



EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND POLICY MAKING IN PAKISTAN (FROM 1947 TO 1980)

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Abstract

Pakistan appeared on the globe of the world as an independent country in 1947 after the British rule ended in India. At the time of independence, Pakistan inherited an educational system that was launched by a foreign government before hundred years ago. This system was established on economic, cultural, social, and political notions that were totally dissimilar from the ideologies of independent nations. During the colonial period, specific development in the education system has been observed. However, this development was mostly restricted to Indian areas. The areas consisted of Pakistan were surprisingly backward in all fields as well as in education. 85% of the population of Pakistan was illiterate at the time of independence. The literacy rate was much low in underdeveloped regions such as Baluchistan and the share of rural women in literacy rate was almost zero. A reviewing study of the history of educational planning and policymaking in Pakistan during the period of 1947 to 1980 was commenced which demonstrates that fixing of goals and



targets, unsuccessfulness in the achievement of these goals, and fixing of new tasks with demonstrative willingness is an ongoing activity. The policymakers have been playing this game on countless public expenses from the past more than 70 years. Different forms of governments whether military or civilians, socialist or Islamic, elected or otherwise have done slight alterations in the style of playing of this game. The outcomes have been similar in all instances. The purpose of the study is to learn the salient features of educational planning and policies in Pakistan from 1947 to 1980. The analysis shows the lack of political commitment towards education or literacy. This paper recommends that the targets of educational policies can be acquired through the implementation of a proper mechanism for the execution and constant monitoring of these policies.

Keywords: Policy, Educational Planning, Policymaking, Literacy Rate, Illiteracy.

1. Introduction

After independence, it was realized that without a trained and skilled workforce, the task of nation-building could not be accomplished. A National Education Conference was held in the same year, and it was recommended by the conference that within the period of 20 years, universalization of primary education would be achieved. From that, universal primary education has remained the main goal of all governments. For this purpose, numerous programs and projects were initiated. Significant funds were allocated for the construction of new infrastructure and facilities. However, the preferred development has not been attained either qualitatively or quantitatively.

The vision and message of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah delivered instantly after Pakistan came into existence (on November 27, 1947) which describes the wisdom and depth of the founder of the nation into following words: "There is no doubt that the future of our State will and must greatly depend upon the type of education and the way in which we bring up our children as the future servants of Pakistan. Education does not merely mean academic education, and even that appears to be of a very poor type. What we have to do is to mobilize our people and build up the character of our future generations. There is an immediate and urgent need for training our people in scientific and technical education in order to build up future economic life, and we should see that our people undertake scientific commerce, trade, and particularly, well-planned industries. But do not forget that we have to compete with the world, which is moving very fast in this direction. Also, I must emphasize that greater attention should be paid to



technical and vocational education” (Planning Commission, Medium Term Development Framework 2005-2010, 2005).

Article 37 (b) and (c) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 assured its residents that the country shall get rid of illiteracy and within the minimal possible period, free and compulsory secondary education will be provided; professional and technical education will be commonly accessible, and according to the merit, the higher education will be approachable to all.

In April 2010, the eighteenth amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan by the National Assembly and the related Article 25A was a prime policy reform for effective implications in education. Succeeding the 18th Amendment, by the insertion of Article 25A in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, education is deliberated as a fundamental right of all children. This Article described that free and compulsory education will be provided to all children from the age of five to sixteen by the state in legally prescribed mode.

2. Research Methodology

This study on Educational Planning and Policymaking in Pakistan (From 1947 to 1980) was exploratory in nature. A qualitative research design was adopted. The data was collected through secondary sources which include research articles published in various journals and available on online sites. Moreover, data was also collected through books written on public policy by some foreign and local authors.

3. National Educational Conference, 1947

In 1947, National Education Conference was planned which is considered as the first attempt in the field of literacy and education. Mr. Jinnah stated in his message to the conference that According to the founders of this newly formed state, education was considered as the utmost feature for the development of the nation. Moreover, it was stated by the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah that there is no doubt that the destiny of the state greatly and essentially depends upon how we bring our children up as upcoming citizens of the country and the type of education we give them. He further added that we should remember that our competition is with the world that is moving very fast.

In this conference, different committees were established for primary, secondary, and adult education. The committee made on secondary and primary education observed



that the national educational system must be founded on a durable base of compulsory and free primary education. It was decided that the early five years should be dedicated to planning, hiring of teaching staff, and their training. About 0.5 million people were to be literate in the 6th year. Afterward, 0.3 million people must be literate as an annual increase. It was observed that the issue of illiteracy is not limited to the rural areas whereas a major portion of urban areas also fell into it. So, the call was made to all government departments, trade unions, and employers that every employee of their department should be literate. The suggestion of charging taxes was also presented for consideration, for those employers who did not provide enough provisions for the education of their employees (Ministry of the Interior, 1947).

The message of the Quaid at the time of the first education conference was: “The importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized. Under foreign rule for over a century, sufficient attention has not been paid to the education of our people and if we are to make real, speedy, and substantial progress we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our educational policy and program on the lines suited to the genius of the people, consonant with our history and culture and, having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world” (National Planning Board, 1957).

4. National Educational Development Plan, 1951

To approve the six-year National Plan of Educational Growth, for the period from 1951 to 1957, an education conference was held in 1951. It was demonstrated by the plan that “the first deliberate effort to anticipate and provide for our requirements in the various fields of education for a period of six years”. It was further stated that there is no doubt that we would have to review the plan for the arrangement of further institutes for training. If we did not do it we would remain deficient in the deliverance of quality education. It was also noted that additional school buildings, scientific equipment, teaching aids, etc. were also the needs of the time. It was admitted that two-thirds of children between the age group of 6 to 11 were not going to school. It was suggested that 24,000 new primary schools having the capacity of 3,700,000 students should be established. It was described that two-thirds of the children of the related age group would be enrolled till the end of the plan period in 1957. It was also suggested by the Plan that about 2,800,000 adults would be literate every year through the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (V-AID), program, whereby literacy centers would also be established and teaching material and teachers would be provided (Education Division, 1951).



5. First Five Years Plan, 1955

The First Five Year Plan was initiated in December 1957. This plan was introduced two and a half years late. The plan declared that a system of universal primary education is imperative. To prepare the people for fulfilling their municipal and democratic duties and to facilitate them with equivalent chances for cultural and fiscal progression, primary education is compulsory. Primary education is essential which provides a base for the whole system of secondary as well as higher education as leadership comes through this for all disciplines of life and it provides technical support in the fields of industry and agriculture. At that time no specific targets were set up but it was expected that a system of compulsory and free primary education, not only for boys but also for girls, would be set up in just about twenty years, from 1975 to 1980. It was further narrated that fundamentals arranged through this plan for primary education will allow speedy progress on an assured and encyclopedic basis for the goal of compulsory and free universal primary education. The zealous attention was given to the supervision and the organization of the primary education by the Plan. Amongst the other things, it was also deliberated that the district advisory boards chosen by the members of the community and the establishment of school management committees at the local level would be responsible for the provision of buildings for schools with the consultation of the area education officer (National Planning Board, 1957).

6. National Education Commission, 1959

A goal was set up for the enrollment of compulsory universal education within fifteen years till 1975. The commission demanded the curriculum reforms for the development of basic skills in arithmetic, writing, and reading, preeminent understanding of patriotism, and a liking of work with someone's own hands, to teach the national languages, and to make religious education compulsory. It also demanded the improvement of the facilities in schools like furniture, buildings and for the involvement of the local population in the working, maintenance, and opening of primary schools (Ministry of Education, 1959). The government acknowledged all the recommendations by saying that it will try to follow these suggestions. Due to the public pretest, most of these suggestions were introverted before implementation. The committees were suggested by the commission for the implementation of these suggestions but all in vain (Shakoor, Azeem, Dogar, & Khaton, 2011).

7. Second Five Year Plan 1960



The ultimate task of national character building grounded on the solid fundamentals of unity, faith, and discipline, and protection of the national ethics falls upon education without which, no nation in the world can aspire to the height of greatness. The realistic citizenry, competent manpower, and well-informed leadership are compulsory for the development of the nation. These goals can only be achieved through progression in education. In the modern world, no uneducated community has proceeded far as well as any educated community with governance and initiatives that have persisted backward. An uneducated society focuses on traditions, customs, and outdated practices. Such a society counterattacks the powers of change which motivate the attainment of new skills and knowledge. If advancement is to be required from a state of long-lasting backwardness then the society would have to trained its citizens in all fields of endeavor and to acquire the desired economic and social goals, the country has to move swiftly toward these goals (National Planning Board, 1957).

8. Third Five Year Plan 1965

An amount of Rs.2652 million was allocated by the Third Five Year Plan or 5.1% of the total 5-year expenditure of primary education. It acknowledged “the concept of education as a vital national investment and a major determination of the nation’s economic growth”. For the educational planning in the country following objectives were established by the Plan:

- i. Provision of an educational system that encourages economic, political, and social progress and enables the transition towards a new age of science and technology, and brings the cultural and spiritual heritage of the country into harmony with the modern world.
- ii. To facilitate the youth of the state with encouraging circumstances for complete development of their individual capabilities and their character too.
- iii. Promotion of quality education at all stages to achieve the nation-building tasks. (Planning Commission, 1965).

9. Education Policy, 1970

Describing its core philosophies and perceptions, the policy stated that: In the financial struggle of the nation, training and education are grave inputs. The task of speed up the economic progress would remain unsatisfactory without connecting the enormous human resources available in the country. The key objectives in this regard are; to widen the base of education quickly through an interpretation for the achievement of an ideal of a universally literate and dynamic society on one hand and the other hand, affirmation of a constant provision of highly trained persons with the ability of imaginative management



in various domains of national activity. It was also stated that the Education Policy of 1970 endorsed the commitment of the government “to the objective of universal elementary education” considering it as a “basic principle of State Policy in the Constitutions of 1956 and 1962”, the Karachi Plan of 1969 projected universal, free and compulsory primary education as a target for 1980. Universal and free registration up to grade-5 by 1980 with a special focus on girls’ education was the aim of the policy. It was also acknowledged that there are about 100 million illiterate persons in the country and 90% of them are living in rural areas. Policy innovated further by aiming to handle the 5,000,000 adults and school leavers by 1975 through:

- i. All employers, as well as the government, are required to provide basic work-based education to their employees.
- ii. The formation of the National Education Corps.

This policy was not executed due to the separation of East Pakistan, the war with India, and the failure of the armed government (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, 1970).

At that time, the circumstances were not peaceful. The country was distributed into two parts; Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1971. Meanwhile, Yahya Khan’s government was dismissed. The economic crises produced severe hindrances in the execution of this policy, like all other former policies. Mr. Bhutto came into power in 1972 and this policy was rejected by him. He introduced a new policy. Consequently, this policy was not implemented (khan, Ayub, & Khan, 2020).

10. The Education Policy 1972

In 1972, at the time of the emergence of the “New” Pakistan, the condition of literacy rate in the country was as following:

- i. Overall literacy rate = 21.7%.
- ii. Urban literacy rate = 41.5%,
- iii. Rural literacy rate = 14.3%
- iv. Female literacy rate = 11.6%
- v. Male literacy rate = 30.2%.
- vi. Literacy rate of rural women = 4.7%.

The Education Policy 1972-1980 was prepared fairly and realistically and was abstained from philosophical proclamations. The aim of the policy was the elimination of illiteracy from the society within the shortest possible duration through an immense adult education program and universalization of elementary education and provision of exceptional services for women, to equalize their access to education, physically



handicapped and mentally retarded children and adults and underprivileged groups commonly in all areas and especially in deprived areas. Policy declared that “education will be made free and universal up to Class X for all children throughout the country in both Government and privately managed schools. Private schools will be suitably supported for the loss of fees incurred by them.” It was expected that by the year 1979, primary education (up to grade-5) for boys will become universal and by 1984 for girls. It was further added that elementary education (up to grade-8) for boys will become free by 1982 and for girls by 1987.

It was acknowledged in the Policy of 1972 that there are forty million illiterate adults in the country. It was announced that a gigantic literacy program will be commenced in every village and town of the country. Literacy centers will be set up in union council halls, farms, factories, and schools all over the country. The establishment of 276,000 literacy centers was a target for the education of 1.1 million people between 1972 and 1980 (Ministry of Education, 1972).

Most of the policy proposals were political decisions that were not constructed on the basis of research. A serious financial calamity was generated due to the India-Pakistan war of 1971 which was a chief hurdle for the implementation of this policy. General Zia-ul-Haq dissolved the government in 1977. He introduced a new policy in 1978. New teachers were hired during the tenure of this policy. Efforts were made for the initiation of professional subjects in educational institutes. The equalization strategy was encouraged and all institutions were nationalized. The economy of the country was not proficient for free elementary education for all. It is the bad luck of the country that educational policies are just announced and no planning is made for the achievement of required outcomes. This also takes place with this policy; new schemes were announced without understanding the economic calamity (Dildar, Saif, & Naz, 2016).

11. Fifth Five Year Plan, 1978

The literacy rate in Pakistan is poor due to inattention towards primary education. In 1971, 78% of the people over the age of five years were illiterate. Illiteracy played an important role in economic as well as social backwardness. Therefore, it demanded “a fundamental reordering of national priorities in favor of primary education”. A policy intended for an inclusive approach towards primary education in which the measures for the reduction of dropout rate, better supervision, improvement in the quality of teaching, and increase of the physical facilities would be introduced.



For the accommodation of the suggested extra enrolment, the Plan recommended the extension and restoration of 17116 existing schools. Moreover, 12641 additional schools of primary level would be opened. To determine whether the sitting arrangement could help in the attainment of good performance, furniture will be delivered in about 10% of the new schools as an experiment.

It was further projected that for the accommodation of additional enrolment, approximately 75,748 teachers (30,694 female & 45,054 male) will be required. To handle the problem of unavailability of teachers for schools in rural areas, the plan specified that construction of the residences for the teachers will be introduced and during the plan period 5,800 units will be constructed (Planning Commission, 1978).

Shahid (2003) argues that funds were not sufficient for the execution of policies. The credentials of Deeni Madaris were accepted by the government. Teachers of Arabic were appointed. The teaching of the Holy Qur'an was essential. At the elementary level, Urdu was tried for the adaptation of the medium of instruction.

Top priority was given to the quick development of women's education. The Plan specified that an increase of 9.6 percent (per annum) is expected in girl's enrollment in comparison to 7 percent of boy's enrolment. In the program for the up-gradation and construction of schools, priority will be given to the girl's schools.

12. National Education Policy and Implementation Program 1979

After one year of the initiation of the Fifth Five Year Plan, the Education Policy of 1979 was introduced with slight modifications in the dates of targets. This policy was presented as "the first in recognizing the great potentials of our indigenous institutions and patronizing them for bringing about greater educational developments." The policy claimed that development on the foundations that we already have and deviation from unfamiliar models will make an abundant influence. The provision of fundamental education and a minimum satisfactory level of functional literacy to all inhabitants of Pakistan to empower them for effective participation in the total national struggle especially in the youth, regardless of their caste and creed, and faith was the aim of the policy.

A 9-point proclamation of "National Aims of Education" and 12-point execution strategy was presented by the Policy. The Implementation Program was striving and intended for:



- i. The attainment of universal enrolment of Class One (boys by 1987 and girls by 1992)
- ii. Eradication of wastage for the attainment of 60% retention rates by 1983 and 100 % afterward.
- iii. Rebuilding/restoration of 17 thousand present primary schools.
- iv. To set up 13 thousand new schools of primary level especially in rural areas.
- v. Construction of 5000 Mosque Schools for boys.
- vi. Equipment's provision to 12000 present schools
- vii. Provision of textbooks at primary level to all students
- viii. Deliverance of teaching kits (at least one) to the all present and newly constructed schools
- ix. To determine the direction of huge investment at the primary level, experimentation with dissimilar combinations of ideas
- x. To evolve a procedure of school site planning, execution of a countrywide school mapping exercise
- xi. Undertaking of a countrywide survey for the determination of repairing needs of present primary level schools and initiation of a program for repairing

The Program also envisioned the opening of 5,000 Mohalla schools for girls, in addition to 5000 mosques schools for boys. 1000 Village Workshops schools were established for the training in mother trades i.e. masonry, carpentry, and agriculture, and the focus was on applicable skills development related to the needs of society. The resource allocation requirements and predicted difficulties and issues were also explained in the Program.

An elegant adult education program was initiated by the Policy. It is again described with grievance that no serious efforts have been observed for the initiation of a worthwhile adult education program in the country since the emergence of Pakistan (Ministry of Education, 1979).

13. Findings

During the more than 70 years of the history of Pakistan, a lot of efforts have been made to boost up the literacy rate and enrolment. However, the desired policy targets and goals could not be achieved due to political obstacles and the weak economic situation of the country. All policies and plans were partly executed. This study observed that educational planning and policymaking in Pakistan has been scrambled and continued only for fixing of goals and targets, unsuccessfulness in the achievement of these goals, and fixing of new goals. Unstable political conditions are the main reasons for the failure of educational plans and policies. Lack of political commitment towards education or literacy is the chief reason for the failure of these policies. Different forms of governments whether military or civilians, socialist or Islamic, elected or otherwise have



not introduced any viable mechanism for the execution and constant monitoring of educational policies. Findings indicate that the Education Policy of 1959 set a goal of 100% literacy by 1975. However, it was 21.7% in 1972 and 26.17% in 1981. The target of 35% literacy rate was fixed by the Education Policy of 1979 by 1983 but; in 1984 this it was 26.2%.

It is analyzed that all educational policies and five-year plans were introduced without bearing in mind the actual economic condition of the country. Pakistan was facing a severe financial crisis after the wars of 1965 and 1971. It was recommended in the National Education Policy (1972-1980) that the curriculum of the country should be designed according to the fluctuating economic and social requirements of the nation and should be compatible with the ideology of the country. To acquire national harmony and concentration, it was also recommended that a national curriculum must be implanted in all the federal units but we remained failed in introducing and implementing the single curriculum till 2020. The present government took initiative for the implementation of a single national curriculum for all federating units and made it possible.

14. Conclusion

Since independence in 1947, a lot of efforts have been made in the country for the improvement of the literacy rate and to increase enrollment. The start was taken with the national education conference in 1947, and later on various national educational policies, five-year plans, and some other schemes have been introduced and executed. Other than that, many workshops, seminars, and education conferences were also held. A fair picture of the condition of education in the country has been portrayed in the initial plan and policy documents and problems and constraints were identified. For example, the education policy 1951 specified that the first five years would be dedicated to planning, training, and hiring of teachers. The task of universal enrolment and expanding literacy rate would be commenced afterward. After defeat in the war of 1971, the Education Policy of 1972 was the only exception for the commencement of the new Pakistan. The policy documents of 1972 realistically proposed modest goals and avoided philosophical proclamations. However, these modest goals could not be achieved. Though the policy emphasized women's education but appropriate provisions were not made for the achievement of this goal. Fitting attention was not given to the increase in the literacy rate. The education policy of 1979 was introduced as the first policy to recognize and encourage the excessive capabilities of our local institutes which patronized them for superior educational development. The Policy also suggested the modernization, revision, and Islamization of the curriculum. To conclude, it can be safely stated that there is a



need to launch a comprehensive and appropriate setup to overcome the prevailing issues of education in the country.



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