

**AN EXPLORATION INTO MAJOR PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN LAHORE CANTT**Zain Idrees<sup>1</sup>, Tabassum Raza<sup>2</sup>, Suneeta Asghar<sup>3</sup>**Original Article**

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**Abstract**

*This was a follow-up study of a quantitative study that has been conducted to investigate the major problems in Public education system in Pakistan at Primary level. This study sampled the primary school teachers working the school of Lahore city only whereas this study has sampled the primary school teachers (PSTs) working in the schools under Punjab School Education Department in Lahore Cantt. This study has been conducted to get an in-depth view of the concerning phenomenon. The sample comprising 12 PSTs has been selected with the help of purposive sampling technique. They have been interviewed by the inquirer(s) with the help of a semi-structured interview protocol. After the data collection, the data was analyzed with the help of Thematic analysis. Based on the results of this study, it has been concluded that there were no major infrastructural problems faced by the primary school in Lahore Cantt. The electric water coolers available however, there were issues regarding their maintenance and repairing which needs to be resolved. Similarly, it also has come into light that the science and computer labs are not available for the primary students in the schools.*

**Keywords:** Public Education System, Major Problems, Primary Schools

**Introduction**

You are a student from the time of your birth until the day of your death. Because they affect later events, the early years are important. We are unable to totally control the early years since children are raised by their families until they begin school (Krishnamurthi, 2021). Although though kids go to school, a variety of things, such the friendships they form both inside and outside of school, have an impact on their intellectual growth. From preschool to graduate school, the education of children is prioritized. When students enrol in higher levels of education each year, the majority of their gains go from public to private institutions (Vayachuta et al., 2016).

Children are so required to attend school for the first 10 or 12 years of their lives. There would be more serious and costly societal issues if we couldn't prepare kids to be good citizens (Zeitlyn & Meke, 2015). Education has a positive impact on younger generations who aren't quite ready for social contact. In other words, education's primary objective is to aid kids in strengthening their cognitive and motor abilities (Pradhan et al., 2018).

Also, moral development of students should be promoted in schools because if we do not assist children in achieving these goals, society may experience social issues and will need to spend more money to address them. When there is a link between the learner and the environment and when the objective of education is to support students in living in the present rather than preparing

them for the future, education is successful (Bashir-Ud-Din et al., 2016). As a result, moral training and serving as "a form of community" should be the first things schools do." As a result, education is seen as "the ongoing reconstruction of experience" rather than as a necessity for survival. If young people have experiences in school, they may be able to learn about the real world and prepare for the future (Talreja, 2017).

What learning opportunities will this give them? What should we do to assist children in acquiring these experiences, and how, is a subject that has to be addressed. Experts evaluate the curriculum in terms of grade levels and themes to assist students form the right habits for a more peaceful society (PA, 2021).

When analyzing education, the values that are required as well as the society's goal of a desired sort of person have been taken into account. Children may as a result exhibit certain desired characteristics, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge (Pradhan et al., 2018). According to the author, a well-educated individual needs to possess the fundamental intellectual skills, be sensitive to moral issues, be skilled in mathematics, have a scientific vision, and have a grasp of geography and history. It appears from society that the educational system has not been able to produce the ideal educated guy (Lyimo et al., 2017).

Children's abilities and skills should be developed in accordance with education. A system of education should give both boys and girls the opportunity to achieve the highest level of education. In order to prepare children for their responsibilities as workers and contributors to society at large, education's primary goal and principal function is to shape the social being (Herwan et al., 2018). One of the key factors influencing the progress of the country is education. It aids in the development of the country's social, economic, and political facets. The technical period is the modern era (UNESCO, 2015). Education is a prerequisite for technical growth. The health sector depends on education in a similar way (Ailaan, 2017). Education makes it feasible for competent healthcare practitioners to be available to treat patients. Even democracy cannot flourish without a nation's education system (Witte, 2013). Similar to this, if a nation's labor force is educated and competent, more may be produced and productive from their efforts than can untrained and unskilled labour can (Marks & Roads, 2016). Education increases a worker's productivity and gives them the tools they need to do their job well. It makes it possible for the sector to make progress towards its goals (Farwis, 2020). The top managers are able to effectively manage both people and material resources thanks to this. The aspiration of a prosperous and advanced nation is impossible without education. Better growth and development rates would follow as a result for the nation. A collection of individuals become a country via education, to put it simply (Vayachuta et al., 2016).

People's bodies, brains, beliefs, and morals all grow as a result of education, which is a powerful catalyst. This gives people the ability to better understand their life's purpose and goal while also giving them the knowledge necessary to achieve so. It is a tool that both meets people's material needs and promotes their spiritual growth. In 1998, the Pakistani government said that education helps people develop attitudes that are congruent with the principle of righteousness (Pradhan et al., 2018). This helps an Islamic community flourish in a positive way. Education is crucial for developing people as resources. It develops competent employees who can fuel the development of the economy, boosts productivity and efficiency, and (Jumanovich, 2019).

There is no need to justify or explain the importance of education for the development of human resources. Education is the most important aspect, both for developed and developing countries. The government of Pakistan is mandated under the country's constitution to guarantee that everyone has access to education, which is one of their fundamental rights (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Education has a significant influence on a person's later years since it helps students prepare for life after school. It gives kids the knowledge needed to have a balanced existence (Reviews, 2021).

Also, it acts as a basis for the technical training that will be offered later in higher education. Yet, in order to get this level of technical education, a basic education is required; otherwise, no one could pursue technical or vocational education (Siddiqui & Gorard, 2017).

Since that it is a legal requirement, both male and female students should pursue an education. Islam, the most widely practiced religion in Pakistan, promotes education for people of both genders (UNICEF, 2013). Some believe that every kid under the age of 18 has a basic right to a quality education. 193 people have signed off on the aforementioned in agreement and support (Mughal, 2018). All students should have access to the education. Hence, the simplicity of teaching may be made accessible to the broadest audience feasible. All of them must have access to educational resources, such as a current curriculum, a suitable learning environment, and trained teachers (Mehmood, 2016).

Many advantages of education exist for both individuals and society at large. First off, the majority of tax payers are well educated. People pursue more education in order to be qualified for or promoted to a higher-paying job due to the credentials and capabilities of the economy. More government initiatives are supported by a society's tax revenue, which also improves the quality of life for its residents and fosters rapid economic growth. Second, they become more receptive to novel ideas and marketability (Berkowitz et al., 2017).

The economies of different nations are now competing, necessitating the improvement of their tactics and goods in order to attract better business possibilities, such as a big number of investors leading to company expansion. By doing this, they raise tax income for the economy and increase the number of employment accessible to people in society. The need for public spending may also decline as a result of better cooperation with other socioeconomic policy areas, such as crime and health (Naveen, 2016). If members of society can afford health care owing to their financial means, they may transfer monies from the department of health to parts of the budget that are more in need (DBISD, 2013).

In addition to the knowledge of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their family. Education also reduces the incidence of theft since the administration has had a budget to give vocational and training courses to moderate/low-income or unemployed individuals (Talreja, 2017). This results in people receiving an education, which might lead to work or the opportunity to establish a small business to support their everyday requirements. Campaigns, seminars, and workshops have been held to educate underprivileged people in order to help them understand and improve their health, therefore there is a clear link between health and education in society (Mujahid & Noman, 2015).

A person's level of education may open up several doors and opportunities for them in life. Because they have more options for where to earn their money, they are less inclined to steal and more likely to be politically engaged (Wang, 2010). They live longer because they are more informed about health and are hence more willing to practice preventative medicine. In addition, kids are less likely to engage in risky behaviors like drinking, smoking, or being overweight since they have a better understanding of the consequences of doing so (GoP, 2016a). Individuals with a higher level of knowledge are more likely to vote properly, volunteer, trust and accept others, have a reduced proclivity for (non-violent) crime, have better-educated parenting, and live longer owing to their capacity to afford (expensive) medical care (World-Bank, 2013).

Due to increased individual health awareness, people smoke fewer cigarettes, consume less alcohol, and have a lower risk of being fat. Additionally, people are more likely to seek preventative medical treatment, have higher life satisfaction with a stable mentality, and have improved mental acuity (Tooley et al., 2010). They also have superior mental health, and in addition, they must be able to participate in economic development while simultaneously obtaining self-fulfillment (UNESCO, 2015).

Educated individuals enjoy greater life satisfaction, including the capacity to finance quality housing and their needs and wants, since they earn more (Norwich & Black, 2015). In addition to this, they are more adaptive, which encourages them to study more so that they may fulfill themselves. As a consequence of this, individuals are not only helping the economy (by paying taxes), but they are also helping themselves on a more philosophical level (UNDP, 2016). In a similar vein, one of the purposes of education for people is to foster their own personal development and advancement. A healthy and prosperous society is hard to achieve without educated individuals (SDPC, 2015). It is the belief that a curriculum that places a strong emphasis on the individual's growth makes a rock-solid basis for human ethics. On the other hand, it is stated that education has the power to alter the perspective and comprehension of a person, and as a result, it possesses an ethical component (Motala et al., 2007).

As a consequence of continuous education, an individual's awareness eventually develops the ability to discern between moral and immoral concepts or choices, as stated as an order for learners to boost their employability and grow their skill sets, it is essential for them to plan their personal (Rizvi, 2015). Individuals may be supported and encouraged in their personal development, but they must have the ability to adjust their perspectives and attitudes (Menashy et al., 2014). In a position of secondary importance is a thesis, in which she asserts that people who have developed personalities are capable of exercising control over their behaviors (Härmä, 2011). The researcher went on to state that personality is a system made up of numerous psychological processes that, when integrated, determine the distinctive manner in which each individual behaves in the world. Those were her exact words (Schargel & Smink, 2014). This is a reliable approach to take. As a result, a fully formed persona exemplifies not just unit values but also univocal responses to events (the ultimate unity of attitude or conduct, the individual's response to what's happening in his or her environment) (Berkowitz et al., 2017).

Education played a vital part in the development of a person's personality since it enables a person to perform all of the roles that come with being a human, which in turn makes that person a more capable individual (GoP, 2009). Additionally, a successful individual could contribute to the betterment of society (Malik, 2010). The results of a study suggest that the achievement of individual goals may contribute to the development of a wealthy society (Day-Ashley et al., 2013). And the societal benefit or goods may be accomplished by allowing individuals to choose what they genuinely want, rather than compelling them to make choices about something they don't want to do (World-Bank, 2013).

Children's schooling has a direct bearing on how well they do in high school, college, and beyond (Bruns et al., 2011). Population increase and the fast ascent of private education—seen by many as a lucrative economic opportunity—have contributed to this trend (Khalid, 2010). Because of this, some English-medium schools provide a mediocre educational experience for their students by using English as a second language in the classroom, despite the fact that this is the medium of instruction in which they specialize (Hancock et al., 2013). Dini Madrassas operate side by side with English and Urdu language schools, with the former emphasizing religious instruction (Farooqi, 2011). Therefore, there are four distinct types of schooling in Pakistan:

- Dini Madaris
- Government Urdu medium schools
- Private elite English medium schools
- Private non-elite English medium schools (madrassas)

The essential features of the four types of schools are shown in Figure 2.3. There has never been consensus on how to best educate Pakistani children in the local language, and opinions on the matter shift often according to who you ask. Urdu is used as the language of teaching in public schools (KPKG, 2012). However, Sindh and KP each have several public schools that provide instruction in both Pushto and Sindhi. Many government schools and cadet colleges are federally funded and run, and English is used as the medium of instruction (Rizvi, 2015). Urdu-medium schools have a lower position in the government sector than English-medium schools (ESED, 2013).

Teachers who choose teaching as their profession because they could not secure any other job tend to gravitate towards Urdu language schools (Iqbal et al., 2017). This has led to a lack of dedication among many teachers, which could have an impact on the progress of their students (Ali, 2011). The language used in the classroom has a significant impact on higher education, resulting in many children being at a disadvantage and leaving school without being able to understand fundamental English concepts. According to LEAPS research (Learning and Education Achievements in Punjab Schools), a child who drops out of school after the first year is likely to be functionally illiterate and have poor mathematical skills (Ahmad, 2012). Literacy is acquired during the early stages of school, and even if such students complete high school, they are significantly disadvantaged compared to their peers, regardless of their potential (Iqbal, 2011). The low literacy rate in Pakistan puts many young people at a disadvantage and makes it difficult for them to attend college (Ali, 2011).

Additionally, due to the highly disintegrated educational system, numerous parents have lost confidence in government schools to provide a superior education. In several instances, parents aim to admit their children to private schools or organize additional private tutoring, while in other cases, children are obliged to relinquish their education and secure jobs instead (GoP, 2011).

The way Pakistan's education system is managed and structured is responsible for several problems. The creation of the curriculum and approval of textbooks are the responsibilities of the federal government, whereas the evaluation and creation of textbooks are the tasks of provincial textbooks and examination boards (GoP, 2016b). At the district level, the District Education Office is responsible for teacher training, school budgeting, and teacher recruitment. To implement policies effectively, all levels of government must collaborate (Iqbal, 2011).

In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission has the responsibility of regulating and improving the quality of teacher education at the university level. However, the education system in Pakistan faces numerous obstacles, as it primarily focuses on lectures and memorization-based testing (Rashid & Mukhtar, 2012). This narrow approach to education results in a lack of comprehensive skills, and students may encounter difficulties in higher education, such as language barriers, low confidence, poor thinking processes, and negative attitudes towards studying (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2015). The educational experience varies widely from school to school, and students may struggle to pursue further education due to a lack of emphasis on developing generalized skills like critical thinking. These issues are relevant to the study of education in Pakistan (Vayachuta et al., 2016).

The educational policies of Pakistan have consistently advocated for the provision of free primary education for all children, irrespective of their gender or location, as well as equal education opportunities. However, despite these recommendations, primary education in Pakistan continues to face several challenges that hinder its ability to eradicate illiteracy and provide education to all children. The lack of research on the problems facing the public education system makes it difficult to address these issues. Therefore, the current study aims to identify these problems to provide recommendations for their solution.

### **Methodology**

This was a follow-up study of a quantitative study that has been conducted to investigate the major problems in Public education system in Pakistan at Primary level. This study sampled the primary school teachers working the school of Lahore city only whereas this study has sampled the primary school teachers (PSTs) working in the schools under Punjab School Education Department in Lahore Cantt. This study has been conducted to get an in-depth view of the concerning phenomenon. The sample comprising 12 PSTs has been selected with the help of purposive sampling technique. They have been interviewed by the inquirer(s) with the help of a semi-structured interview protocol. After the data collection, the data was analyzed with the help of Thematic analysis. The themes which emerged from the collected data were "Infrastructure; Availability of Resources; School Discipline; Implementation of Curricula: School Curricula."

**Results**

The results are as under:

**Infrastructure**

The majority of PSTs who were questioned about the state of their school's building said that it was made of concrete and the schools were situated in wider streets where kids' movement was convenient. The majority of the participants responded that school ground is available, however only a few of the participants disagreed that there was a ground on the school's property. One of the participant said that:

Well, the building that houses our school is constructed of cement. Our department just constructed it so that the students may study in comfort without worrying about the weather. It is also situate on a wider enough road so that the students could reach the school at their ease. (P2)

Similarly, another person responded that:

Our school has been situated on a reasonable place. The building is also cemented and the rooms are enough as per the students' requirements. As far as the location of school is concerned, it is situated on a street which is easily approachable for the students and the staff. (P11)

However, another participant stated:

Building of our school is reasonable and cemented. The school building also has been maintained properly by the school principal. Whenever, any repairing is required, the school principal take it up seriously. As far as the building is concerned, there is no issue except that of its location which is in a narrow street. It causes the traffic blockage usually. (P9)

When the participants were asked regarding the availability of the water facility and the fans for the students. The majority of the participants stated that the electric water cooler were available there in the schools for the students and the staff. However, if the water cooler go out of order, it remains unattended and this become problematic for us. One of the participant said that:

We had to use the basic water cooler earlier when there was no electric water cooler. However, now the electric water cooler has been fitted to our school. It is easy to use for the students as now they have no need to fetch the ice for the basic water cooler. Now, they can drink the cool water by just pressing the tap and drawing the water instantly from the coolers. However, if the water cooler is out of order, it becomes a problem for us that it remains unattended may be due to the lack of the funds or something else. (P4)

Similar stance was given by another participant:

Yes, we have an electric water cooler in our school. It has been fitted last year as the students were facing the difficulty regarding the availability of the cool water in summer. They were compelled to drink the hot water in the summer when there was no electric cooler. (P10)

**Availability of Resources**

When the students were asked about the availability of the resources, the majority of the students shared their experiences that neither there was any library or laboratory available for the primary students. So, they hadn't any opportunity of reading books except those of their syllabus in the school. Similarly, the students had no opportunity of doing the practices of their science subjects. Similarly, they reported that only the Chalk board was available there in the name of the AV aids there in the school. One of the participant said that:

The library is no library in our school for the students. Similarly, there is no period for the library in which the students could utilize their time to read books other than their syllabus books. Similarly, the science lab is not available in our school. So, the students are unable to learn the science subjects practically. They can have only the theoretical knowledge and that's it. On the other hand there is no other AV aids except the black board, chalk and book (P1)

Another participant said that:

Neither there is any science lab, nor any library for the students. Therefore, the students just study the science subject on theoretical basis. Similarly, the AV aids are just limited to the black board and book. There is nothing else that could be utilized as an AV aid to teach the students. (P12)

### **School Discipline**

Inquiring about school discipline, the majority of the participants responded that teachers adhere to the school schedule promptly and follow the established rules while also effectively managing classroom discipline. One of the participant said that:

The school maintains good discipline by ensuring that the school hours are adhered to and no teacher violates them. This helps to ensure that the educational process runs smoothly, as the teachers also maintain discipline in their classes. (P4)

Another participant responded that:

The school runs as per the predetermined schedule. All the activities are carried out as per the school discipline. One teacher is deputed as a Day Master to watch over and maintain the discipline in school. So, the action is taken suddenly and effectively if anything looks unusual. (P6)

### **Implementation of Curricula**

Upon questioning the participants about the implementation of the Single Nation Curriculum, most reported that they had not encountered any difficulties with its implementation. Additionally, they expressed the belief that it was necessary to introduce a curriculum that could be universally accepted and studied by all students in Pakistan to ensure a uniform educational experience across the country. One of the participants said that:

The introduction and implementation of the single nation curriculum in Pakistan is a positive initiative, as previously there were different curriculums being taught throughout the country. Now, all students are studying the same curriculum, which promotes national unity.

This is a commendable step towards maintaining a cohesive national identity. (P3)

Upon being questioned about teachers' training in implementing the curriculum, the majority of participants agreed that it was necessary to provide such training to enable teachers to effectively implement the curriculum.

Another participant responded:

We were indeed provided training for the successful implementation of the single nation curriculum. I believe it was beneficial for us as we are now able to implement the current curriculum with ease and effectiveness. The effective implementation would have been compromised if the training wasn't given to us. (P5)

### **Students' Dropout**

Inquiring about parental involvement in their children's education, most participants responded that parents value their children's education. However, some participants reported that some parents do not take a significant interest in their children's education or assist them with their studies. Nonetheless, the majority of participants contradicted this view, stating that parents do help their children to the best of their abilities, depending on their own education and understanding. One of the participant said that:

Parents make a great effort to assist their children in their education, but in some cases, if the parents themselves have a limited education, they may not be able to provide much support. However, in general, parents show a great deal of interest in their children's education because they want their children to have a better future. (P7)

Another participant responded:

Gone are the days when parents viewed their children as a means of earning income. Nowadays, parents desire for their children to receive an education, which will enable them to secure a reasonable livelihood for themselves in the future. Therefore, now the parents focus the children's education. (P8)

### Conclusion & Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it has been concluded that there were no major infrastructural problems faced by the primary school in Lahore Cantt. The electric water coolers available for the students in the summer season however, there were issues regarding their maintenance and repairing which needs to be resolved. The locations of the schools are also on the wider roads as compared to the locations of schools situated in the Lahore city which was a problem where the school buildings were situated in the small or narrower streets. It also has come into light that the science and computer labs are not available for the primary students in the schools. On the other hand, the discipline of the school is running smoothly. The implementation of the curriculum is also being done effectively by the teachers. The parental interest and involvement are also found to be satisfactory. The findings of this follow-up study has validated the findings of the Quantitative study to an extent.

Despite being a common topic, there is a lack of research on the subject at hand, particularly regarding local studies that were mostly conducted before 2015. However, Zafar & Ali (2018) conducted a survey with 210 participants to examine the social functions and challenges faced by the education system in Pakistan. The researchers discovered a class-based education system in Pakistan, which poses a challenge that could be addressed by establishing a unified education system throughout the country. Additionally, the study found that the quality of education has been compromised due to the involvement of the private sector. Businessmen have entered the field of education and have focused on profit rather than providing quality education. These findings align with the present study.

Yousaf (2014) conducted a survey to investigate the issues faced by the education system in Pakistan. The study identified problems such as a shortage of teachers, which negatively impacted students' education, and a lack of necessary infrastructure, including libraries and laboratories. To address these issues, the researcher recommended that the education department hire capable, skilled, and qualified teachers who can educate students according to the needs of the modern age. Additionally, providing necessary infrastructure is crucial for the effective and smooth operation of the education system. These findings align with the present study.

Ahmad et al. (2014) conducted a study to address the issues faced by schools in Pakistan. The study recommended various remedies to improve the educational system. One of the key recommendations was the allocation of appropriate budgets to meet the needs of the school education system. The study also emphasized the importance of quality teacher education institutions that can equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively educate students. The establishment of a proper accountability system for staff members was also suggested to ensure that they perform their duties to the best of their abilities. Additionally, the study recommended the eradication of political involvement in schools and the education system to ensure that teachers and staff can work without fear. Implementation of educational policies without delay was also emphasized, along with promoting a research culture in schools and maintaining a well-regulated examination system to prevent the use of unfair means and corruption. These findings have been supported by the current study, as it also found similar issues and recommended similar remedies.

Ahmad et al. (2013) conducted a literature review to investigate the issues confronted by the primary education system in Pakistan. The results indicated that poor management and inadequate financing were the major challenges faced by the primary education system. Neglect and corruption were prevalent in the education system, which was compounded by political interference and favoritism. In addition, the curriculum was outdated and not aligned with the current needs. The assessment of educational attainment relied heavily on memorization rather than performance. These findings are consistent with the results of the present study.

Saeed et al. (2013) conducted a study that focused on investigating the problems faced by school teachers. Although this was not the main topic of the current research, it was one of the indicators/problems that was also studied. The results of the study showed that there was a

shortage of staff in schools, which resulted in teachers being overburdened with work and negatively impacted their performance. Additionally, there was a lack of learning materials and necessary aids, which made it difficult for teachers to effectively instruct their students. The study recommended that teachers should be provided with appropriate incentives and necessary teaching aids to improve their teaching abilities. These findings were also supported by the current study.

Similarly, Memon (2010) conducted research on the key issues faced by the education system in Pakistan. The study highlighted the need for proper infrastructure, qualified staff, and learning facilities such as libraries and labs to effectively educate students. The researcher recommended that the education department should provide these facilities to schools. These findings were also supported by the current study as they showed similar results.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the results, it has been recommended that the electric water coolers should be repaired and maintained properly as per need. Furthermore, the AV aids should be provided to the schools along with the provision of the Library and laboratory.

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