



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars
Asia Program

Education Reform in Pakistan

Building for the Future



Edited by Robert M. Hathaway

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Building for the Future**

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Essays by:

**Shahid Javed Burki
Christopher Candland
Grace Clark
Ishrat Husain**

International Crisis Group

Jonathan Mitchell, Salman Humayun, and Irfan Muzaffar

**Tariq Rahman
Michelle Riboud
Ahsan Saleem
Salman Shah**

**United States Agency for International Development
World Bank, South Asia Human Development Department**

Edited by:

Robert M. Hathaway

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT M. HATHAWAY

Washington seems to be in a season of worrying—some might say “obsessing”—about the education system in Pakistan. The 9/11 Commission, whose final report has become a fixture on the bestseller lists, has highlighted the links between international terrorism and Pakistan’s religious seminaries, or *madaris*, and recommended that the United States support Pakistani efforts to improve the quality of the education it offers its young.¹ The American government, with the U.S. Agency for International Development as the lead agency, plans to spend tens of millions of dollars this year alone on primary education and literacy programs in Pakistan. Prestigious think tanks and research centers, including the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which has produced this volume, have held conferences to explore the challenges facing Pakistan in the education sector. For better or worse, it would appear that Pakistan’s education system is the “flavor of the month” in Washington.

Except that it is not just Washington that has discovered Pakistan’s education sector. The international donor community has been active on this front for decades, but has significantly expanded its activities in recent years. UNICEF, for instance, has unveiled a new project to encourage girls at the primary level to stay in school. The UN World Food Program has pledged more than \$50 million in food aid, also in the hope of persuading parents to keep their daughters in school. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group has released a widely noted report on reforming the public education sector in Pakistan; its executive summary and recommendations are reprinted in this volume.² Analysts commissioned by the World Bank have published another study—this one on religious school enrollment in Pakistan—that has also drawn considerable attention and sparked a lively debate on how serious a threat Pakistan’s *madaris* actually are.³

Robert M. Hathaway is director of the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

But most of all, Pakistanis themselves have raised the alarm and encouraged this newfound interest in their schools. One of Pakistan's most distinguished scientists has written in the pages of the prestigious *Foreign Affairs* that the "greatest threat to Pakistan's future may be its abysmal education system." The newspaper *Dawn* ran an article a year or so ago whose author observed that the gravity of the country's education crisis was "mind-boggling." The list of problems in this area that need to be addressed, he wrote, is "unending. . . . Small wonder, despondency is setting in."⁴ President Pervez Musharraf and other senior Pakistani officials have highlighted the numerous deficiencies in the country's education sector as well; education reform is a central component of Musharraf's vision of creating a modern, progressive Pakistan.

So we are not talking here of a problem that arises simply from the fevered imaginations of an American capital still reeling from the blows of September 11th and dangerously deficient in its understanding of both Islam and the Islamic world. To the contrary, this volume explores an issue that Pakistanis themselves have identified as vital to their national well-being.

Pakistan's education system is regularly cited as one of the most serious impediments preventing the country from achieving its potential. The UN Development Programme's Human Development Report gives Pakistan the lowest "education index" score of any country outside Africa. According to the International Crisis Group, Pakistan is one of only 12 countries in the world that spends less than 2 percent of its GDP on education. The adult literacy rate in Pakistan is under 50 percent, while less than one-third of adult women have a functional reading ability. Even a short list of the problems Pakistan's education system faces today would include inadequate government investment, a shortage of qualified teachers and poor teacher training, politicized curricula that frequently promote intolerance and violence, insufficient number and poor quality of textbooks and other teaching materials, fraud and corruption, and weak institutional capacity at both the central and local levels.

In an essay combining history, demography, policy analysis, and prescription, Shahid Javed Burki offers some striking demographic figures that underscore the extent of the challenge facing Pakistan. Pakistan, the world's sixth most populous country, has one of the youngest populations in the world. Half of its 155 million population is below the age of 18.

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(In the United States, by contrast, the percentage of the under-18 cohort is closer to one quarter.) Moreover, even with further reductions in the birth rate, Pakistan could gain another 100 million people within the next quarter century, and by 2030 could have 132 million youths below the age of 18. And what, Burki asks, will become of this vast army of the young? Unless Pakistan's "dysfunctional educational system" is transformed, it will continue to churn out large numbers of unemployable young people whose bleak economic prospects make them prime targets for purveyors of extremism. Already, Pakistan's education system "not only threatens economic, political and social stability within the country, but also poses a real danger for the world at large."

In response to the many shortcomings in their country's public schools, parents, educators, and community leaders have created a number of alternatives to the state-run education system. According to State Bank Governor Ishrat Husain, the number of private primary and secondary schools in Pakistan increased nearly tenfold between 1983 and 2000, from 3,300 to 32,000. Today private schools may teach a quarter of the country's students, and in some cities, more than half. As Jonathan Mitchell and his collaborators observe in their contribution to this volume, these are "stunning" statistics, "reflecting the loss of public confidence in public education on one hand, and a testament to the demand for quality education on the other."

Some of these private schools are run by charitable and philanthropic groups, including Islamic associations and foundations. Included in this volume is an essay detailing the activities of The Citizens Foundation, one of the most prominent educational philanthropies working in Pakistan today. Other private schools are operated as profit-making enterprises, often catering to the elite, frequently providing a quality education, and priced beyond the means of all but the most affluent. Some for-profit schools are geared to a less wealthy clientele, but the education provided by such schools is often inferior.

Another alternative to the public school system is the *madrassah*, or Islamic boarding school (although younger students are frequently non-residential). In many localities, no public school exists and the *madrassah* offers parents the only possibility of educating their children, so terming *madaris* an "alternative" to public schools can be misleading. *Madaris* have become highly controversial because of their alleged promotion of

Islamic fundamentalism, and the passions, pro and con, that surround these schools have frequently served to skew the discussion of Pakistan's education sector.

Economists have only recently recognized the importance of education in promoting economic growth, observes Ishrat Husain, governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, in his contribution to this collection. Now, however, most economists accept the linkage between education and economic development; even a single additional year of schooling can raise productivity by 10 percent, Husain writes. Unfortunately, Pakistan continues to lag behind its neighbors in providing quality education for its youth. Net primary-age enrollment rates in Pakistan are 50 percent; in Bangladesh, 75 percent; in India, 77 percent; and in Sri Lanka, 100 percent. And because government-run schools have failed so miserably in producing an educated citizenry, today more than one primary student in four attends a non-government school. But contrary to western myths, Husain insists, relatively few primary students—less than one percent—attend *madaris*. Moreover, he adds, the majority of *madaris* in Pakistan offer a balanced curriculum, have no affiliation with religious extremists, and do not promote *jihad*.

The essay by Salman Shah, a senior official in Pakistan's ministry of finance and a close adviser to the prime minister, also places Pakistan's education reform agenda into the broader context of development. Only 30 percent of Pakistanis hold jobs, Shah notes, a rate that serves as a powerful drag on development. This modest level of employment reflects the fact that only about 19 percent of Pakistani women are in the labor force, which in turn is a function of Pakistan's low female literacy rate. Shah also underscores Pakistan's high dropout rates. Whereas 83 percent of Pakistani children 5–9 years of age are enrolled in school, this figure falls to less than 19 percent of 10–19 year olds. Pakistan's inability either to keep its children in school or to provide them with vocational and technical training also retards its development. The country's existing vocational and technical training capacity, Shah declares, is "negligible." Moreover, enrollment in higher education in Pakistan ought to be ten times the current 300,000.

Pakistan needs to create 2.5–3 million new jobs annually, Shah asserts. As part of the strategy for job growth of this magnitude, the Pakistani government over the next few years intends to double the proportion of

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GDP allocated for education, from 2 to 4 percent. Nonetheless, public-private partnerships will continue to have an important role; indeed, both the private sector and non-governmental organizations must be prepared to take on larger burdens if Pakistan is to provide its citizenry with decent educational opportunities.

Shah's essay also mentions Pakistan's acute need for better teachers, a theme explored more systematically in the contribution by Grace Clark. Clark emphasizes the inter-relatedness between reform of Pakistan's system of higher education and reform at the primary and secondary levels. Because of the failure to upgrade Pakistan's institutions of higher learning, she declares, the nation remains "stuck in a pattern of intellectual colonialism." To illustrate the difficulty of the challenges facing education reformers, she notes that while the ministry of education has mandated that science be taught, in English, beginning in the first grade, this plan has the practical effect of requiring teachers "to teach a subject they don't know in a language they don't understand."

In an effort to provide better training for primary and secondary level teachers, Pakistan's Higher Education Commission has established the National Education University (NEU) to replace the inadequate training institutes that had been supplying whatever modest teacher training Pakistan had previously offered. Some encouraging results, Clark reports, are already noticeable. Whereas five years ago, there were only a handful of education doctoral students in the entire country, today more than 200 PhD students in education are enrolled in NEU. Unfortunately, Clark continues, NEU remains "terribly underfunded and under supported in terms of intellectual capital."

Ahsan Saleem, founder and chairman of the nonprofit Citizens Foundation (TCF), details the efforts of one of Pakistan's most prominent private educational organizations to provide quality schools to the country's youth, and particularly its underprivileged children. (Seventy percent of the 32,000 Citizens Foundation students are on scholarship.) Created in 1995, this Karachi-based philanthropy has built and equipped well over 200 primary and secondary schools in both rural and urban areas over the past decade. To address Pakistan's serious gender disparities in educational attainment, TCF seeks to maintain a 50-50 male-female student ratio. In addition, all TCF teachers are female in order to encourage parents to permit their daughters to attend school. Ultimately, Saleem writes, qual-

ity education can do far more than merely providing Pakistan's children with the tools needed to succeed in life; it can equip them with high moral values and serve as "the very nucleus of social change."

Saleem's emphasis on the urgency of addressing the serious gender imbalance in Pakistan's education system is echoed in many of the other essays in this volume. Burki estimates that in Balochistan, only 15 percent of adult women are literate. Using data from the ministry of education, he notes that while more than 83 percent of primary school-age boys attend school, the enrollment rate for girls is less than 63 percent—a 20-point gender gap. The issue raised by these disparities is not one just of fairness; study after study has shown that gender discrimination retards development and exacts a large toll on both present and future generations. Governor Husain cites a study that concludes that annual growth in income per capita could have been nearly a percentage point higher had Pakistan closed the educational gender gap as rapidly as East Asia. Social scientists have also linked high fertility rates with low levels of female literacy. As another scholar has written, "a compelling body of evidence has emerged in recent years demonstrating that investing in girls' education is the most effective way to pursue a broad range of critical development objectives."⁵

Tariq Rahman's contribution to this volume focuses on English-language instruction in Pakistan's schools, and links such instruction with the diffusion of liberal values that might provide an antidote to the rising tide of intolerance and violence in Pakistani society. English, Rahman observes, "the major language of power and social prestige" in Pakistan, "remains the preserve of a small elite." This elite has permitted most Pakistanis to remain confined to the "ghetto" of vernacular-medium or sub-standard English-language schooling. Among other results, this has kept most Pakistani students computer-illiterate, a serious handicap in an increasingly digital world. Since English fluency is "the main filtering device" for access to political power and economic success, their restricted access to quality English-language instruction has fostered in many Pakistanis a perception of victimization and injustice that contributes to the violence endemic to today's Pakistan. Rahman's recommendation that elitist English-language schools be phased out will strike some as extreme. But the monopoly on quality English-medium instruction now held by the elite must be broken, he argues, before such

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instruction will be made available to the masses. If widely available, Rahman optimistically concludes, English-language instruction “may create a more tolerant and less militant society which will support policies of peace and peaceful coexistence within Pakistan and abroad.”

The essay by Jonathan Mitchell, Salman Humayun, and Irfan Muzaffar, all of whom have extensive experience working on education reform projects in Pakistan, emphasizes the importance of demand-driven strategies—that is, initiatives arising from within the local community. Pakistani parents, they argue, must step forward and “articulate demands for education as moral and legal claims.” Pakistan’s new experiments with devolution, they find, have had a positive impact by linking the common citizen with governmental authorities and giving parents a vehicle for demanding better schools. Mitchell and his co-authors believe that all the conditions necessary for a successful demand-led strategy currently exist in Pakistan. A free and feisty press, for instance, offers parents a forum for voicing their views, while a legally recognized right to government-held information provides ordinary citizens with a potent tool for insisting on accountability and transparency in governmental decision making. Their essay can be seen as a how-to manual for generating locally based demand and giving it effective channels for expression. Constant pressure on the government, they caution, will be necessary if Pakistan’s education system is to be revitalized. If judiciously applied, this pressure can transform “the political landscape surrounding education . . . from one clutching to mediocrity and political interference to one that demands continued improvement based on changing local demand.”

In the four years since the 9/11 attacks, the United States government has made Pakistan education reform a priority. In 2002, Washington signed a five-year \$100 million agreement with the Musharraf government to support Pakistani activities in this sphere. Three years later, the Bush administration and Congress more than tripled this commitment, and the U.S. Agency for International Development now anticipates spending nearly \$67 million in the Pakistani education sector over each of the next five years. These plans, as well as the strategies for education reform adopted by the governments of Pakistan and the United States, are outlined in an April 2005 report prepared by USAID pursuant to congressional legislation, and reprinted in this volume.

Other international donor agencies have also targeted Pakistan's education sector for special emphasis. The World Bank plans to spend approximately \$325 million over four years (beginning in FY 2004) on direct project funding for the Pakistani education sector, as well as a similar amount on other poverty reduction and development programs that will tie in with education sector reforms. Included in this volume is a brief World Bank paper that provides details on the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP), a promising initiative being implemented by the province of Punjab, with support from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The paper asserts that heartening progress has been achieved in the first year of the program—an assessment seconded in the essay by Ishrat Husain—but cautions that the reforms in Punjab remain “fragile.” It also lists four prerequisites for sustained success:

- Continued political support and commitment
- Avoidance of major external macro shocks
- Resolution of capacity bottlenecks at the district level; and
- Appointment and retention of high performing civil servants at critical implementation agencies.

Introducing the World Bank paper is a brief note by Bank official Michelle Riboud, who places the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program into the broader context of Bank activities in Pakistan. Riboud acknowledges that substantial programs in Pakistan's education sector in earlier years, by the Bank and other donors, produced disappointing results. The most important lesson from these failures, she writes, echoing a point also underscored in the Bank paper on PESRP, is the need for “political championship and sustained commitment.” Another lesson from these earlier projects is that policy reforms require backing beyond the sector line ministry, and particularly from the finance ministry and top political leadership. A third lesson, Riboud declares, is the need for flexibility; in a country as diverse as Pakistan, she writes, one size does not fit all. Nonetheless, as the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, Punjab, by succeeding with its reform efforts, can open the way for other parts of the country to adopt similar approaches. Hence, the Bank's emphasis on Punjab.

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In this volume's opening essay, Shahid Javed Burki, a longtime Bank official who also served briefly as Pakistan's finance minister, applauds the intensified interest in Pakistan's education system on the part of international donors, but cautions that money alone will not solve the country's education problems. Reviewing the World Bank's unhappy experiences in the 1990s in seeking to upgrade Pakistan's education system, he judges that the Bank's efforts failed for "one simple reason": Pakistan's "educational bureaucracy was so corrupt, inefficient and dysfunctional" that resources funneled through these channels had no chance of achieving the hoped-for results. "Pakistan's educational system requires an almost total overhaul," he writes. Burki concludes his essay by offering ten suggestions that he believes ought to be elements of an "imaginative and comprehensive" strategy of educational reform.

Discussion of Pakistan's education system among westerners, especially since the September 11th terrorist attacks, usually gravitates toward consideration of the country's *madaris*. This obsession with Pakistan's Islamic schools, several contributors to this volume insist, more accurately reflects the insecurities of western analysts than the actual educational challenges confronting Pakistan. *Madaris*, Burki writes, are a secondary issue in Pakistan today. Nearly three-quarters of Pakistani students attend government-run schools; this is where reform efforts should concentrate.

Nonetheless, both federal and provincial governments in Pakistan have committed themselves to "mainstreaming" *madaris*, which is generally taken to mean providing assistance to modernize *madrasah* curricula without challenging the *ulema* (Islamic scholars) on matters of Islamic studies. Christopher Candland's contribution to this volume examines efforts by the government of Pakistan since August 2001 (prior to the 9/11 attacks) to regulate and reform the country's Islamic boarding schools. *Madaris*, he notes, have filled a large void left by the state's inability to provide educational opportunities for its youth. Most are "institutions of caretaking and education," rather than the recruiting agents for militancy portrayed in the western media. If some Pakistani *madaris* are sectarian and militant, Candland writes, this reflects not the Islamic approach to education, but the policies of General Zia ul-Haq, who ruled Pakistan between 1977 and 1988. Government efforts to reform the *madaris*, Candland observes, have been handicapped not simply by the intransigence of the *ulema*, but by the limitations of the gov-

ernment's strategy for dealing with the problem. For instance, the government's insistence that all institutions of Islamic education integrate parts of the National Curriculum into their curricula sounds promising. But in fact, the present National Curriculum is largely the product of Zia ul-Haq, and promotes intolerance toward religious minorities, sectarianism, and violence. A proper curriculum for Pakistan's Islamic educational institutions, Candland argues, must be based on the enlightened and tolerant messages of Islam. Reforming the *madaris* cannot be done through coercion or government fiat. The *ulema*, many of whom favor reform, must be integral partners in this effort; the state must work with these Islamic leaders, rather than attempt to bypass them.

The question of *madrasah* enrollment figures has assumed considerable prominence of late. Estimates of the percentage of Pakistani students studying in Islamic schools range from as low as 1 percent upwards to 33 percent. Western sources, many of which rely on an influential report published by the International Crisis Group, frequently cite the higher figures.⁶ But a 2005 report funded by the World Bank contended that the figures for *madrasah* enrollment usually seen in the western press are wildly inflated.⁷ According to this study, actual *madrasah* enrollment is less than half a million, or less than 1 percent of Pakistani students. This lower figure has been accepted by prominent Pakistani officials (including Governor Husain) and by Burki. Candland, on the other hand, writes that the assumptions used by the authors of the World Bank study are faulty, and therefore, that their figures for *madrasah* enrollment are misleadingly low. At least some of the confusion seems to be semantic; enrollment estimates depend on how "religious schools," "*madrasah*," and "study" are defined. The issue remains unresolved, and is of more than merely academic interest, given the intense focus recently placed on the role of *madaris* as a breeding ground for terrorism.

At a minimum, it would appear that much of the western debate about "*madrasah* reform" is ill-informed. As Candland observes, the "real problem" in Islamic education has nothing to do with an absence of computers or of instruction in the natural sciences, but that students "do not learn how to relate with other communities in a culturally diverse country and a globally interdependent world." Pakistan might do well to follow reform programs implemented in other Muslim countries, including Bangladesh, Turkey, and Indonesia, he suggests.

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Rahman, too, downplays the *madrassah* issue, acidly remarking that “reforming” *madrassah* curricula will not alter the anger toward the west felt by many *madrassah* students; only just settlements in Kashmir, Chechnya, Palestine, and other Muslim battlefields will do that.

Also included in this volume is the “Executive Summary and Recommendations” section of an October 2004 International Crisis Group report. Many of the recommendations found here, such as that calling on the government of Pakistan to devote a minimum of 4 percent of GDP to education, are very much within the mainstream; indeed, Salman Shah and several other contributors to this collection specifically endorse this target. The reception accorded other ICG recommendations has been less unanimously welcoming. Many in the international donor community, for instance, are chary of conditioning their aid to the government on Islamabad’s success in achieving benchmarks for increased expenditures in the education sector. Reprinting the ICG recommendations here is meant not as an endorsement, but merely to spur further discussion.

The essays collected in this volume were all written prior to the catastrophic Kashmir earthquake of October 8, 2005. Pakistan has suffered a grievous tragedy, whose impact will reverberate across the Pakistani decision-making spectrum for years to come. Pakistan’s many friends around the world join Pakistanis in mourning their losses, and salute their determination to build anew. At the same time, the huge relief and reconstruction tasks facing Pakistan’s earthquake survivors represent yet another call on the country’s already stretched resources, as well as the humanitarian impulses of global donors. Other worthy causes, including education reform, will face new competition for funds and for the sustained attention of senior decision-makers.

There is widespread agreement among the contributors to this volume as to both the nature of Pakistan’s education problems and the broad solutions. Whether the Musharraf government possesses the vision and political will to provide the necessary resources, enforce controversial decisions, and above all, follow through on its declared commitment to genuine reform remains to be seen. Only after the answer to this question becomes clear will we begin to know whether current education reform efforts in Pakistan will fare any better than their numerous failed predecessors. And in the resolution of that matter lies Pakistan’s future.

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Compiling a volume such as this produces many debts of appreciation. My warm thanks, first of all, to the contributors to this collection, all of whom have responded with extraordinarily good humor to my queries and my badgering. Thanks as well to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the International Crisis Group for permission to reprint excerpts from their documents.

Debts of a different nature are owed those in Pakistan and the United States who have demonstrated their confidence in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and its Pakistan program by the very tangible means of supporting us financially. I am especially grateful for the backing we have obtained from the Fellowship Fund for Pakistan, a Karachi-based charity without whose generosity neither this volume nor the Center's Pakistan program would have been possible.

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Lastly, it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the wonderful collection of Pakistan talent we have here at the Center: Dennis Kux and William B. Milam, both former American diplomats and current Wilson Center Senior Policy Scholars; Ayesha Siddiqi, the Center's 2004–05 Pakistan Scholar; and Shahid Javed Burki, who was a Public Policy Scholar at the Center during the months in 2004 when this project was first conceptualized. All of these gifted and congenial scholars generously permitted me to interrupt their research and steal their writing time in order that I might tap their expertise. The Wilson Center and its Asia Program have been enriched by their membership in the Wilson Center family. And so have I.

NOTES

1. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 367–369. *Madaris* is the plural of *madrassah*. In Urdu, there is no such word as *madrassahs*, although one frequently finds this word in English-language publications. The editor of this volume has not tried to enforce uniformity of spelling of this word on the contributors.
2. International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector*, Asia Report No. 84 (Islamabad/Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 7, 2004).
3. Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series 3521 (Washington: World Bank, 2005).
4. Pervez Hoodbhoy, “Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2004), 129; Zubeida Mustafa, “NGOs role in education,” *Dawn*, December 1, 2004.
5. Isobel Coleman, “Gender Disparities, Economic Growth and Islamization in Pakistan,” in Robert M. Hathaway and Wilson Lee, eds., *Islamization and the Pakistani Economy* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Asia Program, 2004), 81.
6. International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, Asia Report No. 36 (Islamabad/Brussels: International Crisis Group, July 29, 2002). In mid-2005, ICG replaced the original one-third estimate with a revised (and substantially lower) estimate that more than 1.5 million Pakistani children attend *madaris*. See <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1627&1=1> (accessed Nov. 28, 2005).
7. Andrabi et al., *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*.

EDUCATING THE PAKISTANI MASSES

SHAHID JAVED BURKI

There is a great deal of interest in Washington's official, political, policy and academic circles in the subject of reforming Pakistan's educational system. This is probably also the case in other western capitals where governments have become increasingly concerned about the growing number of poorly educated and unemployed youth who pose security problems not only for their countries. As vividly demonstrated by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, they have also become a security problem for America and much of Europe.

I would like to underscore six conclusions. One, it is right for the world to worry about the impact of Pakistan's dysfunctional educational system especially when it has been demonstrated that poorly educated young men in a country as large as Pakistan pose a serious security threat to the rest of the world. This theme was developed at some length in the report of the U.S. Commission on 9/11, which had the following observation about the system of education in Pakistan. "Millions of families, especially those with little money, send their children to religious schools or madrassas. Many of these schools are the only opportunity available for an education, but some have been used as incubators for violent extremism. According to Karachi's police commander, there are 859 madrassas teaching more than 200,000 youngsters in his city alone."¹ I will argue below that the Commission's seeming endorsement of the estimate of the number of children attending the religious schools and its emphasis on

Shahid Javed Burki was a Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar in 2004, working on a book titled *Pulling Back from the Abyss: Musharraf's Pakistan Project, 1999–2004*. He served as Pakistan's finance minister from 1996 to 1997. He has held numerous positions with the World Bank, including vice president of the Latin America and Caribbean Region, director of the China and Mongolia Department, and director of the International Relations Department. Before his World Bank career, he was chief economist of the government of West Pakistan. Mr. Burki currently writes a weekly column for *Dawn*.

reforming the madrassas as a way of dealing with the Pakistani educational malaise are misplaced. There is no doubt that madrassas need to be reformed but what is even more critical is the reform of public sector educational systems.

Two, it is timely for the world's donor agencies to offer help to Pakistan to reform its system of education so that it can produce people who have the right kinds of skills to operate in the modern economy. This has happened before, particularly in the 1990s, when the World Bank funded an ambitious program for social development in the country. Called the Social Action Program, the donor community contributed hundreds of millions dollars but without much effect. In fact, according to one analyst who has looked at the program, the rate of enrollment in the country had declined after the program was terminated compared to the time when it was launched.

Three, an impression has been created that religious schools in Pakistan have overwhelmed the educational system, particularly at the lower level. This is inaccurate since a report issued recently by the World Bank based on a careful survey of schooling in several districts of the country has shown that less than 1 percent of the students enrolled in primary classes are attending madrassas, whereas 73 percent are in public schools and 26 percent in private institutions.²

Four, as stated above, the part of the system that really needs attention is the one managed by the public sector. This is the system that looks after the education of the large proportion of the school-going-age population. There are in all 155,000 schools in the public educational system. Most of them are poorly managed, impart education of poor quality, use poorly written textbooks and use curricula that are not relevant for the needs of the 21st century. Reforming the entire system, therefore, is of critical importance.

Five, the problem of public education will not be solved by throwing more money into the system. It is true that the government in Pakistan spends relatively little on education compared to other developing countries—at the moment the country is committing only 2 percent of its gross domestic product on education while the countries that have developed good educational systems spend at least twice as much. There are plans to increase the amount to 4 percent over the next five years.³ Western donors have also made fresh commitments of money for the

reform of the educational system. A total of \$1.4 billion to be spent over a period of seven years has already been committed, the bulk of it by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The United States is providing \$100 million worth of support. There are indications that more donor money will be provided. By 2010, Pakistan is likely to be spending \$2 billion a year on education, with 20 percent, or \$400 million, provided by the donor community. While all this is welcome news, what is required is a carefully articulated reform of the entire system.

Six, and finally, the private sector has an important role to play in reforming the educational system. This system already has 45,000 institutions and, contrary to the general impression, it is not catering just to the needs of higher income groups. Thousands of private schools are in the rural areas providing education to the children of poor families.

I will develop these conclusions below. I will begin with a quick overview of Pakistan's demographic situation and how it has affected the system of education. I will then give a brief description of the structure of the educational system in the country from the time of independence in 1947 to the early 1970s when it began to deteriorate. Next I will provide a quick overview of the reasons that led to slow collapse of the educational system. I will then indicate the lessons Pakistan can learn from attempted reforms in the country as well as in other parts of the world to improve its own system. Finally, I will suggest some approaches to the reform of the Pakistani system.

DEMOGRAPHY AND EDUCATION

Pakistanis, both policymakers based in Islamabad and the public at large, were slow to recognize that the country's large and increasingly young population was mostly illiterate and was singularly ill-equipped to participate in the economic life of the country. Pakistan's young did not even have the wherewithal to participate in the process of "outsourcing" that has brought economic modernization and social improvement to many parts of India.⁴ The economic and social revolution that India is witnessing today could have also occurred in Pakistan but for a number of unfortunate developments I will discuss later. For the moment I will reflect on the problem Pakistan faces today—in 2005.

In 2005, Pakistan is already the world's sixth largest country, after China, India, the United States, Indonesia, and Brazil. Its population is

estimated at 155 million; of this, one half, or 77 million, is below the age of 18 years. Pakistan, in other words, has one of the youngest populations in the world. In 2005, the United States had fewer people below the age of 18 than did Pakistan, even though the American population is almost twice as large as that of Pakistan. What is more, with each passing year the population is getting younger.

In spite of a significant decline in the level of fertility in recent years, Pakistan's population is still growing at a rate close to 2 percent a year. Even with some further reduction in birth rate, by 2030—a quarter century from now—Pakistan could overtake Brazil and become the world's fifth most populous country, with a population of 255 million. Or, put in another way, Pakistan is set to add another 100 million people to its already large population over the next 25 years.

A significant number of this additional population will end up in the already crowded cities of the country, in particular in Karachi, Lahore, and the urban centers on the periphery of Lahore. Karachi already has more than 10 million people; by 2030 it could have a population of 25 million. By the same time, Greater Lahore⁵ may have a population of 15 million. Will such large urban populations live in peace and become active contributors to Pakistan's economic growth and development? Or will they become increasingly restive and disturb peace not only within the country but also outside the country's borders? The answers to these two questions will depend on the way the authorities and people of Pakistan approach the subject of education and what kind of assistance they can receive from the world outside.

There are several characteristics of Pakistan's demographic situation that should be kept in view as the country develops a strategy to educate the masses. In two to three decades Pakistan will have the largest concentration of Muslims in the world, more than in Indonesia or India. Although Indonesia in 2030 will still have a larger population than Pakistan, it has a higher proportion of non-Muslims than is the case in Pakistan. In 2005, an estimated 95 percent of the Pakistani population is Muslim. Disaffection could easily spread in the population as a result of what the French Islamic scholar Olivier Roy has called "globalizing Islam," the process by which disgruntled and unhappy groups across the globe communicate, motivate and radicalize one another by the internet and the increasingly ubiquitous mobile phones.⁶

In 25 years, the population of Pakistan will be even younger than it is today. Out of a population of some 255 million projected for 2030, about 132 million will be below the age of 18. In other words, those less than 18 years old will account for nearly 52 percent of the total. Unless an ambitious program is launched soon and implemented with the government's full attention and energy, a significant proportion of the young will be poorly educated and will have skills that will not be of much use as a factor of production in a modern economy. An indifferently educated workforce made up of millions of young people, living in a few crowded megacities, will become attractive recruits for groups and organizations that are alienated from the global economic, political and social system. In a Muslim country such as Pakistan, the groups that will be able to attract the young espouse various radical Islamic causes.

There are two questions that need to be answered in order to explain the situation in Pakistan. One, why did the education system in Pakistan deteriorate to the point where it now not only threatens economic, political and social stability within the country, but also poses a real danger for the world at large? Two, what can be done to redress this situation?

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM AFTER THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF PAKISTAN

In the late 1940s and up to the early 1970s, Pakistan had a reasonably efficient system of education, not much different from other countries of the South Asian subcontinent. It was dominated by the public sector; educational departments in the provinces administered schools and colleges while a small number of public sector universities provided postgraduate instruction. A few schools were run by local governments. The public sector also had teacher training schools and colleges. The main purpose of the system was to prepare students for government service. The government including the military was the single largest employer in the country.

There were not many private schools within the system of education for several decades following the birth of Pakistan. Those that existed were run mostly by Christian missionaries and Islamic organizations, each producing graduates for two completely different segments of the society. The Christian missionary schools catered mostly to the elite. They followed their own curricula, taught from textbooks written mostly by foreign authors, and brought in experienced teachers from outside.

The students who graduated from these schools usually took examinations administered by Cambridge University in England. A significant number of graduates from these schools went abroad for higher education. Upon return or after graduating from institutions such as Lahore's Government College and Forman Christian College, they joined one of the superior civil services or entered the army. There were few opportunities for these people outside the public sector.

At the opposite end of the educational spectrum were religious schools, called *dini madrassas*, that imparted religious instruction. Some of the better institutions belonging to this genre were either imports from India or were patterned after the old *madrassas* in what was now the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The best known of these was the Darul Uloom at Deoband that had developed its own curriculum and taught a highly orthodox or fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.

Following the partition of India and the birth of Pakistan, a number of *ulema* (Islamic scholars) from Deoband migrated to Pakistan and established seminaries in the new country. Two of these, a madrassa at Akora Khattak near Islamabad called *Darul Uloom Haqqania* and another in Banori township of Karachi, played a prominent role in bringing an austere form of Islam to Pakistan. This was not the type of Islam that had been practiced in the country. Islam was brought to the areas that now constituted the state of Pakistan by a number of Sufi saints from Afghanistan and Central Asia. The religion they spread was not done by force but by setting personal example of piety, simplicity, and respect for the members of other faiths. Consequently, even to this day non-Muslims visit shrines such as the one at Ajmer Sharif in India's Rajasthan. This was not the version of Islam that appealed to the seminaries patterned after Deoband. I will return to the subject of these madrassas a little later.

The private schooling system of that era, imparting western style education, produced members of what later came to be known as the Pakistani establishment—the military and the civil services. The religious schools, on the other hand, produced imams (preachers) for the mosques, teachers for the madrassa system of education, and political workers in the Islamic parties.

These two very different systems with very different ideologies and pedagogic techniques produced two very different social classes with

very different world views and views about the way Pakistan should be managed. The two groups are now clashing in the political and social arena. One recent example of this is the controversy over the deletion of a box in the newly designed and machine-readable passport that initially did not have a column indicating the religious affiliation of the passport holder. This step was taken by the government headed by General Musharraf as one small move towards what he has called “enlightened moderation.” He was, however, beaten back by the religious parties and the “religion column” was reinserted in the passport. Another example is the street violence religious groups were prepared to resort to in order to stop women from participating in sporting events in Gujranwala. Once again, the government stepped back rather than press forward with the modernization of the society. Education, therefore, has begun to play a divisive role in the Pakistani society.

In between these two active social classes is a large inert group, the product of the public educational system. The large public school system includes all aspects of the system of education. It starts with kindergarten and primary schools at the bottom, includes secondary and higher schools, and has at its apex semi-autonomous but publicly funded universities. For several decades the standard of instruction provided by this system was adequate; the system’s graduates were able to provide the workforce for the large public sector and also for the rapidly growing private sector of the economy. Those graduates of the system who went abroad for further education either at their own expense or relying on the funds provided by various donor-supported scholarship schemes did not experience much difficulty in getting adjusted to the foreign systems. Some of Pakistan’s better known scholars and professionals such as the Nobel Prize winning physicist Abdul Salaam and the well-known economist Mahbubul Haq were the products of this system.

However, the system deteriorated over time to the extent that it has become common to describe Pakistan as the country that has done the least for the social development of its large population. It is also common to fear that without major investment in education, Pakistan may well become a large exporter of manpower to the stateless Islamic organizations—al Qaeda being the most prominent among them—that will continue their crusade against the West, western values, and anything else they see from their narrow prism as anti-Islamic.

How did Pakistan travel the distance from a moderate Muslim country with a reasonably efficient educational system to a country in which the public system of education is virtually broken down and in which a large number of educational institutions are providing instruction that teaches hate for those who hold different points of view and encourages *jihad* against them? Pakistan's gradual transformation from one state to the other occurred slowly under many different impulses. As such, the country offers a good case study of how a society can get derailed.

SYSTEM'S PROGRESSIVE COLLAPSE OVER TIME

The Pakistani educational system collapsed slowly; at times its progressive deterioration was not even noticed by the people who later were to be most seriously affected by it. The collapse occurred for basically four reasons. The first jolt was given in the early 1970s by the government headed by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto decided to nationalize private schools, in particular those run by various Christian missionary orders. His motive was simple. He was of the view that private schools encouraged elitism in the society whereas he wanted equality and equal opportunity for all.

Bhutto was also responsible for delivering the system the second shock, and this time the motive was political expediency. His rise to political power was viewed with great apprehension by the religious forces in the country. They considered the socialism Bhutto espoused as "godless" and were determined to prevent him and the Pakistan People's Party founded by him from gaining ground. The two sides—Bhutto and the Islamists—chose to use the college and university campuses to fight the battle for the control of the political mind in the country. Both sought to mobilize the student population by establishing student organizations representative of their different points of view.

For a number of years campuses of the publicly run institutions became the battle-ground for gaining political influence at the expense of providing education. It was in this battle, waged in educational institutions, that Pakistan witnessed the birth of another organization—the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz—that was to use violence in order to spread its word and make its presence felt.

The third development to turn the system of education dysfunctional occurred in the 1980s when a coalition led by the United States

and including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia decided to use the seminaries as training grounds for the *mujahideen* who were being instructed to battle the Soviet Union's troops occupying Afghanistan. There was an unspoken understanding about their respective roles among these three partners. The United States was to provide equipment and training for the foot soldiers of the jihad. Pakistan was to set up madrassas in the Afghan refugee camps and along the country's long border with Afghanistan. Its military, with good knowledge of the Afghan terrain, was to be actively involved in training the mujahideen. The government of Islamabad also reserved the right to choose among the various groups that were prepared to do battle in Afghanistan. The Saudis were happy to aid the effort with money as long as they were allowed to teach Wahabism, the brand of Islam they favored and espoused, in the seminaries that were to be used for training the jihadis. This proved to be a potent mix of motives: the United States was able to recruit highly motivated fighters to battle the occupying forces of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Pakistan was able to further its influence in Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia was able to introduce its extremely conservative interpretation of Islam into a large Muslim country that had hitherto subscribed to a relatively liberal, accommodating, assimilative form of the religion.

The fourth unhappy development to affect the sector of education was the political confusion that prevailed in the country for more than a decade, from the time of the death of President Zia ul-Haq in August 1988 to the return of the military under General Pervez Musharraf in October 1999. In this period four elected governments and three interim administrations governed the country. Preoccupied with prolonging their stay, the elected governments paid little attention to economic development in general and social development in particular. Under the watch of these administrations, public sector education deteriorated significantly. To put it back on the track will need more than money; it will require a change in the way the society views education and in the way it is prepared to impart knowledge that would be useful in the market place. The education system must aim to change the mindset so that all citizens begin to recognize that it is not right to declare your religion on the front page of the passport, or to stop women from participating in public sporting events.

REFORMING AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

There are several ways of assessing the status of an educational system in the developing world. Among the more frequently used indicators are adult literacy rates for both men and women in various parts of the country; enrollment rates for both girls and boys at different levels of education and in different areas of the country; the dropout rates at different levels of education; the number of years boys and girls spend in schools; the amount of resources committed to education as a proportion of the gross domestic product, particularly by the public sector; the amount of money spent on items other than paying for teachers' salaries; and, finally, some measure of the quality of education provided. To these indicators, one should also add the quality of data and information available about education. Unfortunately, Pakistan's record is relatively poor on all these counts, including the quality and reliability of the data, which makes it difficult to provide a reasonably accurate description of the state of affairs in the sector.

The latest information available for Pakistan suggests an adult literacy rate of only 43.5 percent for the entire population above the age of 15 years. The rates for Sri Lanka and India are considerably higher than for Pakistan; 92.1 percent and 61.3 percent respectively. Of the South Asian countries, only Bangladesh has a slightly lower rate, 41.1 percent. Since the level of literacy has a profound impact on the quality of human development, Pakistan ranks 142 in terms of the UNDP's Human Development Index. Sri Lanka ranks at 96, India at 127, and Bangladesh at 138.⁷

There are noticeable differences in gender literacy and in the level of literacy in different parts of the country. Some 58 percent of the male population qualifies as literate while female literacy rate is estimated at only 32 per cent. In other words, two-thirds of the country's women cannot read or write. There is not a significant amount of difference in the rates of literacy among different provinces. Sindh, on account of Karachi, has the highest rate at 60 percent while Balochistan at 53 percent has the lowest rate. However, it is among women living in different parts of the country that literacy rates vary a great deal: in Balochistan the rate is as low as 15 percent while it is 36 percent for Punjab's women. It is clear that the women of Balochistan must be targeted in any drive to educate the masses in the country.

There are wide discrepancies in the various estimates of enrollment provided by various sources of information. My own estimates are for the year 2003, when the number of children in the primary school age was 22 million, of which 11.5 million were boys and 10.5 million girls. According to the ministry of education in Islamabad, 9.6 million boys were in school, giving an enrollment rate of 83.4 percent. The number of girls attending primary school was estimated at 6.6 million, giving an enrollment rate of nearly 63 percent. There was in other words a gender gap of 20 percentage points. Once again the policy implication of this information is the need to focus on the provision of education for girls. Another conclusion suggested by these numbers is that we should expect a fairly significant increase in the rate of literacy as the cohorts presently in school reach adulthood.

There is considerable disparity in the rates of enrollment among the richest 20 percent of the population compared to the poorest 20 percent. The gap is two and half times as large in the urban areas and even larger in the rural areas. Applying these number to overall literacy rates, it appears that while universal primary education has been achieved for the richest one-fifth of the population for both boys and girls, the enrollment rate for the poorest one-fifth is only a shade above 45 percent. Public policy aimed at increasing the level of education must, therefore, focus on the poor in both urban and rural areas. There is demand among the poor for education; if it is not satisfied by the public sector, it will be met by the *dini madrassas*.

As is to be expected, the well-to-do families tend to enroll their children in high performing privately managed schools while the poor are forced into the public sector system. According to a recent survey, while only 27 percent of the children from the richest 20 percent of the households were enrolled in government schools, these schools catered to as much as 75 percent of the children from the poorest 20 percent of the families. This means that the rich have been able to bypass the part of the educational sector managed by the government while the poor have no recourse but to send their children to public schools. This process of selection according to income levels is reducing the quality of the student body in government schools.

There is a high dropout rate in the public system with the rate increasing as we go higher up in the system. Barely 10 percent of the

school-going-age children complete 12 years of schooling; around 25 percent leave after eight years of schooling and another 15 percent by grade 10. Such a high level of dropout has serious budgetary implications. At least 50 percent of the educational budget is spent on children who drop out early. This is a tremendous waste for a sector that is already short of resources.

A high dropout rate has one other adverse consequence. Even if the level of literacy increases in the country, the level of skill acquisition will not improve. For many years a number of development institutions emphasized the provision of primary instruction without focusing attention on higher level education. It is only recently that there is recognition that human development means more than primary education. Some researchers maintain that universal education should mean more than five years of schooling; it takes a much longer stay in schools to become functional in a modern economy.

In light of this, what are the options available to policymakers and to the donor community that is eager to help the country reform its educational system? The donor interest in the country's educational system reflects the understandable fear that unless the educational system is fundamentally reformed, it would create a large body of young alienated people who would be prepared to lend a helping hand to the forces of radical Islam not just in Pakistan but in all corners of the world.

EDUCATING THE PAKISTANI MASSES: A NEW APPROACH

The conventional approach for addressing the problem posed by the underdevelopment of the educational sector is based on six assumptions. One, in many societies the opportunity cost of sending children to school is greater than the benefit education is likely to bring. Parents bear costs even when education is free. Perceived cost of education is likely to be more of an inhibiting factor for the attendance of girls in schools than for boys. In poor households girls help their mothers handle a variety of chores including the care of their siblings. One way of approaching this problem is to provide monetary incentives to parents to send their children to school. School feeding programs fall into this category of assistance; they lower the cost of education for parents.

Two, the state may not be spending enough on education. The remedy is to increase the proportion of public resources going into education.

If tax-to-GDP ratio cannot be increased, the state should be willing to divert resources from sectors with lower priority towards education. The donor community has been prepared to help with funds when it was feared that domestic resources were too constrained to allow for an increase in public sector expenditure on education. This was one reason why development institutions such as the World Bank significantly increased their lending for education.

Three, typically a state spends more on secondary, tertiary and university education than on primary education. The cure is to divert more funds into primary schooling and if need be, charge students attending colleges and universities.

Four, the quality of instruction is poor. The obvious solution is to invest in teacher training, reforming the curriculum and improving the quality of textbooks. Sometimes the quality may suffer because schools may lack proper physical facilities. They may be poorly constructed or the buildings may be poorly maintained. The students may not even have chairs and desks where they can sit and work. This problem can be handled, once again, by committing more resources for public sector education.

Five, the educational bureaucracy is too remote from the parents who wish to see an improvement in the quality of education given to their children. This gap between the provider and the receiver can be bridged by organizing parents to oversee the working of the educational system. Teachers can be made responsible to the parent's association in addition to being responsible to the educational departments in some distant place.

Six, in highly traditional societies, parents will be prepared to send their girls to school only if they don't have to travel long distances, if they are taught by female teachers, and if the schools have appropriate toilet facilities. In some situations parents would be prepared to educate girls if there were single-sex schools. The solution for this problem is to build more schools for girls and to employ more female teachers.

All this was learned by the donor agencies from a great deal of experience around the world. Most of these lessons were incorporated in a high profile program of assistance for educational improvement launched by the World Bank in Pakistan in the late 1980s. Called the Social Action Program, the plan developed by the Bank was supported by a number of donor agencies, and billions of dollars were spent on it for over a decade. The result was disheartening. The program was

inconsequential in achieving even the most fundamental objectives: increasing the rate of enrollment in primary schools for both boys and girls and bringing education even to the more remote areas of the country. The Bank made several attempts to correct course during the implementation phase but the program did not succeed. There was one simple reason for the program's failure. It did not take full cognizance of the fact that the educational bureaucracy was so corrupt, inefficient and dysfunctional that it could not possibly deliver a program of this size. Ultimately the donors decided to abandon the program altogether.

Given this experience and given the magnitude of the problem the country faces, what options are available to the policymakers in the country and the donor community interested in providing help to Pakistan?

As already indicated, a variety of donors have already committed large amounts of finance for helping Pakistan educate its large population. However, the experience with the World Bank-funded and supervised Social Action Program tells us that a mere increase in the availability of resources will not address the problem. What is required is a multi-pronged approach in which increased resource commitment is one of the several policy initiatives. For Pakistan to succeed this time around, it will have to be imaginative and comprehensive in the strategy it adopts. There are at least ten elements of this approach which should be added to the six enumerated above.

First, the government must develop a core curriculum that must be taught in all schools up to the twelfth grade. Along with the prescription of such a core syllabus, the government should also create a body to oversee the preparation of textbooks used for instruction. There should be no restriction on the submission of books that can be used as authorized texts and there should be a fair amount of choice available to schools. They should be able to pick from an approved list. The selected books must carry the "good-housekeeping seal of approval" of the authority created for this purpose. The members of the authority should be selected by an autonomous Education Commission whose members can be nominated by the government but should be approved by the national assembly.

Second, no institution should be allowed to take in students unless it registers with the Education Commission. The Commission should issue certificates of registration to the institutions which should indicate

what kind of curriculum is being taught in addition to the core syllabus. Over time, the Commission should develop the expertise to grade schools according to their quality. A scale of the type used by credit rating agencies for assessing the performance of business and financial corporations could be used by the Commission as a way of informing the parents about the type and quality of education on offer.

Third, either the Education Commission or a similar body should issue certificates to qualified teachers. No school, no matter what kind of curriculum it teaches, should be allowed to hire teachers unless they have been appropriately certified by the authority. The certificate should indicate which subject(s) the teacher has the competence to teach.

Fourth, in order to further encourage the participation of the private sector while lessening the burden of the public sector, the state should encourage the establishment of Private Education Foundations that will be run on a non-profit basis and will raise funds that will qualify for tax exemption. These foundations should also be encouraged to register abroad so that they can receive contributions from the members of the Pakistani diasporas in the United States, Britain and the Middle East. The government should offer for sale to the Foundations the institutions it manages at all levels. This will be a form of privatization with the intent to encourage not only educational entrepreneurs to enter the field, but also to involve the people who are interested in improving the quality of education in the country.

Fifth, the government must reform the management of the educational system. One way of doing this is to decentralize the system's financing and supervision to the local level. The recent devolution of authority permitted by the reform of the local government structure has created an opportunity for the involvement of local communities in educational management. The development of the local government system as envisaged by the administration of President Pervez Musharraf is being challenged by some vested interests, including the members of the national and provincial legislatures, who fear erosion of power as more authority flows to the local level. The old bureaucracy that had exercised enormous power under the old structure is also reluctant to loosen its grip. This resistance will need to be overcome.

Sixth, parent-teacher-administrator associations should be created that manage funds and allocate them to the areas in which serious defi-

ciencies exist. These associations should also have the authority to assess the performance of the teachers and administrators based on the quality of education given. Parental involvement in education, even when the parents themselves were illiterate or poorly educated, yielded very positive results in several countries of Central and South America.

Seventh, the government should attempt to level the playing field by making it possible for children of less well-to-do households to gain admission into the privately managed schools. The government could initiate a program of grants and loans that should be administered by the commercial banks. Such an approach was tried successfully in Mexico. Letting the banks manage these programs will save them from being corrupted.

Eighth, to address the serious problem of youth unemployment in a population growing rapidly and in a society that is becoming increasingly susceptible to accepting destructive ideologies, it is important to focus a great deal of attention on skill development. This will require investment in vocational schools or adding technical skills to the school curriculum.

Ninth, in undertaking a school construction program to improve physical facilities, special attention should be given to the needs of girls. Only then will the parents have the assurance that the schools to which they are sending their daughters can handle their special needs.

Tenth and finally, a serious review of current expenditures on public sector education should be undertaken. It is well known that the state pays a large number of “ghost teachers” who do not teach but turn up to collect their monthly paychecks. It is also well known that the annual recurrent cost in well managed private schools that are able to provide high quality education is one-half the recurrent cost of public schools. Rationalization of these expenditures will increase the productivity of resource use.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan’s educational system requires an almost total overhaul. It will not be reformed simply by the deployment of additional resources. This was tried once before by the donor community under the auspices of the World Bank’s Social Action Program. That, as we noted above, did not succeed. What is required now is a well thought-out and comprehensive approach that deals with all facets of the system.

NOTES

1. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2004), 367.
2. Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Tristan Zajonc, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series 3521 (Washington DC: World Bank, 2005).
3. See Salman Shah's essay in this volume.
4. One of the better discussions on this topic is in Thomas L. Friedman's latest book, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005).
5. By "Greater Lahore" I mean the urban area that includes small towns along the highways that link the city to Gujrnawala in the north and Sahiwal in the southwest.
6. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
7. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2005* (New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 2005).

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

ISHRAT HUSAIN

The “new growth theory” has been highly influential in explaining the differences in the economic performance of developing countries. Economic backwardness is highly linked to low labor efficiency and training, deficient supplies of entrepreneurship and slow growth in knowledge. The countries that have surged ahead, on the other hand, are characterized by high level of human capital accumulation where the educated labor force has raised the level of output and the rate of growth over a sustained period of time. Stern (2001) argues that education takes center stage in any discussion of development strategy for two reasons. First, the quantity and quality of education influences strongly the labor force, governance and the workings of most institutions. Thus it is a key determinant of the investment climate. Firms, both domestic and foreign, are more eager to invest when they know that they will be able to draw on a skilled workforce to make that investment productive. Second, universal access to basic education is essential for ensuring that all segments of society will benefit from macroeconomic growth.

Studies confirm that the productivity benefits of education are large—just one additional year of education can increase productivity in wage employment by 10 percent even after controlling for other factors. Skill development through education has been identified as a key determinant of comparative advantage and manufacturing export performance. In Pakistan, it has been shown that districts with a higher literacy level have a higher level of development (SPDC 2003).

Ishrat Husain is governor of the State Bank of Pakistan. Previously, he held various positions with the World Bank, including director for the Central Asian Republics, director of the Poverty and Social Policy Department, chairperson of the Public Sector Group, and chief economist for Africa and for the East Asia and Pacific region. Dr. Husain has also served in Pakistan’s civil service. His publications include *Economic Management in Pakistan, 1999–2002* and *Pakistan: The Economy of an Elitist State*.

For poor people, education can serve as a bulwark against volatility: even the fundamental skills learned in primary school can make a critical difference for the survival of families when government services fall short or during times of economic crisis. The widening of educational access thus can help to eradicate poverty even before it begins to yield returns in the labor market (Stern 2001).

Pakistan presents a paradoxical situation. The country was able to record 5 percent annual growth rate over a fairly long period of three decades between 1960-90, bringing down the incidence of poverty to 18 percent. This happened when Pakistan's social indicators were dismally low in absolute as well as relative terms. In 1990, after such impressive growth performance, almost two-thirds of the country's population was illiterate, enrollment ratios were dismally low, the dropout rates were quite high, gender disparities in access to education were rampant, and the quality of higher education was on a declining path. By most indica-

Table I. Trends in Human Development

	1960	2000	Change over the Period
Life expectancy at birth (years)	43	61	42 %
Infant mortality rate	163	80	-49 %
Population with access to safe water	25	90	260 %
Underweight children under five	47 ²	38	-24 %
Adult literacy rate	21 ¹	51.6 ⁴	146 %
Female literacy rate	11.6 ¹	39.2 ⁴	238 %
Gross enrollment ratio for all levels	19 ³	33	74 %
Gross enrollment ratio for primary	36	83	130 %
Net primary enrollment ratio	-	58	-
Net secondary enrollment ratio	-	38	-
Mean years of schooling	1.4 ²	3.0	114 %
Population growth rate	3.2 ⁵	2.0	-62 %
Human Development Index	0.346	0.497	44 %

¹ 1970 ² 1975 ³ 1980 ⁴ 2003-04 (Labour Force Survey) ⁵ 1960-90

Source: Government of Pakistan, UNDP, World Bank (various publications).

Note: The data on social indicators in Pakistan suffers from high degree of inconsistency over time and should be interpreted with caution. They represent broad orders of magnitude rather than precise numbers.

tors, basic schooling investments in Pakistan were low and growing less rapidly than on the average for low income countries. Table I details some of these human development trends.

The reasons for Pakistan’s low educational status are varied but one important factor is that Pakistan’s educational system is highly fragmented and segmented. It has, therefore, created some intractable problems in the optimal utilization of human resources under the given labor market conditions.

Chart I depicts graphically the three parallel streams that start right from the primary level. The parents have the choice to send their children either to a madrassah or to an English medium primary school or Urdu medium primary school. The English medium schools are further

Chart I. Fragmentation and Segmentation of Education System

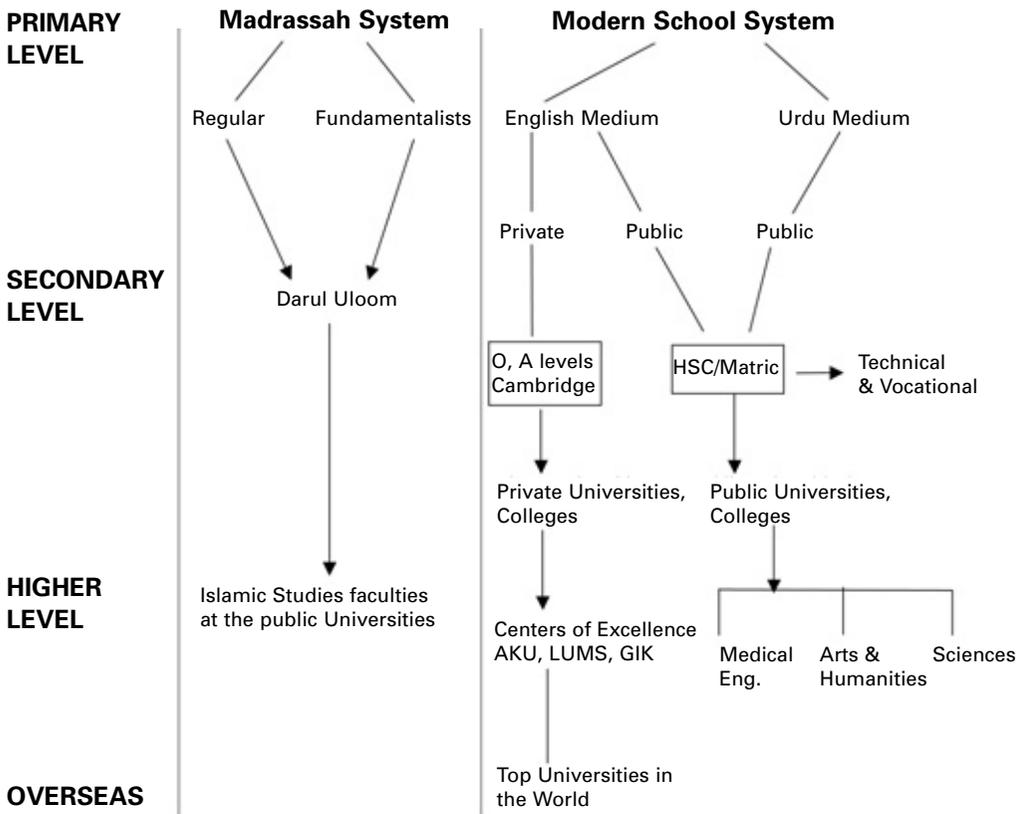


Table II. Distribution of Primary Enrollment - 2002

	Urban	Rural	Overall
Government	62.4	81.8	73.0
Private	36.9	17.1	26.1
Madrassah	0.7	1.1	0.9
Total:	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹Source: PIHS (2000)

divided into “elite” schools and “non-elite” schools. Most English medium schools are in the private and not-for-profit sector while the majority of the Urdu medium schools are run by the Government. The latter provide education to about 73 percent of the total primary school enrollment (Table II). This fragmentation does not end at the primary level but persists throughout the education cycle and spills over into the labor market as well.

Pakistan has suffered immensely as a result of this fragmented educational system coupled with issues of access, quality and governance. Pakistan’s primary and secondary enrollment ratios in 1991 were 46 and 21 percent of the relevant age groups—only one-half the average for all low-income countries. Only about half of those who enrolled in school stayed on until the fourth grade in comparison with an average of about two-thirds for all low income countries. Within the South Asia region, Pakistan lags well behind its neighbors in enrollment; net primary enrollment rates are 50 percent in Pakistan, 75 percent in Bangladesh, 77 percent in India and 100 percent in Sri Lanka. By all criteria, Pakistan’s educational system was at the bottom of the international ladder.

A number of empirical studies show that the returns to expanding years of education in Pakistan are still considerable, i.e. 20 percent (Behrman 1995). The implication is that Pakistan has lost considerable earnings due to underinvestment in education. A social rate of return of 13 percent for primary school, with reinvestment, would lead to a doubling of assets within six years (Shabbir 1994). In one influential work, an attempt was made to characterize the cost to Pakistan of having low schooling and a relatively large gender gap by a series of simulations based on pooled estimates of the dependence of growth on initial schooling investments. The authors found that Pakistan’s 1985 income would have

been 25 percent higher if Pakistan had had Indonesia's 1960 primary enrollment rate and about 16 percent higher if female enrollment rates had been at the same level as for boys (Birdsall, Ross and Sabot 1993). Extending these projections to 2005, it would be safer to conclude that Pakistan's per capita income today would have been almost double than what it actually is and the record on poverty much better.

The gender gap in education in Pakistan suggests that the country has foregone a great opportunity by not capitalizing on the large rates of return of female schooling on economic productivity. In a study of estimates of wage relations for males and females separately over several time periods using Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, it was found that females had higher rates of return than their male counterparts (Ashraf and Ashraf 1993). Some estimates suggest that the return on getting more girls into schooling may be over 20 percent. Another study estimated that annual growth in income per capita could have been nearly a percentage point faster if Pakistan had closed the gender gap as fast as East Asia between 1960 and 1992 (Klasen 1999).

Pakistan thus missed economic opportunities that have been exploited by many developing countries by increasing educational levels for the bulk of its labor force and, thus, enhancing their household incomes and reducing poverty. What is more disturbing is that the low net enrollment ratios will make the achievement of 100 percent literacy levels even more difficult in the future. This has serious implications for Pakistan's competitiveness and rapid poverty reduction.

The enrollment rate in primary education is 40 percent among the poorest 10 percent of the population, while the children of the richest 10 percent have reached 100 percent enrollment. Moreover, nearly 40 percent of children belonging to the poorest quintile drop out of school by grade four. The comparable figure for children belonging to the richest quintile is only 12 percent. It can thus be seen that a majority of the children belonging to the poor families are not acquiring the basic skills that would equip them to participate in the country's economic development while the children of the rich families are better off.

The Social Action Program, a multi-donor program of assistance to Pakistan implemented during the 1990s, has had a mixed record of success. The number of girls enrolled in primary school in Balochistan doubled as a result of subsidized recruitment of female teachers, and the drive

to increase girls' education led to higher enrollment of boys (Kim, Alderman and Orazem 1999).

The adult literacy rate in Pakistan had risen to 47 percent by 1999, and the female literacy rate to 32 percent. Net enrollment ratios, however, remained unchanged. It is estimated that there are 13 million out-of-school children of about 50 million children in the 5–9 years age group, over half of whom are girls (SPDC 2003). In Balochistan and North West Frontier Province (NWFP)—the two conservative provinces of the country—the female literacy rate more than doubled in the decade of the 1990s, much more rapidly than the national average, bridging the gap somewhat. But the fact remains that both Sindh and Punjab have still twice as many literate females as a proportion of the population compared to Balochistan and the NWFP.

The other noteworthy development in the 1990s was the emergence of non-governmental schools sponsored by the private sector (for profit), communities, and not-for-profit organizations. Between 1983 and 2000, the number of private primary and secondary schools in the country increased tenfold from 3,300 to 32,000—much faster than the population of school-aged children (Andrabi et al 2002). Table II shows that in 2002, the private schools had a share of 27 percent in primary school enrollment. The expansion of private schools has also played an important role in bridging the gender gap in primary schooling in Pakistan. Andrabi et al (2002) provide evidence that private primary, middle and secondary schools have a lower ratio of enrolled boys to girls than comparable public schools. Private schools have achieved a more balanced male/female ratio than public schools despite the fact that a larger proportion of them are co-educational schools. This finding challenges the conventional wisdom that parents in rural areas in Pakistan are not willing to send their daughters to co-educational schools. Even private schools for low-income households are emerging. According to a survey, two-thirds of all primary school students in low-income neighborhoods in Lahore attend private schools. The record of these institutions in expanding access is impressive, but in imparting quality education it has been mixed. In higher education a number of institutions with international standards were established in the country during this period. There are no firm estimates of the enrollment in private and non-governmental institutions in the tertiary sector, but the number is expanding rapidly.

The remittances sent by the Pakistani workers employed in North America and the Middle East are also reported to have a positive influence on the education of their own children's and the children of their extended families education. As most of the migrant workers originate from poor families, this investment in their children's education is likely to have some intergenerational mobility out of poverty.

In the period since October 1999, several major initiatives have been taken to bring about structural reforms in the education sector. The thrust of these reforms is achieving universal primary education and adult literacy, improving the quality of education, a focus on technical and vocational education, and reform of madrassah education.

In Punjab and Sindh provinces, education up to matric levels has been made compulsory and free. The Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PERSP), implemented with the support of the World Bank, has set up a workable model of expanding access, and improving governance and quality of education. Provision of free textbooks to primary school students, monthly stipends to girls enrolled at the middle schools, appointment of better qualified teachers and improvement in physical infrastructure have led to an overall 13 percent increase in enrollments in primary schools and 20 percent increase in enrollments of girls at middle level in fifteen low literacy districts of Punjab. The model has proved successful because of the wider participation of civil society organizations, district and local level department staff, parents and teachers. An overarching objective of this program is to reduce gender inequalities in the province. If successfully replicated in other provinces, it is quite likely that the unsatisfactory performance of the past several decades could be reversed and the slippages in meeting the Millenium Development Goals could be contained.

Higher education has received a big boost in the allocation of financial resources and improvement in the quality of education. The enrollment ratio which is only 2.6 percent compared to 10 percent in India is projected to double in the next five years while the universities are being upgraded through a vigorous program of faculty development, scholarships and stipends to the poor, curriculum revision, equipping laboratories and libraries, connectivity to pooled and shared resources and emphasis on research. Annual budget allocation has been raised ten times from a paltry sum of \$15 million to \$150 million while that for science and technology increased from \$3 million to \$100 million.

Table II also explodes the popular myth held in western countries that Pakistan's education system is heavily populated with the madrassahs that are producing the fundamentalists, extremists and terrorists for the rest of the world. Primary enrollment in madrassahs accounts for only 0.9 percent of the total enrollment and there is distinct differentiation among even those attending madrassahs. A majority of madrassahs are not affiliated with any of the religious political parties or *jihadi* groups and offer a balanced curriculum to their students. The weight of Koranic studies, theology and Islamic history is relatively high in this type of madrassah compared to modern schools but they do teach other subjects such as mathematics, geography, and civics.

Andrabi et al (2005), analyzing the district wide data from the 1998 census, have found that the Pashto speaking belt along the western border with Afghanistan is the only region in the country that has a high proportion of madrassah enrollment. But even this accounts for just over 2 percent of total enrolled children in the 10 districts of the Pashtun belt. Media claims about enrollment and existence of madrassah education have been very carefully analyzed in this study and found to be highly exaggerated.

Despite the positive movements on the macroeconomic front, the unemployment situation in Pakistan has not yet improved. The linkage between higher employment and poverty reduction is strong both through direct and indirect channels. In the last several years Pakistan has shown high economic growth, but the improvement in the employment front is by no means satisfactory. The unemployment rate has declined from 8.3 percent to 7.7 percent in the last two years, but the trend is still not widespread either geographically or sectorally and has occurred mainly due to an increase in the jobs for the category of unpaid family workers in rural Punjab.

There are at least five different factors that I would like to put forward to explain this phenomenon of higher incidence of unemployment coexisting with rapid growth rates in Pakistan.

First, there is a serious mismatch between the jobs demanded by the emerging needs of the economy and the supply of skills and trained manpower in the country. While the economy is moving towards sophisticated sectors such as telecommunications, information technology, oil and gas, financial services, and engineering, the universities and colleges are

Box I. Emerging Employment Scenario in Pakistan

Where are the jobs being created?

- Mobile phone, wireless loop and LDI companies
- Public call offices
- Internet service providers and broad band service providers
- Cable services
- Electronic media companies
- Private and non-governmental educational institutions
- Scientific research and development organizations
- Private and philanthropic hospitals and clinics
- Agriculture farm machinery sales and workshops
- Automobiles service stations and show rooms
- Automotive vendor industries
- Fertilizer, pesticides, seeds and agrochemicals distributions
- Dairy and milk processing packaging and marketing
- Livestock, fisheries, fruits and vegetable industry
- Feed mills
- New private banks including Islamic banking and microfinance institutions
- Advertising, marketing and creative services
- Intercity and intracity coach, bus and transport services
- CNG filling stations
- Hotels and restaurants
- Information technology and Internet related companies
- Accountancy and management consultancy
- Construction services particularly plumbers, electricians, masons
- Private airline companies
- Oil and gas exploration, drilling

Where are the jobs disappearing or stagnating?

- Federal Government ministries and attached departments
- Provincial Government departments and agencies
- Public sector corporations
- Nationalized commercial banks
- Public sector universities and colleges
- Print media companies
- PIA, Pakistan Steel, Pakistan Railways
- Water and Power Development Authority
- Provincial Government owned enterprises and corporations

turning out hundreds of thousands of graduates in arts, humanities and languages. This mismatch has created waste and misallocation of resources and the shortages of essential skills required to keep the wheels of the economy moving. On the basis of anecdotal evidence I have put together Box I that summarizes the emerging employment situation in Pakistan—the subsectors and companies where the jobs are being created or are likely to emerge in significant numbers in the next few years. It also shows that the public sector is losing jobs, or there is at least stagnation. Technical and vocational training has failed to keep pace with the emerging skill gaps that have further been widened by the migration of experienced technicians and professionals to the Middle East and elsewhere.

Second, there is a crisis of expectation among the families and the youth belonging to certain areas of the country which have enjoyed quota reservations in the government jobs for several decades. As the economy is relying more on the private sector and the public sector enterprises are being privatized, the opportunities for new jobs in the government ministries, attached departments, public sector corporations, state owned enterprises and nationalized commercial banks are fast disappearing. Those who used to get into the public sector on the basis of quota entitlements therefore feel themselves at a disadvantage in the job market. The security of the tenure, the perks and power which they were expecting are no longer available, and this has led to a lot of frustration among a section of the population. The private sector employers are highly competitive in their choice of recruitment and totally indifferent to the considerations of regional balances.

Third, the aggregate elasticity of employment with respect to GDP was historically high because of the relative weight of agriculture. But as the share of agriculture in GDP is declining, the contribution of agriculture sectoral elasticity to the aggregate elasticity has also dwindled. Higher total factor productivity in the economy and technological innovations are also reducing the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labor force in almost all the sectors of the economy. The inefficient utilization of factors of production that was a characteristic of a public sector dominated economy has been minimized as a result of structural reforms in tariffs, taxation, financial markets and privatization. The demand for labor inputs per unit of output has consequently been reduced due to this compositional shift from the public to private sector employment. At the same time,

labor force participation rate is on an upward incline because of the entry of large number of females. High unemployment rates under these conditions of productivity and efficiency gains are therefore not surprising.

Fourth, mobility across the provincial boundaries is highly limited with the exception of Karachi, which absorbs people from all parts of the country. Labor market segmentation based on ethnic and province of origin and domicile is quite pervasive and allows simultaneous existence of labor shortages in one part of the country with excess availability in other. The high costs of relocation for the job seekers and high search costs perceived by the employers further attenuate a state of disequilibrium in the nationwide labor market. The regional labor markets may be relatively more efficient, but the same is not true of the national labor market.

Fifth, the archaic and outdated labor laws, levies and benefit payments imposed upon the formal sector of the economy create a wedge between the unit costs borne by the employer and the actual wage received by the employees. There is little incentive for the employer to hire people on a permanent basis and to invest in their training, skill upgradation and productivity enhancement. They have therefore developed a short-sighted view of extracting as much value as possible by engaging part-time or contractual employees. In a competitive environment, this behavior is not tenable over a long period of time. The businesses have to close down or substitute capital for labor, reducing the level of labor absorption in the economy.

The future agenda for productive employment generation and education are closely interlinked. We will therefore have to address (a) the issue of greater focus on technical, vocational and professional education; (b) expanding enrollment in higher education to at least 10 percent of the relevant age group; (c) improving access, quality and governance in primary and secondary schooling; (d) providing incentives to encourage enrollment of girls in schools; (e) reforming madrassah education and making them relevant to the labor market requirements; and (f) restructuring labor laws and regulations that discourage employment in the formal sector.

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CHALLENGES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN PAKISTAN

SALMAN SHAH

Pakistan is a rapidly growing economy, with a strategy of reducing poverty and generating prosperity for all through industrial development by technology up-gradation and greater export orientation. Such circumstances define the relevance of a robust education sector in Pakistan, which would allow it to meet its human resource requirements. Pakistan needs to produce more workers, technicians, supervisors, managers, and researchers. It needs to expand its education base by improving the retention rate of students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels and by establishing more educational institutions across the country. Further, the quality of education needs considerable improvement by inducting better qualified teachers, adopting better education techniques and implementing effective examination mechanisms.

This essay seeks to explain the relevance of a good education system in Pakistan, and then to lay out the education access and quality challenges.

RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION TO PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Human resource is a key input to any economy, and a major driving factor for its growth. Pakistan is on course to be one of the fastest growing economies in Asia over the coming years, with an expected yearly GDP growth rate of seven to eight percent over the next decade. The growing need for a larger competent labor force is hence indispensable.

The growth strategy for Pakistan is to boost its investment/GDP ratio to greater than 25 percent, by increased production capacity and higher

Salman Shah is a senior official in Pakistan's finance ministry, and adviser to the prime minister on finance and revenue. He has been a member of the board of governors of the State Bank of Pakistan, PIA, Foundation University, and the Bank of Punjab. He has also served as chairman of the Privatization Commission and adviser on public finance for the Government of Punjab. Dr. Shah has taught at universities in Pakistan, Canada, and the United States.

value addition in the agriculture, manufacturing and industry, services and natural resources sectors. The orientation of the economy will be export-led, which will be strongly supported by domestic demand for goods and services. Other important determinants such as macroeconomic stability, international competitiveness of Pakistan's products, and technology up-gradation through value chain specific micro strategies will be ensured.

The sectors with a potential of contributing strongly and quickly to Pakistan's economic growth are many and include the following:

- Agriculture, horticulture, fruits and vegetables
- Agriculture processing
- Fisheries
- Livestock, dairy farming
- Information technology
- Consumer electronics
- Construction and real estate
- Retailing
- Tourism
- Trucking
- Urban transport
- Textiles and garments
- Engineering goods

The instruments and resources that have already been mobilized to develop the above-mentioned sectors include value chain up-gradation studies, a Barriers to Rapid Growth and Employment creation study, an Agriculture Support Fund, a Business Support Fund, an Innovation Fund, a SME Credit Guarantee Program and the Khushal Pakistan Fund. A further augmentation to these resources by establishing a Human Resource development fund, an Infrastructure fund, and a Rural Modernization fund, and by promoting public/private partnerships and facilitating access to financial and capital markets would be the way forward.

Our strategic initiatives include:

- Facilitating human resource development by imparting more and better
 - Basic education and vocational skills
 - Engineering, innovation and technical skills
 - Management and marketing skills
 - IT skills
 - Others

Challenges in the Education Sector in Pakistan

- Ensuring energy security by positioning Pakistan as a new energy hub for the region.
- Securing a steady supply of water by initiating a major Indus Basin development program of rehabilitation, renewal and augmentation of water resources.
- Developing infrastructure such as roads, ports and logistics to ensure global competitiveness.
- Developing mega cities infrastructure including water supply, sanitation and facilities for a quality life.
- Modernizing rural areas.
- Launching second-generation reforms for institutional effectiveness both in the public and private sectors.

Given Pakistan's growth-led strategy and its high population growth rates, there is a requirement for the employment generation to be boosted to 2.5 to three million new jobs per year. In order for the people of Pakistan to fully benefit from this anticipated growth in employment, a sound and widespread education system must be in place in Pakistan. Education sector development hence has to be a core part of the larger social sector development of Pakistan.

I would also like to point out that Pakistan's growth strategy is completely in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals, which require that global poverty be reduced by half and primary education be made universal by 2015.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

The education system in Pakistan is characterized by high dropout rates during primary school, a shortage in capacity of both middle and higher-level schools and technical and vocational training centers, and insufficient access for female education.

The total population of Pakistan is 150 million with a labor force of 45 million, a labor participation rate of only 30 percent. This low rate is a result of poor female participation rates, lingering at about 19 percent. The low female literacy rate of 39.2 percent, due to inadequate opportunities for female education, contributes significantly to the low female labor participation. The male literacy on the other hand stands at

Table I. Education Enrollment in Pakistan

Segment	Primary	Middle/High/Vocational and Technical	University and Professional
Age	5-9 years	10-19 years	20-24 years
Population in Millions	24	35	13
Enrollment in Millions	20	6.5	0.3

63.7 percent. There is a need for a more equitable distribution of education between genders.

Table 1 shows the enrollments in the various segments.

It is clear from Table 1 that the main thrust of education in Pakistan is on primary enrollment. There is a huge dropout rate after primary school. There is a deficiency in the system for not being able to accommodate these school dropouts into vocational and technical institutes and recruiting them as productive labor. The existing vocational and technical training capacity in Pakistan is negligible.

A further drop in enrollment can be noticed between higher education and university and professional education. This shows that only a select group of the population has access to tertiary education in Pakistan. It is clear that the secondary and tertiary education and technical and vocational training capacity needs intervention for improvement. This essay will now give very brief snapshots of these education and training segments.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Secondary Education in Pakistan

This segment is highly underfunded. The private sector is rushing in to cater to the demand for education in this segment, providing education at a range of prices with varying quality. This phenomenon is prevalent primarily in the urban areas where the competition between these market players is intense. The government is playing its role in this segment by uplifting government schools in Punjab.

There are major difficulties in this segment related to weak curriculum, lack of facilities and incompetent teachers. There is also an issue of having a two-tiered system where the students from the elite class follow

the “O” and “A” levels curriculum instead of Pakistan’s domestic low quality curriculum. To address this issue, there is a need to bring Pakistan’s domestic curriculum up to international standards. Better teachers will of course be needed for improved education and the price of better quality education will be higher.

Technical and Vocational Training

The capacity of this segment is inadequate to provide an alternate channel for the dropouts from schools and colleges. The infrastructure in this segment is so minimal that it would need investments of over \$1 billion to create facilities for vocational training, a small dent in the overall development needed in this segment.

This segment can be improved by more active partnerships with the industry of various sectors. A comprehensive strategy is being prepared for this, which includes the creation of a Human Resource Development fund and a National Technical and Vocational Training Authority to spearhead the effort.

Higher Education

Good higher education in Pakistan is limited to a privileged few, with enrollment of less than half a million students in university or professional programs. In contrast, South Korea with a fraction of our population has an enormous higher education enrollment base of 2.7 million students. With sufficient resources devoted to this segment, enrollment in higher education in Pakistan can be ten times the existing number.

Higher education in Pakistan is limited to the elite of the country. For those who can afford it, foreign universities are an option. In Pakistan, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and the Agha Khan University (AKU) are the two universities that are head and shoulders above the rest. These are both private universities. I joined LUMS as its first professor of finance in 1986 at its inception. A grant of \$10 million from USAID along with matching funds by private donors got it going. Its current enrollment is about 3000 students. The graduates from LUMS are on a fast track career in the domestic market with multinational companies, or alternatively get admissions into the well-known universities abroad. LUMS has well designed courses and relatively better qualified and well paid faculty. It has well designed processes and procedures. It has excellent classroom

facilities, libraries and computer centers. The best and the brightest students of Pakistan apply to LUMS for admission, and only the very best are selected through a rigorous admission process. At graduation, the students have multiple well paying job offers. At the entry level the selected group comprises entrants who have three to four A- levels with top grades. This group of students generally follows an English medium “O” and “A” level education stream from a handful of the best secondary schools of Pakistan. Very few of the selected students are from the domestic matriculation route of education, many of whom apply but cannot be selected. They end up in second tier private universities or public universities.

The example of LUMS shows that quality higher education is very important for access to the job market. Further, there is a high demand in the domestic market for primary and secondary education of international standards, which would enable admissions to top tier higher education institutions. The entire chain has to be upgraded.

Regarding development of universities and professional colleges, the choices for the government of Pakistan are whether to fund new public universities to meet the demand of university education, or to support the establishment of private universities through public/private partnerships, or a combination of both. The key question is whether public universities would be able to reach the standards set by LUMS-type private institutions. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is trying to reform the existing public universities. These institutions are faced with serious systems and governance problems, for which distorted salary structures and untrained teachers and administrators are the major causes. Whether the HEC will succeed in reforming these institutions remains to be determined.

THE WAY FORWARD

A few benchmarks that can be set for the future development of Pakistan’s education sector are to make it market-driven, to provide it with hardware and software facilities, to prioritize primary, secondary, vocational and university education, to define roles of public and private sectors and to encourage public/private partnerships. Public/private partnerships are important for dampening the government’s burden. Both the private sector and the NGOs can play a much larger role in this equation. The government is playing its role, which is shown by its commitment to increase

Challenges in the Education Sector in Pakistan

the budgetary allocation for education from two percent to four percent of GDP over the next few years.

The future interventions for education sector improvement in Pakistan can be summed up in the following manner:

- Review and strengthen current programs such as the Education Sector Reform (ESR) and the Education For All (EFA) programs.
- Rely on market-based solutions as much as possible.
- Further strengthen implementation capacities.
- Further augment resource mobilizations through budget and non-budget means.
- Improve quality of education, provide technical and vocational training for dropouts, and allow greater access to higher education.

In the end, I would like to thank the Woodrow Wilson Center for allowing me the opportunity to bring to light my views on the challenges in the education sector of Pakistan. I do realize that my essay might not have covered the subject in totality, and that there will be room for further refining of these ideas or addition of new ones. I hope this article will be helpful as a spur to further debate, research and exploration of avenues for improving the education sector in Pakistan.

REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

GRACE CLARK

In today's world, knowledge is the engine that drives socio-economic development. For a country to carry out a meaningful program of sustained development, its schools at all levels need to be prepared to teach students a knowledge set that is both relevant and useful. To do this, they need teachers who are adequately prepared in both subject content and in teaching methods that are maximally productive to meet the educational needs of their students.

Currently, Pakistan has two broad priorities related to education. On the one hand, primary education is an essential priority to give Pakistan a literate workforce so it can participate in the global economy. Pakistan cannot really develop as a modern nation while a large proportion of its people—nearly half, according to the Ministry of Education—are illiterate. On the other hand, Pakistan is trying to strengthen its universities to educate the educators and to produce the knowledge that will drive a modern economy.

In any country, universities need to be able to carry out two critical roles. The first is knowledge-building, usually through research, analysis, and theory building. The second is imparting knowledge to the next generation through teaching. A country that cannot develop the new knowledge unique to its own needs or that cannot impart what it is needed to the next generation will remain forever stuck in a pattern of intellectual colonialism, dependent on other countries for knowledge building and the development of new teaching staff. Moreover, a coun-

Grace Clark is executive director of the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan. She is former president and current Board member of both the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies and the National Association for Training and Staff Development. For many years, Dr. Clark worked as an administrator for the State of Maryland while teaching at Johns Hopkins University, Catholic University of America, and the College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

try that cannot conduct its own research on education and learning in its own environment will be stuck trying to fit models from other countries into its own system.

This is a very exciting time to be involved with higher education in Pakistan because there is a revolution going on in academia in Pakistan. President Musharraf has given the Higher Education Commission (HEC) a mandate to do whatever it takes to upgrade Pakistan's universities. The HEC has been given the political muscle to accomplish this as well as an enormous infusion of cash. About half of the money Pakistan itself will spend on education will be going to improve universities this year and next.

While it would not be accurate to say that research about education in Pakistan and the development of university level departments of education are high priorities of the HEC at this time, improvements in higher education generally, and in research and teaching in all fields at all universities, should eventually help to generate improvements in the education sector of academia as well.

FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Higher Education Commission recognizes the current limitations of higher education in Pakistan. In its *Medium Term Development Framework*, the HEC cites four fundamental problems facing higher education in Pakistan, which echo the problems identified in other sectors.¹

1. Access—Currently, only 2.9 percent of the population has access to higher education.
2. Quality—The HEC report states, “The present quality of higher education is very low. Not a single university of Pakistan is ranked among the top 500 in the world.” The main cause of this deplorable state of higher education is seen as insufficient education and training of faculty. Of 7000 faculty members, only about 25 percent, or 1700 in all of Pakistan, have PhDs. This is very low for a country of 153 million people.
3. Infrastructure—Most universities in Pakistan are ill-equipped to teach, functional laboratories are almost non-existent, and libraries are extremely limited, and, because they are a scarce resource, are often kept locked.

4. Education and research are not linked to critical development issues facing Pakistan or to opportunities for economic and social development.

HEC STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN

Recognizing the serious limitations currently facing Pakistan's higher education establishment, Pakistan's HEC has undertaken an ambitious program to rectify the current state of higher education in the country by essentially revolutionizing it. President Musharraf has determined that the upgrading of the higher education system is a national priority. Under the leadership of Dr. Atta ur Rehman, the HEC plan has four core aims:

1. Faculty development
2. Improving Access
3. Promoting Excellence in Learning and Research
4. Relevance to the Economy and Development

Three other goals support these four core aims—the development of leadership, governance and management; enhanced quality assessment and accreditation; and physical and technological infrastructure development.²

These HEC-elaborated national goals for the university level are similar to the goals which have been articulated for the educational sector at all levels. Thus, it may be beneficial to look at the HEC goals in some depth.

TRAINING FACULTY

The number one goal of the HEC is faculty development. HEC wants to improve both the number of qualified faculty and the quality of teaching through improving the teaching skills and academic qualifications of faculty members. In particular, the HEC plans to increase the number of faculty with PhDs at Pakistan's 60 public universities from 1700 to 15,000 within five years. To implement this goal, the HEC has several programs.

First, as a short-term fix, the HEC is importing foreign faculty from other countries for up to three years. The HEC is focusing especially on PhDs of Pakistani origin who have earned degrees from prestigious universities abroad and who have solid records of academic publication. The idea is to use these foreign-trained faculty as "seeds" to both model good

teaching and to begin research initiatives in universities in Pakistan. These imported teachers, who will receive more pay than current faculty, are expected to set a new and higher standard for teaching performance and for conducting research. These scholars are also expected to begin indigenous PhD programs within Pakistan that are capable of turning out the large numbers of high-caliber PhDs in a variety of fields that will enable Pakistan to begin to meet its quantitative goals for PhDs.

A second, longer term plan to upgrade faculty is to increase the number and quality of PhDs teaching in Pakistani universities. The HEC would like to increase the number of teaching and research PhDs from the current level of 1700 to 15,000–20,000 in five years. Rehman would like as many as possible of the new PhDs to be foreign-trained at top universities around the world. To accomplish this, the HEC has agreements with several countries, including Austria, China, Sweden, Germany, and France, to send about 200 students a year for PhD training over a period of a few years. These countries traditionally have free university education for their own students, and the Pakistani students will be included at no tuition cost. The HEC is paying for living stipends. The agreements with France, Germany, and China, also include a period of language training prior to initiating PhD studies. Whether that is sufficient time to learn a new language well enough to conduct doctoral level work remains to be seen.

Most of these agreements are for Pakistani students to study science and engineering subjects, although a few are for economics. These programs will help primary education best by helping to teach the people who will teach science and math to teachers. These programs also serve as models for the development of new knowledge in education. Moreover, the program itself, which selects students on a merit basis, provides a goal for poor but bright students throughout the educational system.

It should be a source of some pride for Americans that the HEC considers U.S. education the best in the world. Rehman and most others in Pakistan especially value PhDs from the United States because these programs require that students not only conduct research on some narrow area of their field, but also receive a number of courses in broad theory relating to their discipline. This makes U.S.-trained PhDs much better prepared to teach in areas across their disciplines. For some time, Rehman has pressed the United States to have a program similar to those offered

by other nations, but the high cost of tuition at American educational institutions has served as a serious impediment to allowing this to happen.

After about a year of negotiations, on April 6, 2005, Rehman and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker, along with Minister of Education Qazi, announced a new program to train masters level personnel in the United States.³ This program will send about 80 to 100 Fulbright students a year for masters or PhD degree programs in the United States. Many of the persons in this program are junior faculty in public universities who need to obtain masters level training to enable them to pursue a PhD. A key priority of this Fulbright/USAID program are masters degrees for those who train primary and secondary school teachers and those studying educational administration. This program will be funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and administered by the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP). This program will involve \$12 million a year for a period of five years.

HEC, USAID, and USEFP also announced a PhD program jointly funded by Pakistan and the United States that will send an additional 30 to 50 PhD students to the U.S. each year for five years in a wide variety of disciplines. This program is seen as an important step in upgrading faculty at Pakistan's top schools. The cost for this will be about \$6 million a year, half from Pakistan and half from the United States. This program is still in negotiations about details. Rehman is challenging Washington to increase its contribution with a pledge to match U.S. contributions up to \$20 million a year, so this figure may increase. While negotiations may or may not be successful for the Fulbright//HEC/USAID program, USEFP will still be sending about 20 PhDs to the U.S. each year and about 100 masters students.

HEC has also announced an indigenous program to train 1,000 PhDs a year in Pakistan. These students will work with PhD scholars in Pakistani universities whom the HEC has recognized and registered based on their own teaching and record of publications in international journals. USAID has also funded much of this local production of PhDs, with special emphasis on providing funding for students from disadvantaged families who would not otherwise have the opportunity to obtain a PhD. These indigenous PhD candidates must also have dissertation readers from outside Pakistan who pass on whether the dissertation is of an acceptable quality to be awarded a PhD. Several concerns

have been raised that in the rush to produce PhDs, more PhD students are being accepted than one professor can really supervise. For example, the National Education University in Lahore has over 200 PhD students, with some professors having more than 20 PhD students.

Recognizing the problem of an explosive proliferation of degrees, some of questionable quality, on July 6, 2005, the HEC issued a warning to degree granting institutions that they must follow the established criteria or risk having their charters withdrawn and having the HEC not recognize the degrees they have awarded.⁴

While the vast majority of these PhD students are in the sciences and technology, with very few in educationally related fields, one would hope that the emphasis on the need for a PhD to do university teaching and research will carry over into all academic disciplines, including education. Participants in these programs also serve as role models for bright hard-working students who can see some reward for succeeding at academics.

In addition to these programs, HEC's plan calls for the National Academy for Higher Education to enhance basic competencies in the teaching of core sciences and math, computer sciences and functional English. These nine-month academic courses will be offered in conjunction with methods courses designed to help junior faculty improve their competence as teachers.⁵

These radical steps hold the promise of forever changing Pakistan's universities. While they are designed to improve higher education in Pakistan overall, on an individual basis there will be both winners and losers. Those faculty who do not have a PhD will need to work to get one, and this may be difficult for older established faculty who already have many other life commitments. Similarly, faculty who are good teachers but who have not done research themselves will be at a disadvantage in the new promotion system. The HEC is working to find ways to help current faculty to make the transition, but all involved need to be aware that, however positive these changes may be overall, there will be a human as well as monetary costs to putting a new system into place.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

A second major area of higher education reform is support for research. Traditionally, Pakistani universities did not conduct a lot of research, and research that was conducted did not receive much support to carry it out.

Under the HEC reforms, professors are actively encouraged to conduct research in their field, whatever it is. The HEC has provided grants large and small for many hundreds of research projects. The indigenous PhD program, cited above, provides a source of smart labor for university research, since PhD students are often organized to do small parts of a larger research study. Once faculty have conducted research, the HEC also makes funds available to enable faculty to present their results at international conferences.

Moreover, where once research did not count in the promotion process for university faculty, research is now a critical factor for promotion. The HEC is moving toward a tenure system for faculty. Faculty will not be granted tenure unless they have demonstrated teaching ability, the ability to conduct research and have it published in international journals, and the ability to train future PhDs.

There is a critical need for research on education in Pakistan. With all the money being poured into education, it is essential to be conducting research on a peer-reviewed basis according to international standards of research. It is essential to know what works and what does not and why. The Ministry for Education has established monitoring and measurement of progress against goals as a key part of the Ministry's program of educational reform. It is essential, however, to go beyond simply measuring and monitoring to doing more fundamental research to understand how learning at the primary level is similar to primary education in other countries and how it differs, in order to develop educational policy that really meets Pakistan's needs. Currently this is a research area that would seem to require a lot more support and development.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

Another key aspect of higher education reform is the improvement of infrastructure. There is an incredible academic building boom all over Pakistan. In addition to buildings to house expanding universities, there are HEC grants to equip laboratories of all sorts. This building boom extends to the development of entire new universities. New universities are springing up like mushrooms all over Pakistan. Some, like the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), are equipped with the latest technology to enable Pakistan to produce graduates who are able to develop and utilize the latest technology. Others, like the

National Education University, are receiving some funds for new buildings and technology, but not nearly as much as the universities cranking out research scientists or technicians to fuel the development process.

The HEC's Digital Library project has also undertaken to make hundreds of journals and many books available on-line for students and faculty throughout the country. This alone should revolutionize higher education since it will provide all students with direct access to the cutting edge work going on in their field, wherever that work is being done anywhere in the world. This is one area in which those majoring in education can have access to world class resources just as much as those in the sciences.

One of the drawbacks of the Digital Library is that it tends to focus on journals in science and technology. As wonderful as the Digital Library currently is as a learning tool, it will be even more useful when journals are added for the arts, humanities, social sciences, and, of course, education. Moreover, teachers at the primary and secondary school level need to have some way to have access to this wonderful resource without having to travel to key universities and requesting special permission to use it.

The HEC is also investing heavily in computers of all sorts, in computer labs for all students and special computer labs for those majoring in computer-related subjects. As with the Digital Library Project, this explosion of computers creates new access to international contacts for the infusion of new ideas and for the ability to work with those in other countries on academic projects. This will help those in education both by giving them access to international discourse on education and also by helping the next generation of teachers to become computer literate so that they are comfortable using computers to teach the next generation of students.

Another critical portion of the new infrastructure is the development of new systems for the evaluation of the universities and individual departments in universities. Now departments and universities will be judged using the following performance indicators:

- Percentage of faculty with PhDs
- Percentage of faculty who have had teacher training courses
- Number of postgraduate courses per department

- Number of PhD students per faculty member
- Total funding obtained from competitive grants
- Number of international publications
- Number of faculty presentations at international conferences⁶

While it is certainly possible to argue with some or all of these criteria as valid measures of teaching competence or research quality, it is at least an organized beginning that provides a standardized set of benchmarks. The creation of a standardized system for evaluation allows promotion and tenure to be based on known criteria and enables each faculty member to measure for himself where he stands on these criteria.

Of all of these efforts, probably the one of most potential importance to primary and secondary school teachers is the Digital Library. While access will be limited to sites at universities, it will be possible for teachers to access sources of information never before possible in all disciplines and from many countries.

INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The HEC plans to increase enrollment in higher education from 2.9 percent to 5 percent in five years and to 10 percent in 10 years. It plans to do this both through improving universities, and by encouraging an appreciation for tertiary education.

Clearly, this is a point at which the reform of higher education intersects with the reform of all education in Pakistan. In order to increase the number attending college and university, Pakistan will need to increase the number of students in primary and secondary education. In addition, there will be a need to increase the quality of education at all levels to prepare students for university level work.

Part of the HEC plan to increase access is to make higher education more accessible to students from modest backgrounds. HEC is funding a number of scholarship schemes, and USAID is funding 1,000 scholarships a year for undergraduate and graduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This greatly increases the incentive to stay in school, since it makes it possible for poor young students to aspire to higher education.

Increased access to university education will drive development in two ways. To begin with, increased university graduates in sciences and technology will provide a pool of talented labor that will enable Pakistan to

compete with other nations in the global economy. This should raise the standard of living, which will also help to drive development. On an individual basis, increased access to universities provides a path of possible upward mobility for many individuals and their families to better their lot in life. This is an essentially democratizing step for the entire society.

TYING RESEARCH TO DEVELOPMENT

Another important aspect of Pakistan's higher education reform plan is to use universities as a research engine for Pakistani business and for Pakistan's development programs.⁷ Rehman sees universities working closely with Pakistan's industries to make Pakistan and its products more competitive on the world market. Previously, there was an almost complete disconnect between the university and industry. Now, universities are actively encouraged to work with industries and the military on projects of critical national importance. Some current priorities are food processing, packaging, and marketing, combating the salinization of soils that is currently destroying vast acres of productive farmland, computer design and innovation to help Pakistan duplicate India's IT successes, and research on geology and mineralogy to take advantage of Pakistan's natural mineral wealth.

There is another advantage to this integration of the university and business. Business has the capacity to fund Pakistan's university research activities far more extensively than the government does, especially over the long term, and research developments that advance a business provide an incentive for businesses to want to fund research at universities.

RELATIONSHIP OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

HEC has also become involved in the training of primary and secondary school teachers through the establishment of the National Education University. Previously, teachers were trained, if at all, in teacher institutes, very modest one-year programs. Now, in the general reform of higher education, these teacher training institutes have been combined into the National Education University. This university provides a focal point for the training of future teachers. It also provides a base of operation that allows for increased research on education in Pakistan. Five years ago there were only a handful of PhD students in education in all of Pakistan; now there

are over 200 PhD students in education at the NEU. Unfortunately, while the NEU is a great idea and has received greatly increased funds to train teachers, it is still terribly underfunded and under supported in terms of intellectual capital. One can only hope that it will soon receive the funding it needs to do its essential task of training the next generation of teachers.

The National Education University also provides training to a network of Master Trainers who can provide in-service and summer training to current primary school teachers. This is one of the few direct impacts of reform in higher education on primary and secondary schools. In the enthusiasm to make up for past deficits, plans for these Master Trainers to upgrade the knowledge and skills of current teacher are sometimes unrealistic. For example, one province proposed a plan to teach primary and secondary school teachers English as well as how to teach English in two weeks of summer training.

A recent report evaluating these training sessions was brutal about the failure of these sessions to accomplish their goal. The basic idea, however, is sound, as millions of teachers around the world use at least part of their summer to upgrade both knowledge and skills. If this program becomes more realistic in its goals, it will be a wonderful help to improving the skills of faculty at the primary and secondary school level. Also, the more that it ties into a variety of academic disciplines at universities, the more useful the summer teacher training will be.

One of the most important outcomes of higher education reform is that it sets a model for reform in other educational sectors. Some of the concepts essential to the HEC's plan would improve all sectors of Pakistan's education. These include merit-based selection of teachers, accountability of teachers to show up and perform well and on a regular basis, monitoring of standard scores and progress in educational attainment, and an emphasis on professional degrees.

A critical aspect of the HEC plan that should serve as a model for the whole educational sector is that while it is ambitious, it is possible. The plan articulates a series of steps that build on each other. Also, the HEC has recognized that change takes time. While it is probably the case that the plan will take longer than the HEC would like, the HEC is the first to realize that some aspects of the plan, such as obtaining a PhD, take a certain number of years. Moreover, the HEC's modifications to its original plan recognizes that if the plan starts slowly, it will take longer.

Another benefit resulting from improved universities is that improvements in the academic departments related to education, such as psychology, sociology, human development, organizational development, and others, will help to provide a much stronger base of experts who can conduct research about education in Pakistan. Results from these studies will inform those driving educational reform at the primary and secondary level as to whether their reforms are having the desired effect.

Still another benefit is that as the various departments of universities improve the quality and quantity of their teaching and research, the numbers of well-trained persons in the general population will increase. Increasing numbers of educated persons will generate more of a demand for good schools at the primary and secondary levels.

Finally, increased access to university education will produce increased numbers of graduates in all academic disciplines. Some of these graduates may consider teaching as a profession, thus providing increased numbers of teachers with substantive knowledge in core academic subjects.

LIMITS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Probably the biggest limitation in the relationship between reforming higher education and improving primary and secondary education is that there is so little interface between these two plans. Part of the problem is structural. The Ministry of Education oversees primary and secondary education, while the Higher Education Commission oversees the reform of that sector. For all that the Ministry of Education plan calls for improving the teaching of English and the sciences at the elementary level, its plan does not coordinate with the HEC to improve university departments in ways that would support this effort.

The new enthusiasm for upgrading primary and secondary education has placed heavy additional expectations on a currently weak teacher base. To give an example, a key point of the Ministry of Education plan is that English will be taught from the first grade. A related point is that science will be taught in English from the first grade. There are obvious problems for students to be learning a language at the same time that that language is used as a medium of instruction for a key subject.

Leaving aside the problems of the students, however, a critical problem is that most of the primary teachers not only do not have the teaching methods to teach English to their students, many of them, probably

the majority, do not speak English themselves. Moreover, for those who are supposed to teach science in English, they also do not have the subject background in science. So, the flaw in implementing this part of the plan is that it calls for teachers to teach a subject they don't know in a language they don't understand.

This is a problem that could be helped by better coordination between the HEC and the Ministry of Education. With all the money going into university departments in the sciences, it would seem they would be in a much better position to provide a stronger academic base for teaching primary and secondary school teachers.

Moreover, while upgraded universities can serve as a model for other levels of the educational sector, there is no guarantee that primary and secondary education will follow the model of using merit-based selection and accountability for teachers. Universities may be able to improve the level of research and knowledge in subject areas throughout Pakistan, but they cannot require teachers to use that knowledge.

At the same time, while the HEC has made strong efforts to move to a merit-based system, it is not without its own critics. Because of its very ambitious agenda, the HEC is trying to do a lot very fast. It is probably inevitable that there will be a few growing pains as it works through this new system. In a recent article, Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, a physicist at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, cites problems with projects gone astray and questionable research. He is especially critical of what he calls "PhD factories," a problem the HEC is already trying to correct. Hoodbhoy also suggests that not all research grants and scholarships are given on the basis of completely merit-based selection. He asks for an audit by the National Accountability Bureau to insure that the money is well spent. Even Hoodbhoy, however, recognizes that "There is no doubt that some benefits have accrued from the HEC reforms."

CONCLUSIONS

The HEC plan for reforming higher education in Pakistan is very ambitious, but it has a high probability of success. The HEC has recognized the primacy of good faculty in any teaching effort. It has designed several programs to increase both the quantity and quality of university faculty in the foreseeable future. The HEC has also invested in infrastructure development necessary to support the improved faculty. It has also made

critical changes to increase access to a university education for many people who previously would not have dared to dream about it.

One of the most important aspects of the HEC's plan is that its goals are realistic relative to the resources available, and the HEC has shown energy and imagination at leveraging the resources it started with to increase the resources available. The plan is also realistic in terms of sequencing the steps for implementation and the time frame for efforts to come to fruition.

The HEC is in the process of reforming access to higher education, and it is in this area that it will need to work most closely with primary and secondary education to ensure that the numbers matriculating to university really do increase substantively in the next decade and that they are prepared to do academic work at the university at the new reformed level.

The HEC has also proposed new paradigms for higher education in Pakistan that will affect who goes to university, how subjects are taught, the preparation of those teaching, faculty research, the system for promotion of faculty, evaluation of all aspects of university accomplishment, and how the university is tied in to the worldwide academic community. These concepts may, or may not, carry over into teaching at the primary and secondary school level.

The weak link at this point seems to be that the HEC plan is not well integrated with other plans to reform all education in Pakistan. In order for the HEC reforms to help primary and secondary education more effectively, the teaching of primary and secondary education, teaching methodologies, and educational research need to be integrated at the university level. There is a serious need for PhD teachers in education and related research fields (child development, sociology, psychology, learning theory, cognitive development, educational methods).

After just a few years, changes really are taking place throughout higher education in Pakistan. These changes are generating excitement and energy for the process as well as increasing credibility about the whole reform effort. The HEC's most important accomplishment has been to convince Pakistanis themselves that universities can be reformed, and that there is no reason that they cannot have world class universities and research as good as those in any developed country.

Pakistan has made an excellent beginning at reforming and improving its system of higher education. Time alone will determine the long term

Reform in Higher Education in Pakistan

impact of these radical changes in higher education on primary and secondary education in Pakistan.

NOTES

1. Government of Pakistan, Higher Education Commission, *Medium Term Development Framework 2005–10* (Islamabad: Higher Education Commission, January 2005).
2. Government of Pakistan, *Education Sector Reforms: Action Plan 2001–2005* (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, revised June 2003).
3. “\$90 million for Fulbright programme in Pakistan,” *The Nation* (Pakistan), April 7, 2005.
4. Khawar Ghumman, “Degree-awarding institutions directed to follow criterion,” *Dawn*, July 7, 2005.
5. Government of Pakistan, *Action Plan 2001–2005*.
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AGAINST THE TIDE: ROLE OF THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION IN PAKISTANI EDUCATION

AHSAN SALEEM

Pakistan is an underdeveloped third world country that is haunted by problems of staggering proportions. The country ranks amongst the lowest 20 percent in human development indices (142 out of 177 countries tabulated in the Human Development Report 2004).¹ All these problems come together to pose a “network of negativity” in which the many strands link in myriads of ways to form an ever-strengthening web that often defies attempts to break it. The first problem—a rapid population growth (officially stated to be 1.9 percent²)—leads to high incidence of poverty (officially around 33 percent).³ This widespread poverty in turn means illiteracy, poor health, environmental degradation, worsening law and order, and—perhaps worst of all—a hopelessness that provides breeding opportunities for militancy, extremism, terrorism and intolerance.

The Citizens Foundation (TCF), a civil society organization that began its journey in 1995, took upon itself the responsibility to break the strands of this web. Due deliberation led to the conclusion that the strongest strand crisscrossing this web is illiteracy. Thus was born a dream to stem and turn back the tide of poverty, illiteracy, intolerance, and despondency.

The first target that TCF set for itself was to build 1,000 schools in some of the most underprivileged areas, both urban and rural, all across the country. As of today, more than 224 school units are a reality. A typical TCF school is purpose-built and costs US\$68,000 to build and US\$12,500 to operate every year. Thus in a short span of time, TCF has been able to invest more than Rs 895 million (US\$15.2 million) solely on

Ahsan Saleem is chief executive officer of Crescent Steel & Allied Products Limited and chairman of The Citizens Foundation, a Karachi-based nonprofit organization founded in 1995 to provide quality education to underprivileged children in Pakistan. He has also served on the Managing Committee of Commecs Institute of Business Education, and for three terms as chairman of the Pakistan Jute Mills Association.

the physical infrastructure. In addition, operational costs over the past 10 years have also run into hundreds of millions of rupees. All of this has been raised from private individuals and the corporate sector, both within Pakistan and abroad.

Current estimates for Pakistan's population are approximately 153 million.⁴ Of this, 60 million are children eligible for school. The 2003–04 school enrollment for all categories of schools (public, private, non-profit) in grades 1–12 was 23.945 million. Thus only about 40.12 percent of children enroll in school.⁵ This means that about 36 million children are not attending school at all,⁶ and a population three times the size of New York City or nine times that of New Zealand is either idle or entering some kind of work, paid or unpaid, at an age that most psychologists consider to be the most impressionable.

A further cross section reveals that 23.9 million children are aged five to nine—the age to enter school. Of this, once again, 40 percent—9.6 million—go to school. The bulk of these schoolchildren are part of the program managed by the four provincial governments. The private sector and federal government have their own programs that address a much smaller number. The balance of 14.3 million is out of school. These are TCF's main target, in phase one of its mission to enroll 360,000 children in its 1000 school units.

THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

Even with the greatly enhanced budget allocation for education in 2003–04 (Rs 111.475 billion),⁷ the expenditure on education amounts to about 2.29 percent of GDP⁸—a fair bit below the minimum of 4 percent proposed by UNESCO.⁹

As for the quality of education provided by the government sector, insight can be obtained by dividing the amount that the government spends on education by the approximate figure of 24 million school-going children. Based upon the public sector budget allocation for education in 2003–04, this amounts to US\$60.5 per student per year. While this figure is itself less than half of the US\$140 that TCF spends per child per year, the figures of state-run education are compromised by the figures for non-functional or “ghost” schools.

Howsoever one reads the educational statistics regarding the public sector (as percentage of GDP or by way of quality compromises), the

fact remains that few Pakistanis even at the bottom of the economic pyramid want to send their children to state-run schools. Here the basic facilities (buildings, furniture, supplies, etc.) are below the bare minimum standards even for third world countries. Sixteen percent of schools are without a building, which itself could be as little as just one single bare room; 55 percent are without a boundary wall, perhaps at the edge of farmland (with stray animals wandering around) or in an urban shanty town, the premises serving as a thoroughfare; 79 percent are without electricity, which means that—in the severe heat that characterizes most of Pakistan—children often prefer to sit under a tree rather than in oven-like rooms; 44 percent are without water and 60 percent are without a washroom, so that both teachers and students, especially females, must break from classes for considerable periods in order to attend school.¹⁰

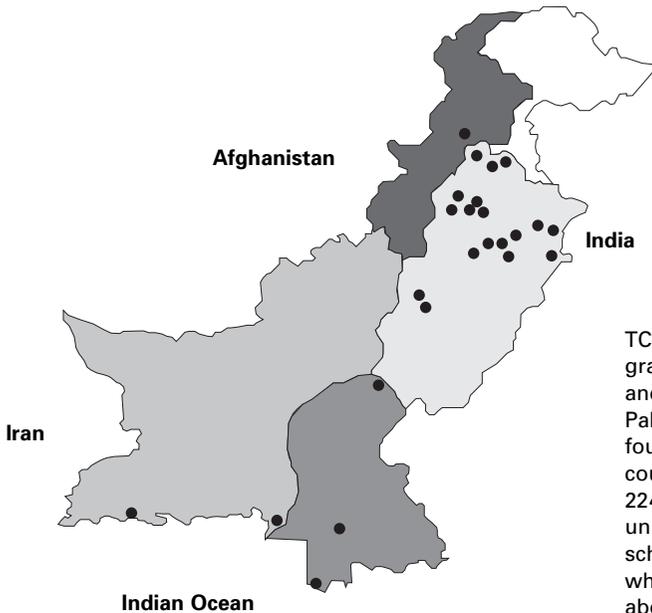
To make this tale of woes even worse is the fact that, on the human resource side, a large number of appointments are made for political expediency. This means that there are absentee teachers in these “ghost schools” which exist only on government records. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group in its October 2004 Report, *Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector*, cites figures as high as 40 percent for teachers who only come to collect their salary checks. Figures for ghost schools vary but are still disturbing. The ICG report cites a figure of 4,500 schools that were identified as such only in the province of Punjab in 1998.¹¹ Even where the buildings may have been built, these are used for other purposes, such as part of the estates of local political heavyweights.

RESPONSE OF THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE TO THE FAILURE OF THE STATE TO EDUCATE ITS PEOPLE

The failure of the Government to educate its children led to a number of initiatives by the people. The following emerged:

- Some for-profit and very expensive elite schools with world class facilities. These schools create “sovereign-individuals” who prefer to work for those who can pay them international wages whether at home or abroad. The presence of these sovereign-individuals does not do much to mitigate poverty or improve the lot of the common man.

- For-profit English-medium schools which attract the upper middle class. These charge high fees (by Pakistani standards) of about US\$100 per month. Some of those who graduate do go on to become sovereign-individuals. The rest join the upper middle class.
- For-profit very low quality English-medium schools charging about US\$10 per month. They have extremely low-quality teachers and are housed in dingy garages or houses and are sprinkled all over the country.
- TCF Nationwide and housed in good quality, purpose-built buildings. TCF is virtually one of a kind. Its emphasis is on quality education for the less privileged.



■ SIND = 130	■ N.W.F.P = 3
■ PUNJAB = 85	■ BALOCHISTAN = 6

TCF is a nationwide program located in 28 towns and cities all across Pakistan. Present in all four provinces of the country, TCF has built 224 purpose-built school units. TCF has a formal schooling program in which 32000+ children, about half of them girls, are enrolled. TCF has created over 2500 jobs and all TCF teachers are female. The mission is to build 1000 school units wherever there are children in need.

TCF PROGRAM

Into this utterly deplorable situation of the state of Pakistani education arrived TCF in 1995. TCF was established as a professionally managed, not-for-profit organization with a primary mission to bring about a qualitative change in education in neglected, low-income urban and rural areas of Pakistan. TCF focuses on the following objectives:

- Extend outreach all over Pakistan
- Build schools in communities that need them the most
- Provide quality education; the less privileged do not deserve second best
- Make an effort to ensure that the number of girls in TCF schools mirror the female population of Pakistan
- Groom proud Pakistanis

Commencing with five schools in May 1996, TCF now has 167 Primary School Units and 57 Secondary School Units in 26 town and cities, and one Teacher Training Center in Karachi. By August 2005, it expects to cater to over 32,000 students and provide over 2,500 jobs. The Foundation is funded by individuals and corporations within Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora in the Middle East, United Kingdom and United States. There is a network of supporters who work voluntarily and organize fundraising events.

TCF's mission is to provide quality education to children from destitute and poor families, at the primary and secondary levels, in an environment that encourages intellectual, moral and spiritual growth. The objective is to provide children with knowledge and literary skills, and to equip children with high moral values that will inspire confidence in them to play an effective role in society.

TCF emphasizes a small but professional management, focusing on the provision of basic education. All schools built by TCF are model schools, as TCF's firm belief is that a formal program will be the cornerstone of civil society in Pakistan and school facilities will significantly contribute to this. All TCF schools are purpose-built with a play area, library and art room. Each school has a modular professional design that is adapted to suit various sites and plot size conditions with an administrative block, six classrooms, an art room and a library. Secondary

schools have well equipped physics, chemistry, biology and computer laboratories.

The student-to-teacher ratio is an important indicator of quality of education. The number of students in a primary class does not exceed 30, and in a secondary class does not exceed 36.

To remove sizeable gender disparities in educational attainment, emphasis is on maintaining a 50–50 ratio of male and female students at the time of admission.

While low family income and high school fees are the main constraints to access to primary education, the fee structure is designed on the basis of what the parents, who are mostly poor, can afford to pay. Monthly tuition fees for kindergarten, primary and secondary classes are US\$1.60, US\$2.00 and US\$2.90 respectively. It may best be described as an ability-to-pay program.

All students are supposed to pay fees, but no student is denied schooling due to an inability to pay. In such cases, scholarships are awarded based on the principal's assessment of the recipient's financial condition. TCF offers financial aid of 5–95 percent depending on the income level of the family. A student on scholarship is required to pay a token minimum fee of 10 rupees and is provided books and uniform, free of charge.

Governance

TCF is structured as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Ordinance of 1984 and thus reports to the apex regulatory body of the corporate sector—the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors and professionally managed. The Board has responsibility for the proper direction and control of the activities of TCF and for setting policies and strategies in line with the TCF mission and values.

TCF accounts are audited and available for public information. The Board's audit committee meets regularly and reviews the financial statements as well as internal audit reports to ensure strengthening of controls and compliance with Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan regulations. The audit committee lends important support to the management to ensure a transparent and accountable operation.

TCF aims at a high level of corporate governance. In this respect, TCF invited an independent rating agency to score its performance.

The JCR-VIS Credit Rating Co. Ltd. has assigned TCF a non-profit organization (NPO) governance rating of GR-8 on a scale of GR-1 (lowest) to GR-10 (highest).

TCF has been certified by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) after a detailed Desk Review and Field Evaluation of the organization and approval by the Certification Panel.¹² TCF is amongst the highest scoring organizations certified by PCP to date.

Certification by PCP is a “seal of good housekeeping” for organizations that exhibit exemplary standards in organizational effectiveness. This is based on independent and objective evaluation of the NPO in critical areas of internal governance, financial management and program delivery.

TCF's Current Challenges

- Pakistan is diverse, comprising many languages, cultures and nations. Pakistan is often defined as a “5000 year old melting pot of many civilizations.” It is one of the few countries with geographical terrain ranging from golden sand beaches to areas that are snow bound throughout the year. Managing this diversity, yet retaining a common thread throughout the system, is a huge challenge.
- TCF's growth is leading us toward building 100 schools every year—up from the current 50 we presently erect every year.
- Finding human resources to match growth is one of our biggest tests.
- Fundraising is a constant endeavor. Support groups work endlessly to bring in the money on time.

Monitoring

An independent monitoring system is the essence of TCF's schooling system. All TCF teachers and principals are evaluated and also go through an internal academic audit to ensure that TCF's education goals are met. The purpose is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching staff. While unique strengths allow the TCF to establish best practices and serve as a role model for other teachers and principals, weaknesses help to identify areas where improvement is required.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND EXPERIENCE OF TCF

The fundamental belief of TCF is that all people have the potential to achieve, that there are universal moral values and that a community thrives when its members cooperate and contribute.

TCF believes that learning should be fun and should bring a sense of inquiry. The school experience should be rewarding for all stakeholders—students, teachers, and parents. A relationship of trust between the school and the community is imperative for the school to deliver its potential. A school—any school—cannot achieve its mission starting out against great odds. The school is the force of change which upsets the status quo being defined and defended by the forces of the status quo—the religious leaders, the local toughs and the police, whose domain it is eating into.

It is and has always been the dream of TCF that the children of Pakistan get an opportunity in life—an opportunity to realize their inherent potential, to prove their worth, and above all to become better human beings who are an asset and a pride to not only Pakistan, but also the greater Muslim and human communities. We wish them to be proud citizens of a tolerant and more beautiful world. TCF has shown that the people of Pakistan are a very responsible and giving people.

It has also been the dream of TCF that every child be given the ability to enjoy life to its fullest, the understanding to make informed choices, the responsibility to be virtuous and kind, and the belief that they can create a better tomorrow—and that every TCF child has the courage to do so.

TCF believes that only education can ensure the achievement of its dream and ensure a better quality of life for all children and people of the world. In order to make this dream a reality, TCF has acted not just by taking children off the streets and into schools—but it has also ensured their stay in school so that they can be provided with the basic tools for success.

TCF philosophy has many more tangible aspects as well.

1. Philosophy: The educational system should have a degree of formality and seriousness.

Experience: The attitude of abandonment that often characterizes public sector education at the primary and secondary stages (“ghost” schools,

missing teachers) has led to an informality which itself is manifested by students who are “both in and out of school”—they get up in the morning, put on uniforms and go to what ostensibly should be a school. However, their daily routine effectively turns out to be one of personal merriment (wandering in the streets or fields), enforced uselessness (staying within the premises with little or no education) or enforced labor (for the school masters). Thus it was through a long process of focused thought and conscious choice that TCF chose a highly formal “regular school” model.¹⁵

2. Philosophy: The formal school must lead to positive aspects of “restraint” developing in the community.

Experience: To start with, illiterate parents were intolerant, badly dressed, angry and abusive in their dealings with the school heads and staff. Under usual circumstances this would have led to a “natural human reaction” impairing the school’s ability to adjust to local cultures in underprivileged communities, and thus impacted its overall ability to provide education. The restraint and positive outlook of TCF staff worked wonders. Once the parents got the feeling of being looked after, and as they saw their children “brightening up,” it was not just their attitude towards TCF members that was transformed, but they became more interested in life generally. In effect, they went to scour the bottoms of their trunks and came back with their “Sunday best.” The anger and abrasiveness that were products of their harsh upbringing and deplorable social milieu began to disappear. The school heads became their guides and counsels. TCF experience has shown that the school can be not just a beacon of knowledge but the very nucleus of social change.

3. Philosophy: The primary schooling curriculum should be uniform across the country, creating standardized quality throughout the system.

Experience: While virtually all Pakistani schools catering to the middle class are based upon a national curriculum, there are wide-ranging disparities in the roll-out of teaching-learning activities in the classroom. This is due not only to poor teacher training and poor monitoring but also a largely absent sense of ownership in the stakeholders. TCF has been able to deliver a uniform quality by addressing all these issues.

4. Philosophy: *The primary curriculum should teach children to be creative and tolerant.*

Experience: The syllabus for the 6-9 year-olds encourages art, handicrafts, and field trips and observation to enhance their creative and management skills. Their homes are now cleaner, and hygiene awareness is increasing. They are making use of available resources in ways that they could not have imagined a few years ago.

5. Philosophy: *Teacher training should be a core function.*

Experience: Teacher training at TCF has been a rewarding experience. All fresh faculty entrants undergo a 12-week pre-service training. In addition, a four-week annual development course is held for all in-service teachers. It is through training that teachers have developed good qualities of leadership, teambuilding, and dedication to the TCF vision and mission. They have shown themselves to be receptive to new ideas and have provided creative solutions through “lateral thinking.”

6. Philosophy: *TCF assets should be leveraged to ensure optimization.*

Experience: Of late, TCF has begun second afternoon shifts in localities where there was severe pressure for enrollment in the main morning shift. Naturally these have been well received in such high-demand communities where waiting lists have run into the hundreds. Although still not as widespread as one would like, recently 11 more schools were added to the list of those operating two shifts, bringing the total to 25, or just about 10 percent of the total system. Besides afternoon shift schooling, pilot programs are underway in health and adult literacy. Results are very encouraging in both areas.

The connection between adult literacy rates and school enrollment of children is an established one. Education level of parents is known to influence the level of education attained by their children. Fortunately, the adult literacy rate in Pakistan has been improving, but at a slow pace. During the last 30 years, the literacy rate has increased from 21 to 43 percent. The high incidence of illiteracy, especially among women, creates an adverse impact on the level of school enrollments and on the

quality of human capital. Poverty also tends to be concentrated in households in which the head of the household is illiterate. Thus, children belonging to such households, trapped in illiteracy and poverty, tend to remain out of school and/or be pushed into child labor with all its attendant consequences.

7. Philosophy: *Schooling should be a neighborhood activity. This will give parents the comfort of safe passage and greatly encourage female enrollment.*

Experience: In view of the TCF philosophy to keep schools located inside or very close to the communities that they serve, TCF has been bussing its teachers while providing walking-distance placements for the students. This has been particularly favorable from the point of view of female-child enrollments which currently stand at 46.4 percent in the TCF system nationwide. This is considerably more than the national average in the public sector and is of vital importance in a country like Pakistan where gender bias has been a major stumbling block in national progress.

It is but natural for every parent to desire a safe passage to and from school. Given the fact that parents of many TCF students leave home early, the surety of safe passage comes from the community.

Being highly motivated, TCF students bond well not only amongst themselves but also with their communities. They come to school well before start time and prefer to stay late. More often than not, before and after school the school playground serves as the neighborhood playground as well.

8. Philosophy: *The maximum amount of money should go to schools for the benefit of children in the school.*

Experience: TCF administrative costs are well below the average of similar organizations in Pakistan. Even after nine years of operation, TCF has been successful in keeping this figure below 10 percent. The exact figure for last year's operation was 7 percent.

9. Philosophy: *All teachers will be female to encourage female enrollment and empower women in the country.*

Experience: Addressing the gender imbalance and poor levels of female empowerment is a cornerstone of any tolerant and forward-looking society. Women teachers have responded well to TCF's invitation. There is negligible turnover amongst TCF faculty members. Many teachers are overcoming great distances and investing as much as three hours every day to and from school.

TCF currently employs almost 2,000 women at middle and low income levels. The economic contribution of these individuals to their own households has given them respect and status within their own families and communities.

10. Philosophy: Demolish the myth "Illiterate Pakistani parents do not want to send children to school."

Experience: Increasing numbers of illiterate Pakistani parents are alive to the need of and deeply interested in sending their children to quality schools. The experience at one TCF school located near a small river not only defies this myth but is a testimony to the desire of individuals and communities alike for improving their lot through education. Parents have devised a mechanism by which they have their children cross a small river in inflatable rubber rafts improvised from the rubber tubes of large truck tires.

BUILDING A CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The importance of building a civil society for the development of its human resource potential and general socio-political stability can hardly be exaggerated. And the linkage of this civil society with the state of educational attainment of that particular community or country is again a foregone fact. One cannot exist without the other.

In recent years Pakistan's national image has not been a positive one. With the militant struggles in Kashmir and Afghanistan that raged unabated throughout the 1990s—and in which there was a certain degree of official government support—Pakistan itself gained an unfavorable image as a retrogressive, intolerant society. Much of this retrogressive, intolerant attitude has a direct nexus with illiteracy.

The International Crisis Group's report on Pakistan's education sector has pointed out the political implications of the education malaise in Pakistan. In summary, it states that:

Pakistan's deteriorating education system has radicalized many young people while failing to equip them with the skills necessary for a modern economy. The public, government-run schools educate the vast majority of children poorly, while poorer families will only send their children to a school system that is relevant to their everyday lives and economic necessities. Public school students are confined to an outdated syllabus and are unable to compete in an increasingly competitive job market against the products of elite private schools that teach in English, follow a different curriculum and have a fee structure that is unaffordable to most families. The public school system's deteriorating infrastructure, falling educational standards and distorted educational content impact mostly, if not entirely, on Pakistan's poor. The failure of the public school system to deliver such education is contributing to the madrassah boom as it is to school dropout rates, child labour, delinquency and crime.¹⁴

CAN TCF BE FAST TRACKED?

At the pace TCF is growing, TCF is set to get to its phase one target of 1000 school units by the year 2015 if the growth is organic. If this program were to be ramped up to get to 1000 schools by year 2010, 500 additional units would have to be built in the next five years.

This will involve a completely new set of challenges. The funding requirement for this additional 500 school units to be set up between now and 2010 would be nearly \$200 million. Even if the first hurdle is successfully crossed, an even bigger challenge of the requisite human resource development will be a tough one to tackle. TCF will have to draw upon its 10-year experience of hiring and training 500–700 teachers per year; and train sufficient master trainers to be able to cope with the additional 800 teachers per annum. The wherewithal to take up this challenge exists but matching physical resources do not. To put the elements in place will be challenging, but possible.

THE WAY FORWARD—INVESTING IN EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

In regard to investing in education, few better lines exist than “If you think education is expensive, try illiteracy.” Investment in human capital has to begin now. For the young child there is no second chance.

If there ever were a time to break the vicious cycles of poverty and intolerance, it is now. Without investing in education, Pakistan may not

be able succeed in achieving its dreams of attaining a modicum of socio-economic stability and progress.

We must make the TCF philosophy and experience in primary and secondary education a benchmark for performance of the Pakistani public and not-for-profit sectors. All recipients of funding from the international donor community should maintain the same standards.

NOTES

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2004*, (New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 2004), accessed at http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/pdf/hdr04_HDI.pdf.
2. Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, *Economic Survey of Pakistan 2003–04*, accessed at <http://www.finance.gov.pk/>, 123.
3. The official poverty line is Rs 646 (US\$10.77) per month per person, with rural and urban figures of Rs 605 (US\$10.08) and Rs 741 (US\$12.68). Social Policy & Development Centre (SPDC), *Social Development in Pakistan*, Annual Review 2004 (Karachi: Social Policy & Development Centre, 2004), 56–57.
4. The last census held in 1998 put the population at 129 million, which has been extrapolated at the rate of growth. Economist Intelligence Unit, Yearbook.
5. The most credible Government of Pakistan policy and statistical compendium, *Economic Survey 2003–04* (released June 2004, page 122) gives enrollment figures up to class 10 as 23.108 million with a breakup as follows: 17.415 million in primary school and 5.693 million in secondary school (i.e., 6–10 grades). Additionally, there are 846,000 students in classes 11 and 12.
6. This figure was obtained by subtracting 23.945 million from the total population aged 4–19, which is estimated at 59.67 million.
7. *Economic Survey 2003–04* gives a figure of Rs 111.475 billion for all education. Many line items need to be subtracted from this figure to reveal the expenditure on primary and secondary education. Even subtracting the Rs 9.783 billion allocated to the Higher Education Commission gives a still high figure of Rs 101.692 billion for pre-tertiary education.
8. *Economic Survey 2003–04* gives GDP as Rs 4,445,805 million (US\$74.097 billion). See Table 1.1 on page 9 of the appendix “Economic and Social Indicators.” Some comparative figures for educational expenditure as a percentage of GDP are: India: 4.1 percent; Nepal, 3.7 percent; Sri Lanka 3.1 percent; and Iran 4.4 percent.
9. International Crisis Group, Report No. 84, *Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector* (Islamabad/Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 2004), ii. Excerpts from this report are reprinted in this volume, beginning on page 169.

Against the Tide

10. Social Policy & Development Centre (SPDC), *The State of Education*, Annual Review 2002–03 (Karachi: Social Policy & Development Centre, 2003), 1.
11. International Crisis Group, 22.
12. PCP is an independent non-profit support organization established in August 2001 to lead philanthropy promotion in Pakistan. It is a member of the governing council of the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium.
13. Some NGOs have chosen non-formal or “baithak” (village square) schools. TCF schools operate in purpose-built buildings with uniforms and other “routine paraphernalia.”
14. International Crisis Group.

REASONS FOR RAGE: REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ENGLISH

TARIQ RAHMAN

Pakistan is a multilingual state with six major languages—Punjabi (spoken by 44.15 percent of a population of 153 million in 2003); Pashto (15.42 percent); Sindhi (14.10); Siraiki (10.53); Urdu (7.57); Balochi (3.57)—and about 57 minor ones (Census 2001). Urdu is the national language and English the official one. The 1973 constitution of the country, which was suspended in part during the military rule of both Generals Zia ul-Haq (1977–1988) and Pervez Musharraf (1999–), is again in force. It provides the following guidelines on language policy:

- a. The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes.
- b. Subject to guideline a. above, the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements for its replacement by Urdu.
- c. Without prejudice to the state of the national language, a provincial assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language (Article 251).

This further relates to education policy and practice as well as employment prospects of educated people, because the medium of instruction and the language of the domains of power—government, bureaucracy, military, judiciary, education, media, research, the corpo-

Tariq Rahman was the first incumbent of the Quaid-i-Azam Chair on Pakistan Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2004–05. He is currently National Distinguished Professor of Linguistics and South Asian Studies at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad. He has published 12 books and dozens of book chapters and articles on literature, language, history, politics, and education, including *Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education, Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* and *Language and Politics in Pakistan*.

rate sector, commerce, etc—are the languages chosen by individuals in order to empower themselves and their children. English is the major language of power and social prestige in Pakistan and remains the preserve of a small elite. The present author believes that no more than two percent of the population is highly fluent in English and uses it as a language of private conversation as well as for more formal occasions. However, the English script is known to all matriculates and people in white collar, and even blue collar, jobs at all levels (17.29 percent in 1998 according to Census 2001: 122).

This essay looks at the education system of Pakistan by focusing on the relationship of English with schooling and socio-economic class, world view (especially militancy and tolerance) and the potential for violence in the country. It also refers in passing to religious education in the Islamic seminaries (*madrassas*) and higher education with a view to determining how they too may be related to the possibility of social unrest and violence in society.

THE CONCEPT OF RAGE

An important assumption of this paper is that social unrest and violence are caused by the perception of injustice in a group defining its identity with reference to language, religion, class or a common perception of shared experience. This group identity is mostly imagined even when some ascribed features make it appear to be primordial (Anderson 1983). Conflict is produced when leaders channel the anger born out of perceived injustice to restructure the pattern of the distribution of power. This has happened when language-based ethnic movements have challenged the Centre in Pakistan (Rahman 1996; Ahmed 1998), but the challenges from the underprivileged have remained under-researched.

Actually the Pakistani peasantry has traditionally believed in fate (*kismet*), which makes it reconcile itself to the injustices of daily existence in a harsh feudal milieu. Since the beginning of recorded history, oral and printed literature has emphasized the arbitrariness of life and encouraged acceptance of injustice as an unalterable and given way of life (Rahman 2002: 495–496). This world view is changing because of education, urbanization and the media, all of which suggest that social mobility is possible, that there may be a rational connection between

poverty and the way wealth is distributed (including taxation, corruption in high places, budgets and consumerism), and that people can change their present and their children's future by activist intervention in society. The perception of injustice causes anger which may lead to violence, as it did in Germany in the 1930s and during the rise of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) during the late 1980s and 1990s in Karachi. In short, literacy does not necessarily lead to peace because, while many illiterate communities were peaceful, these highly literate ones are not. It was precisely because they were literate and urbanized that they were not fatalistic and tended to blame someone for their plight (Jews in Germany, Sindhis or Punjabis in Karachi). In short, education does not in itself lead to tolerance or peace. It is only when the reasons for anger are removed that educating a society can bring about a peaceful society. As it is, the education system of Pakistan, and especially the role of English within the system, has the potential of being perceived as unjust by most people and, therefore, may lead to violence.

MAJOR POLICIES AND THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

The British left behind a legacy of three streams of education roughly divided along socio-economic class lines: the *madrassas* catered to rural and very poor children; the vernacular-medium schooling was for working and lower-middle class children; and the English-medium schools were for the middle and upper classes. Those who overcame the obstacle of English joined their privileged counterparts in the colleges because that is where the vernacular-medium and the English-medium streams met. This system was unjust but has now become even more unjust. Furthermore, more and more people are becoming aware of it and, possibly, responding to it with anger. Pakistani decision-makers followed policies which perpetuated the injustices of this inherited colonial system, and which are described below. These policies were: expansion of education and literacy (modernization); dissemination of Urdu (vernacularization); and privatization and ideological socialization. Let us take them each in turn.

Modernization

All education policy documents of the state emphasize the link between modernization and an educated work force. Achieving hun-

dred percent literacy has been an avowed aim of all governments. This aim has not been achieved even now, though literacy increased from 16 percent in 1951 to 54 percent of the population in 2004. Recently the Pakistani elite has shown a renewed interest in modernization. This has been strengthened by the United States government, which now feels that modernization of education in Pakistan—connected as it is not only with technological sophistication but with liberal values of egalitarianism, democracy and human rights—might be the best way to ensure that Islamic militancy is not exported from the country. Thus a recent bill before the U.S. Congress calls for “efforts to expand and improve the secular system in Pakistan and to develop and utilize a moderate curriculum for private schools in Pakistan.” Although the Education Sector Reform Action Plan (ESR) was approved by President Musharraf on 30 April 2001, it was only after 9/11 that American money started coming in earnest. Thus, between 2005 to 2009, USAID anticipates that \$67 million will be made available every year to bring about the desired changes (Kronstadt 2004). In short, modernization, which was connected only with creating a modern state earlier, is now perceived to be linked to the survival of law and order within the state and peace in the world itself.

Vernacularization

The Pakistani state embarked upon a policy of disseminating Urdu as it was considered an identity symbol, next only in significance to Islam itself, of the Muslims of India during the movement for the creation of Pakistan. Official thinking was that Urdu would be an antidote for language-based ethnic movements which could break up the new state. However, Urdu was opposed in this anti-ethnic role by the Bengali nationalists, leading to a crisis in 1952 when police opened fire, killing students of Dhaka University. Other ethno-nationalists, seeking identity through their indigenous languages, have supported Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi and Brahvi and Siraiki while opposing the perceived hegemony of Urdu.

However, despite this opposition people all over Pakistan have learned Urdu for pragmatic reasons, as it is the language of wider communication within the country. It is disseminated through the government schools, the government colleges and universities which teach all

except technical and scientific subjects in Urdu, the print media, radio and the television. Thus all those who have passed primary school (40 percent) and even illiterates who come in contact with urban people for providing services as well as all city dwellers know Urdu. As Indian films and songs are very popular and they are in a language which is very close to Urdu in its spoken form, Urdu is also spreading through the entertainment industry through the audio and video cassette and CDs. The National Language Authority (*Muqtadra Qaumi Zaban*), the Urdu Science Board and a number of institutions have created both bureaucratic and technical lexicons in Urdu, and it is being used by certain provincial governments as well as the lower courts for all purposes. It is also available for use in the computer. Moreover, Urdu is associated with Islam, being the language of examination for all the registered *madrassas* as well as the medium of instruction and of sermons for most of them. In short, Urdu is officially associated with the nationalist Pakistani identity and unofficially with urbanization and the Islamic identity in Pakistan (for both associations, see Abdullah 1976).

“Urduization” is not only opposed by the language-based ethno-nationalists. It is also resisted, though covertly and not through declared policy statements, by the Westernized English-using elite.

Vernacularization has affected higher education more than school education, which was already conducted in the vernaculars by the time Pakistan was established. Colleges taught the higher secondary classes (11 and 12) as well as the bachelors level (13 and 14) in English, as did the universities at the masters level (15 and 16). This started changing as more and more of the non-scientific subjects came to be taught in the vernaculars (Urdu, except in parts of Sindh where Sindhi was used). Nowadays, all subjects except the sciences, engineering and medicine are taught in the vernaculars. This has created the perception that the scientific subjects are more academically demanding, and hence more financially rewarding, than the others. Rather than creating more chances of advancement for a larger number of students than before, this policy has “ghettoized” them as well as the government educational institutions which teach through the vernaculars. Those who want to escape from this “ghetto” either tend to avoid the humanities and the social sciences altogether, or buy them at exorbitant rates from the private sector to which we turn now.

Privatization

Though it is only recently that the Ministry of Education has officially recognized the trend towards the privatization of education at all levels, there have been private, expensive, elitist schools in the country ever since its inception. When controlled by the Christian missionaries, they were said to be necessary in the name of religious tolerance (though they catered more to the Pakistani Muslim elite's children than to Christians), while those administered or controlled by the armed forces (public schools and cadet colleges) were said to be necessary for a modernizing country since they prepared leaders. The armed forces now control or influence—through senior military officers who are on their boards of governors or principals—most of the cadet colleges and elitist public schools in the country. While the education policy documents declare that these institutions are financed by the fees paid by their pupils, the present researcher estimated that the average cost per student per year in 2003 was 14,171 rupees, whereas that of the Urdu-medium schools was 2,264.5 (Annex 2). Besides, these institutions are given land as grants at very subsidized rates as well as gifts and other forms of patronage. The armed forces also control federal government educational institutions in cantonments and garrisons, run their own schools and colleges, and also control a huge educational network through their philanthropic services run mostly by retired officers (the army's Fauji Foundation, the air force's Shaheen Foundation, and the navy's Bahria Foundation) (Rahman 2004: 53–54).

Besides the armed forces, elitist schools are owned as business empires with campuses in most big cities of Pakistan. These schools charge exorbitant tuition fees and prepare their students for the British “O” and “A” level examinations. Not all private schools are elitist or very expensive. Leaving aside the *madrassas*, which are given attention elsewhere, there are a large number of non-elitist English-medium schools in all cities and even small towns of the country. They cater to those who cannot afford the elitist schools but want to give their children better chances in life by teaching them English. Their fees, though far less than those of their elitist counterparts, are still forbidding for their impecunious clientele. Ironically, they do not teach good English, as efficiency in that language is a product of exposure to it at home and in the peer group, which is available only to the Westernized urban elite.

Privatization is now taking place in the field of higher education. There were 55 public and 51 recognized private sector universities in 2005 while there were only seven public and no private ones in 1971, when Bangladesh became a separate country and the area now called Pakistan carried the name of the country (HEC 2005). The first private university, the Aga Khan University in Karachi, was established in 1983. It taught only medicine and created two trends: first, that private entrepreneurs could establish a university; and second, that an institution of that name could teach only one subject. Soon universities teaching lucrative, market-oriented subjects like business studies, computers and engineering proliferated. They charge very high fees, thus making them almost unaffordable for even the middle classes, which undergo much self-sacrifice to enroll their children in these institutions.

The armed forces, despite being organizations of the state, entered the business of higher education as entrepreneurs. There are at present five universities controlled directly or indirectly by the armed forces. While some cater primarily to the needs of the armed forces themselves, allowing civilian students to enroll only if there are places after their own students are accommodated, most function like private institutions catering primarily to civilian students who can afford their high fees.

All private sector universities attract students because they use English as a medium of instruction for all subjects and provide the kind of elitist infrastructure and facilities which distinguish the elite from the masses (such as air conditioning).

Ideological Socialization

The state uses education to create a cohesive national identity transcending ethnic identities in which Urdu and Islam are used as unifying symbols. The textbooks of social studies, history and languages are informed by this theme. The other major theme informing them is that of creating support for the garrison state, which involves glorification of war and the military. Islam, the history of Muslim conquests and rulers as well as the Pakistan movement are pressed into legitimating these concerns. Although General Zia ul-Haq's eleven-year rule strengthened Islamization of the curricula, these trends were manifested in the early fifties when the first educational policies were created. The textbooks of government schools, and especially the subject of Pakistan Studies, carry

the major part of the ideological burden. Urdu, which is taught to all students, is the main ideology-carrying language.

The main target of the ideological impact is the government school and college—i.e., working and lower-middle class students. Students of elitist English-medium schools and private colleges do not follow the government curricula except in the subjects of Pakistan Studies, Urdu and Islamic Studies. Thus, both through the government-controlled education and media, the masses are exposed to anti-India, pro-military and militant values which do not appear to be conducive to creating permanent peace in South Asia or the world.

THE PERCEPTION OF INJUSTICE AND EDUCATION POLICY

As we have seen earlier, the Pakistani elite has invested in an elitist system of education through the medium of English while allowing most Pakistanis to remain uneducated, seek *madrassa* education or remain confined to the “ghetto” of vernacular-medium schooling, sub-standard so-called English-medium schooling and sub-standard institutions of higher education. English is the main filtering device for “elite closure,” defined as limiting the “access of non-elite groups to political position and socio-economic advancement” (Scotton 1993: 149). This policy makes English both resented and desired at the same time. While people recognize the need to give the great advantage of knowing English to their children at the pragmatic level, they also wish that English were not the language of powerful and lucrative employment (Annex 3). In the early 1960s students protested against Ayub Khan’s education policies. One of their demands was to abolish the elitist English-medium schools. Similarly, during the agitation against the privatization of universities in 2002, students protested against the unaffordable fees of the new universities and especially against the idea that some of the public universities would be privatized.

OTHER COSTS OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE POLICIES

Other costs of language and education policies are cultural and psychological. For instance, the policy of promoting Urdu at the cost of the indigenous languages of the people has increased the ethnic opposition to Urdu on the one hand while creating contempt for the indigenous identity on the other. This is most pronounced in the Punjab, where Punjabi is regarded as a sign of rusticity, lack of sophistication and lack of good

breeding (Mansoor 1993). The ethnic activists of the other languages—Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi and to some extent Siraiki—have managed to create a sense of pride in their identity and language, but they too acknowledge the pragmatic value of Urdu and remain impressed with English. This increases the pressure of English which, being the language of globalization, already threatens most of the world's languages. As the concept of language rights has not emerged in Pakistan and the demand for indigenous languages is seen only as part of ethnic resistance to the Centre, the languages of the country do not have the chance of being written down, taught even at the elementary level, or promoted in the media. This will make some of the minor languages obsolete. Though the major languages will survive as spoken mother-tongues because of their size, even they will become so mixed up with words of Urdu and English as to lose their present identity.

Another consequence of privatization and the elite's support of and investment in English is to increase the ideological polarization between the different socio-economic classes. In two surveys of school students from the *madrassas*, the vernacular-medium schools and the elitist English-medium schools, one taken in 1999 and the other in 2003, it was found that the *madrassa* products were most intolerant of religious minorities in Pakistan and most supportive of a militant policy towards India in relation to Kashmir. The first survey is more detailed (Rahman 2002: Annex 14) but does not cover the views of teachers, while the second one is confined only to the urban parts of the Punjab and the NWFP but does reflect the opinions of the faculty which are close, and sometimes less liberal than their students (Rahman 2004: 155–188).

Still other problems are linked with increasing computerization and globalization. As the language of both is predominantly English with Urdu being in the experimental stages, most Pakistani students have yet to learn anything about computers which, indeed, are not available to them either at home or in their schools, colleges and even universities. Urban males do, however, encounter computers in internet cafes where they are seen as devices for playing games or gaining access to pornography. Students from English-medium institutions do, however, have access to computers both at home and in their educational institutions. They use them for gaining knowledge but even more for integrating with the globalized (mostly American) culture, which distances them even more from

their vernacular-educated and *madrassa*-educated counterparts than ever before. In short, the English-vernacular divide, which is also the class divide, is now also expressed as the digital divide.

ISLAMIC MILITANCY AND EDUCATION

Since 9/11 there has been much media coverage of the *madrassas* in Pakistan. They are blamed for sectarian conflict (between the two major sects of Sunnis and Shias) as well as exporting terrorism across the Line of Control into Indian-controlled Kashmir. That is why there is so much interest among U.S. as well as Pakistani policymakers to modify their curricula.

The *madrassas* follow a modified form of the traditional, eighteenth century curriculum called the *Dars-I Nizami* (Robinson 2002: 53) in which the canonical Arabic texts, which are memorized, are symbolic of valorized cultural memory and continuity. They also have polemical texts in Urdu to refute what they see as heresy and Western ideas. The emphasis on *bellum justum* (*Jihad*), which is blamed for terrorism in the press, does not come from the traditional texts but from extra-curricular pamphlets in Urdu and, even more importantly, from warriors back from Afghanistan, Kashmir or other battlefields. That is why changes in the curricula of the *madrassas* will not change their attitude towards armed conflict; that will require creating new political realities, such as peaceful settlements in Kashmir, Palestine, Chechnya and other flashpoints in the Muslim world. However, it is beyond the scope of this essay to suggest how American (and global) policies should change in order to appear more just to Muslims and how this can reduce Muslim anger. What may be suggested here is how to deal with the Pakistani *madrassas* at present.

What is often forgotten, however, is that the *madrassas* contribute only slightly to Islamic militancy, though their numbers increased from 2,801 to 9,880 because of state patronage between 1988 to 2002 (Rahman 2004: 190–191). However, even in 2002 there were only between 1.5 to 1.7 million students in them (PIHS 2002 and ICG 2002: 2). Militants also come from secular schools and range from being dropouts to the highly educated. Olivier Roy, for instance, points out that the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were technologically modernized and some even led secular lives. He tells us that, except for the Saudis, most activists of Muslim militant organizations study technology, computing, or town planning, as the

World Center pilots had done (Roy 2004: 310). The clergy has not resisted technology, and Ayatollah Khomeini led his movement against the shah of Iran through a highly effective use of the audio tape. The al-Qaeda and other Islamic militant organizations also use the internet, cell phones and, of course, modern weaponry. As such, militants need the kind of knowledge which the traditional, conservative *madrassa* does not supply.

This is where elitist decisionmakers looking after their short-term, as opposed to long-term, interests come in. Such an intervention occurred in the eighties when the United States sent in money to train the Afghan Islamic forces to fight their proxy war against the Soviet Union. It happened again over a long time when the Pakistani decision makers trained the same kind of people, sometimes from the *madrassas* and sometimes from the government schools, to fight a long covert war for Kashmir with India. Both these interventions, combined with the confidence produced by the victories of the clergy in Iran and Afghanistan, gave the Islamic forces the confidence and power to challenge the secular governing elite in Pakistan and the global dominance of the West, especially the United States. But the point is that the *madrassas*, which were basically conservative institutions, did not become militant by themselves. They were helped to change their identity by outside forces, among which the most important role was played by the secular ruling elites of both the United States and Pakistan.

PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

All policies have unintended consequences and one can never be sure whether the optimistic scenario one envisages will actually come about. Below I have presented both an optimistic and a pessimistic scenario. The latter is based on counter-arguments to my own preferred proposals, so that no aspect of the possible outcomes of the new policies may be overlooked.

The proposals fall under three heads. First, the *madrassas* and higher education are given very brief consideration. After that, more detailed analysis is offered of the main focus of this essay, the system of schooling with reference to the use of English.

Madrassas

As the *Dars-I-Nizami* does not give any special emphasis to *jihad*, no change need be sought in the traditional curriculum. Any attempt to

change it will merely enrage the clergy and will not lead to the creation of less militant students. English may, however, be introduced by positive inducements, but the books and the teachers should not come from the *madrassas* themselves as they do at present. Indeed, instead of relying merely on books, English should be taught through documentaries, films based on historical events, literary classics and interaction. The idea is to bring *madrassa* students into contact with discourses created in cultures which value human rights, women's rights and democracy. At present they are not even allowed to be exposed to the television or radio, in order that they receive ideas only from the religious right wing around them.

As many *madrassas* will probably not allow such dilution of their ideological training, the number of children they influence may be reduced. This can be done in the long term by reducing poverty and providing government schools for all children. These schools should teach textbooks valuing peace and human rights and should take over the welfare state functions of the *madrassas* (providing meals, shelter, and books free of cost).

Higher Education

The economy of Pakistan cannot sustain over 50 world-class universities. It can probably sustain at least two such institutions. These institutions should give such attractive salaries and prestigious positions to the faculty as to attract the most talented young people who emigrate to the West, go into the corporate sector or private universities. The most published scholars and scientists too should be so handsomely rewarded that these universities should be the most coveted places in the country. This, combined with state-of-the-art libraries and laboratories, will make at least two public sector universities better than the best of the private sector ones. If these universities are to remain affordable for most Pakistanis, they will have to be highly subsidized by the state, but this will be worth doing if universities are not be ghettoized and students denied a good education and commensurate jobs only because they are poor or even middle class (because the fees of the most expensive private universities are unaffordable even for the middle class). As more and more students find the doors of the best education, and hence jobs, closed upon them for no fault of their own, they perceive the privatization of higher education as injustice and hence anger is increasing in the society.

A few private universities that teach the basic sciences, humanities, arts and technology may also be granted autonomy as universities. All other public and private institutions of higher education must be affiliated with a board of higher education so as to ensure that their standard of education is roughly similar and standardized. They must also have scholarships and fee waivers for bright but impecunious students.

Schooling and English

Seeing the indifference to the local languages and conscious that the present patronage of English and its valorization has weakened the masses and keeps the hegemony of the elite intact, the present author suggests that English-medium elitist schools be phased out. Urdu and other Pakistani languages should be used in the domains of power at all levels while, at the same time, English should be taught as a subject through modern means of instruction (film, cassette, DVD, drama, radio, interaction) and should be spread out to all children.

The advantages of such policies may be as follows:

- a. Power will be redistributed more justly among the lower middle and middle classes instead of circulating, at least as far as the corporate and the fashionable private sector is concerned, among the Westernized elite.
- b. There may be more cultural authenticity and multiculturalism, which the globalized culture, mainly influenced by American trends and modes of thinking, is presently threatening.
- c. As English is spread out more widely and through contemporary, interactive methods, religious and vernacular-medium students will be exposed to liberal, democratic values of egalitarianism, women's rights and human rights. These students at present, as we have seen, are kept in ideological ghettos provided by the *madrassas* and the vernacular-medium schools. This may create a more tolerant and less militant society which will support policies of peace and peaceful coexistence within Pakistan and abroad. In short English, if spread out in a just and fair manner, will be an antidote to intolerance and militancy.

This is the optimistic scenario which the present author wishes and hopes for. However, there is a pessimistic scenario also which should be mentioned for a fair appraisal of these policies. This is as follows:

- a. If the vernacular proto-elite is empowered, it may bring its traditional, male-dominating values to the fore and curtail women's rights even further. Moreover, since most discourses in Urdu which this proto-elite has been exposed to are nationalistic and Islam has been used by the Pakistani state to seek legitimacy, it is likely to support religious intolerance, sectarian infighting, and militancy towards India. It may even support globalized Islamic militancy being inspired by Huntingtonian (and Osama bin Laden's) views of the antagonism between the West and Islam.
- b. The Westernized elite, being denied jobs in Pakistan, will abandon the country. The proto-elite which will learn English only as a school subject will not be proficient enough to replace the departed Western elite. This will mean that Pakistan will lose whatever edge it has at the moment over countries which do not inherit English as a legacy of history. This will be a great loss for the country.
- c. The already Islamized young students who will learn to use the internet if English is made available to them may not be influenced by the liberal values they come across. Instead they may join the "virtual ummah" available on the internet and become part of globalized Islam.

This last point needs elaboration. The concept of globalization with reference to Islam has been explained by Olivier Roy in his book *Globalized Islam* (Roy 2004). Roy points out that in this age of worker mobility and rapid communication, Muslims live in Western countries. They are "deterritorialized" and hence create a globalized version of their religion. The language of this globalized Islam is English and the medium is both the printing press and the internet. The theoretical rationalization is to go back to the fundamental sources (Quran and the *Hadith*) and to leave out the different traditions of Muslim culture(s). Thus not only the ethnic languages, cuisine, customs and traditions of Muslim cultural groups are purged, but even the cult of mystic saints and the debates of the medieval *ulema* are ignored or repressed. This neofundamentalist interpretation is spread out to the virtual religious

community (the *ummah*) operating in English through the internet. This appeals powerfully to the Muslims in Western lands because they seek an identity which asserts their rights and provides some defense against the forces of globalization (Roy 2004: 309).

Moreover, the Islamic preachers, who were restricted to their language community, now have a wider influence because they are translated into English. Hence, the power of neofundamentalist Islam may be growing. As Roy tells us, the “aged Wahabi Sheikhs based in Saudi Arabia rely on their English-speaking disciples to be translated but also to be informed” (Roy 2004: 169). This opens up the possibility of Pakistani religious students, hitherto shut out from the rest of the world because of their lack of knowledge of English and unfamiliarity with the internet, becoming part of a neofundamentalist (possibly militant) Islamic movement instead of remaining concerned with local, folk or typically South Asian Islamic movements.

These possibilities suggest that some of the policies regarding the use of English in the schooling system suggested above may backfire and, instead of creating a more just and tolerant Pakistan, may end up doing just the opposite. However, the present author feels that the gamble is worth the risk, especially if the schools expose the students to textbooks, films, verbal and other discourses promoting democratic and peaceful values, while giving the appearance of egalitarianism and justice through the education system.

CONCLUSION

Language policy and education, as we have seen, are subordinated to the class interests of the urban, professional, English-using elite in Pakistan. For its political interests this elite has been using the name of Islam, and has strengthened the religious lobby, for many years. Given the state’s encouragement of privatization in the recent past, this seems to be a future trend which can have negative consequences for peace in South Asia and the world. Privatization, with its concomitant strengthening of English as an elitist preserve, will lead to “ghettoization” in Pakistan’s public educational institutions and increase anger among the educated, unemployed workforce of the country. This will have several consequences. First, the most educated people will lose faith in the country and give up on it. Second, the ideological polarization between the dif-

ferent socio-economic classes will increase even further. And, above all, the incentive for reforming Pakistan's educational system and making it more conducive for creating a tolerant and peaceful society will decrease.

Another trend will be to strengthen the power of the military in Pakistan. As more and more elitist schools and universities pass into the hands of the military, the number of teachers, administrators and business concerns under the patronage of the military will increase. More students will also be influenced by them. This will privilege the military's views about national interest, the future of the country and economic priorities. This may dilute ideas of civilian supremacy which underpin democracies and jeopardize the chances of lasting peace in South Asia.

Most of these possibilities do not bode well for the future of the country, but it is only by recognizing them that potentially negative language and educational policies may be reversed. The present author has suggested that private, elitist, English-medium schools be phased out and state-influenced ones (cadet colleges and public schools) be replaced with merit-based vernacular-medium schools. Moreover, English need not be taught very well to a small elite, but it must be spread out as widely as possible, and especially through innovative methods, to all school children. This will appear just to most people and reduce the perception of injustice and, hence, anger, which may create student militancy, possibly expressed through the idiom of an Islamic revolution, in Pakistan. On the negative side, the author has admitted that this policy may empower the vernacular proto-elite which may strengthen traditional values and radicalize the Islamist students even further by eroding their traditional religious culture and bringing them into contact with neo-fundamentalist thought through the internet. The author recognizes these possibilities but hopes that the creation of a more just educational system in Pakistan will reduce the potential for violence within Pakistan and its possible spillover to other parts of the world.

The following compares the number of students who appear in the matriculation (10th class) examination of the Pakistani system of education with those who appear in the British school-leaving examinations, which require a very high standard of English.

Annex I. Ratio of Pakistani School Examinees to British Ones, 2002

Pakistani Matriculation (Secondary School Certificate)	1,026,805	98.95%
British General Certificate of Education, or "O" Level	10,546	1.05%
Pakistani Intermediate (Higher Secondary School Certificate [F.A./F.Sc.])	502,209	98.88%
British Advanced School Leaving Certificate, or "A" Level	5,680	1.12%

Sources: For SSC/HSSC 24 BISE's of Pakistan. Data Base of Inter-Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad. For "O" and "A" Level, British Council, Examination Section, Islamabad, May 2004.

Annex 2. Differences in Costs in Major Types of Educational Institutions

Institution	Average cost per student per year	Payer(s)	Cost to the state, per student
Madrasahs	5,714 (includes board and lodging)	Philanthropists + religious organizations	*Rs. 1.55 in 2001-02. An additional sum of Rs. 28.60 for subsidies on computers, books, etc. in some madrasahs in 2003-04.
Urdu-medium Schools	2264.5 (only tuition)	State	2264.5
Elitist English-medium schools	96,000-for "A" level and 36,000 for other levels (only tuition)	Parents	None reported except subsidized land in some cantonments.
Cadet colleges/ public schools	90,061 (tuition and all facilities).	Parents + state (average of 6 cadet colleges + 1 public school)	14,171 (average of 5 cadet colleges only)

* The cost per student per year in the madrasahs is calculated for all 1,065,277 students reported in 2000. In 2001-02 a sum of Rs. 1,654,000 was given by the government to those madrasahs which accepted financial help. In 2003-04 Rs. 30.45 million was to have been given in addition for computerization and modernization of textbooks. However, not all students receive this subsidy as their madrasahs refuse government help (these figures are from IPS 2002: tables 1.17 and 1.19).

The present author carried out a survey of 954 students in 1999-2000 (described in detail in Rahman 2002) which gave the following results:

Annex 3. Pakistani Students' Attitudes Towards English

	Madrassas			ENGLISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS		
	Sindhi- medium schools (N=131)	Urdu- medium schools (N=520)	Elitist (N=97)	Cadet college (N=86)	Ordinary (N=119)	
1. What should be the medium of instruction in schools?						
Urdu	43.51	9.09	4.12	23.26	24.37	
English	0.76	33.33	79.38	67.44	47.06	
Mother Tongue	0.76	15.15	2.06	Nil	1.68	
Arabic	25.19	Nil	Nil	Nil	0.84	
No response	16.79	37.88	5.15	Nil	8.40	
2. Do you think higher jobs in Pakistan should be available in English?						
Yes	10.69	30.30	72.16	70.93	45.38	
No	89.31	63.64	27.84	29.07	53.78	
NR	Nil	6.06	Nil	Nil	0.84	
3. Should English-medium school be abolished?						
Yes	49.62	13.64	2.06	12.79	5.88	
No	49.62	84.09	97.94	86.05	93.28	
NR	00.76	2.27	Nil	1.16	0.84	

Note: The results do not add up to 100 in some cases because those choosing two or more languages have been ignored.

Source: Rahman 2002: Appendix-14

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EDUCATION SECTOR REFORMS IN PAKISTAN: DEMAND GENERATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE RECIPE

JONATHAN MITCHELL, SALMAN HUMAYUN, AND IRFAN MUZAFFAR

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has witnessed over 15 policy regimes guiding education improvement in Pakistan. Each policy has been ambitious in its targets and critical of past failures. A survey conducted a few years ago summed up the situation as follows:

A common feature of all policies, plans, programs, and schemes is that all of them, with the sole exception of the Second Five Year Plan, failed to achieve their objectives. The Third Plan placed a target of 70 percent [gross] primary enrollment rate; yet the same at the beginning of the Fifth Plan was 54 percent. The Fifth Plan set the target 100 percent by 1987, which was pushed forward to 1992 by the 1979 Education Policy; yet the same was 60 percent at the beginning of the Seventh Plan in 1988. The Seventh Plan set the target at 100 percent by 1993; yet the rate in 1998 was 69 percent. The 1992 Education Policy pushed forward the target of 100 percent to 2002, while the 1998 Policy lowered the target to 90 percent by 2003.¹

Even large infusions of international donor and multilateral bank resources have failed to significantly influence Pakistan's education sector. Despite the expenditure of Rs. 327 billion under the Social Action Plan in the 1990s, enrollment rates dropped.² Thus education in Pakistan continues to languish while investment in education in Pakistan has fallen

Jonathan Mitchell is senior education scientist at the Research Triangle Institute and manager for the Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) project, an initiative that seeks to empower local Pakistani actors within and outside the educational system to identify and solve their own problems. **Salman Humayun** is a political sociologist and deputy chief of party for ESRA. **Irfan Muzaffar** is the Islamabad-based director of ESRA's Office of Technical Support.

from 2.7 percent of GDP in 1985 to 1.8 percent in 2001.³ The results are captured in the education statistics: of the population over ten years of age, only 51 percent have ever attended school and only 38 percent have completed class five, whereas net enrollment rates at the primary level are an appallingly low 42 percent (gross rate 72 percent).⁴ Compounding this is the widespread political appointment of teachers to government schools in an environment where at all levels there is little accountability or risk of sanction for poor performance or absence. Thus absenteeism is rampant. Teachers don't have to teach, supervisors don't have to supervise, planners don't have to plan, and in many cases they don't. Compounding this is a very badly resourced system with a high percentage of schools with inadequate space or without shelter of any kind, with no water or latrines or furniture, and few materials or books. It is no wonder that the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index ranks Pakistan at 142 out of 177 countries across the world.

The reasons for these failures are complex and beyond the scope of this essay. Among the factors frequently cited are a lack of political will and the interference and resistance of vested interests opposed to reform attempts. These may well be the fundamental causes, but they do not lend themselves to ready solutions. Yet a solution must be found if Pakistan's human capital base is to meet its manpower needs for the future.

This essay contends that reform efforts can yield the greatest and most sustainable outcomes if they break out of a narrow technical and supply driven approach to harness public demand and collective action as tools for positive change. If the struggle for education reform is to take on the character of a demand-based collective action, ordinary citizens will have to come forward and articulate demands for education as moral and legal claims. Such collective action need not necessarily be confrontational; it can be successfully formulated within existing rules and procedures. Recognition of education as a fundamental right in the constitution, government declarations and policy documents, and decentralization of education as part of the overall policy of devolution together allow citizens to work for reform in education. This can happen by utilizing the enabling policy environment, legal guarantees, rules, and regulations to push education up the priority list as a central social issue and citizen demand.

Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to provide a practical way forward for education in Pakistan in the form of informed demand and pro-

cedural engagement that can serve as an alternative or supplement to more traditional reform approaches. It outlines how citizen demand for delivery of quality educational services, articulated through collective public action and processed through procedural engagement, provides a strategic entry point for sustainable reforms.

THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS FOR EFFECTIVE DEMAND

The Pakistani political system is remarkably responsive to demand, and the current state of education in Pakistan is the result of effective demand. Traditionally, however, this demand has been the demand of individuals rather than more widespread popular demand. By way of example, politicians gain votes by securing government employment for members of their constituency, thus capitalizing on the demand for jobs in an environment of high unemployment. In the case of education, this leads to a large number of teachers who are incompetent and uninterested in their profession and whose performance remains unaffected by training programs. If the demand for quality education by many were greater than the demand for jobs by a few, the outcome could be different. The challenge is to generate this demand and to give it effective channels for expression.

Effective demand requires the following conditions:

1. An environment responsive to demand
2. Demand agents/articulators
3. A forum for demand articulation
4. A means to aggregate demand
5. Tools for informing demand
6. Channels for articulating demand
7. Links with the political process

Many of these ingredients already exist in the Pakistani context as described below.

1. An Environment Responsive to Demand

Historically, Pakistan's political structure has not been responsive to local popular demand. Important decisions regarding education policy and resource allocation were taken in distant provincial capitals with little thought to local needs or aspirations. This has changed radically with the

introduction of Local Government Ordinance (LGO) in 2001, by which many important powers and responsibilities were devolved down to the district level with a locally elected district government replacing the traditional deputy commissioner.

For the first time in its history, Pakistan has elected district governments with powers to divide up the development budget as they see fit. In principle, the elected members of the district assembly approve the division of budgetary resources between health, education and civil works, and, if so inclined, can allocate increased resources for education. The key is that district assembly members are elected at the Union Council level, ensuring that they are aware of local demands. These people are politicians with re-election on their minds and are keen to be seen as the one who delivered. If voters want improvements in education, their representatives wish to be seen delivering such improvements. Thus, with devolution Pakistan has created an ideal environment for demand-led reform in education.

In addition to devolution of power, a number of policy measures have helped create structures for people to participate in development processes and also voice their demands and aspirations. Take the example of School Management Committees (SMCs). Comprehensive notifications on SMCs have given adequate legal cover to what could become a very potent channel for demand articulation and citizen-led education reforms.⁵ Although the scope and mandate of SMCs varies across the provinces, nevertheless legal instruments provide them reasonable space to take on the role of change agent for school improvement. When the SMC mandate is placed against the backdrop of devolution, SMCs could become one of the most important actors in the field.

Another important development is the enactment in 2001 of the Freedom of Information Ordinance. This has made it mandatory for government departments and ministries to furnish information to ordinary citizens as and when they demand within 21 days. The Ordinance has put in place clear rules and mechanisms through which citizens can access information that affects their lives. This has created strong possibilities for a more accountable and transparent system. The scope of the ordinance is currently limited to federal subjects, but federal grants to provinces and districts for education reforms are clearly covered within the scope of the ordinance. Citizens can use different provisions of the

ordinance to ask for the performance under federal Education Sector Reform grants, for instance.

Similarly, the liberalization of media policy in Pakistan has led to an exponential growth in electronic media channels in Pakistan. The state monopoly on airwaves has given way to an open environment allowing private entities to set up radio and TV stations, including many local and regional channels. People have already started experiencing a qualitative change in the coverage of local issues in discussions arranged by local FM radio channels. The mushrooming of new media, both print and electronic, not only allows greater access to information, it offers greater opportunities for ordinary citizens to voice their views, demands and opinions.

These developments at the local level in Pakistan have together created institutions and channels through which local demand can influence local government decisions and policies. These have not existed in the past, and they present new opportunities for demand-led change.

2. Demand Agents/Articulators

There is no shortage of demand for education in Pakistan. Parents across the country have come to realize that a good education will be critical for their children to take advantage of new opportunities the future will bring. One compelling piece of evidence for this is the dramatic rise in private schools and their enrollment. According to the 2001 Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS), 28 percent of enrolled Pakistani children are in private schools. In urban areas the figure is more than 50 percent. This is a stunning statistic, reflecting the loss of public confidence in public education on one hand, and a testament to the demand for quality education on the other. Many parents send their children to private schools at great cost and sacrifice because these schools have been sensitive to parental demands by delivering what parents perceive to be relevant, quality education.⁶ There is certainly high demand for quality education among this group. Unfortunately, this group has found an outlet for its demand and no longer has a stake in public education reform.

Fortunately demand for quality education is not limited to those sending their children to private schools. Parents of children in government schools also demand quality, but options to express this demand have not been available. They cannot influence the education department and for

them the private school option is either not available or is not affordable. High dropout or low participation rates do not reflect a lack of demand for good education. They reflect parental discouragement with the government school system and a sense of powerlessness to bring about positive change. In fact, the overwhelming majority of Pakistani parents care very much about their children's education. They are the only ones with a personal stake in preparing their children for the future, and most are willing to give of their time and resources if they believe these efforts will result in a tangible improvement in their child's school experience. Parents want better schools, they have a personal stake in meaningful education reform, and, most importantly, there are many millions of them, every one a potential voter—a potential voter for those responsible for allocating resources for education. The necessary source of demand for education reform is already widespread. What has been missing is the means for channeling it into a force for meaningful change.

3. A Forum for Demand Articulation

Demand for good education needs to be built around collective interests rather than merely the personal stakes of individual parents. Individual parents cannot influence the system. School Management Committees can be the first layer in aggregating and organizing widespread demand for educational change.

SMCs have had a checkered history in Pakistan. Originally successfully pioneered by the Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan in the Northern Areas and Chitral, SMCs suddenly became a fashionable element of education reform, and were declared into existence in schools across the country. The roles of SMCs were poorly defined and even more poorly communicated. SMCs were given very little to do (check school registers, keep the school clean, monitor teacher attendance, etc.—nothing that resulted in a tangible improvement in the school). There was little or nothing in the way of resources to take on meaningful tasks, and often their legal status was uncertain (allowing teachers to challenge their presence in the school, for instance). Gradually most SMCs became irrelevant, and the idea was viewed as a failure.

More recently, provincial and district governments have rediscovered SMCs. The legal frameworks have been strengthened, provisions for the regular selection of members have been established, and their responsi-

bilities have been better delineated and expanded. New authorities include the right to hire contract teachers, the right to receive funds from any source including government and donors, and the right to undertake construction.⁷

These developments open up many possibilities. In Sindh and Baluchistan the USAID-funded Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) project is working with SMCs to outline a vision for their school delineating what they would like their school to become over the next 15 to 20 years.⁸ This is followed by the SMC putting together a school improvement plan on the basis of which they can apply for a school improvement grant to be distributed through the district government. It will take this kind of nurturing to bring SMCs to the stage of being effective partners in basic school improvement, but it can be very effective, as the experience of the World Bank-supported Punjab Education Reform Support Program has shown. Under this program some SMCs have reached the stage of being able to effectively utilize government grants of up to Rs. 400,000, and have become effective partners in school improvement.

It is remarkable what an SMC can accomplish even with a small grant. Toilets and boundary walls get built, the school may get a water supply, walls are whitewashed, furniture is purchased or repaired, teaching supplies are procured, and the appearance and functionality of the school can be quickly and visibly improved in ways that the government has been unable to achieve. This type of activity that results in tangible improvements in the school gives confidence to SMC members that their efforts are effective and valuable. They get the sense that their involvement makes a difference, and their willingness to participate increases dramatically.

Exciting as this may be, active SMCs on their own do not lead to real education sector reform. They can only influence their school and often this is limited to physical inputs. They cannot influence education budgets, the antics of the teacher's union, local or regional inequities in the distribution in resources, needed changes in the curriculum, or the political appointment of teachers. SMCs need to combine, become informed and master a number of political tools to become effective agents of change in the political-economic arena. This can begin with the formation of associations of SMCs.

4. A Means to Aggregate Demand

The lowest level of political representation in Pakistan is the Union Council (UC) with 21 members or councilors. Although UC populations vary considerably, they typically represent 20 or so villages. Each UC councilor is a member of each SMC in his/her constituency, giving the elected UC a direct link to each school. The UC thus presents a natural level at which to form an association of SMCs with one representative from each SMC. This association of SMCs can become a legal entity by registering as a Citizen's Community Board with the right to submit education development proposals to the UC or Tehsil or District for direct funding.⁹ The proposals can thus reflect education needs at the UC level rather than just at the level of the individual school.

Formation of a CCB is not the only advantage of having the association of SMCs at the UC level. The association forms the initial step in aggregating demand at the UC level. The UC is made up of members of the SMCs in this association, and this represents the first direct link between parents, schools and the elected government. The association can thus force UC-level discussion on the state of education at the UC and leverage UC-level action. It can push the UC nazim to raise education issues in his/her capacity as a member of the district assembly where the district education budget is decided. It can also use the UC nazim as an advocate for district funding of SMC association proposals for school improvement funding.

With this level of aggregation SMCs can begin to affect decisions at the district level, but only in a small way. Such an association would still be unable to bring significant pressure on the district education department to improve its level of planning, equity in resource allocation or better school supervision and support. The association needs information and a means of using that information to engage with government departments.

5. Tools for Informing Demand

Parents frequently make demands on the education department for additional teachers, furniture, repairs or new physical infrastructure. The standard response they get is that there is a ban on hiring, which is true, and that there are no resources for repairs or construction, also true. What these responses conceal is that some schools are over-staffed

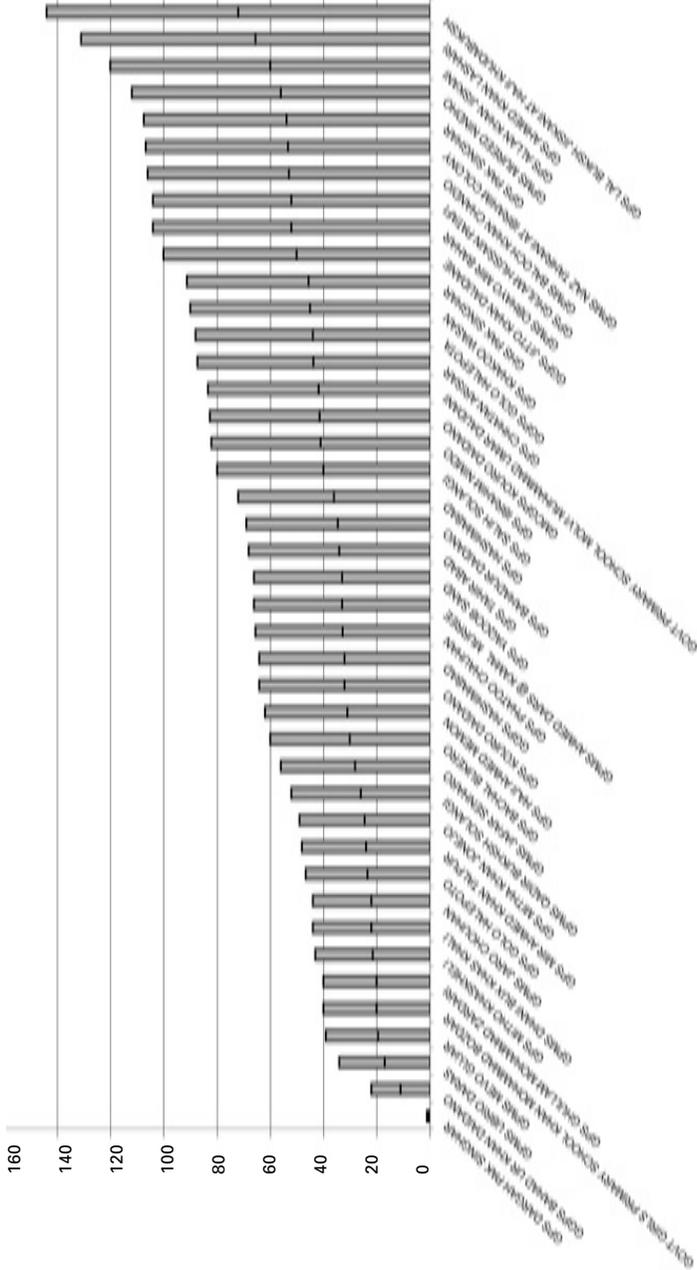
and resources often go where they are less needed. Their demands come to nothing as parents do not have the information to challenge the answers. The demands of associations of SMCs needs to be better informed, and for that they need access to information as well as skills in understanding and using it.

An association of SMCs would have access to enrollment and physical facility information for each of their schools, but simply by looking at enrollment, staffing and physical facility figures, members would have great difficulty comparing their schools or determining which schools were in the most need of additional resources. This inability is also true for most members of the education department. It is very difficult to identify trends or outliers by casually examining columns of numbers. However, it is a simple matter to convert school data into information products that are readily useable by people who are even illiterate and innumerate.

One example is the basic bar chart. Using pupil-teacher ratio as an example, a two minute explanation demonstrating how the length of the bar reflects how many students each teacher on average is responsible for in each school is sufficient for parents or councilors or education officials to see which schools are doing well and which are doing poorly out of the current teacher distribution. The bar chart below illustrates this.¹⁰

An information product such as this is a powerful tool. It shows variation in resource allocation and allows rapid comparison with a “reasonable” or established standard. When shown such a chart, parents will stand up and crowd around, first asking which bar represents their own school and then guessing which school is at either end of the chart. Where significant inequities or departures from notional or established norms exist, the result is often outrage and a determination to go raise the issue with the education department. Similarly, a chart comparing Union Councils often highlights further inequities within the district, which a UC nazim can raise in the district assembly or take directly to the education department. Charts like these showing inequitable allocation of resources are much more difficult for an education official to defend and can generate considerable public interest. If publicized, such information can translate into considerable pressure on the education department not only to allocate resources more equitably in the future, but possibly to reallocate existing resources.

Annex I. Pupil-Teacher Ratios for Schools in Union Council of Pak Singhar in Hyderabad District



Source: Sindh Educational Management Information Systems

This pressure can rapidly lead to a demand for information by the district education department as well. The district itself does not currently have the information tools for effective budgeting, planning and resource allocation necessary to respond to informed pressure from parents, SMCs and UCs. Introducing those tools and training in their use will enable education departments to reduce the pressure on them. The same information products can also assist them in resisting pressure from politicians for favors in hiring and school rehabilitation, as the politician can be embarrassed by the visible inequities such favors would create.

Where does this information come from? Fortunately for Pakistan, a variety of donors have funded Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) at the provincial and national level. The provincial EMISes are of uneven reliability, partly because district education departments deliver unreliable data. However, if SMC associations have regular access to school information (initially through a “project” but later as a matter of course), unreliability becomes a liability for education departments since parents can challenge discrepancies. Once demand for information at the school, UC and district level is generated, education department interest in accurately supplying the data on which it relies is greatly increased. This solves the problem of EMISes having very unreliable data and also solves the problem of information availability at the district level and below.

This seems straightforward, but experience shows that the Pakistani bureaucracy is remarkably resistant to change. Possibly it will refuse to supply information products such as the bar chart above (which would have originally been introduced by an outside agency) or it will refuse to meet with outraged associations of SMCs, or it may simply ignore them. Parents need yet another powerful tool, and they can find it in procedural engagement.

6. Channels for Articulating Demand

Public action in Pakistan is characterized by extremes. Many people become disillusioned with the system and shun all collective action as useless. Others adopt reactionary methods such as strikes, violent protests and even physical confrontation, which are all regular features in mainstream Pakistani politics. In less common cases, public action takes the form of litigation, which involves exorbitant costs and seldom leads to the resolution of grievances.

Given the futility of the above modes of action in the arena of education, there is a need to identify methods and entry points which entail low risks for parents and other demand agents with a correspondingly high chance for success. The process needs to be collective and non-confrontational. Using a combination of correct and timely information, knowledge of rules and procedures for demand articulation and citizen participation in the system, and the capacity to use these rules and procedures, procedural engagement offers a promising means of engagement that meets these criteria. Procedural engagement refers to a methodology relying on legal frameworks, government policies, official procedures, and rules of business to induce government officials or departments to bring about change in their conduct.

A short illustration is useful here. Pakistan's capital city Islamabad is designed with beautiful green spaces that require constant attention to prevent them from becoming impenetrable thickets. The city has a budget for gardeners and employs many of them, but at one point the sectors of G-9 and I-9 were visibly suffering from neglect. It was common knowledge that the gardeners were often used as domestic servants by higher officials in the department responsible for green area upkeep, thus leading to the rapid overgrowth. Believing that procedural engagement with civic agencies can eliminate many malpractices in the public sector as well as enhance good governance, an Islamabad-based public action group requested the directorate to furnish a list of the work schedules for the gardeners along with their names, referencing the Freedom of Information Ordinance. The first response of the department was to offer a senior member of the public action group the services of a gardener-turned-domestic servant. This offer was turned down and within a short space of time the gardeners began to return to duty in the greenbelts and parks.

As the example above demonstrates, a knowledge of government rules combined with the submission of a carefully worded request for information can bring about change in government department behavior that has proved difficult through other reform approaches. It can lead to transparency and accountability and responsiveness to citizen demands, which has, to date, not been part of the Pakistani political and governance landscape. This form of activism ensures that the system and reforms process are not derailed while citizens demand change and improvements. For example, while SMCs work for improvement in education service deliv-

ery, they could also ask for a specific piece of information, say about the transfer of teachers or budgetary allocation for a school or Union Council, quoting relevant sections of the Local Government Ordinance.¹¹ Such engagements stand a positive chance of success, as government officials cannot deny information without risk of penalty. If citizens are provided with right kinds of information products either emanating from government EMIS or other databases produced by other development agencies, they would have the ability to question anomalies such as undersupply of teachers in one Union Council and oversupply in another. If the local government resists acting, the local media can be utilized to increase the pressure.

How can procedural engagement work for SMCs and their associations? They do not know government rules and they are not familiar with how to word a request for information or even to whom to address it. The development of their skills in this area needs to be facilitated, and several often overlooked district level bodies, including local bar associations, press clubs and civil society organizations, can play an instrumental role in this. Members of local bar associations are, or can become, familiar with relevant government policies, procedures and rules, and can assist associations of SMCs in formulating questions for the education department that can result in accountability and transparency required for systemic change. They are already organized and typically have an interest in bringing about local change. Press clubs are attracted by local interest stories and can publicize demands for information as well as inefficiencies or unfair practices that are illuminated by available information or by departmental answers. Finally, local civil society groups are increasingly common in many parts of Pakistan, and these could play an instrumental role in informing citizens of their rights and training them in the use of procedural engagement. Over time this could become part of the Pakistani political landscape.

Procedural engagement can also help prevent abuse of the system for political purposes, which lies at the core of the educational problems in the country. Equipped with relevant information and invoking policies, rules and procedures, citizens would be able to question the arbitrary transfer of educational managers, which seriously hampers reforms efforts. One case in point is the transfer of 11 secretaries in 13 years in one province, and some districts have had as many as four Executive

Development Officers (EDO) Education in a twelve month period. These transfers happen despite a clear provision in official policy that no public servant should be transferred before completing a tenure of three years unless the public interest warrants otherwise. Most of these disruptive and politically motivated appointments are justified in the name of the “public interest” in order to remain within this policy. Procedural engagement offers a tool by which the public can demand justification for a variety of arbitrary administrative actions and can help eliminate the monopoly of those in power to define what constitutes the public interest. Conscientious citizens and citizens’ groups, including associations of SMCs, could thus enter the discussion on how the public interest is defined and what its parameters should be.

7. Links with the Political Process

If associations of SMCs can become active at the UC level and bring education issues to the UC agenda, their first link with the political process will have been established. With the help of district-level bar associations, press clubs and civil society groups, their use of procedural engagement will bring education to prominence as a mainstream political and electoral agenda. When local politicians begin viewing education as a source of political legitimacy, they are more likely to take ownership of the reform process as a matter of their political agenda and a commitment to their constituents in order to appear responsive to public demands. It will also become a route through which aspiring politicians can enter the political process.

Procedural engagement can take this even further. Associations of SMCs, or anyone for that matter, can ask their representatives in the district assembly what they have done for education. Over time, this can take the form of citizens and civil society groups monitoring the district committees on education, encouraging and facilitating their representatives to raise issues at the appropriate time. Education provides a non-partisan ground for the interface between political parties, government officials and actors of diverse political orientations. Once education is on the political agenda, civil society groups can also facilitate district-level fora on education, calling politicians, education department officials and concerned citizens together for discussions on the state of education in the district, including the drafting of a vision for the future and identifying

future priorities for submission to the district assembly. This will be true devolution—local citizens and citizen groups driving the reform agenda based on local aspirations and needs.

CONCLUSION

All the conditions necessary for successful demand-led procedural engagement exist in Pakistan. Changes in the political structures at the district level, the demand of parents for education, an improved framework for SMCs, the Freedom of Information Ordinance and the tools of procedural engagement combine to create an environment in which the entire political economy surrounding education can be reshaped. For this concept to take root, however, will initially require outside intervention to train SMCs and form associations, to explore and meet the information needs of various district-level stakeholders, and to introduce the tools of procedural engagement along with drawing in local bar associations and local press. With a new political force created at the grass-roots level, the political landscape surrounding education will change from one clutching to mediocrity and political interference to one that demands continued improvement based on changing local demand. And this is as it should be.

NOTES

1. K. Bengali, *History of Educational Policy Making and Planning in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute [SDPI], 1999), 26.
2. *Poverty in Pakistan: Issues, Causes and Institutional Responses* (Asian Development Bank, 2002).
3. World Bank Education Statistics, 2005, accessed at <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/edstats/>.
4. Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, “Pakistan Integrated Household Survey, 2001–2002.”
5. Government of Sindh, Department of Education, August 13, 2001, notification number SO(ACD-I)2-2/93.
6. There is a debate over the relevance and quality of private school education in Pakistan. Whatever the truth, private schools have come into existence as the result of parental demand, since parents perceive them as better than government schools.
7. Recently the district of Khairpur requested and was granted permission from the provincial government to withdraw funds from the C&W department budget and give them to SMCs for community-managed school construction.
8. For more information, see www.esra.org.pk.

9. The 2001 LGO has also established a mechanism by which concerned citizens can receive government resources to engage directly in a social sector activity. A group of 20 or more individuals can form a Citizens Community Board (CCB) and submit a proposal to the district government for a project addressing local needs, for which they are prepared to contribute 20 percent of the costs. The district government is required to allocate 50 percent (temporarily reduced to 25 percent) of its development budget for CCBs. This is a significant amount of money, and the unused portion does not lapse at the end of the fiscal year.
10. This example has been successfully used in the Nigerian state of Kano as part of the USAID-funded Literacy Enhancement Assistance Project (LEAP).
11. For example, under Section 137 of the LGO, every citizen has the right to access information about any office of the district government. Under sections 18 and 57 of LGO, *nazims* and *naib nazims* are required to present a performance report regarding their respective councils, twice a year. There are other sections also that can be used to put demands in a procedural manner.

REPORT FOR CONGRESS ON EDUCATION REFORM IN PAKISTAN

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

President Musharraf of Pakistan has embarked on an ambitious course to turn Pakistan into a modern, moderate Islamic state. Central to achieving this goal is reforming an education system that had fallen into serious decline. Although modern educational facilities were available for the elite, the vast majority of Pakistanis did not have access to functioning public or private schools. Only half the population aged 10 and above has ever attended school, and more than 50 million children and adults were illiterate. Some parents with the least resources relied on religious schools (“madrassahs”) to fill the gap; a small percentage of these schools actively promoted extremism.

An Education Advisory Board headed by the Federal Minister of Education was established in January 2000, to develop an action plan. President Musharraf approved the Education Sector Reform Action Plan (ESR) on April 30, 2001. The Board subsequently reevaluated the initial plan in light of Pakistan’s active efforts post-9/11 to tackle terrorism and sectarian violence and included madrassah reforms as an essential part of its revised plan.

In August 2002, the U.S. Government, through USAID, signed a five-year \$100 million agreement with the Government of Pakistan (GOP) to support ESR. In 2005, additional funds were allocated to the education portfolio as part of President Bush’s FY 2005 to FY 2009 \$300 million a year economic commitment. The USAID education allocation is anticipated to be about \$300 million from FY 2005 to FY 2009. This anticipates roughly \$67 million per year. The five-year presidential commitment also includes \$200 million of ESF for budget support, a portion of which the GOP is expected to use to bolster its spending on education.

This report reviews the strategies of the two governments, funding levels, and progress made in achieving education reform since January 2002.

1. GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY

The overall structure of the reform strategy of the GOP is defined by three policy implementation documents for education reforms: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the National Plan of Action for Education for All (EFA) 2002–2015, and the ESR. These reform implementation strategies must operate within the overarching framework of the devolution reforms initiated by the GOP with the introduction of the Local Government Ordinance (LGO) in 2001. Described below are the implementation strategies envisaged by the above-mentioned documents and LGO-based (devolution) reforms that provide the context for implementation at the district level.

The PRSP, a product of national consultations, was issued on December 31, 2003, following input from all the major donors and multi-lateral lending institutions. The PRSP delineates a focused strategy for poverty reduction including a commitment to increased annual expenditures in education.

As a signatory to the U.N.-sponsored Education For All (EFA) initiative, Pakistan made a commitment to ensure that by 2015 all children would complete primary education of good quality and that gender disparity would be eliminated in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, but not later than 2015.

Of the three documents, the ESR is the most comprehensive package of educational reforms, with specific targets for seven areas/sub-sectors of education spanning early childhood education all the way to the tertiary level. The main features of the ESR strategy include: (a) sector-wide approach from primary to higher education to eliminate gender and access gaps and ensure optimum use of facilities; (b) macro-level reforms in planning and procedures; (c) institutional reforms at all tiers of government engaged in educational planning and service delivery; (d) commencement of vocational/technical education streams at the secondary-level; (e) quality assurance; (f) increased public—private partnerships, and (g) implementation of a poverty reduction program.

The ESR is fully integrated with relevant Millennium Development Goals. Its aim is to achieve specific sub-sector targets by 2006: literacy increasing from 49 to 60 percent, gross primary enrollment rate from 83 to 100 percent, net primary enrollment rate from 66 to 76 percent, middle school gross enrollment from, 47.5 to 55 percent; secondary school

enrollment from 29.5 to 40 percent; and higher education enrollment from 2.6 to 5 percent. The ESR also aimed to increase public-private partnerships from 200 institutions in 2000 to 26,000 institutions in 2006.

In 2001, the GOP introduced wide-ranging devolution reforms that envisage creating a more enabling environment for better education service delivery. This entails taking the radical step of sweeping away the old colonial district administrative structure and replacing it with a locally elected government that is intended to be more responsive to public demands for quality service in the social sectors. Under the LGO, the federal government gave district government considerable new administrative and management authority as well as discretion in budgeting and resource distribution. Under the devolution program, districts can make their own education improvement plans and they have the discretion to divide their development budget in the way they believe best suits their local needs, in contrast to the “one size fits all” centrally controlled system of the past. However, the districts’ discretionary budget is only three percent of the amount allocated for the districts, the rest being for recurrent expenditures.

The Ministry of Education’s new initiatives, using GOP resources, include:

- A critical and analytical review of the entire education curriculum for grades one through ten;
- The “mainstreaming” of madrassahs;
- Making the teaching of English, math, science and social studies compulsory;
- Vocational/technical training institutes to be established in every major city and town in Pakistan;
- Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Cell to ensure that policy and programs are implemented effectively;
- Establishment of an Education Management Information System (EMIS).

2. EDUCATION STRATEGY IN PAKISTAN

In August 2002, the USG signed a five-year agreement with the GOP in support of the Education Sector Reforms. We agreed to:

- Strengthen education sector policy and planning;
- Improve teacher training and curriculum and the ability to deliver quality education;
- Improve education administration;
- Expand public-private partnerships to improve access and delivery of education services.

Strategically, our Pakistan education portfolio is aiming at far more than increasing the numbers of teachers and literates trained, or schools improved or policies drafted. Although these activities will achieve impressive results in those areas, they are achieved in the process of helping school management committees (SMC) consisting of parents and teachers to identify and solve their own problems. These committees will have the ability to develop lasting and realistic education policies. SMCs will have the confidence and ability to access resources available at the district level. Parents and education officials will recognize the value of early childhood education and be able to recognize quality programs. District administrations will have the capacity to use their new authorities in ways that result in tangible school improvement. For example, districts will have the capacity to conduct teacher training and to continue literacy programs. Our intent is that together these will enable national efforts at education reform to move forward and break the cycle of repeated failure. To this end, we are working in some of Pakistan's most deprived areas by:

- Strengthening 7,004 SMCs to develop school improvement plans and better management of schools. A realistic assessment of SMCs and their capabilities lead us to anticipate that by the end of the project, 4,903 school improvement plans will have been developed and fully implemented.
- Developing the capacity of district officials to draft district improvement plans and carry out fundamental quality level (FQL) planning. FQL planning will get district officials to allocate resources to schools most in need and thereby help de-politicize resource distribution. There are multiple phases to the improvement plans for each district. By the end of the project, it is anticipated that nine districts will have developed and fully implemented at least two improvement plans.

Report for Congress on Education Reform in Pakistan

- Enhancing professional development opportunities for educators, administrators and officials through a professional development infrastructure: a consortium of public and private sector actors tending to lifelong learning needs of education professionals throughout Balochistan and Sindh. By the end of the project, 37,000 professionals will have been trained, which includes professionals in these project's nine districts.
- Improving the overall policy and planning milieu by opening it to wider consultation and debate and making it more information-based. We are working to align and render more coherent the myriad education reform efforts underway by helping the GOP drive a visioning process. The result will be a widely owned vision of where reform efforts should be directed.
- Developing reform support units that will continue to drive a number of ESR-related policies/planning activities after the project ends.
- Involving political actors such as parliamentarians and local public representatives at the federal, provincial, and district levels in policy-making processes.
- Establishing 24 public-private partnerships—formal relationships between corporate Pakistan and the education sector in support of school improvement.
- Increasing literacy among out of school youth and adults with a focus on youth. By the end of the project, more than 75,000 illiterate people will have completed ESR literacy programs.

The strategy also supports ESR through teacher training, early childhood education, and the rehabilitation of schools in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Specifically, this includes:

- U.S.-based training provided to 109 teacher-trainers;

- Early childhood education training for 765 teachers, benefiting 25,500 students;
- Rehabilitation of schools in the FATA: 130 schools rehabilitated for 22,000 students and 550 teachers (jointly financed with the Government of Japan);
- Independent examination board for schools that wish to affiliate;
- Increased funding available from FY 2005 to FY 2009 that will be used to increase the number of functioning schools, increase teacher training, construction of new schools, a new Fulbright scholarship program, a school-to-work program, and other activities that support the GOP's strategy.

3. EDUCATION FUNDING LEVELS IN PAKISTAN

The original ESR package was prepared at a budget of \$94.068 million for 2001–2004. The package was extended to 2006 due to non-availability of required resources and to accommodate President Musharraf's program of school construction for shelter-less schools. It also added a fund for mainstreaming of madrassahs, and setting up polytechnic schools throughout the country, bringing the ESR budget total to \$169.492 million.

For the GOP's FY 2003–2004, the budgetary allocation for education amounted to \$2.027 billion, an estimated 2.2 percent of GDP. The Ministry of Education is negotiating with the Ministry of Finance to increase the education budget to 3 percent of GDP for FY 2005–2006 and to have a steady increase up to 4 percent of GDP in line with UNESCO recommendations.

The GOP's education expenditure increase in 2005 will be bolstered with a portion of the \$200 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) provided by the USG for budget support. This amount will not be reflected dollar for dollar in the education budget as it will be spread across several sectors. Use of ESF budget support will be guided by the "Shared Objectives," based on target indicators drawn from Pakistan's Poverty Reduction Structural Credit Program and agreed upon by the GOP and USG. An annual review of the Shared Objectives will be conducted prior to disbursement of the following year's ESF budget support tranche.

Table A. Funds Obligated and Expended and for Education Budget by the GOP¹

Fiscal Year	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005²
(FY July 1–June 30				
Budgeted Amount³	78,002	89,760	120,350	134,890
(Rs. millions)				
Expended Amount³	66,300	78,500	98,000	102,400
(Rs. millions)				
Budgeted Amount	\$1,314	\$1,512	\$2,027	\$2,272
(\$ millions)				
Percent of GDP	1.8 %	1.9 %	2.2 %	2.2 %
(budgeted amount)				
Expended Amount⁴	\$1,116.42	\$1,321.86	\$1,650.24	\$1,724.34
(\$ millions)				
Percent of GDP	1.5 %	1.6 %	1.8 %	1.7 %
(expended amount)				

1. Data from the Ministry of Finance has been historically weak. Efforts are underway to increase this capacity.

2. FY 04–05 is based on expenditures to date and is an extrapolated forecast. One quarter remains in the fiscal year.

3. A conversion rate of 1 USD = 59,375 Rs. is used for all four years.

4. Generally, expenditures are lower than initial budget allocations. This is due in part to late disbursements and lack of management capacity at the provincial and district levels. We are providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to address these capacity issues.

Efforts are also underway to allow the Ministry of Education to expend resources centrally and locally over more than one fiscal year.

Table A-1: Funds Obligated and Expended by the GOP for ESR (in US \$ millions)

Fiscal Year	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
(FY) July 1 -June 30				
Budgeted Amount	Not Available	\$15.015	\$27.098	\$123.396 ²
Expended Amount	Not Available	\$28.527 ¹	\$17.699	Not Available

1 \$13.51 million was re-appropriated from other projects, thus making a total of \$28.527 million.
 2 \$87.53 million was allocated in the budget book of Punjab Province FY 04-05 for ESR.

Table B: Funds Obligated and Expended by the USG (in US \$ millions)

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004¹	2005¹
(FY) Oct. 1 -Sept. 30				
Obligated Amount	\$15.567	\$21.5	\$27.417	\$66.673
Expended Amount	\$14.506	\$8.888	-	-

1 Funds for 2004 and 2005 have not yet been spent. Funds from 2002 and 2003 are still being spent. Because USAID must forward fund grants or contracts by a 12-18 month period, obligations inevitably initially far outpace expenditures. New activities added to the Pakistan portfolio in subsequent years translate to significant increases in obligation amounts. Given that the rate of increase in expenditures is greater than obligations, expenditures and obligations are expected to be roughly in balance by FY 06.

Table C: Funds Expected to be Provided by the USG (in US \$ millions)

Fiscal Year (FY)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
DA	\$20.573	\$19.403	\$19.403	\$19.403	\$19.403
ESF	\$46.100	\$47.300	\$47.300	\$47.300	\$47.300
Total	\$66.673	\$66.703	\$66.703	\$66.703	\$66.703

The data in this report reflect current published figures. The Ministry of Education has requested our assistance in the establishment of the Education Management Information System to support the Ministry's efforts to build its capacity to collect, analyze and report data accurately.

Table A presents the total funds obligated for education by the GOP. Table A-1 shows the funds obligated and expended under the ESR. Table B contains the level of funding obligated and expended by the USG in support of the ESR. Table C provides data on the estimated level of expenditures for ESR by the USG between 2005 and 2009.

4. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING EDUCATION REFORM SINCE JANUARY 1, 2002

(a) GOP Progress in Achieving its Objectives Under ESR *Enrollment and Literacy*

We examined several GOP reports and studies, including one prepared by the Academy for Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), and U.N. agency reports. The AEPAM survey shows increases in enrollment and literacy. Increases in enrollment rates and literacy rates are two key ESR objectives. The tables below represent the best information available. We are working with the GOP to improve its capacity to provide more reliable information.

GOP education statistics for measuring progress in literacy and enrollments are deficient in scope and reliability. Discrepancies appear in enrollment and literacy data between GOP and UNESCO data as evident in the tables below. GOP statistics do not consistently reflect data for private school and non-formal schools. These are thought to absorb a significant percentage of students with varied educational results. In addition, although data are obtained from public schools countrywide, no system is in place to monitor and ensure reliability of the data. As a result, the system does not provide the Ministry of Education, provincial authorities and district government with necessary data for effective planning and use of funds.

Approximately 6,900 adult literacy centers are operating and are now contributing to the GOP literacy efforts.

The GOP reports trained teachers increased from 626,543 to 637,413 teachers, representing 99 percent of all teachers in 2004.

Enrollment Numbers at Primary Stage¹

Source	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Pakistan Economic Survey 2003–04	16.931	17.171	17.415
AEPAM (Public + Private)	14.560	15.094	16.091
AEPAM (Public Only)	9.624	9.902	10.266

¹ In millions of students

Enrollment Rate at Primary stage (%)

Source	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Gross ¹	93.4	92.4	91.4
(per Pakistan Economic Survey)			
Gross as per AEPAM	80.3	81.3	84.4
Net ² as per AEPAM	64.3	65.0	67.5

¹ *Gross enrollment* is the number of students enrolled in a level of education, whether or not students fall into the relevant age group for that level, as a percentage of the population in the relevant age group for that level.

² *Net enrollment* is the official school age (as defined by the national education system) who are enrolled in primary school as a percentage of the total number of official school age children.

Literacy Rate (%)

Source	AEPAM and Pakistan Economic Survey			UN
	2001–02	2002–03	2004	2003
Total	50.0	51.6	54.0	44
Male	63.0	64.0	66.3	
Female	38.0	39.0	41.8	

The GOP Information and Communication Technology initiative includes:

- 1,500 classroom teachers have been trained for computer education in these institutions. The GOP has received private sector support for this initiative: Intel has also trained 8,000 teachers in information technology.
- 1,613 computer laboratories in secondary and vocational schools consisting of a special room with 10–20 networked computers and a server dedicated to computer-assisted instruction.

Mainstreaming Madrassahs

Until recently there has been little progress in madrassah reform. The Pakistan Madrassah Education Board (PMEB) was established by the Ministry of Education on September 8, 2001. About 450 madrassahs are affiliated with the PMEB. Most madrassahs in Pakistan remain only affiliated with religious councils, not the government.

Efforts to mainstream madrassahs are being made by both federal and provincial governments. For example, the GOP allocated 1,449 million Rupees during FY 2004–2005 for small madrassahs that register with the PMEB. Assistance includes computers, textbooks, salary of teachers, and stipends for students. In September 2004, the Minister of Education informed the heads of the religious councils regulating madrassahs of his plans concerning assistance to modernize madrassah curriculum while preserving the religious councils' autonomy on Islamic studies. Reluctance of madrassahs to register with the GOP, however, has left the GOP funds untapped until February 2005, when the government of the NWFP that has responsibility for the FATA announced that it would provide Rs. 60 million and other facilities to madrassahs in the FATA. These funds are for formal education of madrassah students, including payment for teachers, laboratory equipment and computers. Rs.5 million had already been distributed to madrassahs. A total of 112 applications for registration from madrassahs in the FATAs have been received and 36 have been registered.

Modernizing the Curriculum

Efforts to modernize Pakistan's public school curriculum in early 2004, encountered strong opposition, prompting the GOP to step back from revisions that would remove religious instruction from science subjects at the upper primary school level. Nevertheless, the Minister of Education has strongly backed revising the curriculum. Recently the Ministry of Education renewed its efforts by organizing an independent task force of experts in mathematics, science and the social sciences to conduct a comprehensive review and make recommendations for the entire curriculum. An example of the effort to revise the curriculum at the provincial level has been in Sindh where the teaching of English has been made mandatory beginning with the first grade, with a new grade added each year. The province of Balochistan has also declared teaching of English manda-

tory in 2004, again starting from the first grade, with one new grade added every year. Our involvement in these initiatives is limited to training teachers for the new curriculum.

Early in 2004, the Education Ministry approved an integrated curriculum for grades I– III covering subjects including science, social studies, Islamic Studies and Urdu in a single textbook. This effort is subject to modification as part of the comprehensive curriculum review.

Public-Private Partnerships

Through tax concessions and incentives, the GOP is encouraging increased private sector participation in education: major private sector donors include the multi-nationals ICI, Unilever, Shell, Microsoft and Intel. Through community participation, more than 7,000 schools have been upgraded, allowing them to operate as primary schools in the morning and as middle and high schools in the afternoon. Semi-governmental educational foundations have mobilized the private sector and communities to make 975 schools fully functional. Bureaucratic constraints facing corporations seeking tax exemptions for their contributions remain and impede greater private sector support for public education. A legal framework is being developed to help these positive developments work more smoothly.

(b) Progress Made Since 2002

Steady and impressive progress has been made against all of our targets. Most impressive has been the strong, collaborative relationship between our implementers and government partners. One of the most visible results of this relationship is the early success of the “Visioning and Planning” process implemented with the Ministry of Education at all levels.

Recognizing the need to align the numerous reform efforts underway in Pakistan and render the overall education reform effort more efficient, effective, and coherent, the Ministry of Education, with our support, has embraced the need for a comprehensive vision of education in Pakistan in the year 2025. Educational administrators, key officials, planners, and teachers, from the federal, provincial and district levels are participating in U.S.-sponsored workshops to craft a widely owned vision. Once in hand, this vision will make meaningful policy reviews possible, and thereby force the entire reform effort to move in one direction.

Presently, our program has benefited approximately 4,777 schools, 367,555 students and 15,198 teachers, primarily in Pakistan's remote and under-served areas.

To increase the impact of the ESR efforts, we raised the target number of schools to be improved in nine districts of Balochistan and Sindh to more than 9,300 with approximately 700,000 pupils. More than 4,300 schools in Balochistan and Sindh will have school improvement plans in place and more than 4,300 community School Management Committees are trained to support school activities. In addition, construction of new schools, boundary walls and installation of toilets has been completed at 234 of these schools, resulting in increased enrollments according to anecdotal information. Improving public schools in these remote areas attracts students and their parents away from schools that do not provide a modern education and fail to provide children with useful opportunities in life.

Two other key elements to ensure increased enrollment and the improvement in education are teacher training and literacy courses for parents and community members. Approximately 13,200 teachers received in-service training in teacher strategies, language, math, science and social studies. In addition, 574 school administrators were trained. More than 2,873 literacy centers have opened, and 17,850 men and women have completed the literacy training where they were enrolled and attended the entire four-month literacy course. An additional 69,214 illiterates are enrolled in these courses. Community efforts to improve literacy include textbook drives that netted 80,000 books to be used in libraries in communities.

An additional 1,315 teachers have participated in the early childhood project and are teaching in FATA construction project schools to which 47,500 children are benefiting.

Finally, 109 teachers from teacher-training institutions were sent to the United States for intensive, four-month training in the teaching of mathematics, science and English as a Second Language. All have returned to Pakistan and are teaching an estimated 5,000 pre-service teachers of primary-school-age children.

These teachers and administrators participating in these programs include ones from some of Pakistan's most remote areas, which border Afghanistan and Iran, and from the poorest regions of Sindh, Punjab and

the NWFP. In rural Balochistan, where population density is low, we are experimenting with innovative technology to create learning opportunities for isolated teachers.

In the FATA, surveys and designs have been completed on 112 schools. With the improved security in North and South Waziristan, eight schools have been approved for design and construction. Plans to survey 18 other schools in South Waziristan have been delayed due to harsh winter weather. Construction is well underway on one school, and has started at another nine sites.

Our early childhood education program has outperformed expectations. Two grantees, one in rural Balochistan, the other in an urban setting, have demonstrated the effectiveness of training teachers in early childhood education and its impact on classroom participation and child learning. In the target areas, teaching methodologies improved by 97 percent, and student attendance is 10 percent higher, on average, than in other classrooms. (These results are based on classroom observation where experts assess teachers' instruction skills.) Monitoring data suggest that teachers are using materials effectively 95 percent of the time. Most importantly, the Education Ministry has adopted the new and improved teaching methods introduced in our early childhood education program for countrywide expansion. Plans are to begin the scale-up by placing early childhood education classrooms in two schools in each one of Pakistan's 106 districts.

Efforts to develop partnerships among business, government and NGOs are bearing fruit. Eight Pakistani corporations "adopted" 70 public schools by contributing \$492,000 in financial support. More than 10,000 students will benefit. In addition, a computer company donated \$147,000 worth of equipment for computer labs at two provincial teacher colleges and nine teacher resource centers.

To improve education sector delivery it is critical to know its current situation reliably and credibly. Statistics now compiled for various tiers based on the existing Education Management Information System (EMIS) are neither reliable nor consistent. We are assisting in improving the federal level and two provincial EMISs. An important goal is for the EMIS to provide information products to both the decision makers at the operational tiers of the government as well as parents of public school students.

Map Showing Education Reform Assistance Program



Source: Research Triangle Institute (RTI) 2005

EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN AND THE WORLD BANK'S PROGRAM

MICHELLE RIBOUD

BACKGROUND

During the past decade, Pakistan's education indicators remained among the worst in the Asia region and there was no sign of progress. The national literacy rate (53 percent) was lower than that of India or Nepal. The primary net enrollment had stagnated around 42 percent for a decade. Substantial gaps persisted between boys and girls, urban and rural areas, and between provinces. Quality of education was poor with only 10 percent of children of a given cohort able to complete a 10-year cycle, and governance issues impeded an adequate functioning of the sector. The situation would have been even worse without a rapidly expanding private sector, which already catered to the needs of over seven million children.

At the same time, however, there was growing awareness and concern among government officials that social development lagged behind economic development and that the growth recovery experienced since 2002 could not be sustained without reversing the trends observed in the previous decade and putting education at the top of the political agenda.

The World Bank and other donors had supported education in Pakistan through investment projects for a long period of time. By the end of the 1990s, however, outcomes did not show significant improvement. Several lessons could be drawn from this decade. Perhaps the most important one is that sector reforms require political championship and sustained commitment. Donor support, even if large, cannot be effective

Michelle Riboud is education sector manager for South Asia at the World Bank, responsible for the Bank's education programs throughout the region. She has also served as a senior economist with the Bank's Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and Soviet Union regional departments. Prior to joining the World Bank, she was professor of economics and director, Research Center in Labor and Industrial Relations, at the University of Orleans (France). Her research and publications focus on human capital issues, earnings distribution, changing labor markets, and impact evaluations of social programs.

otherwise. Another lesson is that policy reforms require support beyond the sector line ministry. Ministries of finance and the highest levels of government play a key role in addressing financing and governance issues and gathering support for reforms. The third main lesson is that specific variations across provinces need to be kept in mind. One size does not fit all, especially in countries as diverse as Pakistan.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES: THE PUNJAB EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM

The presence of a very reform-minded chief minister at the head of the province of Punjab opened the way for new support. When the chief minister of Punjab took office in 2002, he immediately recognized education as an area that needed drastic improvements. To signal the government's commitment to education, his first step was to announce the government's policy of free education. The chief minister then developed political alignment within his cabinet and close political advisors, who worked with a team of reform-oriented civil servants. This was followed by a serious effort to review and design the technical aspects of a three-year education reform program. The design process included intensive consultations with all stakeholders, including district governments, teachers, education department field staff, communities, and civil society. Bank financing provided the necessary fiscal space for implementing the reforms.

After implementation began in 2003, the program has continued to be monitored by a high level provincial steering committee, headed by the chief secretary of the province and including senior bureaucratic leadership from the education, finance and planning departments. This is supported by a system of robust monitoring and information management that provides the province's leadership with credible information to help inform policy decisions for steering education sector reforms. The program also benefited from an extensive mass awareness campaign through the print and electronic media.

The program is now in its third year of implementation and is supported by a series of annual development policy credits (see the detailed description of the program in the following section). It is already showing significant gains. Within one year of its inception, enrollment in government primary schools increased by 13 percent (compared to the previous trend of a less than 2 percent increase per year). Girls' enrollment in

grades 6–8 in the low-literacy districts receiving the stipends increased by 23 percent. A recent school census data shows another overall 7 percent increase in enrollments in public schools. Recent household survey data show that net primary enrollment rates in the province increased from 45 percent in 2001 to 58 percent in 2004–2005.

WORLD BANK'S ROLE AND STRATEGY

The initial positive results from the Punjab Education Sector Reform seem to confirm that success highly depends on several key factors: highest level political commitment, ownership at all levels, and robust monitoring. For its current engagement in the education sector, the World Bank is now looking for these conditions to be met.

As the largest province in Pakistan, Punjab can influence the overall direction of the country's development and its policy decisions open the way for other provinces to adopt similar approaches. At the start of the first credit, it was envisioned that improvements in education outcomes in Punjab would have a country-wide impact and success could lead to similar reform efforts in the other provinces. This is now happening. The other provinces are showing interest in learning from the Punjab experience and undertaking sector reforms backed by strong monitoring arrangements.

Already some education reforms were initiated and supported in fiscal years 2002 and 2004 under provincial adjustment credits in the provinces of North West Frontier and Sindh. A development policy credit for the North West Frontier province is currently under preparation with a strong focus on the education sector. At the national level, to measure student learning achievements, a Bank supported project is assisting government to establish a national education assessment system. A project for improving access and quality of primary education in Pakistan's smallest province, Balochistan, is also currently under preparation. Recent and on-going analytical work includes policy notes on teacher management issues, assessment of impact of demand side interventions for girls, an assessment of student learning achievements in public and private schools, and an analysis of enrollments in madrasahs.

The current goals of the government of Pakistan for the education sector are ambitious. National and provincial reform efforts are now aiming at increasing the net primary enrollment rates from 42 percent in

2001–2002 to 100 percent by 2015 and to bridge the gender gap at the primary level by increasing girl’s participation from 42 percent of total enrollment to 50 percent by 2007. Preliminary results of a national household survey are encouraging and show an improvement in the trends with an overall increase in net primary enrollment rates to 52 percent at the national level. Programs focus on improving equitable access to quality education; improving governance and service delivery including better teacher management; and establishing effective public private partnerships. They are increasingly aligned to the national devolution reform, which has brought service delivery closer to the people. The federal government is committed to supporting those efforts by increasing public expenditures on education from the existing Rs. 98 billion (US\$1.6 billion, or 1.8 percent of GDP) to Rs. 166 billion (US\$2.8 billion, or 2.2 percent of GDP) by 2007.

Although these are encouraging signs of progress, especially in Pakistan’s largest province, it still appears unlikely that the country will achieve the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) of full primary completion by 2015. Sustained efforts will be required for a long period of time and a major challenge for the years to come will be to improve the quality of education. Despite robust results in enrollment improvements in Punjab, poor quality of student learning remains the biggest challenge which the government has to tackle during the next phase of the program.

In the future, the Bank will continue to assist Pakistan in improving education outcomes (in particular, quality) and coming closer to the MDG targets. The policy package the Bank is supporting at the provincial and local level contains: free tuition and books, upgrading school facilities, stipends for girls in backward areas, and public funding of the rapidly growing non-government—independent low-cost private—education sector, all this through grade ten, eventually. In addition, the Bank is supporting public-private partnerships and teachers professional development. The Bank will continue to support policy reforms through development policy credits in Punjab with annual tranches linked to outcomes; annual human development policy credits in NWFP and possibly in Sindh, with a special focus on education; and investment projects for geographic areas where sector investment projects present a more viable option such as Balochistan. Policy dialogue on financing, governance, demand side interventions, improvements in quality of learning,

and service delivery issues will be backed by analytical work, including an education sector review and evaluations of the impact of different education sector reforms and policies. The Bank will also use the PRSP/PRSC discussions to assist Pakistan to improve the quality of education and sector outcomes.

Pakistan's future development also depends on increasing the quality and quantity of educated people trained in universities and technical institutions. Enrollment at that level is one of the lowest in the world (3 percent of the age cohort). The Bank has recently initiated a review of the higher education sector and may in the future provide support to the reform program that is currently under implementation under the leadership of the Higher Education Commission.

THE PUNJAB EDUCATION SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM 2003–2006

WORLD BANK SOUTH ASIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Province of Punjab has embarked on a wide-ranging reform agenda to improve fiscal management, promote decentralization and improve service delivery—starting with the education sector. To this end, the Punjab Government has developed a Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) that is consistent with the national priorities and frameworks, including the PRSP, the national Education Sector Reform Strategy, the devolution program, and national gender priorities. These reforms are being implemented over a three-year period initially by the Government of Punjab, and are supported by the World Bank through a series of annual development policy credits.

PESRP, which is now in its third year, has three pillars: (A) **public finance reforms** that realign (increase) public spending towards education (and other pro-poor services) and ensure fiscal sustainability; (B) **reforms that strengthen devolution and improve fiduciary environment and governance**; and (C) **education sector reforms** that improve quality, access, sector governance, and public private partnerships.

The Punjab Government has made significant progress during the first two years of the program:

- In the first year, free textbooks were delivered on time to all primary school students for the first time in Punjab. In the second year, free textbook policy was extended up to grade VIII, and over 20 million books were dispatched to over 11 million students by the start of the academic year in April 2005.
- A pilot stipend program targeting girls in Government middle schools (grades VI–VIII) in fifteen low literacy districts was successfully launched, and has already shown improvements in attendance and increases in enrollment in government schools—approximately

20% increase in the target schools in the first year, and another 20% increase in the second year. The program has now been extended to over 250,000 girls enrolled in grades 9–10 in the same fifteen low literacy districts.

- The program for providing missing infrastructure to schools commenced upon signature of annual Terms of Partnership agreements with district governments. So far, 1/3rd of missing facilities have been provided to schools, while work on the remaining is at various stages of implementation.
- Capacity building program for School Councils has been launched in six pilot districts in partnership with NGOs. In addition, school based budgets have been provided to School Councils by fifty per cent of the district governments.
- Capacity building of district governments has been fully financed.
- A robust monitoring system has been established by the Punjab Government to oversee progress of the program. The data is being used for planning and preparing analytical reports for the policy makers.

As a clear demonstration of its continued commitment, the Punjab Government has fully financed the program from FY04 onwards, and increased education sector budget (overall increase of over 40% since FY04). During the course of implementation, the provincial Chief Executive has maintained his championship of the reform program through regular monitoring, and taking corrective action as and when required. An important indicator of this championship is the establishment of a high level Program Steering Committee, headed by the provincial Chief Secretary, which regularly reviews program progress and approves policy directives. A widespread media awareness campaign has been launched and is being implemented across the province and also nationally.

These and other inputs, including free education, have shown early signs of a surge in enrolments in primary and middle schools – the Government estimates approximately 11% increase in enrolments in the

The Punjab Education Sector Reform Program

primary and middle grades, and about 20% in middle school girls' enrollment in stipend districts. In parallel, support to low cost private education is being provided through the restructured and autonomous Punjab Education Foundation, and further ways to enhance private sector participation will be explored in the upcoming years of reform. The Government has initiated independent third party surveys and evaluations to determine the impact of the program, and improvements in outcomes, and the results of these studies are helping to inform the Punjab Government's strategy to expand initiatives and to strengthen the reform program. Third party surveys to assess the delivery of free textbooks and stipends program have shown over 90% coverage.

The Bank's support for the first and second program year was approved based on the strong prior actions taken by the Government. Government of Punjab's performance during the first two years has been impressive and a number of initiatives are already beginning to show impact, as a result of which the Bank is now preparing the third and last in a series of development policy credits to continue supporting the reform program. The reforms are being implemented on a faster track than anticipated during the preparation of the first World Bank credit.

The reforms are still fragile, and continued attention is required to avoid the risk of complacency setting in because of the initial success. In this regard, some important sectoral and cross sectoral areas are highlighted below:

- It is critical that the momentum be sustained, and that the programmatic approach remain flexible enough to accommodate lessons learned from ongoing activities and changes in ground realities – while maintaining overall coherence and direction of the reform.
- It is essential to articulate a clear vision of the role of the private sector in this reform program.
- Besides potentially expanding and modifying existing interventions, there is a need to strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms of existing interventions. For example, it is widely held that contract teachers will be less likely to be absent from class compared to regular teachers. It is still not clear as to how contract teachers, or

any teacher for that matter, will be exactly held accountable to the state or to the community.

- There is a need to closely monitor and regulate targeted interventions such as stipends and textbooks. More importantly, it is necessary to focus on bringing improvements in the quality of teaching and materials.
- More focused programs to strengthen the capacity of district governments are also required, including in the area of monitoring, and of school councils to enhance parental and community participation in school-level decision making.
- To respond to the growing demands and pressure on the public school system, subsequent operations will have to consider reforms beyond the elementary sector to include the secondary level, as well as address the access gap by including the private sector under the umbrella of reforms.

Looking Ahead: Impact and Sustainability

While it is too soon to assess impact, emerging outcomes of the reform program, as discussed already, in public schools have been quite promising. The reform program has already brought about broad changes such as increased financial resources devoted to the education sector, a new cadre of contract teachers being recruited, improvements in school infrastructure, and restructuring of the data monitoring system to inform credible policy dialogue. This unison of positive outcomes so early into the reform program is encouraging.

Initially viewed as a three year operation, it is a long term program and therefore the Bank is considering a longer commitment as long as there continues to be well documented and sustained improvements in educational outcomes in Punjab. The Government is now initiating preparation of Phase II of PESRP to deepen the reform agenda, and has sought World Bank support for this second phase. Beyond improving school governance, enrollment and completion rates, improving teacher quality and pupil learning will require a more involved commitment. Such fundamental structural changes require a longer time horizon than originally envisaged.

The Punjab Education Sector Reform Program

The Punjab reform program should stay on track as long as:

- there is continuing political support and commitment;
- there are no major external macro shocks;
- the capacity bottlenecks at the district level can be addressed in a timely manner; and
- the Punjab Government continues to appoint and retain high performing civil servants at critical implementation agencies to consolidate and sustain the reform program.

The program is also offering valuable lessons to the World Bank and to the Federal and provincial governments as they move forward to develop or deepen their education sector reforms. The Bank has already initiated sector work in the province of Sindh, and is preparing a development policy credit to support the North West Frontier Province's Human Development sectors, and is also preparing a community support school project for the province of Balochistan.

PAKISTAN'S RECENT EXPERIENCE IN REFORMING ISLAMIC EDUCATION

CHRISTOPHER CANDLAND*

When the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan, in December 1979, until it withdrew in defeat, in August 1988, Pakistan's Islamic boarding schools were praised for absorbing tens of thousands of Afghan refugee children and young adults. Some of these schools received funding to train anti-Soviet *mujahideen* [fighters in defense of faith] and were thereby praised as bulwarks against Soviet aggression. The take-over of Kabul by *taliban* [Islamic boarding school students, literally seekers of knowledge] in September 1996 and the attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the U.S. Pentagon in September 2001 cast Pakistan's Islamic boarding schools in a disturbing, new light.

Since September 12, 2001, the Pakistani government has been under considerable pressure to police the activities and reform the educational system of the Islamic boarding schools. In 2001 and 2002, the government issued two ordinances designed, respectively, to establish new exemplary Islamic boarding schools and to regulate better the existing Islamic boarding schools. What are the specifics of these reform measures? How have these reforms been received? How effective have they been? And how might they be made more effective?

ESTIMATING *MADARIS* ENROLLMENT

Recently, *madaris* enrollment estimates have been keenly contested. How many Pakistani students study in a religious boarding school? And what percentage of total school enrollment does that represent? Estimates of *madaris* enrollment range from fewer than half a million to more than two

Christopher Candland is an assistant professor in Wellesley College's Department of Political Science. He teaches courses on South Asian politics and literature and focuses his research on labor politics and community development in South and Southeast Asia. Among his recent publications is an article on "*Madaris, Education, and Violence.*"

million. Because estimates of enrollments in private and public school vary as well, estimates of the percentage of students studying in religious boarding schools vary even more widely, from fewer than 1 percent to as much as much as 33 percent.

The range of estimates and the bases of these estimates are themselves important pieces of evidence about the role of the *madaris* in Pakistani society and about scholarship on *madaris*. The wide range of estimates indicates that generally scholars and educational professionals have a very weak understanding of even the basic dimensions of the *madrassah*. The differing statistical bases for these estimates indicate that some scholars and educational professionals dismiss data sources that other researchers regard as convincing.

A recent World Bank study estimates that there are fewer than 475,000 *madrassah* students and that fewer than 1 percent of the secondary school-going population attends a *madrassah* (Andrabi et al. 2005). The attempt to ground the widely ranging estimates of *madaris* enrollments in verifiable data is laudable. But many scholars have found the assumptions used for those estimates to be problematic. The report is based, in part, on a national census and a national household survey, neither of which were designed to gauge *madaris* enrollment. Indeed, the national census does not ask about children's school or *madrassah* attendance. It asks about adults' "field of education." In their own survey of three districts, the authors find three times the percentage of students in *madaris* as is estimated by the national census and the household surveys. Yet their survey was restricted to areas served by public schools and thus probably underestimates *madaris* enrollments for Pakistan as a whole, which is poorly served by public schools. Further, the extrapolation, that fewer than 1 percent of Pakistani primary aged students attend *madaris*, is based on the statistic that 19 million students are enrolled in private and public schools (GOP 2004). However, half of these children drop out before reaching the fifth grade. Finally, the report conflates a *madaris* education with an education in religious schools, as suggested by the title of the report. This leads to problems with interpretation of the data, as will be discussed below.

Many scholars find that establishment-based surveys are more trustworthy than statistical manipulation of household surveys. Pakistani police and officials in the ministries of education and religious affairs conduct establishment surveys of *madaris* enrollments. These count the number of stu-

dents in *madaris*, rather than estimate enrollments from household responses. By these estimates, between 1.7 and 1.9 million students in Pakistan are educated in *madaris*. The former estimate comes from the former minister of religious affairs, Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi (ICG 2002: 2). The later estimate comes from Pakistani police. The number of *madaris* supports these estimates. More than ten thousand *madaris* are registered with the government. At least that many are thought to operate without registration. A typical *madrasah* will educate more than one hundred children. Thus, the official establishment surveys' estimate of nearly 2 million *madaris* students is not unrealistic. An estimate of fewer than 500,000 is. Whatever the precise number of *madaris* students, the Islamic boarding schools of Pakistan educate not merely the residual few whom government and private schools do not reach, but a substantial segment of the population.

ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY

A brief explanation of the terminology that teachers in Islamic boarding schools themselves use will make the following discussion more productive. A *madrasah* is a school for grades one through ten. Thus, the age of students in *madaris* typically runs from five through sixteen years. Children below the age of twelve are typically non-residential students. The plural of *madrasah* is *madaris*. Many refer to Islamic boarding schools as *dini madaris* to distinguish them from western-styled government and private schools, which were introduced under British rule. *Din* refers to faith. Thus, the Urdu word *dini* might be translated as "religious." For study beyond the ten years offered by the *madaris*, one would attend a *darul uloom* [literally, an abode of knowledge], for grades eleven and twelve. The *darul uloom*, then, is the equivalent of upper secondary schools in the British system, also known, in Britain, as sixth form colleges. For study beyond the *darul uloom*, one would attend a *jamia*, the equivalent of a college or university. Thus, some Islamic educators in Pakistan suggest that the names of the Pakistan Madrasah Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model Dini Madaris) Board Ordinance 2001 and the Dini Madrasah (Regulation and Control) Ordinance 2002—aimed at, respectively, building new institutions of Islamic education and reforming existing Islamic boarding schools, at all levels not merely at the *madaris* level—themselves demonstrate that the government does not adequately understand the structure of Islamic educational institutions.

The Pakistani *madrasah* has only recently assumed its present form. Most of the formally registered *madaris* were established during General Zia ul-Haq's tenure (1977–1988) not only through the encouragement of the state but also often with the financial assistance of the state. In 1977, there were a couple hundred *madaris* registered with the *madaris* central boards (Malik 1996). By 1988, there were more than 2,800 *madaris* registered with one of the five *madaris* boards (GOP 1988, cited in Rahman 2004: 79).

If *madaris* are sectarian and militant, it is not the product of an Islamic approach to education but of the militaristic policies of General Zia and his supporters. For nearly a decade, the U.S. government, among others, poured hundreds of millions of dollars of weapons into Pakistan, much of it through *madaris*, and used *madaris* students to fight a proxy war in Afghanistan. According to the *Washington Post*, the U.S. government even supplied texts to *madaris* glorifying and sanctioning war in the name of Islam. (Stephens and Ottaway 2002, cited in ICG 2002:13). If only a small fraction of that money and ingenuity were sustained over the next decade on curriculum development, on books and scholarships, on teacher and staff salaries, and on facilities and amenities, the *madaris* sector could be transformed again—this time into a foundation for tolerance and moderation, essential teachings of Islam. Indeed, it might be argued that the U.S. government has a moral duty—not merely a strategic interest—to commit such funds and to help to repair the damage done to the *madaris* sector.

Some *madaris*—well known to those who study Pakistani sectarianism—continue to serve as recruitment grounds for young militants (Abbas 2002, Rana 2004). Many *madaris* also socialize and politicize youth to a particular sectarian organization's or a religious political party's perspective. Generally, however, *madaris* are institutions of caretaking and education (See Candland 2005). Most have done a remarkable job of caring for and educating a large population whose basic needs have been entirely neglected by the state.

There are five boards [*wiqafha*] that oversee the institutions of Islamic education in their respective “school” of Islamic thought: Ahl-i-Hadith, Barelvi, Deobandi, Jamaat-i-Islami, and Shia. With the exception of the Rabta-tul-Madaris-al-Islamia, the Jamaat-i-Islami board, which was established under the patronage of General Zia ul-Haq in 1983, each of

these boards has been in operation since the late 1950s. The boards determine the curriculum of the Islamic schools registered with them, provide examination questions, grade examinations, and issue graduation certificates and diplomas. There are approximately 10,000 institutions of Islamic education registered with these five boards. Roughly 70 percent are Deobandi, 16 percent are Bareilvi, 5 percent are Jamaat-i-Islami, 4 percent Ahl-i-Hadith, and 3 percent Shia. The differences between these schools of Islam will be explained, briefly, below. Over the past two decades, the fastest growing Sunni *madaris* seem to be those of the well-patronized Jamaat-i-Islami (Rahman 2004: 79).

THE RECENT *MADARIS* ORDINANCES

General Pervez Musharraf, as the Chief Executive of Pakistan, promulgated the Pakistan Madrasah Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model Dini Madaris) Board Ordinance in August 2001. The Ordinance, hereafter referred to as the Model Dini Madaris Ordinance, created the Pakistan Madrassah Education Board with the responsibility of establishing new, exemplary *dini madaris* and *darul uloom* and overseeing those existing *dini madaris* and *darul uloom* that choose to affiliate with the Board. The Board is based in Islamabad. The Model Dini Madaris Ordinance also established a Pakistan Madrasah Education Fund. The Model Dini Madaris were to be semi-autonomous, public corporations to demonstrate to existing *madaris* how to modernize and to train a new generation of liberal-minded *ulema* [religious scholars]. The approach of the pre-September 11, 2001 Model Dini Madaris Ordinance might be characterized as enabling.

General Musharraf promulgated the second ordinance related to *madaris*, the Dini Madaris (Regulation and Control) Ordinance in June 2002. This second Madaris Ordinance, hereafter referred to as the Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance, requires all *dini madaris* and *darul uloom* to register with the government and to make regular financial declarations. The *dini madaris* and *darul uloom* that registered with the Board would receive scholarships for their students. *Dini madaris* and *darul uloom* that do not comply would be closed. The approach of the post-September 11, 2001 Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance might be characterized as controlling. *Ulema* opposition to the Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance has prevented it from being implemented.

Each ordinance was promulgated as an Extraordinary Ordinance, indicating the high importance that the government attached to reform of institutions of Islamic education. Each ordinance was also promulgated before the October 2002 general elections that produced the present National Assembly and provincial assemblies. The Ordinances, therefore, promulgated by a military government, did not receive the broad public support or the critical study that an elected government might have generated. It is not surprising, therefore, that they need to be revised, as will be argued below.

IMPACT OF ORDINANCES ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION REFORMS

The impact of the Model Dini Madaris Ordinance has been positive but quite limited. The impact of the Dini Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance has been extensive but largely counter-productive. A poorly designed administrative structure rather than intransigence of *ulema* is the greatest limitation to the Model Dini Madaris Ordinance. However, very recent initiatives suggest that there may be positive changes in the near future.

The counter-productive element of the Dini Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance stems from its heavy-handed approach and its requirement that all institutions of Islamic education integrate parts of the National Curriculum into their curricula. The present National Curriculum is largely the product of the military government of General Zia. Those parts of the National Curriculum that are required to be added to the curricula of institutions of Islamic education—Civics, Pakistan Studies, Social Studies, and Urdu—are sectarian, highly biased against religious minorities and against India, and glorify the military and the use of violence for political ends (see Nayyar and Salim 2002). Indeed, the National Curriculum may give greater sanction to intolerance toward religious minorities, to sectarianism, and to violence toward perceived enemies than do the curricula in the *madaris*.

REGISTRATION OF EXISTING MADARIS

While the richness and variety of Islamic expression in Pakistan defies easy categorization, one might, for convenience, distinguish between three major Sunni traditions. The Deobandi tradition has its roots in the “shock” of the British response to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 (see

Robinson 2000). British forces responded to the Mutiny by expelling Muslims from several Indian cities and destroying or occupying Muslim places of learning and worship. The *darul uloom* established in 1867 at Deoband, in Uttar Pradesh, was designed to protect Muslim education from Western incursion and to extract and eliminate practices from the Muslim community that it regarded as un-Islamic. The Bareilvi tradition, established soon after the *darul uloom* at Deoband and named after Raza Ahmed Khan of Bareli, also founded a *darul uloom*, in Uttar Pradesh, which affirmed the devotional practices that the Deobandi school sought to eliminate, such as worshipping *pir* [living Muslim saints] and offering prayers at the graves of revered teachers. The Jamaat-i-Islami has later origins. Syed Abu A'la Maududi, a prolific writer, founded the Jamaat-i-Islami as a political party in 1941. The Jamaat-i-Islami, a leading member of the opposition Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, [United Action Council] now ruling the Northwest Frontier Province and the Karachi Metropolitan Government, aims to combat corruption and immorality by establishing an Islamic state capable of imposing justice and morality.

Many leaders from Islamic boarding schools have evidenced a strong demand for reform of their institutions, contrary to elite perceptions. Nearly 500 Islamic education institutions applied for affiliation with the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board in 2003, its first full year of operation. Had the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board conducted its meetings in 2004 as mandated by the Model Dini Madaris Ordinance, there could be a hundred institutions of Islamic education affiliated to the board.

Islamic institutions that affiliated with the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board include some of the largest and most highly respected. Further, these institutions represent the entire spectrum of Muslim traditions in Pakistan. The Bareilvi-oriented Jamiat ul Uloom Rasuliya, in Faisalabad, one of Pakistan's oldest institutions of Islamic learning, established in the 1930s, affiliated itself with the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board. The well-known Deobandi Jamia Abu Huraira of Maulana Abdul Qayoom Haqqani, in Nowshera, has also affiliated with the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board. And the *darul uloom* degrees given by the Jamaat-i-Islami affiliated Fikr-i-Maududi [Maududi's Thoughts] Institute in Lahore are now recognized by the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board as equivalent to the Bachelor of Arts.

There is, however, significant resistance to the government's attempts, represented by the Dini Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance, to control institutions of Islamic education. An association of *madaris*, the Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaris Deenia [Religious Madaris Organization Alliance], was formed to protest and oppose the coercive dimensions of government's reform efforts. All five *wiqafha* participated in the formation of the Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaris Deenia. Member *madaris* have declared that they will refuse government scholarships for their students. According to some authoritative estimates, the Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaris Deenia may represent as many as 15,000 *madaris*. However, most of the members of the association are principals and teachers at relatively small *madaris*.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW MODEL *DINI MADARIS*

The government's own orders and regulations related to the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board have not been met. The Model Dini Madaris Ordinance requires the chairman of the Board to hold meetings of the Board at intervals of no longer than six months. However, the Board has not met since January 10, 2004. Since its inception, the Board has not had a permanent chairman or secretary.

The government's orders and regulations related to the establishment of new *madaris* have also not been substantially fulfilled. Three Model Dini Madaris were established under the Ordinance, in Karachi, Sukkur, and Islamabad. The Islamabad Model Madaris was established for the education of girls; the Karachi and Sukkur Model Madaris were established for the education of boys. These three institutions were not given adequate authority, staffing, or financing to perform as mandated. To date, no permanent principals have been appointed. Until recently, the same person was appointed principal of both the Karachi and Sukkur *madaris*. The principal of the Islamabad Model Madrasah has been replaced four times. Those in charge of the three *madaris* have not been given authority to hire staff or allocate resources. Instead, they must appeal to the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board in Islamabad. Facilities are sub-standard. All three Model Dini Madaris are housed in the Hajj Directorate's *hajji* [pilgrimage to Mecca] camps. During the Hajj season, the camps are very noisy and packed with people on their way to and from Mecca. In Karachi, the Pakistan Army Rangers are permanently camped at the New Hajji Camp. The Rangers have even forcibly occupied part of the prem-

ises of the Model Dini Madrassah. The presence of heavily armed men, occupying a part of the *madrassah* premise, is not conducive to study.

There is considerable misinformation issued about the model *madaris*. Occasionally, a Pakistani newspaper will report that the government intends to establish several dozens of model *dini madaris*. In February 2004, it was reported that the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board had announced that it would establish 98 Model Dini *madaris*. In March 2005, it was reported that additional Model Dini Madaris would be established in Lahore and Multan, in Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province; in Quetta, in Balochistan; and in Peshawar, in the Northwest Frontier Province. However, the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board claims to have no knowledge of such plans. Some speculate that KNI, the press service behind these reports, has been fed these stories to give the false impression that the establishment of model *madaris* is proceeding quickly.

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Islamic education makes up a large part of the general education imparted in government and private schools. The National Curriculum includes *Islamiyat* [the study of Islam] as one of the mandatory subjects for Muslims. Additionally, there is a great emphasis on Islam in the Civics, Pakistani Studies, Social Studies, and Urdu sections of the National Curriculum (see Nayyar and Salim 2002). According to some *ulema*, the *Islamiyat* taught in government and private schools focuses on the most militant and intolerant portions of the Quran and *Ahadith* [sayings and practices of the Prophet] while the most tolerant and enlightened passages are ignored. This bias can be traced to the 1980s, when Pakistan was home to millions of Afghan refugees and front-line state in the fight against Soviet aggression. Just as militant prayer leaders in the armed services and militant teachers in government schools were promoted in the 1980s, it is possible to promote moderate prayer leaders and teachers today.

The private schools with the widest reach in Pakistan are those run by Islamic associations and Islamic foundations, some affiliated with Islamic political parties, not those that are most visible in the affluent sections of Pakistan's larger cities, which generally follow the Cambridge or Oxford curriculum. These private schools are not *madaris*. But educators in many of these private schools, by their own account, would like to raise children in the ideology of their political party or in a particular sect of Islam.

It is a mistake to assume that only Islamic boarding schools are involved in Islamic education. Thousands of private schools, using either the Cambridge or Oxford curriculum or the National Curriculum, or both, impart a predominantly Islamic education. Yet very little attention has been focused on the curriculum or pedagogy in these sectarian and political party-oriented private schools (see Candland 2005).

MADARIS IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Reform of Islamic education and institutions of Islamic instruction must proceed from the recognition that Islamic boarding schools and Islamic education are an integral part of national education in Pakistan. Reform efforts based on the assumption that national education must remove discussion of religion from the educational curriculum are not only impractical. Avoidance of religious subjects in national education and weakening of the Islamic education sector are neither likely to improve tolerance and understanding between people of differing faiths nor diminish violence in Pakistan or abroad.

Reform of Islamic education must also recognize that the present “backwardness”—in administrative, curricular, and financial terms—of institutions of Islamic instruction is a direct product of a highly polarized educational system. As Tariq Rahman aptly puts it:

The madrasa students regard their Westernized counterparts as stooges of the West and possibly as very bad Muslims if not apostates. The Westernized people, in turn, regard their madrasa counterparts as backward, prejudiced, narrow-minded bigots who would put women under a virtual curfew and destroy all the pleasures of life as the Taliban did in Afghanistan (Rahman 2004: 150–151).

In this context, it should be recognized that the promotion and subsidy of elite education is responsible for much of the “backwardness” of the institutions of Islamic education. Most of Pakistan’s children have been entirely neglected by the state’s educational system (see Candland 2001). The *madaris* have done a remarkable job of reaching a large sector of the Pakistani public with virtually no government support and very modest funding from the public. However, they have educated this neglected sector largely within a sectarian tradition and have not inculcated

moderation and tolerance. At the same time, when the government has involved itself in the *madaris* sector, as under General Zia ul-Haq, the consequences have been detrimental to the cause of education.

Moderately minded leaders in the field of Islamic education need to be made full partners in the reform of *madaris* and Islamic education in non-*madaris* educational institutions. Pakistan's experience with the reform of Islamic education demonstrates that such reforms, to be effective, cannot be imposed. *Ulema* themselves will determine whether the government's attempts to reform Islamic education succeed or fail. A coercive approach is likely to fail.

The suggestion that all *ulema* are against reforms seems to be designed to excuse the clumsiness in and the delay of government reform attempts. Just as it benefits some opposition politicians to claim that the attempt at reforming Islamic education is a plot by the U.S. government to weaken Islam, it benefits other governing politicians to suggest that their attempts at reforming institutions of Islamic education are being waged against the opposition of recalcitrant and backward *ulema*. Many *ulema* are in favor of reform. Indeed, many *madaris* have already integrated social studies and natural sciences into their curriculum.

What is needed for successful uplift of institutions of Islamic education is not the promulgation of more ordinances but constructive conversations between accomplished *ulema* and senior government officials. The government already has the authority—through the Societies Act of 1860—to regulate and control institutions of Islamic education. The Societies Act requires all educational institutions to register with provincial governments and to make regular financial declarations. Thus, the Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance's requirement that institutions of Islamic education register and disclose their accounts irritated educators at Islamic educational institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Greater attention to the model *dini madaris* could have a strong influence on the entire reform program. The government could appoint qualified *ulema*—like the principal of the Model Dini Madrassah Karachi—as administrators and educators at these *madaris* and give them regular appointments and the prospect of promotion. The government could also provide model *dini madaris* with permanent facilities. The government

could involve educators at these institutions in significant conferences and press events—as was successfully done in a conference on abolishing sectarianism and promoting enlightened moderation at the Sindh Governor’s House in March, 2005. Model *dini madaris* administrators and educators could also be invited to be external examiners in *Islamiyat* examinations at government colleges and universities.

Further, the government might ask qualified *ulema* and university professors in *Islamiyat* to develop an alternative curriculum for Islamic educational institutions. The faculty of Islamic and Oriental Studies at the University of Peshawar and the staff of the National Research and Development Foundation in Peshawar have extensive experience in and promising proposals for consultations leading to such an alternative curriculum. The present program for a new curriculum in Islamic educational institutions merely adds National Curriculum textbooks—many of them substandard and biased against minorities—to the existing curricula in Islamic educational institutions. The real problem in the Islamic educational institutions is not that students do not learn computers and natural sciences. Many *madaris*, *darul uloom*, and *jamia* do teach these subjects. But a natural science education is not a guarantee of an enlightened mind. Indeed, many of those most committed to violence in the name of Islam were educated in the natural sciences. The real problem in these schools is that students do not learn how to relate with other communities in a culturally diverse country and a globally interdependent world.

The Quran is full of recommendations and insights on how to relate peacefully with other communities through goodwill and tolerance. Of course, those looking for justifications for violence can find them in the sacred texts of any religion (see Candland 1992). The purpose of an alternative curriculum for Pakistan’s Islamic educational institutions would be to develop a curriculum based on the enlightened and tolerant messages of Islam. *Ulema* and Islamic educators in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Turkey have already succeeded in framing such a curriculum and, thereby, in engaging Islamic educational institutions in their countries in national development programs, including community health and income generation programs. Scholars from these countries could be consulted while crafting an alternative curriculum for Islamic education institutions in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Madrasah Education Board would function better if it had a permanent chairman and secretary, who are respected *ulema*, and regular meetings of the Board, Academic Council, and Ordinance Review Committee. The Board also needs to develop its own examination papers. The Pakistan Madrasah Education Board might also function better if it—and the authority and financing for both the operation of new Model Dini Madaris and the regulation of existing institutions of Islamic education—were transformed to a newly created Islamic Education Cell within the Ministry of Education. Presently, the administrative authority and the funding for reform of Islamic education belong to different ministries. The Ministry of Education receives funds—largely from foreign sources—for the reform of Islamic education. The Pakistan Madrasah Education Board is prohibited from taking funds from foreign sources. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is authorized—according to the Dini Madaris Regulation and Control Ordinance—to administer reforms. Adding to the confusion over administrative authority, there are Sub-Directorates of Religious Education [Dini Madrasah Education Boards] in the provincial ministries of education.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs does not have experience or expertise in education. Indeed, the ministry does not have the ability to administer an *ushr* [Islamic charity based on land holdings] program, despite being entrusted with that task, through the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance, more than 25 years ago. The administration of *zakat* [Islamic charity based on capital holdings] is the principal occupation of the ministry. Further, the present chairman of the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board, the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is neither a graduate of an Islamic educational institution nor an educator.

The creation of an Islamic education cell within the Ministry of Education, the transfer of the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board to that cell, and the appointment of a person who has an Islamic educational background and the rank of State Minister as a full-time chairman of the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board could reduce redundancy and guarantee that reform of Islamic education is treated as a national educational priority. The appointment of full-time staff knowledgeable of systems of Islamic education to the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board would also improve its chances of success. If the aim of the Madaris Ordinances is “to improve and secure uniformity of standards of education and [to integrate]

Islamic education imparted at *dini madaris* within the general education system,” as the Model Dini Madaris Ordinance says (GOP 2001: 1), then it makes sense for the Pakistan Madrasah Education Board to have the staffing, status, and autonomy that could make such a goal possible.

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PAKISTAN: REFORMING THE EDUCATION SECTOR

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP*

Pakistan's deteriorating education system has radicalised many young people while failing to equip them with the skills necessary for a modern economy. The public, government-run schools, which educate the vast majority of children poorly rather than the madrasas (religious seminaries) or the elite private schools are where significant reforms and an increase in resources are most needed to reverse the influence of jihadi groups, reduce risks of internal conflict and diminish the widening fissures in Pakistani society. Both the government and donors urgently need to give this greater priority.

Recent attempts at reform have made little headway, and spending as a share of national output has fallen in the past five years. Pakistan is now one of just twelve countries that spend less than 2 per cent of GDP on education. Moreover, an inflexible curriculum and political interference have created schools that have barely lifted very low literacy rates.

In January 2002, President Pervez Musharraf's government presented its Education Sector Reform (ESR) plan, aimed at modernising the education system. A major objective was to develop a more secular system in order to offset mounting international scrutiny and pressure to curb religious extremism in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks. But Pakistani governments, particularly those controlled by the military, have a long history of failing to follow through on announced reforms.

The state is falling significantly short of its constitutional obligation to provide universal primary education. And while the demand for education remains high, poorer families will only send their children to a school system that is relevant to their everyday lives and economic necessities. The failure of the public school system to deliver such education is contributing to the madrasa boom as it is to school dropout rates, child labour, delinquency and crime.

* Executive Summary and Recommendations, *Asia Report* N°84, 7 October 2004. We thank the International Crisis Group for allowing us to publish this excerpt. The entire report can be accessed at <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=3055&l=1>.

In the absence of state support, powerful Islamist groups are undermining the reform initiatives of civil society to create a sustainable, equitable and modernised public education system that educates girls as well as boys. Despite its stated commitments, the Musharraf government appears unwilling to confront a religious lobby that is determined to prevent public education from adopting a more secular outlook. Public school students are confined to an outdated syllabus and are unable to compete in an increasingly competitive job market against the products of elite private schools that teach in English, follow a different curriculum and have a fee structure that is unaffordable to most families.

Political appointments in the education sector, a major source of state employment, further damage public education. Many educators, once ensconced as full time civil servants, rise through the system despite having little if any interest and experience in teaching. The widespread phenomenon of non-functional, even non-existent “ghost” schools and teachers that exist only on paper but eat into a limited budget is an indication of the level of corruption in this sector. Provincial education departments have insufficient resources and personnel to monitor effectively and clamp down on rampant bribery and manipulation at the local level. Reforms such as the Devolution of Power Plan have done little to decentralise authority over the public education sector. Instead, it has created greater confusion and overlap of roles, so that district education officials are unable to perform even the nominal functions delegated to them.

The centre still determines the public school system’s educational content, requiring instructors and students alike to operate under rigid direction. As a result, the syllabus cannot be adapted to combine national academic guidelines with a reflection of the different needs of Pakistan’s diverse ethnic, social and economic groups. Worse, the state distorts the educational content of the public school curriculum, encouraging intolerance along regional, ethnic and sectarian lines, to advance its own domestic and external agendas.

The public school system’s deteriorating infrastructure, falling educational standards and distorted educational content impact mostly, if not entirely, on Pakistan’s poor, thus widening linguistic, social and economic divisions between the privileged and underprivileged and increasing ethnic and religious alienation that has led to violent protests.

Far from curtailing extremism, the public school system risks provoking an upsurge of violence if its problems are not quickly and comprehensively addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Pakistan:

1. Demonstrate a commitment to improving the public school system by:
 - a. raising public expenditure on education to at least 4 per cent of GDP, as recommended by UNESCO, with particular emphasis on upgrading public school infrastructure, including water, electricity and other facilities, buildings and boundary walls; and
 - b. raising public expenditure on social sector development to make public schools more accessible to teachers and students, especially in rural areas and urban slums.
2. Take immediate political, police and legal action against extremist organisations and others seeking to prevent or disrupt development, social mobilisation and education reform initiatives, especially related to girls and women.
3. Suspend any initiatives to coordinate the madrasa curriculum with the public school curriculum until the Curriculum Wing completes a comprehensive review and reform of the national syllabus, and ensure that the Curriculum Wing:
 - a. identifies and deletes historical inaccuracies and any material encouraging religious hatred or sectarian or ethnic bias in the national curriculum; and
 - b. limits Islamic references to courses linked to the study of Islam, so as to respect the religious rights of non-Muslim students.
4. Decentralise decisions on educational content, and allow material not currently addressed in the national curriculum by:

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- a. abolishing the National Syllabus and Provincial Textbook Boards that have monopolies over textbook production;
 - b. requiring each provincial education ministry to advertise competitive contracts and call for draft submissions for public school textbooks, pursuant to general guidelines from the Curriculum Wing;
 - c. forming committees in each province, comprised of provincial education ministers, secretaries and established academics, to review submissions based on the recommended guidelines, and to award contracts to three selected private producers; and
 - d. empowering all public schools to choose between the three textbooks selected for their province.
5. Improve the monitoring capacity of provincial education departments by:
- a. increasing education department staff at the provincial level;
 - b. providing adequate transport for provincial education staff required to monitor and report on remote districts; and
 - c. linking funding to education performance indicators, including enrolment rates, pass rates, and student and teacher attendance levels.
6. Take steps to devolve authority over education to the district level by:
- a. directing public schools to establish Boards of Governors, elected by parents and teachers and with representation from directly elected district government officials, teachers, parents, and the community; and
 - b. giving these Boards greater power to hire and fire public school teachers and administrators on performance standards and to recommend infrastructure development projects.
7. Hire public school teachers and administrators on short-term, institution-specific contracts that are renewable based on performance, to be

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reviewed annually by the Board of Governors, rather than as tenured civil servants.

8. Facilitate and encourage formation of active parent-teacher associations (PTAs) by providing technical and financial support for their activities, conducting public meetings highlighting the importance of parent involvement in education, and scheduling regular PTA meetings and activities both within schools and between PTAs of multiple district schools.

9. Give school heads flexibility to run their schools, including to adjust schedules to accommodate working children and to encourage teachers both to use educational material that supplements the curriculum and to organise field trips that better acquaint students with the social dynamics and everyday necessities of their districts.

10. Facilitate access to public schools by:

- a. ensuring that any new public schools, especially girls schools, are established close to communities, especially in less developed rural areas; and
- b. providing transport to students and teachers commuting from remote areas of the district.

11. Ensure there are enough middle schools to accommodate outgoing primary school students.

12. Follow through on the language policy announced in December 2003 that makes English compulsory from Class 1 by providing all schools with adequate English-language teaching materials and English-trained teachers.

To Donors:

13. Condition aid on the Pakistan government on meeting benchmarks for increased expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, and monitor the use of government funds in the education sector.

International Crisis Group

14. Urge the government to redress factual inaccuracies and intolerant views in the national curriculum.
15. Conclude Memorandums of Understanding with the government that no teacher trained under specific donor-funded programs will be transferred for at least three years.
16. Provide low-priced, quality English texts and technical and financial support to local producers of such texts and other materials that give public school students broader exposure to the language.
17. Form flexible partnerships with locally funded organisations that employ effective, tested models, such as The Citizens' Foundations.

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Contributors:
Shahid Javed Burki
Christopher Candland
Grace Clark
Ishrat Husain
International Crisis Group
Jonathan Mitchell, Salman Humayun, and Irfan Muzaffar
Tariq Rahman
Michelle Riboud
Ahsan Saleem
Salman Shah
United States Agency for International Development
World Bank, South Asia Human Development Department

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Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20004
Tel. (202) 691-4000 Fax (202) 691-4001
www.wilsoncenter.org