

# Education System in Pakistan

## 3 - Education Structure:

The academic structure of the existing system of education in Pakistan is as under:

level	Grade/Class	Duration	Age Group
Pre-primary Education		2/3	3-5
Primary Education	1-5	5	6-10
Elementary Education	6-8	5	11-13
Secondary Education	9-10	2	14-15
Higher Secondary Education	11-12	2	16-17
University Education	13-16	4	18-21

The provincial government, local bodies and private management run the educational institutions from lower to higher levels. The tuition fee is not charged at primary and secondary levels at government schools. However, the tuition fee is charged from the higher secondary level to the university level, which is not very high but affordable. However, scholarships, fee-ships and financial support have been provided for deserving students at these levels.

### 3.1 - Pre-primary Education:

Pre-primary education is designed for 3 to 5-year-olds and usually consists of three stages: Play Group, Nursery and Kindergarten (also called 'KG' or 'Prep'). According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2009, the entry age for Katchi is 3–5 years with a 1-year curriculum, a separate teacher, and a separate room. (3.1.1)

### 3.2 - Primary Education:

Formal schooling in Pakistan starts at the age of 5 plus in the first grade of primary school. The curriculum for primary classes is practically the same throughout the country. Instruction is given in local/regional languages and some areas, Urdu is the medium of instruction. Classes are held six hours a day (including a break of half an hour, at midday) and schools are working for five and half days a week. Where schools operate on a double-shift basis, class hours are slightly shorter. The primary courses extended over five years. Beginning generally at the age of five, promotion from grade to grade depends upon, the result of the annual examination oral and written conducted by supervisors.

**Curriculum of Primary Education:**

The following type of curriculum is offered in primary schools.

- a. Languages
  - First language
  - Second language
- b. Mathematics
- c. Science
- d. Pak/ social studies
- e. Health at Physical Education
- f. Islamiyat
- g. Arts

(Practically arts are not taught and manual work is not done). (3.2.1)

**3.3 - Elementary Education:**

The middle level spans 3 years and includes grades 6–8 and is meant for the age group 11–13 years. Most middle schools are the result of primary schools being upgraded rather than teaching solely grades 6–8. Schools that include the primary and middle levels are classified as elementary schools. In some cases, they are part of a high school where all three levels (primary, middle, and high) exist. Some provinces such as Punjab and Sindh have province-wide public examinations at the end of grade 8. (3.3.1)

**Curriculum of Primary Schools:**

The following type of curriculum is offered in elementary schools.

- a. English ( include grammar)
- b. Mathematics ( include algebra)
- c. Science (include physics, biology, chemistry)
- d. Pak/ social studies
- e. Islamiyat
- f. Urdu (include grammar)

**3.4 - Secondary Education:**

This level includes grades 9 and 10 and spans over 2 years, aimed at children aged 13–15 years. Students take a Secondary school certificate public board examination both in grades 9 and 10, conducted by different boards of examinations in the various provinces which are known as “matriculation” or “matric.”. (3.4.1)

### **Curriculum of Secondary Education:**

There are two major groups Science and Humanities are chosen by students according to their interests.

The curriculum usually includes a combination of eight courses including electives (such as Biology, Chemistry, Computer and Physics) as well as compulsory subjects (such as English, Urdu, Mathematics, Islamic studies and Pakistan Studies).

The total marks for Matric are 1200 divided between 9th and 10th. The marks are divided in each year as follows:

- 75 marks for Maths, English and Urdu
- 50 marks for Islamic Studies (or ethics for Non-Muslim students), 50 for Quran Translation and Pakistan Studies, and
- 60 marks for Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics).
- An additional 90 marks are allotted for practicals (30 for each science). (3.4.2)

### **3.5 - Higher Secondary Education:**

This level comprises grades 11 and 12. In the public system, it is offered either in higher secondary schools or in intermediate colleges. Students take a Higher Secondary School Certificate board examination in both grades 11 and 12. There are multiple boards, with different examinations and differing standards in each province, for both the lower secondary and higher secondary examinations. This level of education is also called the FSc/FA/ICS or 'intermediate'. (3.5.1)

#### **Curriculum of Higher Secondary Education:**

There are many streams students can choose for their 11 and 12 years, such as

- pre-medical,
- pre-engineering,
- humanities (or social sciences),
- computer science and
- commerce.

Each stream consists of three electives as well as three compulsory subjects of English, Urdu, Islamiyat (year 11 only) and Pakistan Studies (year 12 only). (3.5.2)

### **3.6 - University Education:**

In a developing country like Pakistan, universities are the institutions of higher learning and have a key role to play. Higher level expertise of the country is located in these institutions. Therefore, they are expected to develop, design, and implement development programs in the country. At the time of independence, there was one established university. In 1984 the number rose to 20 universities. Now there, are 36 universities (22 in 'the public 'sector' and 12 in the private sector). Universities in the private sector are gradually increasing. The thrust of these

universities is on Information Technology (IT) and Business Education. Moreover, agricultural colleges and medical colleges are upgraded to the status of universities. (3.6.1)

Universities and colleges offer a 4-year bachelor's degree. After completing this, students are eligible to pursue a 2-year master's degree program at the university level. Universities also offer Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees after completion of the master's degree program. (3.6.2)

#### **Curriculum of University Education:**

After earning their HSSC, students may study in a professional institute for Bachelor's degree courses such as engineering (BE/BS/BSc Engineering), medicine (MBBS), dentistry (BDS), veterinary medicine (DVM), law (LLB), architecture (BArch), pharmacy (Pharm.D) and nursing (BSc Nursing). These courses require four or five years of study.

The accreditation councils which accredit the above professional degrees and register these professionals are Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC), Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC), Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Pakistan Council for Architects and Town Planners (PCATP), Pharmacy Council of Pakistan (PCP) and Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC). Students can also attend a university for Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) or Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree courses. (3.6.3)

## Reference Links:

Sr.	References
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3.2.1	<a href="#">(PDF) Pakistan's Education System: An Analysis of Education Policies and Drawbacks (researchgate.net)</a>
3.3.1	<a href="#">School Education in Pakistan: A Sector Assessment (adb.org)</a>
3.4.1	<a href="#">School Education in Pakistan: A Sector Assessment (adb.org)</a>
3.4.2	<a href="#">Education in Pakistan - Wikipedia</a>
3.5.1	<a href="#">School Education in Pakistan: A Sector Assessment (adb.org)</a>
3.5.2	<a href="#">Education in Pakistan - Wikipedia</a>
3.6.1	<a href="#">(PDF) Pakistan's Education System: An Analysis of Education Policies and Drawbacks (researchgate.net)</a>
3.6.2	<a href="#">School Education in Pakistan: A Sector Assessment (adb.org)</a>
3.6.3	<a href="#">Education in Pakistan - Wikipedia</a>

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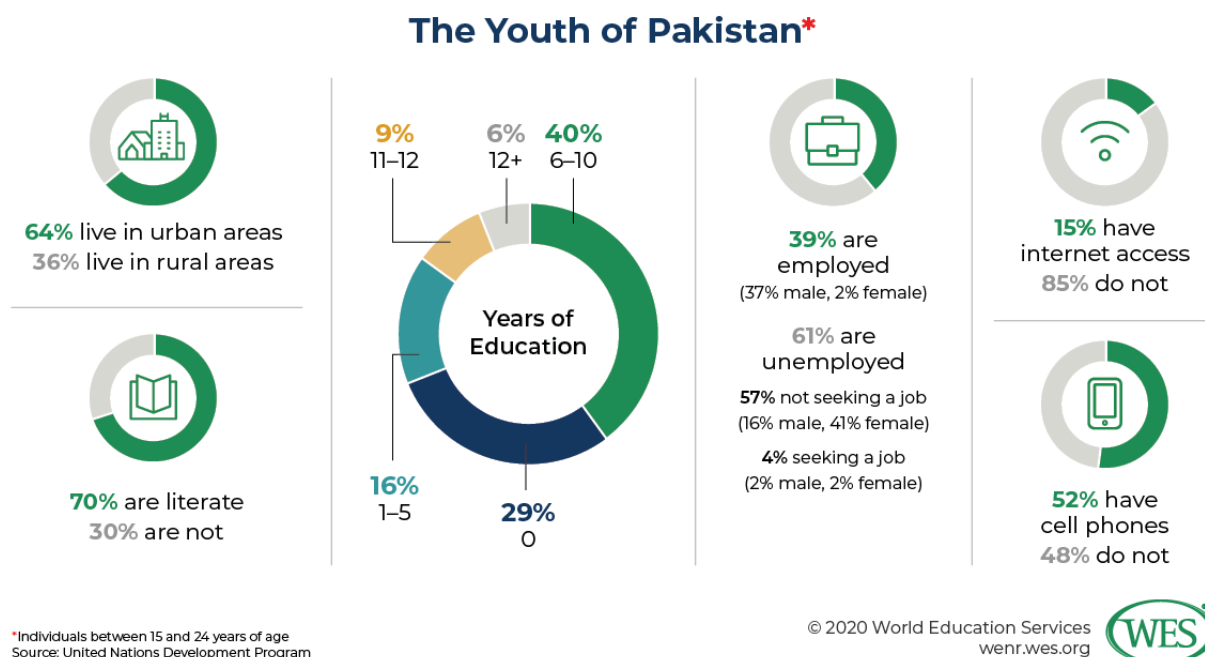
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## 5 Challenges of the Education System in Pakistan

The education system of Pakistan is comprised of **260,903** institutions and is facilitating **41,018,384** students with the help of **1,535,461** teachers. The system includes **180,846** public institutions and **80,057** private institutions. Hence **31%** educational institutes are run by private sector while **69%** are public institutes.

Education plays an important role in the progress and development of a state. Progress of any country depends upon its literacy rate and quality of education in that country. Therefore, it is the key priorities of nations. The Pakistani education system is one of the oldest in the world. However, there are several flaws within the student system that need to be fixed. Unfortunately, our own country Pakistan is a backward one regarding its literacy rate. Even many poor countries have higher literacy rate as compare to Pakistan. Our education system is responsible for all this.



Education policies are very good but, unfortunately, there are many problems in this system and its implementations. Current situation needs more attention is being paid to the higher education instead of primary education. In small villages primary schools are not progressing. These are small buildings schools having little facilities. All of us know that primary education is the main pillar of higher

education. In every field of life primary education plays the foundation and supporting role. Government must promote it according to its importance.

If we look towards higher education system, there are hundreds of private and government colleges and universities. These are of different categories, for example universities of engineering and technology, medical science, business, information technology, agriculture, survey and micro technology and other fields of life. Private colleges and universities are very expensive.

## 5.1 Key Statistics Highlighting the Issues

Before delving into the specific problems, let's take a moment to examine some key statistics

- ❖ Approximately **22.8 million** children in Pakistan are out of school, according to a recent report by the Pakistan Education Statistics. This staggering number highlights the massive gap in access to education.
- ❖ The literacy rate in Pakistan is below the global average, with a significant gender disparity. While the male literacy rate stands at **70%**, the **female literacy rate** lags behind at just **49%**.
- ❖ Pakistan allocates a relatively low percentage of **its GDP** to education, leading to underfunded schools and inadequate resources.

## 5.2 Lack of Access to Education in Pakistan

There is a lack of access to education, particularly in rural and remote areas. There is a significant lack of access to higher education in Pakistan, especially in rural areas. This is due to a number of factors, such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of qualified teachers. Many children, especially girls, are unable to attend school due to distance, lack of facilities, or cultural barriers.

## 5.3 Lack of Infrastructure and Resources

One of the most glaring issues in Pakistan's education system is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources in many regions. This impedes students' access to quality education.

Education resources such as books, libraries and physical facilities are important for smooth running of educational process. There are despairingly no facilities of books, libraries and reading materials in all educational institutions of the country. Besides, there are overcrowded classrooms,



inadequate teachers and ill-equipped laboratories. This entire grim situation has resulted in a despair and low standard education system.



In rural areas, many schools lack proper buildings, electricity, and clean drinking water. The absence of these basic amenities makes it challenging for children, especially girls, to attend school regularly. Additionally, long commutes to distant schools can discourage parents from sending their children to get an education.

#### **5.4 Gender Disparity in Access**

Gender disparity in access to education remains a significant concern. Girls often face barriers to attending school, which perpetuates inequality.

Deep-rooted cultural norms and traditions sometimes discourage families from sending their daughters to school. Early marriages and societal expectations limit girls' opportunities to pursue an education. Addressing gender disparity is crucial for achieving universal education in Pakistan. , Lack of women education and co-education is another problem in Pakistan. There are many people against the coeducation system. Some people don't send their daughters to schools and colleges. They consider women education unnecessary. But women education is necessary because nearly half of the population is women. To increase literacy rate women must get education.

## **5.5 Quality of Education in Pakistan**

Quality of education carries great importance unfortunately the quality of education in Pakistan is contrary to today's standards and is not able to achieve the due objectives. According to the report, 35% of students who reached grade 3 are not able to do single-digit subtraction. The focus is drawn to prepare the students for exams which is achieved to write everything for students in the class, making notice for students followed by surprise tests. Students are forced to learn things by heart. The objective may be achieved of securing good marks but the core objective of education which is human development and to equip the student with relevant skills lags behind. For instance, we teach students in Computer Science class: what is a computer? What are input and output devices and then expect students to write in exams what was being taught? The practical teaching of Computer Science is negligible. The weak quality of education, later on, translates into a lack of competitiveness in various fields. As per the Global Competitiveness Report, Pakistan ranks 125 out of 140 countries.

### **5.5.1 Outdated Curriculum and Teaching Methods**

The curriculum and teaching methods in Pakistan have been criticized for being outdated and failing to prepare students for the modern world.

The curriculum in many Pakistani schools is heavily focused on rote memorization, which hampers critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Modernizing the curriculum to emphasize practical skills and critical thinking is essential for preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century.

## **5.6 Teacher Quality and Training**

Teacher is the backbone of education system. The quality of teachers in Pakistani schools is deplorable. According to a UNESCO report, the quality of the teachers and instruction in schools is of low quality. This situation is grimmer in remote parts of Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan where even there are no teachers available in schools. Research has found that teachers do not use new methods and strategies of teaching and learning.

Majority of the teachers do not know about lesson planning which renders them incapable of dealing with various problems in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers encourage cramming of the materials by students.

Students do not know the use of libraries in educational institutions. Thus the reading habits are decreasing among the students.

Teachers are highly responsible for all this mess. It is their professional responsibility to guide the students towards book reading. Teachers rely on lecture methods which do provide an opportunity to students to participate in the process of education as active member. They only note does the information and memorize this just to pass the examination. Thus students are evaluated on the basis of memorization of facts and information rather than performance. Training is essential for quality performance. Teaching is a challenging job.

There is lack of training opportunities for teachers in Pakistan. Although there various teacher training institutes in the country. These institutes are either not well resourced or being poor run due to lack of fund and trained human resource such trainers and administrators. There are no proper training standards in the available training institutes around the country. Most of the training institutes have been closed down due to lack of funds.

The courses being run in the teacher education intuitions are outdated and very traditional which does not enhance the skills, motivation and quality of teachers. The quality of teachers and their training play a pivotal role in the education system. In Pakistan, there are concerns about the competency of educators.

Many teachers in Pakistan lack proper training and are not adequately equipped to engage students and deliver quality education. Addressing teacher training and professional development is crucial for improving the overall quality of education.

- **Corruption:** Among other causes, corruption is the main contributing factor which has deeply affected the education system of Pakistan . There is a weak system of check and balances and accountability which has encouraged many criminal elements to misappropriate funds, use of authority illegally and giving unnecessary favors in allocation of funds, transfers, promotions and decision making. According to Transparency International, Pakistan is included in the list of the most corrupt countries of the world [3]. Due to low salaries, teachers in search of decent life standards and to keep their body and soul together attempt to unfair means in the examination and matters relating to certificates, degrees and so on.

## **5.7 Examination System Flaws**

Examination is the evaluation of student's learning. It should be based on qualitative and quantitative techniques to comprehensively evaluate the performance of students. The standards must ensure validity and reliability of the procedures used in the assessment process.

The basic aim of assessment is to evaluate the performance of students. 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. It does not evaluate them in all aspects of learning. The examination system in Pakistan has its flaws, including a heavy focus on rote learning and memorization, which may not foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Exams in Pakistan often prioritize rote memorization over a deep understanding of the subject matter. This approach discourages creative thinking and innovation. A reformed examination system that evaluates students' analytical and problem-solving abilities is needed.

## **5.8 Lack of Technical Education:**

Technical and vocational education in Pakistan has received little emphasis. The number of technical and vocational training institutes is insufficient, and many lack facilities, teachers, and training instruments. A state's population is one of the most important components of its national strength. Once proficient, it may be an asset.

A lack of technical education leads to an increase in the number of unemployed individuals in the country, which has an impact on the national development strategy. As a result, the government must prioritize technical education.

These are just some of the challenges that the higher education industry is facing in Pakistan. It is important for the government, the private sector, and the universities to work together to address these challenges in order to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education in Pakistan.

Here are some additional **challenges that are specific to the higher education industry** in Pakistan:

- **Brain drain:** Many talented Pakistani graduates are choosing to study and work abroad, due to the lack of opportunities in Pakistan. This is a major loss for the country, as these graduates could contribute to the economy and society.
- **Gender inequality:** There is gender inequality in higher education in Pakistan, with fewer girls and women enrolling in college than boys and men. This is due to a number of factors, such as social norms and lack of financial resources.
- **Language barrier:** English is the language of instruction in most universities in Pakistan. This can be a barrier for students who do not speak English fluently.
- **Lack of research:** There is a lack of research being conducted in Pakistani universities. This is due to a number of factors, such as lack of funding, lack of qualified faculty, and lack of infrastructure.

The higher education industry in Pakistan is facing a number of challenges, but there are also a number of opportunities. With the right investment and reforms, the higher education system in Pakistan can be transformed and become a major driver of economic growth and social development.

## **5.9 The effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 Pandemic also had its effect on Pakistan and its educational system. Because of COVID-19, Pakistan had to consider using online classes. However, many students, especially in rural areas, do not and did not have access to the Internet. Students who are on the lower ladder of the economical circle and students who live in rural areas had been greatly disadvantaged by this new learning method. Many students did not have access to a laptop or even internet. This has greatly impacted the lives of many students in Pakistan, who therefore could not access their education online. This has also resulted in high drop-out rates across the various levels of education in Pakistan.

Low-income families have been the hardest hit by the pandemic. High rates of poverty have put more burden on adolescent girls to stay at home to reduce schooling costs. Coupled with household chores and early marriage, many may never return to the classrooms. Pakistan was already struggling with high illiteracy rates, the Pandemic has made this situation even worse and has affected the learning of approximately 40 million students across Pakistan.

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