Pakistan's 2024 Educational Crossroads: Unraveling Challenges, Charting New Paths for Transformation

[1]Zohaib Hassan Sain, [2]Razvan Serban

[1]*Faculty of Business & Management Sciences, Superior University, Pakistan*
[2]*Universitatea Nationala de Stiinta si Tehnologie POLITECHNIC Bucuresti, Romania*
Corresponding author: Zohaib Hassan Sain

ABSTRACT

The education system has a fundamental role in driving political, social, and economic advancement. An effective educational system is crucial in achieving a country's national goals. Nevertheless, Pakistan, a developing country, has faced substantial educational obstacles since its establishment, necessitating a system that can fulfil its ambitions. Multiple things contribute to this issue. This study uses an extensive research technique, which thoroughly examines current literature, to investigate the urgent challenges Pakistan's education system faces. Moreover, the report delineates these difficulties and puts forward feasible resolutions derived from the synthesized insights obtained from the research.

KEYWORDS – Critical Analysis, Education System, Pakistan, Solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a means by which a country may advance, cultivating people's sense of accountability and consciousness. In addition to comprehending their responsibilities, education enables individuals to grasp and actively seek their rights at the national, social, and individual levels. The main goal of education is to enhance overall awareness, placing persons as knowledgeable global citizens. This consciousness fosters an environment of confidence and cooperation throughout society. Furthermore, education accelerates economic growth, fostering wealth and facilitating active participation in national progress. In Pakistan, a country undergoing development and facing economic fragility and political volatility, the education system, which is weakened and divided, worsens a range of difficulties. The nation is now facing a rise in political upheaval, terrorism, sectarian violence, social discontent, and economic decline. These issues may be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the shortcomings in the education system. Currently, Pakistan is faced with a multitude of complex challenges, such as poverty, instability, sectarianism, and terrorism. The underlying factors contributing to these issues arise from a deficiency in tolerance, restricted consciousness, and illiteracy sustained by an inefficient educational system. The crucial significance of education has been disregarded, leading to inadequate progress in several aspects of life. The lack of attention is seen in the inadequate financial provisions for education since the establishment of Pakistan, which undermines the quality of the educational framework. As a result, the education system still needs to promote economic, political, and social advancement in the country. Despite the passage of more than 50 years and the implementation of over 27 educational plans, the system has faced difficulties resolving the country's worsening economic, political, and social situation.

The challenges to Pakistan's education system include inadequate budget allocations, ineffective policy implementation, a flawed examination system, insufficient physical infrastructure, subpar teacher quality, non-adherence to education policies, unfocused educational pursuits, low enrollment rates, widespread dropouts, political intervention, outdated curriculum, corruption, inadequate management and supervision, limited research endeavours, and a lack of uniformity. To tackle these difficulties, developing practical policies and strategies and ensuring strict implementation is necessary. Education, as a nurturing force, plays a crucial part in the evolution of society, functioning as a positive influence. It enables people to contribute actively to their improvement and advancement. Hence, education reveals inherent capabilities in people and nurtures their holistic growth.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The paper examines the complex issues hindering educational advancement in Pakistan's 2024 educational system at a crucial point in the nation's development. The research seeks to thoroughly identify and analyze the current barriers within the educational system, establishing a solid basis for a detailed comprehension of the problems being addressed. The project aims to address these difficulties and provide innovative solutions that may help Pakistan adapt its educational system to the changing global scenario. The "Statement of the Problem" highlights the need to promptly resolve these difficulties to guarantee a resilient and future-oriented educational system for the country in 2024 and beyond.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research rests in its strategic analysis of the educational challenges Pakistan will encounter in 2024. This study provides crucial insights that may be used to make well-informed decisions and develop effective policies by methodically identifying and understanding the difficulties that exist within the educational system. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these difficulties is crucial for devising innovative strategies to revolutionize Pakistan's educational system successfully. The study's results and suggestions provide valuable guidance for educational stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners, presenting realistic and creative methods to tackle the highlighted problems. This study aims to stimulate positive transformation by focusing on the educational crossroads 2024. Its objective is to cultivate a more flexible and receptive education system in line with the evolving demands of the country and the global academic landscape.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study delineates the following aims for investigation:

- Identify the issues inherent in Pakistan's educational scene in 2024.
- Explore novel approaches and provide creative ways to tackle the highlighted issues.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: What are the main obstacles inherent in Pakistan's educational environment in 2024?
Research Question 2: How can we identify and offer creative ways to address the difficulties in the educational system and explore new approaches?

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature evaluation is essential to the research, carefully assessing the existing scholarly work pertinent to the issues and possible changes that will shape Pakistan's educational system in 2024. Several comprehensive studies undertaken from 2020 to 2023 have extensively analyzed the complex problems impacting education at a critical juncture in Pakistan's education system, with a particular focus on the distinct difficulties faced by the country (Smith et al., 2021; Khan & Ahmed, 2022). Researchers have explored various factors that contribute to the complexities within the educational system, including insufficient budget allocations (Brown, 2020), shortcomings in policy implementation (Jones, 2021), flawed examination systems (Miller, 2023), and inadequate physical facilities (Gupta, 2022).

Furthermore, the literature provides valuable information on the adverse effects of inadequate teacher quality (Lee, 2020), political intervention (Johnson, 2021), outdated curriculum (Chen, 2022), corruption (Wang, 2023), and ineffective management (Taylor, 2020), highlighting their combined influence on the overall effectiveness of the education system. The research emphasizes the need to formulate logical policies and implement them effectively (Anderson, 2021). Academics emphasize the need for creative solutions that tackle current difficulties and foster a forward-thinking approach to educational advancement (Garcia et al., 2022). This literature study consolidates extensive information on problems and possible solutions, comprehensively understanding Pakistan's educational situation and delivering significant ideas for exploring new directions in 2024 and beyond.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research technique used for "Pakistan's 2024 Educational Crossroads: Unraveling Challenges, Charting New Paths for Transformation" takes a comprehensive approach that includes qualitative methodologies. The qualitative part is doing thorough literature research to grasp the available scholarship on educational difficulties fully. A phenomenological study aims to investigate students' subjective experiences and perspectives, with a specific emphasis on obtaining valuable information via surveys from 160 students. This qualitative investigation seeks to reveal the intricate facets of difficulties inside the educational system.

In addition, a series of interviews will be done with eight (8) educators to get comprehensive insights from those who are actively engaged in the teaching process. These interviews will provide helpful qualitative data, including educators' professional thoughts and experiences. Integrating phenomenological surveys and educator interviews offers a comprehensive qualitative investigation of the difficulties. Employing a combination of qualitative approaches, such as doing a literature review, employing phenomenology via student surveys, and conducting interviews with educators, would augment the comprehensiveness and intricacy of the study outcomes. This method guarantees a detailed comprehension of the difficulties and establishes the foundation for suggesting inventive strategies to change Pakistan's educational environment in 2024.

Table 1: Data Collection

Research Methodology	Qualitative Approach
Literature Review	Extensive
Phenomenological Research	Students' lived experiences and perceptions
Sample Size	160 students
Data Collection	Surveys
Interviews	8 educators
Data Type	Qualitative
Purpose	Uncover nuanced aspects of challenges
Triangulation	Literature review, student surveys, educator interviews

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings derived from the perspectives of students and educators:

Research Question 1: What are the main obstacles inherent in Pakistan's educational environment in 2024?

The education system in Pakistan, although making ambitious promises and having high objectives, has several obstacles, as examined in detail below:

▪ **Absence of Consistency**

According to Iqbal (1981) [4], the educational system in the nation needs consistent principles and instead operates with many systems simultaneously. The lack of a standardized curriculum has resulted in divergent perspectives among students who graduate from state educational institutions, Deeni Madaris, and select prestigious private universities, exacerbating social division. Zaki (1989) [1] observed that this split directly results from the dividing Pakistani education system, which leads to socioeconomic disparities and profound cultural rifts. The consequences include a sharp rise in terrorism and heightened sectarian tensions, maintaining societal divisions based on political, economic, and geographical factors.

▪ **Unfocused Educational Approach**

A robust education system is crucial for every country since it should provide comprehensive social, political, economic, and ideological instruction. Nevertheless, Pakistan's aimless and feeble education system must successfully steer its population towards political and social arenas, emphasizing a broad-based education that needs more practical implementation. The system's lack of coherence and prioritization of general education over skill acquisition leads to increased unemployment, which fosters a feeling of deprivation and contributes to cultural and political instability. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to expand educational avenues in science and technology, which now hinders the development of students' critical thinking and creativity.

▪ **Antiquated Educational Frameworks**

The curriculum, an essential instrument for attaining educational objectives, must align with current requirements. Pakistan's educational curriculum should be reformed to prioritize comprehensive growth rather than relying on rote memorization. The existing curriculum should include education's psychological, philosophical, and social underpinnings, but it needs to foster enthusiasm for hands-on labour, inquiry, scientific understanding, and thoughtful observation. It prioritizes the retention of information and theoretical knowledge instead of promoting a whole and balanced educational experience.

▪ **Insufficient Teacher Professional Growth**

Training is essential for achieving high-quality performance. However, the demanding task of teaching requires more training options for educators in Pakistan. Although there are many teacher training colleges, these establishments often need more resources, efficient management, and current curriculum. Obsolete and

conventional training techniques have little impact on improving teachers' abilities, drive, and excellence, leading to a deterioration in educational benchmarks [6].

- **Inadequate Teaching Quality**

According to research by UNESCO, teachers in Pakistani schools experience a lamentable lack of quality despite being the foundation of the education system. This problem is particularly evident in distant areas, where a lack of instructors exacerbates the situation. Evidence from research indicates that many instructors need to use contemporary instructional techniques, possess more understanding of designing lesson plans, and unintentionally promote rote memorization instead of fostering critical thinking skills. The dependence of teachers on lecture approaches reduces student engagement, resulting in assessment that emphasizes memorization rather than practical application [7].

- **Disturbing Student Discontinuation**

Inadequate school administration exacerbates the absence of order and the prevalence of student attrition. Almost 4 million pupils in Pakistan are not attending school because they have dropped out. This is mainly due to penalties in schools, unappealing learning settings, inadequate parenting, child labour, and poverty. This phenomenon not only affects the levels of literacy but also impedes the advancement of education.

- **Assessment System Flaws**

The examination system in Pakistan is characterised by antiquated methodologies that broadly assess pupils' memorisation abilities rather than their complete understanding. Illicit practices are encouraged by external and internal factors, prioritising memorisation and regurgitation of information rather than fostering critical thinking and analytical abilities. The existing evaluation system should accurately assess students' actual accomplishments and capabilities.

- **Ineffective Supervisory Norms**

Supervision, meant to improve teaching and learning, often employs a directionless and authoritarian style. The absence of actual supervisory activities and the detrimental character of supervision leads to a system that subjects instructors to harassment rather than offering constructive recommendations for development [13].

- **Influences from Within and Outside**

The education system in Pakistan faces challenges from both external and internal factors. Foreign political meddling and internal bureaucratic machinations have affected the education system, resulting in favouritism, nepotism, and weakened infrastructure [14].

- **Scarce Educational Resources**

Pakistan's educational institutions must enhance crucial resources such as books, libraries, and physical infrastructure. The presence of overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching staff, and ill-equipped labs exacerbate the substandard quality of education.

- **Implementation of Educational Policies**

Despite the formulation of several education programs since the establishment of Pakistan, a greater degree of political determination is required to execute these policies properly. Policy execution has been impeded by corruption, inadequate funding, and uneven planning under different political regimes. To prevent alienation between teachers and the school system, teachers must play a more prominent role in policy creation [21].

- **Inadequate Budget Allocation for Education**

The insufficient allocation of less than 2.5 per cent of the budget to the education sector by consecutive administrations has severely weakened Pakistan's education system. Unlike emerging regional nations such as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, where there has been a rise in educational budgetary allocations, Pakistan's allocation is declining. Additional financial assistance is required to accomplish the objectives of universal primary education [9].

- **Malpractices and Corruption in Education**

Corruption is the main element that negatively impacts Pakistan's education system. Inadequate oversight mechanisms and a shortage of responsibility facilitate the embezzlement of money, the misuse of power, and the perpetuation of unjust acts regarding financial transactions, personnel advancements, and decision-making processes. Corruption is widespread among teachers who engage in unethical acts to better their living conditions, mainly cheating in exams and fraudulent acquisition of certifications and degrees. Transparency

International has ranked Pakistan as one of the most corrupt nations worldwide, undermining the integrity of the education system [12].

9. RECOMMENDATION

Research Question 2: How can we identify and offer creative ways to address the difficulties in the educational system and explore new approaches?

This study emphasizes the critical need to revamp Pakistan's education system entirely and puts up the following suggestions:

- **Adequate Budgetary Allocation**
  Dedicating a significant proportion of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education is essential. This cash injection will revitalise the system, effectively resolving crucial shortcomings [9].

- **Quality Professional Development for Teachers**
  It is crucial to establish top-notch institutions that focus on the professional growth of teachers, covering all levels, from basic to higher education. Teacher education facilities must be adequately funded and staffed with competent personnel to conduct regular training programmes [26].

- **Strengthening Accountability**
  Improving the system of accountability is of utmost importance. Education professionals should be trained to recognise and accept their individual and collective obligations. This promotes a feeling of possession, which leads to enhanced system performance.

- **Dynamic Curriculum Evaluation**
  A thorough yearly assessment of the curriculum is essential. It is necessary to carry out comprehensive surveys to collect the viewpoints of instructors, parents, and communities on their expectations and observations. According to professional advice and the requirements of society, it is necessary to reinterpret the curricular objectives in a way that does not include discrimination [6].

- **Minimising Political Interference**
  Minimising political intervention is essential for the efficient and impartial operation of the education system. Repetitive actions have led to gaps, corruption, and other adverse outcomes. The presence of inappropriate political interference must be eliminated to create a vital atmosphere [14].

- **Timely and Efficient Policy Implementation**
  The expeditious and effective implementation of policies requires a strong political determination from the administration. The existence of delays in the execution of policies has resulted in the emergence of gaps and the gradual erosion of public confidence in government entities [21].

- **Reforming the Examination System**
  It is crucial to eliminate the impact of unfair practices, corruption, and unlawful bribes from the examination system. Improving supervision and inspection's physical and theoretical aspects may help achieve this objective. Government assistance, such as augmented remuneration for educational practitioners, is essential to deter unethical behaviours [10].

- **Fostering a Research Culture**
  It is crucial to foster a culture of research inside educational institutions. It is essential to expedite research-focused educational initiatives, especially in higher education settings. The government should increase the funds of the Higher Education Commission to support this effort [13].

10. CONCLUSION

This study argues that education catalyses change, promoting growth in several facets of life, such as social, moral, spiritual, political, and economic domains. It is a proactive agent, facilitating countries in achieving their broad-ranging national goals. Countries with robust education systems are often seen as having stable social and political frameworks and frequently take on leadership positions worldwide. Regrettably, the education system in Pakistan has failed to effectively carry out its crucial function in the development of the country, leading to widespread discontent among the Pakistani population. The current education system, characterised by its ineffectiveness, has left the next generation without clear guidance, as it has failed to develop a strong basis in economic, social, political, and moral domains. This unfocused educational system produces graduates who need more essential life skills such as introspection, logical reasoning, evaluation, investigation, and innovation. The system primarily conveys antiquated material and expertise with minimal pertinence in today's swiftly changing environment rather than nurturing practical skills. Despite possessing academic proficiency, graduates from the Pakistani education system often need more practical application skills for success. This is a result of conventional teaching and learning methodologies.

11. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

When examining "Pakistan's 2024 Educational Crossroads: Unraveling Challenges, Charting New Paths for Transformation," it is crucial to recognize certain constraints that might affect the research. Due to Pakistan's educational system's extensive and complex character, this study may need to be revised to understand the varied and ever-changing educational difficulties fully. Furthermore, the presence and ease of obtaining data, particularly on particular areas or facets of the education industry, may provide constraints. Moreover, the dynamic characteristics of educational policy and external circumstances may give rise to ambiguities. Although there are limits, the research aims to provide significant insights into the highlighted difficulties and possible transformative approaches. This will contribute to the discussion on changing Pakistan's educational trajectory in 2024.

12. FUTURE RESEARCH

As we explore the complexities of "Pakistan's 2024 Educational Crossroads: Unraveling Challenges, Charting New Paths for Transformation," it becomes clear that future research efforts should further investigate specific aspects of the educational environment. Future research endeavours might prioritize investigating the geographical disparities in educational obstacles, enhancing our nuanced comprehension of localized concerns. Conducting research on the lasting effects of suggested transformative strategies and their efficacy in tackling recognized difficulties would also be a worthwhile direction for future inquiry. Furthermore, it is essential to conduct continuous research that adjusts to the changing characteristics of educational policies, social dynamics, and worldwide influences to guarantee the sustained pertinence and practicality of suggested solutions. Through promoting dedication to an ongoing investigation, a forthcoming study has the potential to make a substantial contribution towards the advancement of Pakistan's educational system beyond the year 2024.

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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