**The Educational Paradox of Pakistan**

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The core purpose or the basic demand of education is to instil, unveil, resurface or enhance the ability to strike a clear difference between right and wrong.

A well-versed and result-oriented education system vividly designs its purposes, which might be educating the people or students to pave the way for their contribution to a healthy and prosperous society and even a nation or country. Imparting qualitative education pays back a responsible society. The real classroom makes a nation in the real sense. Students and, even graduates, must have the capacity to boost the progress of their nation. They should have the civic sense to stand for the provision and protection of their fundamental rights. A quality-based education system provides a prospering bed for the development of the nation in a multidimensional way. From the development of information technology and the economy to socio-politico construction, education plays an undeniable role. The prosperous nature of the Scandinavian model of democracy is the blessing of a well-educated system.

The term “quality education” is usually defined as the process to get to the determined purpose. If the education system of Pakistan doesn’t reach its desired goals, it is just because, inter alia, of the lacunae of research-based education. This, in turn, languishes the ability to challenge the prevailing flawed ideas. While keeping this purposeful nature of the education system in mind, Pakistan has been moving against the prevalent model. It largely fails to determine the goals of its education system. Pakistan has a model of the troika in its education regime: government set-up, private sector and madrasah education. Each of the above has its realm. The government sector is usually reported to be problematic, where there is a lack of imparting quality education. Similarly, it has yet to address the gender issue as more than half of the currently out-of-school children comprise girls. The economic survey of Pakistan 2021-22, stages nearly 61 per cent female literacy rate against 71 per cent men. One of the main indicators of the WEF’s Global Gender Gap report gauges the status of women based on their educational empowerment. Pakistan ranks 145 out of 146 in its recent report. Pakistan has the second largest number of out-of-school children (nearly 22.8 million) after Nigeria, according to the UN.

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The educational triangle in Pakistan impedes the education system from reaching its desired goals. Each of the three sectors has its syllabus, curriculum pattern, way of teaching and core purpose. The government sector needs to update its outdated curriculum status. The minimum education expenditure, poor physical infrastructure, lack of quality education and educators and the absence of a well-versed evaluation mechanism have handicapped our education system.

The madrasah education has largely embarked on traditional and outdated courses. It should also take responsibility for inculcating the intolerance saga and stiffing the attitude and behaviour of its students. Madrasah education usually keeps itself away from embracing modern scientific education. The role of madrasahs in the growth and development of our country cannot be ignored as they are home to a large number of students. Many people send their children to madrasahs just by virtue of their religious kowtow and the economic nature of the madrasah’s education.

Likewise, the education realm of Pakistan is struggling with a poor financial account. Pakistan reserves the record lowest money for the education department. The education budget of Pakistan is lower than most of the developing world, even less than many of its south Asian neighbours and counterparts. It allocates t between 1.5 and two per cent for education, among which more than 90 per cent is spent on salaries, pensions and allowances. The remaining few per cent is allocated for the development, construction and maintenance of various educational institutions. Even out of this meagre budget, a huge chunk goes into the pockets of handlers.

Pakistan lacks a quality-based education system. The QS World University ranking and other outfits drawing the rankings of the different universities on the basis of their research production give hardly one or two seats among the top five-hundred universities in the world to Pakistani universities. A bare minimum number of Pakistani universities make their way to prestigious positions among the top Asian universities.

Pakistan has a long-standing dilemma of rote memorization, which has been in place since the first stage of KG. It goes through all the different stages of one’s educational journey. It can easily be observed at the graduation stage where it is boosted by the notes culture, which, in turn, paves the way for copy-pasting menace. This results in the intellectual paralysis of learners, which handicaps them from utilizing their reason and intellect. Moreover, our education system also lacks quality and talented and well-trained instructors. Instructors are mostly seniors and feel deficient in most contemporary teaching techniques. Therefore, they need proper training, which needs the provision of a comprehensive infrastructure, e.g., budget, time management and evaluation process. At the university level, hardly any university has had more than five PhDs. Universities are struggling with external or political interference in their management, recruitment on nepotism, bribery, reference-based, poor financial sources and pathetic physical infrastructure.

Pakistan has yet to ensure a well-functioning technical and vocational education. As per an estimate, Pakistan throws nearly three million educated people into the employment market annually and approximately 0.3 million to 0.5 million among them are worth enough to be recruited by the market. The remaining almost 25 million are jobless, who become an atomic bomb for the country. Such a huge number of unemployed people easily falls into the hands of anti-state elements, who drive them towards anti-state activities. The question here arises is: why cannot the market provide jobs to such a huge number? This might be answered by dragging the reason for not imparting the required education and training. The graduates lack skills and talent.

While keeping the above-drawn portrait of the education system of Pakistan in view, one can reach the point to deduce the conclusion. Multiple questions arise here: can such a problematic education system succeed in meeting its goals? Has the education system of Pakistan determined its goals? Will it bring forth ones who can challenge the flawed status quo and the prevailing deleterious ideas?

While answering the above, one can find out ambiguity in drawing out the clear goals of the education system of Pakistan. The deplorable financial allocation to the education department unveils the priority of the state. The same budget allocates nearly 72 per cent for defence, in return for foreign debts and salaries and pensions. The development budget usually bears the burden of austerity conditions put up by the IMF. In the area of imparting impartial quality-based education, Pakistan sets a multifaceted realm where the students of public and madrasahs sectors have successfully been outpaced by those of the private educational institutions, which comprise the one per cent republic dilemma. This elitism of our education system craves a society of inequality where the sum is ruled by few.

The net result is that Pakistan has a baulk of blind followers and rote memorizers. The learned ones are easily befooled and brainwashed. The lack of well-versed education prepares one to shout and raise slogans after those who are corrupt and selfish. In a nutshell, the education system of Pakistan unequivocally lacks in defining clear objectives, achieving the designed targets and making the system a cost-benefit one.

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