SEN'S CAPABILITY APPROACH AND EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES

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Article Info

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Keywords

Abstract

This article critically reviews the national education policies of Pakistan and assesses the extent of effectiveness of these policies since 1947- 2009. It identifies the major issues which contribute to the failure of national educational policies. Also, this article attempts to highlight the concepts of the Capability Approach in Education and its dimensions in creating equitable opportunities and justice within the education sector. Furthermore, an analysis is given with an emphasis on the medium of instruction and capability approach in the educational landscape of Pakistan, and how it translates into the inequitable distribution of educational opportunities, power dynamics, and social justice. Moreover, the themes of the current national educational policy 2017-2025 are also highlighted. In conclusion, it is reiterated how lack of proper implementation of the educational policies, the lack of quality teachers, and English being the medium of instruction are the primary reasons for policy failure. Lastly, the potentialities and scepticism regarding the efficacy of a Single National Curriculum are discussed

1. Introduction

Education is deemed as a human right that has a pivotal role in the process of developing humans through enhancing their capabilities via Knowledge. (Malik, 2011). Education policies can be deemed as principles, rules, and laws crafted by the government, scrutinized by stakeholders in education, and enacted by educational experts and authorities. (Rayou & Van Zanten, 2015, as cited in Shah., *et al* 2019) For a country to revolutionize its education sector it is first essential to have an analytical approach in assessing the extent of the educational policies that had been drafted in the same pursuit. The role played by the Capability Approach in Education Sector has been incorporated to highlight how the existing inequities in the educational landscape lead to social injustice.

2. Major Themes and Effectiveness of National Education Policies

This section entails main themes of the national educational policies of Pakistan since its inception in 1947 till the previous national educational policy in 2009, and assesses to what extent these policies were effective.

2.1 National Education Conference held in 1947

In this conference, the Education Minister of that time Fazal-ur-Rehman suggested that the education sector should aim in three dimensions which included: spiritual, social, and vocational. Also, at this event, many committees were established for Primary, Secondary University, Adult, Technical and Women's Education as well as Scientific Research Committee, (Hanif, 2018 & Sajid, 2016). The main themes of this policy were:

a) Education provided should be inspired by Islamic ideals and teachings.

b) Education should be made free and compulsory.

c) Emphasis was laid on Technical education (Sajid, 2016; Shami,2005; Government of Pakistan, 1947). Also, it was highlighted that the literacy rate was about 85% and if the prevailing literacy rate was followed, it would require about 140 years to mitigate this issue. Hence it was suggested that a system should be established to resolve the adult literacy issue along with compulsory education within 25 years. (Kaiser, 1999) However, this policy was not fully implemented for a variety of reasons since Pakistan was managing the rehabilitation of refugees as a newly emerged country it did not have sufficient resources to meet the needs and most teachers were untrained. (Shami, 2005)

2.2 Second National Educational Conference, 1951-1957

In this educational conference, it was the first time a proper six-year plan was proposed for educational development at a national level. The main contentions discussed were: an inadequate number of trained teachers and an insufficient number of schools and 24000 primary schools to be established to accommodate about 3.7 million students of age group 6-11 since the rehabilitation of refugees resulted in a massive increase in enrolment rate rates in 1947-1955. Also, it was suggested that every year about 2.8 million adults should be provided literacy via the Village Agricultural and Industrial development program. However, not substantial results were derived because of financial and administrative constraints and, the colonial patterns

seemed to have persisted which were dominant before independence without any major structural change. (Kaiser,1999 & Aziz,1986)

2.3 Report Commission on National Education, 1959

The commission emphasized decentralization to be undertaken and focused on character development via mandatory religious instructions, recommended primary schooling should be compulsory within 10 years for age group 6-11 and middle schooling within 15 years for age group 11-14 and curriculum for primary level to be activity based. It also suggested that introduction of poly-technical education at middle school level be made by diversification in the curriculum and highlighted the need for universities to do research along teaching. It also suggested that national language should be used as a medium of instruction Lastly, extension was made the B.A/B.Sc. Degree programs from two to three years. (Shami,2005; Aziz,1986; Government of Pakistan,1959). Although in the report substantial emphasis was laid on primary sector but this policy was not effectively carried out there were many implementation lags and the extension in degree years caused severe unrest due to which this aspect of the policy was withdrawn from the subsequent five-year plans (Khan & Mahmood, 1997).

2.4 National Education policy in 1970

This education policy emphasized the reorientation of Ideology along with the importance of technical and scientific education was also highlighted. Lastly, this policy also proposed the need for decentralization of educational administration. However, this policy was not implemented because of political reasons and the economically unviable situation of the country (Hanif, 2018).

2.5 National Education policy 1972-1980

This education policy was formulated under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's tenure when nationalization took place. The main aims of this policy revolved around providing equal educational opportunities especially for uplifting backward areas to attain social development; it also focused on the provision of Universal basic education; managing the deteriorating educational trends through imparting quality equation coupled with rectifying the increasing imbalance between various types of education. Lastly, the policy focused on the need for decentralization of administration of education department to encourage freedom in academia to improve the overall quality of equation, particularly higher education. (Hanif,2018; Shami, 2005; Khan & Mahmood,1997). Moreover, this policy also identified that 40 million adult people are illiterate, and to counter this crisis it set a target to establish 276,000 literacy centers to provide literacy to 11 million people in the period 1972- 1980 (Kaiser, 1999). In terms of its effectiveness, it is asserted that the goals envisaged by this policy mostly remained unachieved and a major step that was taken under Zulfiqar Bhutto's government was nationalizing all private institutions which was a regressive measure since it massively deteriorated the performance of the education sector since it is asserted that it was a mere political move without taking in consideration the recommendation of an educational consultant. Also, nationalization policies lead to a massive burden on the national treasury (Khan & Mahmood, 1997).

2.6 National Education policy 1979

This national education policy was formed under Zia-ul-Haq's regime and it aimed at Inculcating a deep sense of loyalty and commitment to Islamic teachings, focused was placed on developing Pakistani identity being part of the collective Muslim ummah. It also aimed at making Islamiat and Pakistan study to be made compulsory and Islamization of Curriculum was proposed. Madrasa Education was suggested to be parallel with modern education where secular subjects were taught as well, Use of Urdu as a medium of instruction was also proposed and mobilization of community resources such as mosques, civic buildings should be made. Lastly, its target was to uplift literacy rates, set up scientific research centers, and set up separate institutes for males and females. (Shami, 2005; Khan & Mahmood, 1997). In terms of the effectiveness of this policy, it can be asserted that the importance of Madrasa education rose enormously in 1979 policy under Zia's regime because of Islamization; their graduates were considered equivalent to Masters and Bachelor's degree in the English educational system to strengthen support to use madrassas as recruitment centers for Mujahidin in the Afghan-Soviet War (Shafiq, 2020). Although this policy was partially able to achieve its goals mainstreaming madrassa was not fully successful; moreover, there were qualitative failures such as the Federal government had taken over control of the financing of all universities on the basis that provincial governments will reallocate resources for primary education; Literacy ordinances introduced were not implemented and Urdu was withdrawn as a medium of instruction (Shami, 2005).

2.7 National Education policy 1992-2002

This national educational policy envisaged an increase in literacy rate by 70% by 2002, women's education was emphasized as an objective; education was aimed to shift from supply orientated to demand-oriented by diversification in curriculum particularly at the degree level. Also, encouragement of private sector to participate in educational programs and education industry as a whole. Furthermore, measures should be undertaken to depoliticize campuses and maintain discipline, Improvements should be made in the dissemination of quality education through high ascription of teachers in the society, followed by strict evaluation of their performance making them more accountable. Also, it suggested establishing linkages between universities, Research and Development organizations, and industries and developing a functional framework that would allow provinces to ensure effective implementation (Shami, 2005, Khan and Mahmood, 1997). Although most of this policy could not be fully implemented such as 70% literacy rate was not attained. It turned out that primarily due to political instability the policy was not fully employed; however, some positive were derived such as mixed primary schools were introduced in the rural areas, literacy programs were launched and teaching requirements were decreases to attract more female teachers (Khan and Mahmood, 1997).

2.8 National Education policy 1998-2010

This policy envisaged that universal primary education would be achieved, it was anticipated that

90% of children who are in age category (5-9) would go school and the gross enrolment rate till 2010 would increase to 105%, diversification would be made at secondary level education and focused was placed on upgrading the quality of technical and higher education being imparted., making curriculum development an ongoing process, emphasis was laid on incorporating Islamic teachings as a pivotal part of the education system. Lastly, in this policy private sector was encouraged to be an active part of the educational landscape of the country (Sajid, 2016). However, this policy faced ownership issues when the government changed but the policy wasstill in style. (Shami, 2005).

2.9 Reforms in Education Sector 2001-2005

Education Sector Reforms major chunk revolved around universal and free primary schooling, f, equal accessibility to opportunities learning, new curriculum introduction, incentives for the private sector to chip in, improvement in research and development for higher education. It also emphasized that 7% of the National GDP would be allocated for education by 2015, literacy rate by 2015 would be increased to 86 %. Also, by 2018 the minimum prerequisite of teaching at the primary level would be a Bachelors' degree with a B.Ed. and a Master's degree at the secondary level with a B.Ed (Sajid, 2015 & Shami, 2005).

2.10 National Education policy 2009-2015

This policy addressed Early Childhood Education before this policy, it was not deemed formally as a part recognized distinctively in the public sector of education. This policy mentions that age group 3-5 years would come under the early childhood

education and a minimum of one year of education at the pre-primary level would be given by State and its universal access is anticipated to be provided within the upcoming 10 years and also this national policy suggested that government should introduce Non-Formal education schools targeting the child laborers. Quality assurance in the education imparted was given much importance and suggested how there is a need to revamp textbook curriculum and improve the overall pedagogical practices to ensure this goal along this 7% of the GDP would be allocated to education. (Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan, 2009). Reviewing NEP 2009 manifests some positives like the introduction of early childhood education and the dire need to increase the quality of education being imparted through concerted efforts by the provincial and federal authorities. It also identified the problems which created hindrances in the development process of education in Pakistan through incorporating indicators related to accessibility, equity, and resources. It also entailed comparisons to few countries such as Iran, Malaysia for setting as a point of reference to evaluate the urban-rural divide, gender disparity, and overall quality of education being disseminated across Pakistan and to ensure that this policy its fully implemented mechanisms were established (Ahmad & Hussain, 2014). On the contrary, the allocation of 7% GDP to education was not achieved. Furthermore, it seems that there was no concordance between the impact this policy had on various stakeholders and the economic targets it had set, and how this policy should have been implemented in the wake of the 18th Amendment (Ahmad & Hussain, 2014). It was

ordered that in all public schools English would be taught from class- I, however, no proper plan was set up to put it in proper action. (Government of Pakistan, 2009). In this realm, it turned out to be the case of a long wish list with little implementation by (Siddiqui, 2010).

3. Reasons behind Policies Ineffectiveness

3.1 International Pressures

It is important to keep in consideration that Pakistan as a newly emerged country in 1947 had to manage the issue of provision among different cultural and ethnic backgrounds alongside handling it with a budget constraint and internal commitments. Consequently, these mounted pressures impacted the formation of policies. Moreover, it is lethal to notice; how the effect of neo-imperialistic powers greatly impacted policymaking in Pakistan at all levels which culminated in a misalignment between political determination and available policy infrastructure (Shafi,2014 & Tikly, 2001). In this realm, it had been pointed out that the policy-making of Pakistan was heavily influenced by the country's international commitments (Milligan, 2011). The World Bank has been quite influential in the multilateral organization in the educational policy landscape because of the prevailing notion that education and economy are interdependent investing human capital becomes essential particularly in low-income countries (Jones, 2006; Spring, 1998 as cited in Shafi, 2014).

3.2 Implementation lags and Decentralization

The main themes of various educational policies highlighted above depict that numerous attempts were made at policy levels but still, there were not properly effective, in this regard policy implementation becomes a major point of contention, especially after the Decentralization was done under the 18th Amendment based on Article 25-A of the Constitution education became a provincial domain. to ensure better governance at the provincial level, but it wasn't successful in aiding province which was backward economically to increase their resource capacity. (Adeney, 2012). Consequently, there was no ministry responsible to oversee the implementation of NEP across four provinces. This devolution of responsibility seemed to culminate in heterogeneous policies across provinces. Although it presumed that the objective behind differences in regional policies is to highlight and bridge the prevailing disparity; however, it is established that it extends disparity and constrains resources (Article 25-A, Constitution of Pakistan, Ministry of Education, 2010; Fuente & Vivies,1995; Shafi,2014) Moreover, another reason which leads to ineffective implementation of policy into practice was because of lack of proper awareness and communication regarding policy matters at the district level- when decentralization occurred as a part of Education Sector Reform (ESRA) funded by the USAID program. (Ali, 2011). However, contrary to the critics of the national education policies of Pakistan, it has been observed that the contents of a policy document until recently have not incorporated global goals for education policy from like Universal Primary education (Khushik, 2018). Alongside policies, various factors shape the educational landscape of a country. Since the education sector encapsulates numerous sub-fields, it is essential to analyze these sub-fields. It depicts how the number of policies

took precedence over quality; how there were lags in implementation lead to policy failures. (Shafiq, 2020). It was found that price and quality are crucial factors that affect the situation of schooling and school reforms, unlike the past educational policies which riveted only on enrolment. (Andrabi *et al*., 2010)

3.3 Private Schooling Vs Public Schooling

It has been identified that along with global shifts and the incompetency of the government of Pakistan disenchanted the international donor community, Consequently, the private sector was deemed as a potential partner to improve enrolment rates and achieve learning targets. (Lingard & Ali, 2007) The education sector had been allocated 2.2 % of GDP. (Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) - Pakistan | Data," 2011) It was lowest in the region which is not surprising since disparity in provision results in the rusty infrastructure of educational institutes and lack of basic amenities like electricity, water, and sanitation. (Sattar *et al*., 2011).

Table 1: Education State (Sector Wise Disaggregation) Source (Lewis, 2018) Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-2017
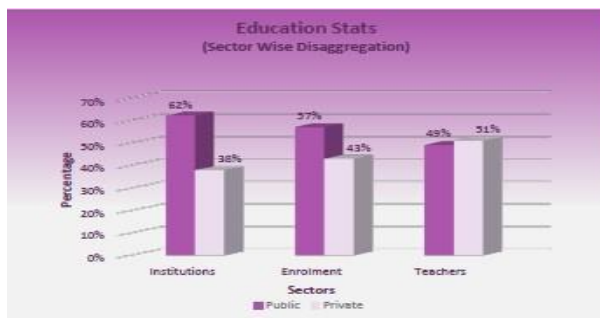
Research shows an increase in low-cost private schools since such schools were able to tap households from different income levels (Andrabi *et al*.,2007). Contrary to popular notion, research

depicts that parents across Pakistan pose a great demand for education and better opportunities to succeed academically even those belonging to lower socioeconomic backgrounds. (Andrabi *et al*.,2010). The education policies essentially failed to properly mitigate the disparities that existed within the public and private schools.

3.4 Madrassa Education

Madrassa education has been deemed as an institution with historical and cultural importance since it was treated as an outlet where great emphasis was laid on Quranic and traditional teachings. The policies crafted have not fully taken the demands of madrassas and are too focused on the imposition aspect (Inamullah *et al*., 2010).

3.5 Quality of Education and Importance of Teachers

For ensuring policy implementation is effective head teachers and teachers are considered to be essential since they are in direct contact with children who are most impacted by the policies. It was emphasized that differences in terms of attributes and characteristics of teachers essentially lead to variations in existing cost structures of public and private sectors (Andrabi *et al*., 2010). Furthermore, teachers are not evaluated on their performance coupled with this, there is a lack of accountability to parents and government authorities breeds minimal motivation to attend school regularly or to ensure that students are at least the basic standard required (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011).

3.6 Language and Medium of Instruction

The role of the medium of instruction is extremely important since it holds the capacity to determine

which segments would have an economic and political advantage and which would be relegated to the background since the medium of instruction is a pivotal source in regards to redistribution of power. (Tsui & Tollefson, as cited by Osborn, 2005), Most educational policymakers do not put much attention to how language policies can have a far-reaching impact in terms of learning outcomes despite there is a dearth of research that depicts how having mother tongue as a medium of instruction can lead to significantly better educational opportunities in many contexts particularly for the underprivileged groups which could potentially decrease the social, economic and political hegemonic status usually enjoy. Consequently, to keep this privilege intact, policymakers justify economic and pedagogical reasons that the mother tongue medium of instruction can be expensive as well as lack of textbook materials. (Tollefenso 2002; UNESCO Bangkok,2007). The many editions of the education policies of Pakistan had contradictions regarding the use of English in education. (Shamim,2011). For instance, in the National Education Policy of 2009, it was set that from class-I onwards English would be taught as a subject, and from class-V onwards for maths and science would serve as a medium of instruction as well. (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan,2009). This particular policy was considered to be only advantageous for the minority upper strata of the society over the common population due to over-emphasis being laid on the use of English instead of promoting being a polyglot (Coleman, 2010; Coleman & Capstick,2012). English was supposed to be substituted with Urdu as an official language as well

as the medium of instruction, However, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, their regional languages were used in education (Rahman,1998). But English was primarily used in education which many in the country deemed as a part of colonial legacy while others have embraced it for its realistic need; many from the upper strata of the society have also acquired the culture connected with English (Rahman, 2005) Furthermore, the split between proponents of Urdu being the National language while English being the official language and proponents of regional languages prevail due tolingual differences since there is a lack of a common language of communication. (Rahman, 2006). Also, English being the medium of instruction primary school children in various provinces where they were taught in their native languages had a considerable disadvantage from areas with different policies where children had been educated in English since different education policies dealt with the language problem by "issuing decrees to change the mediums to Urdu from English which could not be implemented (Shafiq, 2020).

4. Capability Approach

Capability Approach is deemed as an adaptive and multifaceted foundation, rather than an exact theory of wellbeing. (Qizilbash 2001; Robeyns 2005, 94-96; Sen 1992) Capability is regarded as "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being" and it "represents alternative combinations of a things a person is able to do or be"(Sen,1993). It could be highlighted through many "combinations of functioning'' (Sen,1999, p.14). Capabilities represent an individual's freedom to select from

potential livings, in order words capabilities depict a person's freedom to attain worthwhile functionings which are dependent on numerous factors such as personal attributes and socio-political and economic context. (Sen,1993; Sen 1995). Functioning is considered to be an achievement which has more direct correlation with living contexts, whereas capabilities in comparison are abilities to attain; concepts of freedom and wellbeing in terms of what actual opportunities one possesses. (Sen, 1987)

4.1 Using Capability Approach Concepts in Education Sector

Through the framework of Capability Approach in the educational sphere, a learner should possess real freedom to make informed selection to attain achievements that one wants. Capabilities in this sense would mean a range of opportunities and choices in order to pursue a particular achievement in educational domain such as the ability to participate in discussion with other learners, having knowledge and feeling respected by teachers and peers. Here, it is crucial to note that only assessing outcomes/functioning's gives inadequate information about how good people are doing. An example is presented of two Kenyan girls who participated in a math competition and both failed – same outcome or functioning. One of those girls had access to a better school in the capital city with encouraging teachers but she was preoccupied with extracurricular activities and invested less time in studying. On the contrary, the other girl belonged to a smaller city despite being interested in it couldn't perform well because of the lack of guidance since her school didn't have a math instructor and her

parents couldn't afford to send her for private tuition for English and instead, they prioritized their son and compelled the girl to do domestic chores, due to which she couldn't devote a lot of time to study (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). The above-mentioned example showcases how despite functionings being the same but capabilities are varied. Hence, it is important to keep in view that equality measurement should encapsulate the notion of freedom not only in choices but opportunities as well. (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009) Since diversities exist within the social and economic contexts people exist, for attaining functionings, different individuals would need different number of resources so that they become educated (Deneulin &Shahani, 2009).

4.2 Justice and Equality Dimension

Capability Approach gives an encompassing theoretical account on education which deems social justice as the yardstick for equality. (Rajapakse, 2016). Capability Approach is also considered as a theory which incorporates social justice dimension when evaluating life quality on a comparative level (Nussbaum, 2011) Capability Approach offers a nuanced understanding on education through assessing whether capabilities which are valued, equitably available for learners across different intersecting spheres. For example: personal dimensions including class, ethnicity and gender, environmental dimensions such as climate and wealth etc. The important point to note here, is that for education although resources are crucial, but it's the opportunities every individual has to transform these resources into beings and doings which matters more (Deneulin & Shanani, 2009).

4.3 Comparison between Human Capital Approach and Capability Approach in Education

Amartya Sen elaborated that the capability approach aspect embedded within human development goes in depth in order to understand and shed light on how freedom could be enhanced through education. Education has a significant role in influencing at many levels individual's capacity to partake in decision making processes (Fukuda-Parr, 2003) it also has a social role because literacy is extremely important to encourage public dialogue. On the contrary, Human capital theory evaluates the importance of education through the lens of cost-benefit analysis which only considers the material effects and neglects the significant intangible consequences (Blandine, 2003) since the underlying assumption on which the human capital framework operates, is that decisions are based on economic efficiency failing to recognize the structural and power dynamics prevailing within family units, in the context of deciding either a son should be educated or a daughter. In the human capital approach, on the basis of rights, even though both men and women have equal rights, no assertions for social change can be made beyond this (Robeyns, 2006) For example: even if legally both men and women are supposed to be endowed with equal accessibility to schooling following the rights approach the governments would be content despite in terms of functionings gender inequalities are evident. These gender inequalities further shape men and women's identities (Robeyns, 2006). In this regard, Amartya Sen asserts that education could play a redistributive role as well by revamping injustice through uplifting the marginalized, impoverished and socially excluded segments to be active in social arrangements. Also, the transformative aspect is also embedded within education which can be tapped in to facilitate others and themselves as individuals. (Rajapakse, 2016) Hence, the objective should be seeking social justice in education and expanding an individual's capability of education along with effective functionings of these capabilities without dismal of economic concerns such as skills (Robeyns, 2006). Assessing education by focusing on resources and results with the underlying goal of efficiency as neo-classical economic theory proposes, completely misses or barely scratches the surface of several crucial aspects related to development or personal satisfaction. The human capital theory deems education to play a pivotal economic role, and it utilizes rights-based approach when it comes to education. However, Capability Approach encapsulates both these aspects but it is important to notice that making efficiency or rights-based approach, doesn't provide a holistic understanding of humans and their agency and role of education in this regard (Rajapakse, 2016) In the case of India rationalization of educational policies in order to strive for the pursuit of "efficiency and productivity" are resulting into 'loss of meaning and loss of freedom" for the teacher and this adds to the demoralisation of teachers (Bhushan, 2015). Since students come from diverse backgrounds, some of these students are first time learners, some might face difficulties in communicating effectively due to language barriers. In this aspect, the homogenous

policies for regulation and control would not be effective, and it would create numerous problems for the teachers to effectively deal with different students because of the lack of freedom. Hence, policy formulation should have underlying basis of enhancing capabilities of teachers with minimal imposition of regulations (Bhushan,2015) Bhushan (2015) asserts how incorporating Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, the accountability process at teaching level can be made meaningful when it is rooted in a realisation-based and enhancement of teacher capabilities-based narrative. He argues that Sen's Approach apart from resources focuses on humans, without eliminating a sense of duty and importance of rules, rather it intertwines it with the goal of improving people's lives by invoking it as a realisation within people. Without capabilities Bhushan (2015) reiterates that accountability processes would be futile since teachers have diverse skillsets and enhancement of capabilities would entail plethora of ways in which they can utilize their freedom for a particular functioning and he also emphasizes the need to reduce negative capabilities such which curtail the freedom of teacher to make decisions which can benefit the students. Internal capabilities can be nurtured with better provision of social, economic and political factors. It also highlights policies that should be crafted in a manner which would stimulate combined capabilities of the teachers; these types of are capabilities which enhance internal capabilities for example: through training along with improving the external environment (Bhushan, 2015 & Nussbaum, 2011).

5. Analysis

This section analyses the role of the medium of instruction, and the lack of quality teachers highlighted in the educational policy loopholes highlighted above over the years have resulted in an increase in lack of equal opportunities and social justice within the education sector of Pakistan. The focal point in this regard is the role of English as the medium of instruction as one of the primary roadblocks when it comes to raising the quality of education in Pakistan, this further translates into the distribution of power which leads to class divide filtered through the terminologies of Capability Approach. In the context of teaching and learning of English language in Pakistan and its complexity was analyzed after equating the characteristics of the myriad of schools in the country, the facilities available there along with their learning output suggested that it is imperative to notice that teaching of English language does not take place in a vacuum. It further mentioned that there is a multitude of social, political, and economic factors involved. Also, this analysis highlighted how stripping children from the right to learn in their native language is producing a shortage of skilled labor. (Coleman, 2010) Also, it was found that in Pakistan underscoring learning of English in schools where teachers have not trained results in added pressure on students, parents, and teachers as well. Consequently, English is being taught in a ritualized manner which encourages rote learning since most parents are don't have sufficient command over English struggle to assist their children. (Coleman, 2010). Since English is primarily used as the medium of instruction in most

private schools and special emphasis is laid on its usage; on the contrary, the majority of public schools have Urdu and regional language as a medium of instruction despite English is being taught at public schools but the inadequacy of teachers to teach as a second language, makes it difficult for children to be at a parallel level to private school education. Furthermore, this widened gap in terms of having a grip English language becomes pivotal in reducing job opportunities for public school children due to English being the official language. Consequently, children from high-cost private schools have an edge over low-cost private schools, public schools, and madrassas (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018). Furthermore, language policies employed in Pakistan's educational policies and as an extension by educational institutes has ascribed English with a hegemonic status, this hinders the transformative impact education entails in creating opportunities for extending engagement, contributing to economic as well social inequalities. In this realm, through the theoretical foundation of Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Bourdieu's Critical Theory, Tamim (2014) found how the inequities prevailing in English learning opportunities in Pakistan, manifest as social injustice in the country. Moreover, emphasis by her was laid on the extensive research about the political economy of languages that are selected to be taught in educational institutes in Pakistan, which are one of the triggers for lack of social mobility within the country. Furthermore, it was identified that across all main institutions of power such as Bureaucracy,

judiciary, education, and media, the English language is being utilized whereas Urdu's usage is incorporated at lower levels within civil administration, media, and state schools since the ruling elite in Pakistan hold majority if the powerful positions in the country through which they continue to endorse the status ascribed to the English language holds by using it. (Rahman, 2016) In this realm, an inseparable link between language and politics has been presented, which depicts how through an overview of the language movements in Pakistan, the complex relationship between the formation of identity, ethnicity, and language and they are correlated to power could be interpreted. (Rahman, 2006). Also, students who attained private education instead of public education usually ended up with higher earnings which allude to an edge even a low cost- private school education has over the education provided by a public school. Also, a study pointed out how private schools out-compete government schools- even in the same rural areas while taking into consideration the variations in a family's socioeconomic conditions-they tend to depict lesser gender biases, have better civic engagement, and have faith in social institutions. (Andrabi *et al.*,2010; Niazi, 2009). This can be correlated to the justice dimension prevalent in the Capability Approach that enhancement of capabilities and optimal level of functionality of capabilities can exist when ethnic, gender, linguistic groups are catered without any discrimination which is further needed in Pakistan's educational landscape. Since in the light Amartya Sen's concept of justice, the assessment of education should be rooted in the impact it generated over people's

capabilities in the present and future. Since good education should encapsulate well-being and is contingent on the extent of freedom people possess to value and select (Walker, 2006). In the 2009 educational policy as mentioned above the medium of instruction was English whereas the current national education policy emphasizes: "to resolve the medium of instruction and teaching of foreign languages in consultation with provinces" (National Education Policy, 2017). Hence, this vagueness about what language in national education policies of Pakistan leads to the language differentials across schools. (Haidar, 2017). Through applying the Capability Approach concepts mentioned in the sections above it can be analyzed that since teachers are not well equipped when it comes to competent understanding and usage of the English language (Coleman, 2010) it means that the educational policies should be modified in a manner which can stimulate the innate abilities or basic capabilities of the teachers and minimum benchmark can be maintained when it comes the art of teaching, however, since not all teachers have the same level of basic capabilities still it is critical to make the teaching process more effective (Bhushan, 2015) since many teachers across Pakistan do not necessarily have the basic ability to teach in English adopting for a multilingual medium of instruction could lead to better teaching quality. In this regard, the education policy of 2017 has given the option to provinces/institutes to opt for their respective choice of medium of instruction including regional languages. (National Education Policy,2017). One of the reasons (Bari, 2014) why parents in Pakistan prefer sending their children to private schools is

because they want their children to know English despite public school education is free. He further highlights although ample research depicts that children learn better in their mother tongue and apart from a very small minority of children coming from an urban and elite background. Also, he argues that teachers themselves do not know sufficient English so they switch to teaching in Urdu but expect students to memorize the lessons in English for exams which don't lead to optimal learning. Furthermore, according to him, more teachers are needed who can teach English as a language, and the debate between the medium of instruction and learning a language should not be mixed. Also, according to the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative in English classes as well less than 12 % of teachers used English. (Rahman, 2013). Rahman (2013) also mentions the examples of various European countries where English is not the medium of instruction but is effectively taught to students through effective methods the same can be done in government schools here. In this way, the ramifications of English being the medium of instruction can be minimized. In this realm (Raja, 2021) has highlighted the outcomes of a Tharparkar based research carried by the Citizens Foundation results depicted that other than teaching in the mother tongue, the most familiarized language for the large majority of the population has produced better learning outcomes, in the case of Pakistan Urdu holds that place Furthermore, it is also important to notice that despite having the capabilities functioning's can be varied and can be improved through building upon internal capabilities, similarly, it is despite having the same

level of functionings capabilities so be vastly different both cases being highly dependent on the socio-economic factors since resources alone are not sufficient different individuals need different levels of facilitation into two order to be their optimal self, capability approach provides takes into account these nuances (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009; Bhushan,2015). Moreover, as the current national education policy 2017-2015 has highlighted the different streams of education prevalent in Pakistan through the lens of the Capability Approach it can be asserted due to a fewer range of freedom of choices in the educational realm due to social and economic constrains – few privileged succeed in life.-fewer make it into the income bracket which can be directly taxed due to insufficient tax accumulation government has to impose higher indirect taxes like GST whereas out of the most privileged skilled and intellectually potent many resorts to opportunities abroad. Also, the majority of children out of schools increase the likelihood of not only child labor but of participation in various spectrums of crime. Creating a vicious cycle since according to UNICEF already around 23 million out-of-school children exist in Pakistan. Also, by effective teacher training through either changing the medium of instruction as well as the examination language according to the teacher's expertise or through enhancing the English language competency the process of accountability could be made more meaningful since the better

articulation of teaching would promote a realization-based approach advocated through capability approach (Bhushan,2015.

6. National Education policy 2017-2025

This is the currently adopted nationally education policy which identifies the major challenges prevalent in the educational landscape of Pakistan This policy focused on universal primary education, first time in Pakistan's history the issues and challenges of Deeni Madrassa were taken into account, provision of technical and vocational training is also added through Madrassa and regular monitoring and up-gradation of Madrassa Database are being set, the focus is laid on technical and vocational training with the help of private sector and higher accessibility from 8 % - 15 % is set for Higher Education (National Education Policy,2017). The table presented below highlights the national priority levels set to mitigate the prevailing crisis to ensure that accessibility and quality of education being imparted in the country and to achieve the objectives of SDG-4 Quality Education for All. These identified areas need improvement and to achieve the desired results collaborative efforts are needed between national and provincial governments through strong political will, effective usage of technology, and increasing the level of financial and governance efficiency within the educational sphere. (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 201

Table 2: Major Challenges identified in the Educational Landscape of Pakistan

Source (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, National Policy Framework, 2018)

| Out of School Children	Uniform Education System	Quality	Skills and Higher Education
Low and inequitable access and participation	Lack of coordination in policy formulation and implementation across the country	Low student learning outcomes	Low and inequitable access and participation
High levels of poverty in certain disadvantaged areas resulting in high OOSC	Lack of coherence and coordination in curriculum frameworks, textbooks and exam systems	Poor teacher quality and accountability	Poor quality and relevance of teaching and research conditions.
Limited investments in early childhood education resulting in high dropout in early grades	Discrepancies in systems of schooling, i.e. across public, private and madrassa education system	Lack of school leadership- School Principals/Head Teachers	Weak linkages with Industry
Low Quality of Non-Formal and Accelerated Learning Programs	Variation in management of school systems	Poor school environment multi-grade teaching, limited facilities in schools and poor infrastructure	Inadequate sector governance and management
		Inadequate use of student learning outcome data to inform policy making	

6.1 Out of School Children

Decreasing the out of school children and increasing school enrolment rates is at the priority under this policy since across all provinces due to primary schools lacking adequate teachers, whereas government middle schools being more than 2km away girls disproportionately are more deprived in attaining education, about 2 million more girls than boys are out of school and in middle and high schools there are lower enrolment rates of girls than boys (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018).

Table 3: Pakistan – OOSC by Gender

Source: (Lewis, 2018): Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-2017
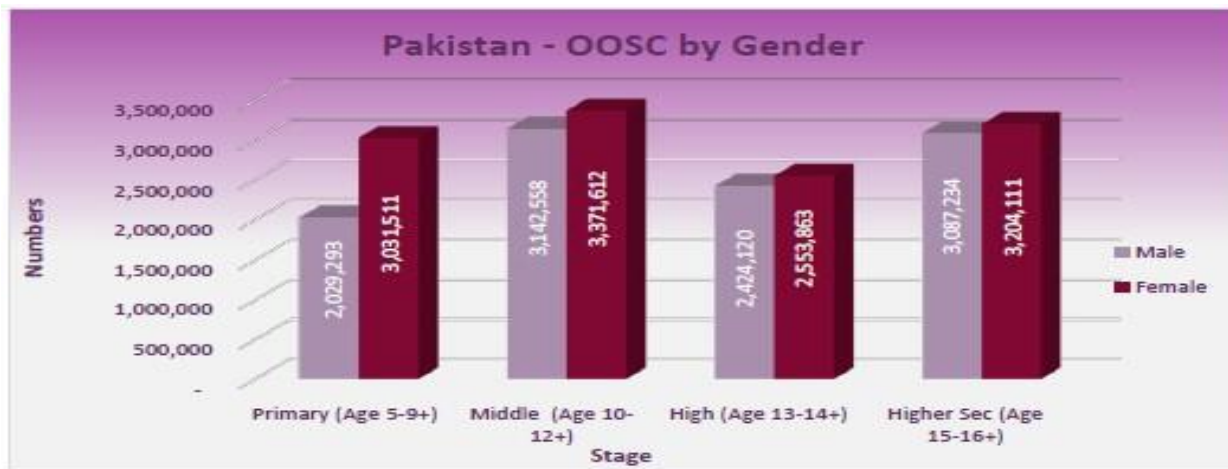
To mitigate this problem better infrastructure facilities would be provided such as the renovation of public-school buildings, afternoon classes being offered to cater to a larger number of students, reducing the financial roadblocks in the path to attain education such as an increase in grants and stipends in disadvantaged areas, restructuring of innovative and non-formal solutions to bridge the gaps in Science, Maths and Languages through

Programs like Teach For Pakistan and Taleem Razakar and efficient use of technology to provide online educational content for free and developing offline solutions for far-flung areas (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018).

6.2 Uniformity in Education System -Single National Curriculum

This policy highlighted that there is a diverse range of school systems operating within the educational domain in Pakistan broadly; public schools, private schools, and deeni madrasas each having massive differences in their systems in comparison to each other. Consequently, this is severely affecting the constitutional right of equal opportunity in education for everyone; however, this policy identified that to ensure uniformity and equality of accessibility it is crucial to first establish an equal level of foundation, keeping into consideration the cultural and linguistic diversities prevalent in the country. Hence, changes are being in curriculum across all provinces uniformity in curriculum and standardization in core subjects is being carried out as one of the primary measures to bridge the inequitable distribution of educational opportunities in Pakistan based on class division beginning from grade Pre I-V (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018). The intent behind Single National Curriculum other than providing an equal grounding at the basic level is to promote social cohesion, national integration, social mobility, tolerance for different cultures and religions, and stimulation of critical thinking faculties by discouraging rote memorization as well as usage of ICT. It is standardized and outcome-based for each subject in comparison to the education policy of 2006. Islamiat would be taught as a separate subject from grade 1 till 12 and instead of ethics, a new subject related to religious education would be taught for non-muslims from grade-1. Also, other than Nazara Quran the number of reading 200 Ahadith and memorization of 40 Ahadith are added in the curriculum from grade I- Themes related to gender equality and inclusivity are added to the curriculum from grade I-V and unlike previous educational policies SNC would act as the minimum level of foundation applicable across all public and private -low cost as well as high-cost schools (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan, 2020).

6.3 Education Quality

This policy has also identified the teaching quality and overall infrastructural facilities provided at public schools have to be massively updated. In order to raise the quality of education being disseminated, restructuring of teacher licensing and recruitment procedures particularly for teaching science and maths has to be done. Along with this special attention should be given at early schooling level when foundation in education of a child is being developed. ((Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018). Lastly focus was placed on inclusive learning overall and a 5% increase was made for children with special needs in the educational budget. (Hanif, 2018).

6.4 Skill Development and Higher Education Sector

To improve the state of higher education, the establishment of 15 public and private science universities is proposed. Also, library access and documentation has been focused to inculcate

reading habits. In order to promote vocational and technical training these issues revolving around Technical and Vocational training have been addressed (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018).

7. Conclusion

Reviewing the educational policies of Pakistan being drafted since its inception in 1947 has been manifesting that political will wasn't strong enough to revolutionize the education sector of Pakistan since the education sector was mostly relegated to the background (Siddiqui, 2016) The HDI value of Pakistan in 2019 was 0.557 and its global ranking was 154. Also, in the same report, the expected years of schooling which coincides with SDG-4.3 was about 8.3 (Human Development Reports, 2020) which further shows that education throughout Pakistan's history based on the reasons identified in the section above international pressures, the inequities prevalent between private and public schools, low quality of trained teachers, and the issue of medium of instruction coupled with the ineffective implementation of policies and lack of strong political will contributes to the educational policy failures. The role the capability approach plays in education is also reiterated which highlights the enhancement of capabilities and optimal level of functioning of those capabilities to ensure inequity and social justice in the sphere of education through taking into account all the disadvantaged and marginalized groups. How in Pakistan English language fluency translates into power dynamics and has a hegemonic status which further extends to not only academics but in social mobility as well (Tamim, 2014) it is deemed as a language of power

used in bureaucracy and judiciary since it is the official language of Pakistan and it predates back to the British colonial times when only elite had the access to it and this legacy continues even after independence (Rahman, 1997 & 2006). Furthermore, the imbalance of educational opportunities and quality of education available across different streams of education systems have culminated into a 'language and educational apartheid' with the underlying basis of class divisions (Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, 2018). To lessen the prevailing inequity levels, the themes of current national policy 2017-2025 are touched upon above, the Single National Curriculum (SNC) aspect has sparked a lot of debate when it comes to resolving the issue of inequitable distribution of educational opportunities. On one hand, it is been deemed as a floor that would be more inclusive when it comes to madrassas and the introduction of religious education for the five minority communities: Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Bahais, and Kalasha faiths (Raja, 2021) but on the other hand it has been massively criticized and regarded as a mere hologram which would not bring a substantial change in the education area as (Mahmood, 2020) has quoted Dr. Bari: "There's so relationship between the national curriculum and improving quality of education, it's just one small factor in a larger context to deliver quality education" Also, (Mahmood, 2020) mentioned in his article Ms. Naviwala's finding from her research 'Why Pakistanis can't read?' that children in poor school are not trained to take ownership of what is being learned, it's mere memorization and to mitigate this

class divide it is important to focus on the hidden curriculum such as how the lessons are being taught instead what is being taught? Furthermore, the issue of political transgression has also been raised in regards to uniformity of curriculum and the intrusive role of the Federal Ministry into the educational realm despite it being under a provincial domain. Also, criticism has been hurled that the SNC curriculum is based on the excessive incorporation of Islamic texts and the mainstreaming of madrassa and qari's could further in the educational landscape can be minimized.

burden children and also could potentially increase extremist ideologies. (Hoodbhoy *et al.*, 2020). Lastly, the goal of bridge the enormous number of out-of-school children is a mammoth challenge as well. Hence, to ensure Capabilities are enhanced and optimality functionalities of children's capabilities can be operationalized, SNC alone wouldn't be sufficient, a dire need to raise the quality of teachers along with examination evaluation reforms are pivotal in this regard as well to ensure that at least at the foundation level inequity

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