

What has gone wrong with the system of education in Pakistan?

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What has gone wrong with the system of education in Pakistan?

Outline:

1. Introduction:

- I. Quaid's view on education
- II. Concept of education..... meaning and definition
- III. Significance of education.....as pillar of success
- IV. Education.....an agent of socioeconomic reforms
- V. Spinal cord of the nation
- VI. Thesis statement leading to conclusion

2. Pakistan's Education System as per 1973 Constitution:

- I. Educational and economic reforms in backward areas
- II. Removing illiteracy
- III. Promotion of technical education..... basic concern
- IV. Education.....access to all
- V. Women participation, etch

3. Factors Leading to Catastrophe

- I. Indecisive medium of education....English? / Urdu?
- II. Co-education....a social dilemma
- III. Lack of uniform academic syllabus
- IV. Women education..... concept in doldrums
- V. Lack of creative education methods..... cramming culture
- VI. Political interference in education institutions....student/ teacher unions
- VII. Political pressures/ influences
- VIII. Teacher absenteeism
- IX. Ghost schools
- X. Less than 2% GDP, for education
- XI. Crippled economy, etc.

4. Education Policy 2009:

- I. Budget for education..... increased by 7%
- II. All primary schools upgraded to middle standard schools
- III. Higher education percentage to be increased from 4.7% to 15% by 2015
- IV. Emphasis on technical education
- V. Establishment of residential colonies for the teachers
- VI. Special incentives for teachers willing to work in remote areas, etc.

5. Suggestions:

- I. Decentralised system/ local government
- II. Village
- III. Council
- IV. Tehsil
- V. District
- VI. At least 7% budget for education sector
- VII. Accountability and transparency in education department at all levels
- VIII. Public-private partnership
- IX. Madrassa reforms
- X. Registration of madaris
- XI. Introduction of English and technical subjects

6. Education Sector Reforms:

- I. **Primary education for all**
- II. **Making civil society vibrant**
- III. **Female education.... A keystone**
- IV. **Promotion of technical education**
- V. **Incentives for the teachers.... Increase in salaries**
- VI. **Revised and updated curriculum**
- VII. **PTC/CT replaced by Diploma in Education**
- VIII. **Enhancing the role of Higher Education Commission**
- IX. **Expansion in universities**
- X. **Virtual universities, etc.**

7. Conclusion.

“Come forward as servants of Islam, organise the people economically, socially, educationally and politically, and I am sure that you will be a power that will be accepted by everybody.”
(Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah)

The importance of education cannot be negated. Education paves the way for advancement. It is a primary catalyst for national development and its availability ensures accelerated growth and progress. It is a key factor that distinguishes one nation from another. It's the education which makes a person live a better life and more importantly contributes to his social well-being. However, it is unfortunate that education system of Pakistan is fundamentally flawed, thoroughly shattered and exceedingly divisive despite the fact that Quaid-e-Azam was a staunch supporter of educational reforms. He provided the basic guidelines for the future development by emphasising that education system should suit the genius of our people, consonant with our culture, history and instil the highest sense of honour, integrity and responsibility. He was also of the view that scientific and technical skills are the only way forward. Pakistan today stands at the crossroads

where there is a stringent need for educational reforms based upon moral edifice. This is only possible if all creeds of mind sit together and evolve a consensus policy in the light of Islamic ideology.

Before going into the details let's have a look on the 1973 Constitution which is a much chanted slogan in Pakistan by almost all political elites. Article 25A of the 1973 Constitution says:

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.”

The Constitution further goes on to make the state responsible for the education of its citizens in the following way:

Special care will be taken for educational and economic reforms in the backward areas. Illiteracy will be removed and secondary education will be made free and compulsory within minimum possible period. People from different areas will be imparted training for agricultural and industrial development. Technical and general education is made generally available and higher education accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Participation of women in all spheres of life will be encouraged. Despite all the pledges and promises made by the constitution, nothing has been done yet on the above-mentioned grounds. Indecisive system of education, outdated curriculum, medium of instruction, meagre budget allocation for education sector and many other factors have played havoc with the fate of this unfortunate nation.

It is noteworthy that Pakistan's national language is Urdu but English has become the major medium of education. English medium schools are enjoying prestigious status in society and are charging heavy fees from students as well. English language is nothing but a way of expression but why is it made necessary? Just to spoil the potentialities to learn English? Admittedly, English is an international language but the students should be imparted education in their mother tongue also. Sir Charles Wood sent “Wood's Despatch” in 1854 regarding the medium of education in India that throws light on the importance of mother tongue in education. Despatch's fifth point was:

“The Indian natives should be given training in their mother tongue also.” Another reason of this sorry state of affairs is the outdated curriculum which leads to the failure of education system to produce professionals in all fields of life. Outdated syllabi do not fulfil the requirements of the ongoing developed world. It is an era of science and technological development while, unfortunately, Pakistan is still entangled in the web of obsolete pedagogical methods.

Furthermore, Student wings of various political parties are also ruining the educational environment of colleges and universities. Unions like ATI, MSF and IJT have been a source of deep concern for the students. Such activities make them forget their aim of admission and they start to take part in political activities.

Public sector is also confronting the issue of teachers' absenteeism. Scanty salaries and job insecurity compels them to join private sector institutions that offer them better incentives. The grievances of the teachers are grave but real and they need to be addressed urgently. A very little amount of GDP, about 2% is being allocated for education sector which should be above 7% for a country like Pakistan.

It is noteworthy to mention the role of madaris in Pakistan here as they are a part of traditional system of imparting religious education. Present government is working to register these madaris and there are around 12,000 madaris that are yet to be registered. There is also a dire need to revise the method, syllabi and curriculum of these institutions so as to impart true spirit of religious education without creating misconceptions and confusions and also keeping them in pace with contemporary world. The conventional style of religious education should be abolished and new methodologies based on science and technology should be adopted. The role of civil society in regarding the reforms is very crucial and equally required.

In the past, there were courses like PTC, CT, etc. which were optional for the students. In the present circumstances, it is strongly recommended to replace such short courses by diploma in education so that the students after adopting teaching profession could give their best to the nation. On the other hand, the teaching staff must be provided special training in form of refresher courses to enhance their capacities and capabilities.

Education is the key to the development and advancement of any nation. Pakistan needs highly knowledgeable and skilled professionals equipped with innovative abilities to gain a respectable in the comity of nations. Pakistan is passing through the turbulent phase in terms of social, economic and political turmoil. It stands at the crossroads and the only way forward is the promotion of education. Time is ripe, effective and implementable strategies must be formulated to come out of these crises. Education must be made the top priority. More than 4-7% of GDP must be allocated for education sector, for teachers' training, development of infrastructure, abolition of ghost schools, scholarships, etc. Chief Minister's laptop scheme is a good omen and an encouraging initiative for bringing educational reforms in the country. Such efforts can be a source of encouragement and inspiration for the young generation. Nations rise by dint of education and education alone. If we want to realise the dream of socioeconomic development in Pakistan, we must follow the message that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah gave us years ago. He said:

“My message to you all is of hope, courage and confidence. Let us mobilize all our resources in a systematic and organized way and tackle the grave issues that confront us with grim determination and discipline worthy of a great nation. ”