**Education in Pakistan: Problems and Their Solutions**

This study was meant to explore and report the problems being confronted by the education in Pakistan and suggest for the resolution of these problems. Education plays the role of leadership in the society. The functions of the educational institutions are to develop the people physically, mentally, psychologically, socially and spiritually. It improves and promotes the economic, social, political and cultural life of the nation. There is no doubt in accepting the fact that education brings about a change in the social, political and cultural scenario of the country; though the change remains slow but it does have an impact on the society at large. Until now the role of secondary and college education in Pakistan has been simply preparation for tertiary education, which in the minds of most people means strictly a university education. All over the world universities are guiding and co-operating with the industrial and agricultural development organizations and they are developing their economics rapidly and meaningfully. There is a close link between education and development. In Pakistan, after more than five decades, the developmental indicators are not showing positive results. The participation rate at higher education is low comparatively to other countries of the region. There are problems of quality of staff, students, library and laboratory. Considering the gigantic problems of education in Pakistan.

# INTRODUCTION:

“Education is a vital process of the development of any society. It is considered one of the main pillars of a society”. (Adams, 1998) Education is the foundation of all types of developments in the world. It is an established fact that in the world only those nations have made progress and development which have a sound education system. (Ball, 1990)

Education develops individuals. It creates awareness among the people about life and its challenges in the world. It fills empty minds with ideas and creativity. Thus, educationally sound nations play leadership role in the world. (Teachers, 2000)

Education plays a vital role in human capital formation. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of sustainable economic development. Like many other developing countries, the situation of the

education sector in Pakistan is not very encouraging. The low enrolment rates at the primary level, wide disparities between regions and gender, lack of trained teachers, deficiency of proper teaching materials and poor physical infrastructure of schools indicate the poor performance of this sector.

The extremely low level of public investment is the major cause of the poor performance of Pakistan’s education sector. Public expenditure on education remained less than 2% percent of GNP before 1984-

85. In recent years it has increased to 2.2 percent. In addition, the allocation of government funds is skewed towards higher education so that the benefits of public subsidy on education are largely reaped by the upper income class. Many of the highly educated go abroad either for higher education or in search of better job opportunities. Most of them do not return and cause a large public loss.

In Pakistan, the quality of primary and secondary education has a declining trend. It is realized that science education in particular is reaching lowest ebb and needs to be improved urgently. At the time of independence and thereafter there remained acute shortage of teachers, laboratories were poor and ill equipped and curriculum had little relevance to present day needs.

The Education Sector in Pakistan suffers from insufficient financial input, low levels of efficiency for implementation of programs, and poor quality of management, monitoring, supervision and teaching. As a result, Pakistan has one of the lowest rates of literacy in the world, and the lowest among countries of comparative resources and social/economic situations. With a per capita income of over $550 Pakistan has an adult literacy rate of 57%, while both Vietnam and India with less per capita income have literacy rates of 94% and 52%, respectively. Literacy is higher in urban areas and in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, among the higher income group, and in males. The rank of Pakistan in education is 144 out of 194 states.

## Education in Pakistan

Education provides the bedrock for reducing poverty and enhancing social development. An educational system of poor quality may be one of the most important reasons why poor countries do not

grow. Education is the backbone of every nation. Many countries have carved their names in the history of the world because of their well-educated society and citizens. Education is the delivery of knowledge and skill from a teacher to student. Though this delivery of knowledge is taking place everywhere in our country as well but it is not effective. According to literacy definition “*an educated person is the one who can read a news paper and write a simple letter in any language”.* (Census, 1998) Keeping in mind this definition, we can say that 60% of population of Pakistan is literate but the reality is quite different. This 60% of the population is unaware of modern techniques and technologies. The education system of Pakistan is responsible for it. The present education system of Pakistan has failed to fulfill the requirement of society. The literacy rate of Pakistan is 57% which is very low. (wikipedia, 2012)

In Pakistan, the quality of education has a declining trend. It is realized that science education in particular is reaching lowest ebb and needs to be improved urgently. There is acute shortage of teachers. Laboratories are poor and ill equipped and curriculum has little relevance to present day needs. The schools generally are not doing well.

In Pakistan efforts have been made to mould the curriculum in accordance with our ideological, moral and cultural values as well as our national requirements in the fields of science, technology, medicine, engineering and agriculture, etc. The rise in supply of educational infrastructure or removal of the supply side constraints can play an important role in raising literacy and education of the population. Development budget allocation for the social sector has been very low throughout and is evident from the budgetary allocation for education.

## Education System of Pakistan

The education system of Pakistan falls into five levels. These are:

* Primary level
* Middle level
* Secondary level
* Intermediate level
* University level

If we talk about schools, colleges and universities, they also fall in three categories. These are:

* Government schools
* Private schools
* Madaras

Talking about the government institutions first, they are in poor condition due to lack of attention and shortage of funds. Teachers are not given adequate salary. Private schools, on the other hand are doing much better job. There are number of school systems which are well recognized in Pakistan like THE CITY SCHOOL, BEACON HOUSE SCHOOL SYSTEM, and ALLIED SCHOOL etc. They are paying

their teachers well and are giving them necessary training for teaching. The only drawback of these private schools is that their fees are not affordable by everyone. Madaris are the third type of educational systems working in Pakistan. They are providing Islamic education to bulk of students. After 9/11 the reputation of these institutions is badly harmed and now, they are not taken as a reliable source for providing religious education.

The numbers of educational system that are currently working in Pakistan are producing no synergy but are creating conflicts and division among people. We have English medium schools, Urdu medium schools and madaras. A student coming out of an English medium school is unaware of Islamic teachings and a student coming out of Urdu medium school gets least chance of acquiring good job. Madaras students are group of youngsters that know very little about the outside world. Here, the need is to form a single system that can fulfill all the current demands of modern education. This hierarchy of schooling systems must be abolished soon and an educational emergency must be declared within the country and the government must involve the whole nation to prevail this war against illiteracy.

## The Role and Appointment of Teachers

The quality of teachers, which is a key factor in any education system, is poor in Pakistan. The main reason is the low level of educational qualifications required to become a primary school teacher; which includes ten years of schooling and an eleven-month certificate program. It has been established through various studies that pupil achievement is closely related to the number of years of formal schooling of teachers. Thus, students of teachers with 12 years of schooling perform better than students of matriculate (10 years education) teachers, who in turn perform better than students of teachers with only grade eight qualifications.

In addition, teacher appointment in schools is subject to interference from local interest groups seeking to place teachers of their choice within their constituency. This has opened the system to graft and rent seeking leading to high levels of teacher absenteeism accentuated by the absence of an effective supervision system. The appointment of teacher’s especially in primary schools is subject to the political influence or paying huge money.

## ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN:

1. **Lack of uniform educational system:**

There is a crying need for quality which calls for homogeneity among the procedural formalities like the observance of the curriculum. Had it been uniform the working for it, further extension becomes easier and getting the intellect skimmed out of masses becomes possible. Currently, the poor are deprived of education in the elite institutions which are causing the development of a special class. This class doesn’t work for the nation; they work elsewhere but are fed through the national resources.

## Medium of Education:

The system of education in Pakistan is operative in match with the local needs and ground realities. It is almost a decisive factor that the education in the mother tongue surrenders more dividends but we have the system more segregated and diversified just contrary to our requirements. A good example of it is that we fail to decide about the Medium of education over the span of 66 years. Different mediums are operational in both, public and private sector. This creates a sort of disparity among people, dividing them into two segments.

## Disparity of System at Provincial Level:

The Regions of Pakistan in the name of provinces are not at par as regards the infrastructure, availability of staff, their training, content mastery allocation of resources and their utilization. This develops a disparity not only in the system but in the turnover too. There is a need to revisit the schools in Baluchistan (The Largest Province of Pakistan by area) because these are not that much groomed as that of Punjab (The Largest Province of Pakistan by Population). In FATA, the literacy rate is deplorable constituting 29.5% in males and 3% in females. The conditions are to be made more congenial about teaching and learning in all parts of the country without any discretion.

## Gender Discrimination:

We should have know how of the population comprising females, unfortunately their education is not attended to the way it was deemed fit. The gender discrimination is a cause that is contributing towards the low participation rate of girls at the basic level of education. The male and female participation ratio is projected at the primary school in the shape of ratio of boys & girls as 10:4 respectively. In the decade passed, government invited private sector to shoulder the responsibility of education of the youth. The intent was also to provide the education at the doorstep to the children especially the female students. The private sector took up the challenge and there was an increase in the growth of private schools but this step didn’t cause the increase in the students or the quality. The masses could not be attracted because of precious education. It created clear cut tiers of society and created a gap among those with the haves and have not’s.

## Lack of Technical Education:

We could not attract the general masses towards technical education making them to earn of their own act as the entrepreneurs and make their living without being the burden on the government. Education system is needed to be revamped making a space for the science, IT, management, and pupil with the excellence to go to the higher education pursuing the education of their own choice. Lesser emphasis on technical education means the lesser manpower for industry and hence the lesser finance generation.

## Low allocation of funds:

The allocation of funds for education is very low as it never went beyond 1.5 to 2.5 percent of the total GDP. Even this amount was not utilized and had to be surrendered back to the government because of want of expertise and the knowledge of coda formalities and in time release of funds. There is a need to increase it around 7% of the total GDP keeping in view the allocations by the neighboring countries, there is also a need to rationalize the share at the different levels not ignoring any.

## Inefficient Teachers:

Government fails to attract the potential candidates for teaching with the zeal vigor and excellent carrier. Teaching is rated as the lowest among the jobs for the youth, because of lesser incentives, slow promotions and lesser fringe benefits. The teachers in government schools are not well groomed and equipped with knowledge and training. People who do not get job in any other sector, they try their luck

in educational system. There is a need to reorganize pre-service and in-service trainings making them matched with the requirements rather to keep them ideal, unique and novel.

## Poverty:

Poverty is growing over the years. The average class is vanishing like anything. It happens to be a curse for the nation that exists without having the average income group. The escalation of poverty has restricted the parents to send their children to tasks for child labor or at least to public or private schools. In these schools, the drop out is very high because schools are not the attractive places, the curriculum is dry and the teaching does not match the live situations. Poor parents are constrained to send their children to Madressahs where the education is totally free.

## Corruption:

Corruption causes the educational policies, plans and projects to fail because of being the major contributing factor. There is no accountability and transparency in the system, the salaries are low, the incentives are too less to be accounted and even those are uneven. The chances of ghost schools should be evaded by involving the community in the processes of inspection and monitoring.

## Social imbalance:

Multiplicity of Systems are leading to Social Imbalance, bifurcating the people into social and economic classes. The students from the elite class follow the "O" and "A" levels curriculum instead of Pakistan's routine orthodox and stagnant curriculum. They have little or no awareness of their religion and culture whereas those passing out from Urdu medium schools are usually destined to work in clerical and lower level positions. Religious Madrassas, another class that is usually unaware of the world outside their own perception.

## Mismanagement of System:

Poor Delivery of Services lead to Low enrolment in Schools; teachers’ absenteeism, poor professional training, sub-standard materials and obsolete teaching methods act as the major contributive factors towards the low enrolment in schools. Burki (2005) opines that most of the public schools are either mismanaged or poorly managed. They are found imparting education of second-rate quality through substandard textbooks and curricula that do not cater the needs of the 21st century. The education should be based on learning outcomes through suggesting multiple books rather than following a single book as an obligation.

## Private school system:

Private Schools in Pakistan enroll more students than in other countries of the region. They least bother about the capacity and facilities available, they rather over burden the teaching staff. The rapid mushroom growth of private schools and academies of teaching reflect the people's lack of trust in the public sector schools coupled with a deficiency of sufficient educational institutions to cater to the needs of the fast growing population. However, there are certain private schools which are slightly better than the public ones. In the elite schools where the quality education is offered, a heavy fee is charged that continues to be a problem. These private sectors schools are meant only for a special sector of the population and are out of the reach of general masses. The private sector schools should be brought under the control of rules making these somewhat accessible for the common population.

## Lack of educational policies:

The National Education Policy (1998-2013) was developed prior to Dakar. It has a clear cut vision and direction to support the education department. Since the 2001, the Ministry of Education has developed a number of policy documents including that of National Education policy (2009) but the endeavors remain focused on paper work more rather than the operationalization, though the involvement of NGOs and international development agencies is very much there. The simple reason is that the plans are vicious and not the ground reality based. The policies should be environment friendly.

## Increase in population:

Literacy in Pakistan has risen from 45 to 57 percent within the span of 2008 to 2013, simultaneously primary enrollment rates have also increased from 42 to 52 percent. The population explosion could not enable to catch the targets. In spite of the increase in the certain parameters, the participation rate in Pakistan remains the lowest in South Asia. Alongside it, there are marked male-female, inter-regional and rural-urban disparities: Only 22 percent of girls, compared to 47 percent boys, complete primary schooling. Female literacy in rural Baluchistan is only 32 percent compared to high urban male literacy rates ( and 80 percent among the urban male in Sindh).

## Lack of attention of the authorities:

Most of the criticisms leveled against the education procedures and practices may be rationalized through improving governance and accountability. It would be tangible and workable if we could go for

considering the merit, enabling capacity building, increasing investments in education as an industry and finally giving the heir and fire powers to the administrative heads. The private sector and the banks should finance the educational milieu with confidence, as at the moment, we are spending 2.3 percent of GDP which is the lowest in South Asia.

## Medium of Instruction:

We took a long period in deciding that what our medium of instruction would be, till now we don’t have a clear picture before us. It is good to have the National language as the medium of communication provided; we have a rich treasure of knowledge. In our case, we do not fail to develop Urdu to cope with the intellectual needs nor do we translate the treasure of knowledge available for our national use.

## Education as a business:

Education has been pursued by some of the people as an industry but because of being illiterates, they fail to cope up with the stipulated standards. The leader with vision spoils the mission as well as the projects undertaken. Their only intent is money making, that has caused the decay in the standards, induction of sub-standard staff, and depriving the deserving to grow. They don’t want to catch with the move of success but they try to be good entrepreneurs.

## Delay in renewal of policies and syllabus/Political Interference:

There is a need to continuously update the curriculum because if it goes stale, it does not equip the beneficiaries with the saleable skills and expertise.

* + At the first place, the problems cited have arisen due to lack of commitment and inefficient management on the part of state. The policies lack long term vision and its implementation strategies are being affected by undue political interference. In addition to it, the measures taken are not evidence based and geared by the vested interests of the authorities. Whatever strategies have been applied failed to promote the rational and critical thinking skills amongst the students.
  + At the second place, we find lack of resource commitment and realistic implementation alongside poor allocated resource utilization. As relevant statistics are not available, implementation of the education policy has not been successfully executed.
  + At the third place, the harmonization is missing too between the federal and provincial governments which cause drastic problems in the policy implementation.

The policy formulating, planning and implementing bodies work in isolation as the water tight compartments. The government's consultation is very much restricted and does not go beyond its specific quarters. It should have to be extended to non -state sectors to initiate and mobilize the action. Teachers does not normally form the part of policy making process, hence the process of sharing and consultation remains missing. It leads to implementation of educational policies without consultation, thus the efforts go in vain. (Bano, 2007)

# SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN:

Following are the solutions for problems of Education in Pakistan.

## Betterment of education policies and teachers workshop:

In the view of importance of education, the Government should take solid steps towards implementation instead of projecting policies. In this regard, the allocations should be made easy and timely from provinces to districts and then to educational institutes. Workshops must be arranged for teachers as a continuous feature for learning.

## Talented and qualified Staff:

Hiring should be made from amongst the highly qualified and the teachers should be paid not according to the level of education but the qualification of the staff.

## Fulfill the lack of teachers:

The number of teachers will have to be enhanced, leading to the rise in number of teachers and enabling the competent persons to be inducted to the system of education.

## Primary education should be made compulsory:

Primary education should be made compulsory and free (it is already free of cost but not compulsory).

It should also be made appealing, impressive, interesting and utilitarian to attract the general masses.

## Increase in teachers incentives:

Teachers should be offered more financial benefits by increasing their pays. The handsome salary must be paid to them.

## Translation of foreign research to local language:

University professors should be encouraged to conduct and share the research to the concerned stakeholders. They should also be asked to translate the foreign research into local languages for sharing it with the lower formations of education enabling them to implement/take benefit out of it.

## Check on distinctive education:

Government should strictly check all private educational institutions for keeping a balance of standards and level of practices.

## Scholarships and financial support to students:

Students should be offered more scholarships and government should support the intelligent and outstanding students to prosper, develop and serve their local community rather than migrating to the big cities.

## Special Financial packages:

The dilemma here in Pakistan is that students are genius but they use their intelligence in negative way, hence, contributing nothing towards the development of country. Another problem with Pakistan is brain drain. Capable and outstanding professionals prefer foreign jobs instead of serving in their own country. This is due to the low financial benefits and indifferent attitude of government towards them. Recently Government should provide them facilities and special financial packages to encourage them to stay in their own country.

## Promotion of primary education:

Promotion of the primary education should be made possible by consulting teachers, professors and educationists while devising any plan, syllabus or policy for it. There should be a balance in reliance on public and private for enabling education to reach the general masses in its true shape. Students’ outlook is to be broadened by taking them out of the books into the practical realities. Education is the only cure of disability of the state and for bringing revolution through evolution and by eradicating the social evils through education.

## Improving the Quality:

The leadership of Pakistan must be focused on uniform policy of Education, teacher professional development, development of textbooks, revamping of examination/assessment, working on improving student learning and classroom environment for the sake of improving Quality of Education.

# CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS:

Education is the tool that can surely bring positive change in any society. It is the only mean to develop oneself physically, socially and mentally as well. If this tool will not function properly then the whole nation will collapse. So the need of time is that everyone must get united to make our education system one of the best in the world and to compose our young generation in such a way that they can compete with any nation in the field of education.

Education provides the base for socio-economic development. An educational system of poor quality may be one of the most important reasons why poor countries do not grow. In Pakistan, the quality of education is on the decline in spite of the fact that the present government has initiated drastic measures in uplifting the quality of education. Quality of teachers especially at primary level is still questionable. It is evident that without teachers’ transformation we cannot transform the education system for improving the quality of education. In this regard, a series of education reforms in the area of teacher education were introduced in the public sector but their vision seemed to be narrow, hence, they failed to make any substantial impact on the quality of teachers and teaching process. Eventually, it further affected the quality of education in schools.

The current literacy rate of Pakistan is 57% which is very low even the countries like India and Nepal has more than 80% literacy rate. *The investment in education will increase literacy rate*. We spend 1.5% to 2.5% of the total GDP on education which is very low. There is a need to increase it around 7% to 8% of the total GDP which ultimately increase the literacy rate.

*Uniform policy of education will lead to the Quality education.* There is a need of uniform policy of education in a country to improve the quality of education. At that time government adopted different policies which create problem. The quality education need uniform policy. The countries like America, Germany and England has uniform policy of education and provided quality education to their masses.

*Quality education helps in individual personality building*. The people who get quality education have a great personality like Obama (President of America) and Bhutto.

*Education leads to improved quality of life*. Those people who are well educated enjoy a quality life, having great living Standards and enjoy the modern way of life.

To sum up, Education is the way through which we improved our life, developed our skills, improved the social status and create awareness in the people. We improve our education system if we focused on the long term.