to uplift the education sector by updating the national curriculum with the help of internationally hired advisers so that Pakistani students could move toe to toe with the world.

(h) Corruption:

(Kirya, 2019) Corruption in education threatens the well-being of society because it erodes social trust and worsens inequality. It sabotages development by undermining the formation of educated, competent, and ethical individuals for future leadership and the labor force.

(Shah, 2020) Article 25-a clearly states that the government is responsible for ensuring free and fair basic education to all children without any discrimination based on social or community status. However, corrupt government officials still ignore the constitution and manipulate the system on the basis of the absence of accountability. The audit conducted a few years ago reviewed the performance of the BECS-Basic Education Community Schools- program authorized by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and found that one-teacher-one-school programs were not running fairly, for example, a BECS teacher pocketed salaries of over 31 ghost schools in Balochistan province between July 2010 and October 2011.

(Kirya, 2019) Corruption in education affects policy-making and planning, school management and procurement, and teacher conduct. Examples include cheating and other academic violations; bribery, nepotism, and favoritism in school admissions, teacher appointments, and licensing of education facilities; bid-rigging in the procurement of textbooks and school supplies; diversion of funds and equipment; teacher absenteeism; and exploitation of schoolchildren for sex or unpaid labor. The education rights of students are crushed by the deeply spread roots of corruption.

Anti-corruption strategies in education may follow:

- (i) Transparency-promoting tools: ICTs, participatory budgeting, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys, and social audits.
- (ii) Accountability-promoting tools: performance-based contracting, staff codes of conduct, community monitoring, complaints processes, and salary, procurement, and public financial management reforms.

(i) Poor supervision management:

Supervision ensures that educational policies and laws are properly followed for youth education. Hence, educational supervision is of utmost importance when maintaining satisfactory academic standards in schools.

(Behlol, Parveen, 2013) The following are the analyses of the views of teachers about the academic supervision by the institutional management and staff. The educational supervisors only help the administration in maintaining data about the school, such as attendance, and neglect their duty of providing professional guidance in classrooms which as a result, compromises the quality of education. Similarly, the headmasters are also only concerned with their administrative part of the jobs, do not provide academic guidance to teachers, and are unaware of the teaching-learning process and situation of the classrooms. They are usually only concerned about the terminal classes: 5th grade in primary schools and 10th grade in secondary schools.

Lack of academic supervision on the part of school supervisors and headmasters adversely affects the teaching-learning process in the classroom. When teachers do not receive proper guidance, they mislead the students academically which results in poor performance on behalf of the students.

An expert selection board may be formulated to interview to assign a school a qualified and hard-working teacher to work as a head of the institution. The appointed supervisors in schools may be trained to guide during problems the teachers confront in school, such as encouraging and facilitating teachers in using teaching aids provided at the school.

Conclusion:

Meanwhile, the role of quality education in a student's character development and life choices is significant, the Pakistani government still fails to confront the issues faced by public schools in Pakistan which creates negative consequences for the students and in fact, murders their skills even before they are polished. The analysis and evidence show that if the Pakistani government takes the right and immediate steps to increase the budget conserved for the education sector and use it efficiently, provide guidance for institutional staff, update the national examination syllabus and system, and develop healthy and trustworthy supervision management, then the level of education offered in public schools will rise to international standards. Although this would be a long-term process, it would provide students with their full education rights and may work towards a resilient economy for Pakistan in the future. A fine education system would not only benefit current students but also encourage more parents to invest in their child's future. Hence, the literacy rate of Pakistan would also boost.

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