

Root Causes of Low Quality of Education in Pakistan: An Analysis from 2008 to 2011

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Abstract

According to several international assessments, Pakistan is far from achieving the goal of Education for All. This study therefore was particularly designed to review the school level education from 2008 to 2011, public and private schools, excluding Deeni Madaris. The objectives of the study were to ascertain quality cardinals of education, To analyze Pakistan's education system in light of established quality cardinals to deduce causes of low quality of education, To suggest measures to improve the education quality in Pakistan. The study was based on the published or secondary information i.e information published in reliable national sources on the Internet in the form of research reports, newspapers, prominent education journals and other related documents in the country covering the period under review i.e. 2008-2011.

Keywords: low-quality, education, Pakistan, schooling, quality of education.

Introduction:

The importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized. any real, speedy and substantial progress is subject to educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of people, consonant with history and culture, and modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world. Education is considered to be a powerful tool for the development of a country. The notion of development is not confined to just economic strength but also encompasses the value of individual freedom (Siddiqui, 2007).

Education exists to adjust individuals to their social life. The education system exists not to train individuals to develop their powers and capacity simply as an individual unit, but rather to fit them effectively to carry on social life before they actively participate in it. The function of education is to guide and control the formation of habit and character on the part of powers so that he shall become an efficient member of society (Quddus, 1979).

Education is a powerful catalyzing agent which provides mental, physical, ideological and moral training for individuals, to enable them to have awareness of their purpose in life and equip them to achieve that purpose. Investing in education has many benefits in particular for people and society and the world as a whole. Good quality education is one of the pillars for developing a modern state and the most powerful tool known to reduce poverty, and inequality and promote sustained economic growth. Furthermore, education is fundamental for the development of democratic societies; is key to building up skilled human resources and is crucial for enhancing a country's prospects for innovation. While setting up educational systems, making education policies and establishing institutions, the nations bear in mind the needs and interests of their people and strive to nourish persons faithful to their national values and capable of coping with contemporary science and technological developments. Education is a powerful

tool by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens (Afzal et al., 2012).

Education was declared a fundamental human right in the Dakar World Education Conference in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000). The 18th Amendment of the constitution of Pakistan binds that the state shall provide compulsory and free education to all children of five to sixteen years of age. Pakistan has also pledged to meet the millennium development goal for education promising that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education (Maqsood et al., 2012). Yet millions of children and adults remain deprived of educational opportunities, many as a result of poverty (Afzal et al., 2012).

Statement of the Problem:

Good quality education (in schools or other forms of organized learning) should facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that have intrinsic value and also help in addressing important human goals. It is well established that the distribution of personal incomes in society is strongly related to the amount of education people have had. Generally speaking, more schooling means higher lifetime incomes (Svanemyr et al., 2015).

When talking about the Quality of Education in Pakistan, several queries come into mind which includes poor literacy rate, difference in education standards for different people or a clear partition between English medium and Urdu medium institutes, continuously varying education policies of the government restriction of women education, ghost schools and many other issues echo in mind about quality of education. However, despite various reforms, policies and efforts the education system in Pakistan is not able to meet the desired quality levels which can support in achieving national objectives or become at par with the international community (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2010).

According to several international assessments, Pakistan is far from achieving the goal of Education for All (EFA, 2004). The EFA was set to be attained by all developing countries under the Dakar Framework decided at a meeting held in Senegal in 2000. UNESCO attributes Pakistan's placement at a lower EFA Development Index (EDI) category to low primary school participation, adult illiteracy, gender disparities, inequalities in education and poor quality of education (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2010). The adult literacy rate in Pakistan is under 50 per cent, while less than one-third of adult women have a functional reading ability. Pakistan is unlikely to achieve the adult literacy target by 2015. Progress is slow, while the gender parity goal is at risk of not being achieved in 2015. Moreover, more than 6 million children are out of school.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To ascertain quality cardinals of education.
- ii. To analyze Pakistan's education system in light of established quality cardinals to deduce causes of low quality of education.
- iii. To suggest measures to improve the education quality in Pakistan.

Delimitations:

The study was particularly delimited to the school level education from 2008 to 2011, Public and Private Schools, excluding Deeni Madaris.

Research Methodology:

The study is based on the published or secondary information i.e information published in reliable national sources on the Internet in the form of research reports, newspapers, prominent education journals and other related documents in the country covering the period under review i.e. 2008-2011.

Literature Review:

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously. In the contemporary discourse on education the word quality is frequently used but not much clearly defined. In the absence of an agreed definition, it may be inferred from the normal quality definition that this term is generally related to the adequacy or appropriateness of processes for the purpose for which they are intended. Quality also implies the scale and often implies standard.

Since education has many purposes and components, every aspect of education like infrastructure, administration, teachers, curriculum and finally achievements are in question.

Education quality defined in Dakar:

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All i.e. EFA noted that the generally poor quality of education needed to be improved and recommended that education be made both universally available and more relevant. The Declaration also identified quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity (Halai & Durrani, 2020). While the notion of quality was not fully developed, it was recognized that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society. Emphasis was accordingly placed on assuring an increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their education (EFA, 2004).

A decade later, the Dakar Framework for Action (ibid.) declared that access to quality education was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality was at the heart of education, a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. Its expanded definition of quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). Although this established an agenda for achieving good education quality, it did not ascribe any relative weight to the various dimensions identified (ibid.).

Evolution of UNESCO's conceptualization of Quality:

One of UNESCO's first position statements on quality in education is the fundamental goal of social change as the eradication of inequality and the establishment of an equitable democracy. Consequently, it reported, "the aim and content of education must be recreated, to allow both for the new features of society and the new features of democracy" (EFA, 2004).

The report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (UNESCO, 2020) identified four pillars of education:

- i. Learning to know acknowledges that learners build their knowledge daily, combining indigenous and ‘external’ elements.
- ii. Learning to do focuses on the practical application of what is learned.
- iii. Learning to live together addresses the critical skills for a life free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunity to develop themselves, their families and their communities.
- iv. Learning to be emphasizes the skills needed for individuals to develop their full potential.

UNESCO promotes access to good-quality education as a human right and supports a rights-based approach to all educational activities. Within this approach, learning is perceived to be affected at two levels. At the level of the learner, education needs to seek out and acknowledge learners’ prior knowledge, recognize formal and informal modes, practise non-discrimination and provide a safe and supportive learning environment. At the level of the learning system, a support structure is needed to implement policies, enact legislation, distribute resources and measure learning outcomes, to have the best possible impact on learning for all.

UNICEF Approach to Quality:

UNICEF strongly emphasizes what might be called desirable dimensions of quality, as identified in the Dakar Framework. Its paper “Defining Quality in Education” recognizes five dimensions of quality (EFA, 2004):

- i. Learners
- ii. Environments
- iii. Content
- iv. Processes
- v. Outcomes

Education Traditions and Associated Notions of Quality:

When thinking about the quality of education it is useful to distinguish between educational outcomes and the processes leading to them. People who seek particular, defined outcomes may rate quality in those terms, ranking educational institutions according to the extent to which their graduates meet ‘absolute’ criteria concerning, for example, academic achievement, sporting prowess, musical success, or pupil behaviour and values. The standard of comparison would be in some sense fixed, and separate from the values, wishes and opinions of the learners themselves. By contrast, relativist approaches emphasize that the perceptions, experiences and needs of those involved in the learning experience mainly determine its quality. Drawing on a business analogy, ‘client orientation’ in education puts strong emphasis on whether a programme fits its purposes in ways that reflect the needs of those who use it. These different emphases have deep roots and are reflected in major alternative traditions of educational thought (Ahmad et al., 2014; EFA, 2004).

Quality in Humanist Approach:

As per this approach (EFA, 2004):

- i. Standardized, prescribed, externally defined or controlled curricula are rejected. They are seen as undermining the possibilities for learners to construct their meanings and for educational programmes to remain responsive to individual learners' circumstances and needs.
- ii. The role of assessment is to give learners information and feedback about the quality of their learning. It is integral to the learning process. Self-assessment and peer assessment are welcomed as ways of developing a deeper awareness of learning.
- iii. The teacher's role is more that of a facilitator than an instructor.
- iv. Social constructivism, while accepting these tenets, emphasizes learning as a process of social practice rather than the result of individual intervention.

Quality in Behaviorist Approach:

In a behaviourist context, quality of education can be achieved through (EFA, 2004):

- i. Standardized, externally defined and controlled curricula, based on prescribed objectives and defined independently of the learner, are endorsed.
- ii. Assessment is seen as an objective measurement of learned behaviour against preset assessment criteria.
- iii. Tests and examinations are considered central features of learning and the main means of planning and delivering rewards and punishments.
- iv. The teacher directs learning, as the expert who controls stimuli and responses.
- v. Incremental learning tasks that reinforce desired associations in the mind of the learner are favoured.

Quality in Critical Tradition:

Critical theorists focus on inequality in access to and outcomes of education and on education's role in legitimizing and reproducing social structures through its transmission of a certain type of knowledge that serves certain social groups. Accordingly, these sociologists and critical pedagogues tend to equate good quality with (EFA, 2004):

- i. Education that prompts social change
- ii. Curriculum and teaching methods that encourage critical analysis of social power relations and of ways in which formal knowledge is produced and transmitted.
- iii. Participation by learners in the design of their own learning experience.

Quality in Indigenous Tradition:

Some important efforts to develop alternative educational ideas are rooted in the realities of lower-income countries and have often arisen as challenges to the legacies of colonialism. Prominent examples include the approaches of Mahatma Gandhi and Julius Nyerere, both of

whom proposed new and alternative education systems with culturally relevant emphases on self-reliance, equity and rural employment (Halai & Durrani, 2020; EFA, 2004). Some important features common to indigenous approaches are:

- i. Mainstream approaches imported from Europe are not necessarily relevant in very different social and economic circumstances.
- ii. Assuring relevance implies the local design of curriculum content, pedagogies and assessment.
- iii. All learners have rich sources of prior knowledge, accumulated through a variety of experiences, which educators should draw out and nourish.
- iv. Learners should play a role in defining their curriculum.
- v. Learning should move beyond the boundaries of the classroom/school through non-formal and lifelong learning activities.

Given the diversity of understanding and interpretation of quality evident in the different traditions discussed above, defining quality and developing approaches to monitoring and improving it requires dialogue designed to achieve:

- i. Broad agreement about the aims and objectives of education
- ii. A framework for the analysis of quality that enables its various dimensions to be specified.
- iii. An approach to measurement that enables the important variables to be identified and assessed.
- iv. A framework for improvement that comprehensively covers the interrelated components of the education system and allows opportunities for change and reform to be identified.

Cognitive development and the accumulation of particular values, attitudes and skills are important objectives of education systems in most societies. Their content may differ but their broad structure is similar throughout the world. This may suggest that in one sense the key to improving the quality of education to help education systems better achieve these objectives could be equally universal.

Vision of the Government of Pakistan:

As per the vision of GOP, “Our education system must provide quality education to our children and youth to enable them to realize their potential and contribute to the development of society and nation, creating a sense of Pakistani nationhood, the concepts of tolerance, social justice, democracy, their regional and local culture and history based on the basic ideology enunciated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan” (GOP, 2009).

Analysis and Discussions:

Definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education’s challenges.

Systems that embrace change are more likely to offer quality education to students. Continuous assessment and improvement can focus on any or all dimensions of system quality.

If the present trends in Pakistan are analyzed in light of the Government of Pakistan's vision in the above Para we can easily identify a huge gap, which is a lack of nationhood concept, social sense and tolerance. Regional and local cultures have been used as a political tool and as a tool of national disintegration. The concept of ideology which was presented at the time of the creation of Pakistan is diminished.

From the above discussion, analysis as well and comparison of the two quality frameworks in Figures 1 & 2, the broad quality notions selected for weighing Pakistan's Education System for this research paper are as follows:

Learners:

What is the quality of a learner? Important determining characteristics of this notion can include socio-economic background, health, place of residence, cultural and religious background and the amount and nature of prior learning. It is therefore important that potential inequalities among students, deriving from gender, disability, race and ethnicity, health and situations of emergency are to be recognized and addressed accordingly.

Policy Aspects: As per the aims and objectives of the National Education Policy 'Equalize access to education through provision of special facilities for girls and boys alike, underprivileged/marginalized groups and handicapped children and adults'(Farah & Bacchus, 2013; GOP, 2009). Improvements in the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) shall be based on a concept of holistic development of the child that provides a stimulating, interactive environment, including play, rather than a focus on regimes that require rote learning and rigid achievement standards. To provide and ensure equal educational opportunities to all the citizens of Pakistan and to provide minorities with adequate facilities for their cultural and religious development, enabling them to participate effectively in the overall national effort. All children, boys and girls, shall be brought inside the school by the year 2015. Food-based incentives shall be introduced to increase enrolment and improve retention and completion rates, especially for girls.

Statistics: Pre-primary education is the basic component of Early Childhood Education (ECE), Prep or Kachi classes of children ages 3-4 years. An increase of 4.0 per cent in Pre-Primary enrolment (8.743 million) in 2009-10 over 2008-09 (8.434 million) has been observed during 2009-10, it is estimated to increase by 2.0 per cent in 2010-11. An increase in Primary enrolment (18.756 million) in 2009-10 over 2008-09 (18.468 million) has been observed during 2009-10, it is estimated to increase by 1.4 per cent in 2010-11 (Malik, 2015). An increase in middle enrolment (5.501 million) in 2009-10 over 2008-09 (5.414 million) has been observed during 2009-10, it is estimated to increase by 0.4 percent in 2010-11. An increase in secondary enrolment (2.581 million) in 2009-10 over 2008-09 (2.556 million) has been observed during 2009-10. It is estimated to increase by 2.9 per cent in 2010-11 (GOP, 2012, pp. 1-11). Survey shows, that over 16.1 per cent of school-going age children are not attending any school in Punjab and those attending show poor learning competencies (Redden & Bakhtiar, 2010). Malik, et al., 2010). Only half of its children go to primary school, while a quarter attend secondary school and a mere 5% receive higher education (Khan, 2011, pp. 350-351). The political elite have no interest in providing education for the masses or changing the status quo (p. 354; Farooq et al., 2011). The differences amongst students due to culture, living standards and diversified backgrounds contribute a lot towards the low quality of education (Butt & Rehman, 2010).

Healthy students are quality learners. If the child is not healthy, it will affect his/her performance in school. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates 40 per cent of cases of diarrhoea at school. The disease is globally responsible for the death of 4,000 children each day. A survey undertaken by the organization revealed that with most public school toilets locked or out of order the students of these schools were resorting to using the open outdoors to relieve themselves. Although public schools keep crying for basic amenities they fail to keep them functional. Parents are apprehensive about sending their daughters to school where there is no boundary wall, electricity, water, and toilet facility. Security issues prevailing all over Pakistan due to operations in KPK, insurgency in Baluchistan, and recent target killings in Karachi have had a devastating effect on schools. Militants blew up two government-run primary schools in the Khyber tribal region's Landi Kotal area. Such incidents are very common and frequent all over Pakistan. In the UK at least lower secondary education is compulsory. Every child must go to school between the ages of 6-19. In government schools of Sri Lanka, children are provided with free books, uniforms and mid-day meals. There are however no compulsory education practically implemented in the entire Pakistan or much incentives available to a maximum of poor or out-of-reach pupils to attract them towards schools (Farooq et al., 2011).

Deductions:

Table 1: Deductions about Problems of Learners

Problems	Effects	Cause(s)
Inequalities among students	Differences amongst pupils State of the complex in weaker or deprived students Difficult to attain similar standards	Societal differences (cultural, religious, standards) Poverty Inadequate parents education Elites/political influences
Lack of incentives for students	Lesser motivation for pupils The burden on poor parents. Less enrolment rate	Poverty Corruption Non-judicious spending of funds Lesser priority of education
Political interference	Merit cannot be ensured. Hindrances to maintain differences between elite and inferior.	Legacies of Cultural/Societal Values Traditional Mindset
Poor health of students	Healthy minds are not available Non-punctuality	Poverty Lack of hospitals/medical facilities Substandard food
Apprehensive Parents	Lack of family support Less enrolment rate More dropouts	Lack of Adult education Security concerns Poverty
Security concerns	Peace of mind not present Loss of concentration	National policies Sectarian/political differences.

Environment:

Learning can occur anywhere, but positive learning outcomes are generally sought by educational systems in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Policy Aspect: In an average rural area of Pakistan, a five or six-year-old child walks to school dreading what he or she will face. Children are scared of the teacher for de facto corporal punishment exists in all provinces, although Punjab has managed some interesting counters. They know that they may have to sit on the cold floor in winter and a hot one in summer provided they are lucky enough to have a school building otherwise the tree is the only shade available to the children. Toilets are a luxury and where in some schools they exist, the ratio is extremely unwise. These issues are linked to poverty irrespective of the locale (Afzal et al., 2012). Library facilities are very rudimentary and teaching aid material is generally in short supply. Games, sports and other extracurricular activities such as debating contests, drawing competitions, skills/ arts and crafts training, and cultural activities that positively contribute to the overall development of school children are missing from most schools. School infrastructure facilities are highly inadequate, especially in rural areas (GOP, 2009, pp. 48-49). Some policy decisions in NEP 2009 about the learning environment are:

- i. A framework setting out the basic standards for school facilities and teaching aid materials including playgrounds shall be established by 2012 and shall form the basis for allocation of funds.
- ii. Student-teacher ratios shall be standardized i.e. 1:20 and enforced at the school level.
- iii. An awareness campaign against corporal punishment shall be initiated and teachers shall be held accountable for violations.
- iv. A code of conduct shall be established which shall enable student unions to participate in healthy activities without affecting the environment of the educational institutions.

Statistics: In the public sector, around 40% of schools are without boundary walls, 36% without drinking water facilities, 61% without electricity, 39% without sanitary facilities and 6% without any buildings (GOP, 2009). The quality of the existing learning environment is evident from the fact that a large number of schools are missing basic infrastructure facilities i.e. 32.7 per cent of schools up to elementary level (Rashid, 2010), 32 per cent are without boundary walls, 33.6 per cent without drinking water facilities, 35.4 per cent without latrines and around 60 per cent schools are without electricity. For higher accessibility of education particularly for girls in low-income households and to enhance enrolment, existing schools should be upgraded with the provision of necessary infrastructure to improve both output and quality of education (Farah & Bacchus, 2013; GOP, 2012). According to another survey 10% of Punjab, 35% of Sindh, 23% of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 18% of Baluchistan are without buildings (Isphahani, 2011) (Figures 3 and 4). Pakistan is committed to spending at least 4% of GDP on education but now it has fallen to 2% (Redden & Bakhtiar, 2010). Some provinces are spending only 60% of the budget in 2010. Only 1.5% of GDP is going to public schools (Isphahani, 2011). A government school principal at Karachi when asked about the deteriorating condition of schools replied that funds are considered adequate but they are not spent religiously.

There are three popular notions of good schools generally recognized by people firstly based on results, secondly the Englishness of the school and thirdly its posh look. However, a good school is one that takes care of education including academic development, physical development and moral development (Siddiqui, 2007, p. 116). In some schools, teachers shout at students and in some cases beat them as well. Such acts cause a lack of self-confidence &

sharing, fear and timidity which last throughout student life (p. 119). All over Pakistan, there is a concept of ghost schools where teacher collects their wages but fail to turn up (Khan, 2011). When teachers are not available then what to talk about education & discipline. Bureaucratic red-tapism and shenanigans over the last 60 years aside, the 2010 floods washed away infrastructure across a wide swathe of Pakistan and disrupted education. It was a severe blow to the already limping education system, particularly primary and secondary, in the rural and semi-urban areas where the quality and quantity of education provided was rarely up to the mark (Farooq et al., 2011).

Pakistan, with one of the world’s largest out-of-school populations, about 7.3 million, spends over seven times as much on arms as on primary schools, says a report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The discrepancy between primary education and military expenditure is so large that just one-fifth of Pakistan’s military spending would be sufficient to finance universal primary education, asserts the `Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2011` published on Tuesday (Malik, 2015). A survey undertaken by the organisation revealed that with most public school toilets locked or out of order the students of these schools were resorting to using the open outdoors to relieve themselves. Although public schools keep crying for basic amenities they fail to keep them functional. However, in Sri Lanka, there are no schools without buildings rather now most government schools have libraries, laboratories and internet facilities. The teacher-to-student ratio in SRILANKAN schools is 1:20.

Deductions: Well-managed schools and classrooms contribute to educational quality. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon school and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable. Order, constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behaviour communicate a seriousness of purpose to students. War and other forms of interpersonal and group conflict have an impact on children’s mental health and their ability to learn (Oluwatelure, 2010). Many young victims of violence suffer lasting physical, psychological, social-emotional and behavioural effects. Some pertinent problems being faced by the education system concerning the environment that are ultimately affecting the quality of education are:

Table 2: Deductions about the Problems of Environment

Problems	Effects	Cause(s)
Non-availability of a conducive environment for learning	Efficiency of teachers/students affected Parents become apprehensive in case girls Low enrolment rates	Least priority to education Non-judicious spending on education Poor managerial skills
Poor HRM	Less motivated teachers Teachers overburdened Discipline problems Control/Governance problems Teachers not punctual	Poor governance Lack of management
Less spent on education and more on arms	Non-conducive environment Reflects national trends to the international community	National mindset Education is the least priority Money making through education
Corruption	Scarcity of funds/resources Compromises on standards Ghost Schools	Poor governance No perfect system of audit Weak judicial system Political interference

Punishment	Psychological effects on students Students Dishearten from education Serious disabilities Parents become apprehensive	Traditional legacies Poor governance No check on teachers The specific mindset of teaching through stick
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Content:

The school curriculum should provide all students with essential life-long learning experiences for whole-person development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, according to individual potentials, so that all students can become active, responsible, and contributing members of the society, the nation and the world. The school curriculum should help students learn how to learn through cultivating positive values, attitudes, and a commitment to life-long learning, and through developing generic skills to acquire, construct and communicate knowledge. These qualities are essential for whole-person development to cope with challenges. A quality curriculum therefore sets the directions for learning and teaching through a coherent and flexible framework which can be adapted to changes and different needs of students and schools (Woitt et al., 2023).

Policy Aspect: Curriculum development shall be objective-driven and outcome-based. It shall focus on learning outcomes rather than content. It shall closely reflect important social issues; and provide more room for developing the capacity for self-directed learning, the spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork. The curriculum shall emphasize the fundamental rights guaranteed to the citizens of Pakistan so that each individual shall develop within himself/herself and the society at large a civic culture strong enough to withstand any extra-constitutional interference which threatens those rights. A well-regulated system of competitive publishing of textbooks and learning materials shall be introduced. An overall policy shall be developed to increase library usage and improve the quality of library services in the country (Mahmood, 2010; GOP, 2009). The decision-makers in Pakistan think that if they could come up with a brand new curriculum document, education in Pakistan would be saved. This notion is not only incomplete but misleading as well. The teachers on the other hand have a much narrower notion of curriculum. Most of them confuse curriculum with syllabus or textbooks (Nayyar, n.d.). Curriculum is not just a static and frigid phenomenon but a living and vibrant reality that is the sum of interactions between teachers, materials and students (Siddiqui, 2007, p. 97).

The curriculum and the combination of the courses have lost their motivational value for lack of relevance to the aspirations of the individual and the development needs of the country. Their usefulness for national integration has become questionable. The delivery of school curricula, that is textbooks, (Nayyar, n.d.) teacher training and examinations suffer from several distortions. For example, the textbook does not properly reflect the spirit and intentions of the school curricula. These are generally of poor quality and contain unnecessarily repetitive materials. The language in many cases is defective as is the presentation of concepts which are not in agreement with the understanding capacity of children. Apart from poor layouts and unattractive illustration designs of science books, the books in social sciences fail to inculcate the desired national cohesion. Also, the teachers are not adequately oriented and trained by the needs of the curriculum (Isphahani, 2010). The different curricula prevailing in the country adopted by various boards are one of the main contributors towards the low quality of education. This is quite understandable that most of the socially desirable theories are imported from countries

whose classrooms, cultures and problems are quite different from ours (Siddiqui, 2007, p. 49). One of the strongest forces that play an important role in quality is curriculum. In Pakistani schools, the curriculum is prepared at the national level and the teacher’s role is to implement it. The teachers have to teach the textbooks and great concern is to finish the course. Several teachers find themselves shackled in the restraints of curriculum (Isphahani, 2010). One of the reports on curricula and textbooks reported the following problems in Pakistan (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Nayyar, n.d.):

- i. Inaccuracies of fact and omissions that serve to substantially distort the nature and significance of actual events in our history.
- ii. Insensitivity to the existing religious diversity of the nation.
- iii. Perspectives that encourage prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, especially women and religious minorities, and others towards nations.
- iv. A glorification of war and the use of force.
- v. Omission of concepts, events and material that could encourage critical self-awareness among students.

Inconsistency in the curriculum guidelines was observed while reviewing it. Approved textbooks were inconsistent concerning the number of exercises and pages assigned to cover the scope of topics given in the national curriculum. The elaboration of concepts and the number of activities and/or end-of-unit/chapter assessments of the same topics also varied in the approved textbooks (Mahmood, 2010; Nayyar, n.d.). In Srilanka curriculum is the same in all schools and the same textbooks are taught all across. However, in Pakistan curricula are different, even though are not uniform at a conceptual level. The level of content taught at a government school is lower than that taught to an equivalent grade in other private schools (Arif & Ilyas, 2013). The same is the case with textbooks, in which extreme diversity is seen through different boards.

Deductions:

Table 3: Deductions about the Problems of Content

Problems	Effects	Cause(s)
Wrong basis of curriculum	Students with weak conceptual knowledge Not able to cope with international level Non-contributory to national building	Legacies of British Non-systematic evolution of curricula Less deliberated reforms Non-conformance to worldly evolutions Copy and paste culture
Non Uniformity	Diversification in society Lesser cohesion as a nation Standard-based division	Introduction of different boards Inconsistent policies and reforms Lack of standardization Lack of governance
Poor quality of books	Unable to seek students’ attention The desired concept could not be effectively delivered Teachers’ synchronization with the textbook is difficult	Weak audit/evaluation system Implementation problems due to poor governance Monopoly of publishers
Imported material	State of confusion among students Problems of applicability in real-time Brainwashing as per the exporters’ wish Distraction from reality	Legacies Lack of urge to devise own systems External inspirations Easier way to adopt

Incorrect perception of teachers and students	Not thinking out of the box Mental capabilities of teachers/students restricted Rote learning trend encouraged	Educational background Prevailing culture Traditional Mindset
Lack of scrutiny and feedback mechanism	Improvement is effected Implementation not ensured	Non-existence of concern Lesser priority to education Poor governance

Teachers:

Until now much discussion of educational quality centred on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupils and curricula is done. However, to have a desired output, the teacher’s role is much more important to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality education processes.

Policy Aspect: National Education Policy 2009 states that, a bachelor’s degree, with a B.Ed., shall be the requirement for teaching at the elementary level (Rashid, 2010). A master level for the secondary and higher secondary, with a B.Ed., shall be ensured by 2018 (GOP, 2009). Governments shall take steps to ensure that teacher recruitment, professional development, promotions and postings are based on merit alone (ibid.). Governments shall take steps to improve the social status and morale of teachers. These include the upgrading of teacher salaries as part of establishing a separate teaching cadre and teaching career; teachers’ professional development, and a reward system based on performance measures. Teacher allocation plans, likewise, shall be based on the schools’ needs and qualifications of teachers (ibid.).

In their pursuit to promote the Pakistan ideology, previous governments have passed on their vision through curriculum and textbooks, but very little has been done about teacher education and training (Dilshad, (2010). Unfortunately, this area has been ignored in the larger context of education in Pakistan. Supervision in government institutions in particular and many private ones in general is lacking (Arif, & Ilyas, 2013). This may be due to the complacent attitude of supervisors or their incompetence unnecessary and uncalled-for political and bureaucratic intervention, etc. Due to these, even the regular attendance of teachers cannot ensure what to talk about the quality of education. The institutional heads generally don’t bother to go out of their office. Perhaps they think it is below their dignity. If at all they make rounds of the institutions which are more ceremonial to just show their presence (Mahmood, 2010). It is a regular happening that students keep waiting for teachers most of whom reside on the campus but do not take classes as scheduled in the timetable. The assignments handed out by the teachers are generally nothing more than a waste of paper and money. In most cases they want us to reproduce the same things that have been discussed in the class from different sources.

One thing I find common in all is that they are energetic and keen learners. They are always trying to improve themselves by learning new skills and new teaching ideas. They attend courses and workshops and they value these experiences. It is a very positive attitude but there are so few opportunities. Formal teacher training is limited, so teachers rely on workshops and short courses. These are useful but how do they carry these ideas forward on a day-to-day basis in the classroom? (Oluwature, 2010). If a teacher is committed and persistent, the chances are that a change is initiated and sustained and if the teachers are not committed, change is less likely to take place (Siddiqui, 2007, p. 50). Regarding teacher training, not enough attention is given to attitudinal change (Dilshad, 2010). In a typical education course, the participants are given a handful of recipes for good teaching. In this model teacher is not viewed as a generator of

knowledge but just as a user of knowledge (ibid.). Statistics about teacher education (Table 4) do not depict the healthy status of teachers quantitatively as well qualitatively (Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2006-07).

Table 4: Teacher in Public Schools and their Qualification

PUNJAB	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	9,654	14,529	24,183	48,612	44,805	93,417	58,226	59,334	117,600
CT	6,074	5,657	11,731	23,615	14,689	38,304	29,689	20,346	50,035
B.Ed	12,630	9,248	21,878	36,078	25,578	61,656	48,708	34,826	83,534
M.Ed	4,555	2,514	7,069	9,088	4,938	14,026	13,643	7,452	21,095
Other	3,407	1,911	5,318	8,709	4,034	12,743	12,116	5,945	18,061
Untrained	2,331	2,179	4,510	9,014	5,234	14,248	11,345	7,413	18,758
Total	38,652	36,038	74,689	135,116	99,278	234,394	173,767	135,316	309,083
SINDH	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	9,348	12,583	21,931	32,737	5,950	38,687	42,085	18,533	60,618
CT	2,631	2,879	5,510	2,997	736	3,733	5,628	3,615	9,243
B.Ed	9,401	8,011	17,412	16,527	2,467	18,994	25,928	10,478	36,406
M.Ed	6,245	7,938	14,183	8,419	1,665	10,084	14,664	9,603	24,267
Other	1,426	432	1,858	1,893	262	2,155	3,319	694	4,013
Untrained	622	458	1,080	2,432	679	3,111	3,054	1,137	4,191
Total	29,673	32,301	61,974	65,005	11,759	76,764	94,678	44,060	138,738
BALOCHISTAN	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	3,703	2,599	6,302	13,187	5,049	18,236	16,890	7,648	24,538
CT	858	593	1,451	2,060	437	2,497	2,918	1,030	3,948
B.Ed	1,291	940	2,231	2,166	544	2,710	3,457	1,484	4,941
M.Ed	639	335	975	625	96	721	1,264	431	1,695
Other	684	302	986	1,908	385	2,293	2,592	687	3,279
Untrained	193	213	406	556	504	1,060	749	717	1,466
Total	7,368	4,982	12,350	20,502	7,015	27,517	27,870	11,997	39,867
NWFP	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	2,626	2,673	5,229	26,491	16,703	43,194	29,117	19,376	48,493
CT	2,292	1,257	3,549	15,453	4,514	19,967	17,745	5,771	23,516
B.Ed	2,338	1,389	3,727	13,138	3,750	16,888	15,476	5,139	20,615
M.Ed	1,312	469	1,781	5,052	1,165	6,217	6,364	1,634	7,998

Other	716	427	5,446	5,446	1,889	7,335	6,162	2,316	8,478
Untrained			-			-	-	-	-
Total	9,284	6,215	15,499	65,580	28,021	93,601	74,864	34,236	109,100
AJK	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	199	272	471	3,404	3,296	6,700	3,603	3,568	7,171
CT	233	181	414	2,892	1,675	4,567	3,125	1,856	4,981
B.Ed	500	279	779	4,923	2,341	7,264	5,423	2,620	8,043
M.Ed	101	48	149	681	311	992	782	359	1,141
Other	98	68	166	756	521	1,277	854	589	1,443
Untrained	138	116	254	1,422	1,049	2,471	1,560	1,165	2,725
Total	1,269	964	2,233	14,078	9,193	23,271	15,347	10,157	25,504
FATA	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC			-	11	4	15	11	4	15
CT			-	39	15	54	39	15	54
B.Ed			-	32	20	52	32	20	52
M.Ed			-	67	11	78	67	11	78
Other			-	60	24	84	60	24	84
Untrained			-	2	1	3	2	1	3
Total	-	-	-	211	75	286	211	75	286
FANA	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	59	85	144	663	282	945	722	367	1,089
CT	57	78	135	476	185	661	533	263	796
B.Ed	243	166	409	1,374	229	1,603	1,617	395	2,012
M.Ed	30	15	45	119	17	136	149	32	181
Other	9	4	13	84	60	144	93	64	157
Untrained	41	80	121	678	514	1,192	719	594	1,313
Total	439	428	867	3,394	1,287	4,681	3,833	1,715	5,548
ICT	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	3	282	285	214	290	504	217	572	789
CT	52	374	426	243	277	520	295	651	946
B.Ed	327	1,143	1,470	768	796	1,564	1,095	1,939	3,034
M.Ed	251	334	585	202	141	343	453	475	928
Other	49	64	113	48	42	90	97	106	203
Untrained	84	62	146	85	41	126	169	103	272

Total	766	2,259	3,025	1,560	1,587	3,147	2,326	3,846	6,172
TOTAL	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PTC	25,592	33,023	58,615	125,319	76,379	201,698	150,911	109,402	260,313
CT	12,197	11,019	23,216	47,775	22,528	70,303	59,972	33,547	93,519
B.Ed	26,730	21,176	47,906	75,006	35,725	110,731	101,736	56,901	158,637
M.Ed	13,133	11,653	24,786	24,253	8,344	32,597	37,386	19,997	57,383
Other	6,389	3,208	9,597	18,904	7,217	26,121	25,293	10,425	35,718
Untrained	3,409	3,108	6,517	14,189	8,022	22,211	17,598	11,130	28,728
Total	87,450	83,187	170,637	305,446	158,215	463,661	392,896	241,402	634,298

For the success of any change initiative, it is important to have a strong follow-up system. In Srilanka the teachers are selected on merit based on their academic performance and those who are below the desired academic criteria are to pass an entrance exam. The teachers are permanently recruited after training of about 05 years. In Pakistan, the recruitment of teachers is mostly political and hardly on merit. In addition, the standard of teachers' training is also doubtful.

Deductions:

Table 5: Deductions about the Problems Related to Teachers

Problems	Effects	Cause(s)
Induction of teachers not on merit	Compromise on teaching Sense of deprived of deserved ones Teachers not working religiously	Political influences Corruption Lack of good governance
Poor HRM	Less motivated teachers Teachers overburdened Discipline problems Control/Governance problems Teachers not punctual	Poor governance Lack of management Seeking teachers who can be employed at lesser pay rates
Lesser incentives for teachers	Teachers motivation effective Teachers focus shift to private teaching Inconsistency due to brain drain	Lack of managerial skills. Concept of saving finances by spending less on teacher's welfare.
Political influences	Disturbance in system Priorities compromise Merit is effected Standards compromised	Traditional Mindset Political elites are more resourceful and assertive
Poorly trained teachers	Teaching non-effective Education standards compromised Teachers in compromising position The inability of teachers to deliver	Poor implementation of Education policy across the country Lower standards of training institutes Conceptual flaws in teachers' training
Lack of attitudinal development	Restricts education to textbooks and curriculum Students learning values are not fulfilled about personality building	Conceptual flaws in teachers' training

Assessment:

Academic achievement in general and achievement in literacy and numeracy in particular represent key educational outcomes. Teaching students to read, write and calculate is often considered the primary purpose of formal education, but students’ regular attendance and attention in school does not guarantee this outcome. It is generally recognized that, as a means to an end, examinations should help to determine the extent to which the broad goals of instruction have been achieved as well as the extent to which educational institutions have served the needs of the community and the society.

Assessment Perspective: Parents tend to see academic achievement as closely related to the opportunity for social promotion and future employment. During examination, certain parents think that it is more of their assessment than of their children. This puts tremendous pressure on the child (Siddiqui, 2007, p. 188). Children’s priority becomes to secure good grades only and both i.e. parents and child become least concerned about making concepts.

The principal of a school’s appraisal largely depends on the result of the school. This pressure trickles down to school culture in classrooms and the teacher who shows good results is considered to be the best teacher (p. 189). Students at an early stage took the assessment as a challenge to step next grade and after a bit of maturity the concept generally evolved into the perception of getting admission to a good college/university through better grades and finally, the concept becomes acquiring a good job and same is inculcated at all levels by parents/teachers. Unfortunately, cheating in exams is shrugged off as an inconsequential matter, in fact, one that is no longer deserving of condemnation. It has become an accepted part of our academic culture. Educationists and psychologists argue that a reliance on grades as a tool to motivate students is detrimental to the process of learning. To force students to study a subject out of fear is to make it a drag for them. Bonus marks or failing grades serve only to increase anxiety and resentment; they do nothing to motivate students to take an earnest interest in the subject that they study. The examination questions, based mainly on textbooks, are hardly designed to measure the competencies required to be inculcated in students. All this promotes rote learning (Malik, et al., 2010). Assessment of academic achievement outcomes has most often been used in a summative rather than formative way. Testing information tends to be used primarily as a screening device to decide who can continue to the next grade level rather than as a tool to help improve educational quality for individuals and systems.

Deductions:

Table 6: Deductions about the Assessment System

Problems	Effects	Cause(s)
Incorrect perspective of assessment	Rote learning encouraged Students judged on retaining capability Knowledge is not measured	Concept of schools as money-making machines Restriction of covering the stated curriculum Concept of achieving good grades as a target The concept of judging a student based on grades Concept of earning good jobs based on grades
Cheating in exams	Useless output Students’ personalities developed by cheating Incompetent and knowledgeable people available for nation-building	Poor governance Weak judiciary

	Future teachers will be cheaters	
Textbook based exam	Rote learning encouraged Students judged on retaining capability Knowledge is not measured Out-of-the-box thinking capability not developed Research abilities suppressed	The concept of schools as money-making machines Restriction of covering the stated curriculum Concept of achieving good grades as a target The concept of judging a student based on grades Concept of earning good jobs based on grades
Purposeless assessment	No betterment in assessment procedures No regard for meeting national requirements	Concept of maintaining status quo Inefficient functioning of the feedback mechanism Poor implementation

Conclusions:

There is no denying the fact that education is the backbone of the development of any nation. It develops the people mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. The countries that have an effective system of education also happen to be the leaders of the world, both socially and economically. Every nation prepares its generation according to ideological, cultural and religious norms but our education system did not preserve our norms. If we prepare our generation properly, according to our needs and make them faithful and patriotic then they can play their role as a useful and secure asset, otherwise, we are preparing enemies of our own country. In short, it is education, which can turn the population of any country from a burden to a human resource.

The main problematic issues of low-quality education in Pakistan are lack of professional teachers, high dropout rates particularly at the primary level, outdated curriculum, lack of accountability, multiple systems, political interference, insufficient funds, corruption, poor examination system, lack of research and lack of proper implementation of policies etc. Pakistan's state of education quality demands immediate attention from the government. We are on the verge of destruction and the only factor which can build up our society is Education, so it's our responsibility to work for the betterment of our education to align ourselves with the modern world.

Recommendations:

After going through the above research some ways are now being recommended, which are considered useful in bringing some improvement in the quality of education. These are as follows:

- i. Education problems should be taken up as an emergency and be addressed in a way like disasters are managed when they occur. In this regard, a committee may be formed which should include prominent educationists of Pakistan, industrialists, economists and political representatives to jot down comprehensive goals and plans. Implementation of the same is to be ensured with the help of the army.
- ii. A dynamic campaign for fundraising may be launched. NGOs and overseas Pakistanis may be asked to contribute to the same.

- iii. All national, private and multinational firms are to be bound to spare a certain percentage of income to the education sector.
- iv. Strict rules may be enforced for the elimination of corruption especially in the education sector. The same is to be strictly monitored preferably through NAB.
- v. A board on the lines of ISSB may be formed for the selection of teachers, which do the selection not merely based on degree but also based on IQ, psychological assessment, character and suitability for teaching. Selection is to be ensured on merit.
- vi. Teachers are to be given special status/incentives and teaching is to be projected as a prestigious profession by use of media.
- vii. GDP share to education is to be increased by compromising on luxuries.
- viii. Political interference in the education sector is to be eliminated. Divisions based on sect, language and province are to be strictly prohibited in the education sector.
- ix. Free compulsory education is to be ensured till the HSC level and those who are hindering in this process whether feudal or parents are to be counselled or dealt with accordingly.
- x. Free books, uniforms and food incentives may be introduced gradually starting in most inferior areas.
- xi. Medium of all schools should be made same i.e. English. The standard of a Beacon House school system and a school in a village of Baluchistan is to be equalized.
- xii. Private sector schools including Deeni Madaris are to be synchronized.
- xiii. Tuition/coaching centres' culture is to be seized on priority.
- xiv. Volunteers may be inducted in various fields of the education sector to reduce financial effects.
- xv. Special measures are to be taken to curtail the brain drain for HRM.
- xvi. Common examination system is to be introduced all over the country and examinations are to be made more transparent.
- xvii. Cheating culture may be curbed through smart examination techniques as well as through strict control.
- xviii. Examination procedures and the quality of question papers are to be evaluated regularly and the results are to be assessed with a concept to improve teaching and assessment methodologies.
- xix. The curriculum should be made uniform and reviewed periodically to incorporate innovations/developments.
- xx. The national component is to be the core of the curriculum.
- xxi. Medical facilities are to be made a compulsory part of all schools.
- xxii. Computer facilities including the latest training aids are to be introduced in schools.
- xxiii. The quality of textbooks is to be improved through standardizing and keeping them abreast with the latest environment and interactive content. The monopoly of publishers and other stakeholders is to be fixed.
- xxiv. Training of teachers is to be improved through conceptual evolution rather than technical aspects.
- xxv. Inter-province teachers exchange programs would result in better cohesion.

- xxvi. Above all, priorities need to be redefined and education is to be kept as the priority.

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