2012 International Conference on Education and Management Innovation
IPEDR vol.30 (2012) © (2012) IACSIT Press, Singapore

The role of schools in building a peaceful society in Pakistan

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Abstract: It is known to all that the relation between school and society is very close and integral. We cannot think of a school without a society and a society without school is unimaginable. One without the other does not carry any sense. These are two sides of a same coin. School are places which prepare the by-products of the society.

School directs the society, reforms the society and ensure the progress of the society by analyzing the principles and rules and selecting only those which have some good effects on society. If the school fails to do it, the society will fail to be a productive entity. Unfortunately over the last two decades the Pakistani society has seen a rise in extremism, militancy, terrorism, poverty, hopelessness and economic disparity among social classes and the main cause of all these evils is the lack of school system.

This paper looks at the society in some troubled parts of Pakistan and the relationship of the failed education systems in those societies and also looks at other parts of the society and their educational value systems that have helped transform the local communities. It recommends the positive cycle in which schools should be following value systems that produce creative youngsters who can be useful citizens and form a positive community and such empowered communities to ensure the running of a sound educational system.

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail ."- Ralph Waldo Emerson -

Keywords: school, peaceful, society, extremism, militancy, hopelessness, creation, local communities**.**

1. Introduction

"An educational system isn't worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn't teach them how to make a life.'

Society or culture is the social heredity of man (Itedjere, (1996) in Asuquo, et al 2010). The child, a biological being is born into a society with hereditary traits from his parents. These equips him with a level of mental superiority which enables him to get aquatinted with and gain acquisition of the language, technology, laws, beliefs, customs, arts, habits etc of his people. Itedjere (1996) in Asuquo et al (2010) thus concludes that .a child is born with both biological and social heredity. The child learns about its society in the process of growing up which involves a number of school years. "After birth he comes in contact with a variety of experiences within his environment-and consequently learns to cope and adjust accordingly through the process of socialization. Through this process the child becomes a member of a society. In this regard, he becomes conscious and aware of the values of the culture of his society and is able to react to stimuli in his environment."

Durkheim writes in Les règles de la méthode sociologique, that in order to determine the 'function' of education fulfilled by a social phenomenon, the first thing to be established is 'whether there is any correspondence between the fact considered and the general needs of the social organism and wherein this correspondence lies'

In an article written in 1911 entitled 'Education, its Nature and Role' published in Education et sociologie, Durkheim asserts, on the basis of 'historical observation', that 'everysociety, considered at a given moment in its development, has a system of education which is imposed on individuals'. Every society sets itself a certain 'human ideal', an ideal of what a person should be from the intellectual, physical and

moral points of view; this ideal is the crux of education. Society can subsist 'only if there is sufficient homogeneity among its members'. Education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by inculcating in the child's mind the fundamental relationships required by life in the community. Through education, the 'individual being' is turned into a 'social being'. This homogeneity is, however, only relative—in societies characterized by a division of labour, the greater the differentiation and solidarity between various types of occupation, the more a certain degree of heterogeneity is necessary.

We thus arrive at the following definition: education is the action exercised by the adult generations over those that are not yet ready for social life. Its purpose is to arouse and develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him both by the political society as a whole and by the specific environment for which he is particularly destined. (...) It emerges from the foregoing definition that education consists of a methodical socialization of the young generation (Education et sociologie)

It is a known fact that education for can help break the cycle of deprivation that is prevalent in too many of our poorest communities. Better education can help people move into sustainable employment, which in itself is a major contributor to social stability; better education also leads to higher aspirations and to higher levels of civic participation and community leadership. However the question arises what kind of education will enhance those qualities and what kind of schools can impart such values.

2. Salient Features

Education in Pakistan can be roughly divided as:

- Public Sector (Government Institutions)
- Private Sector (ranging from schools for the poor to the very rich)
- Madrassas (schools to impart religious education)

There are 256,088 educational institutions of all categories in Pakistan, with a total enrollment of 37,462,884 students.

Private Education institutions enroll 31% of the students who are in basic education. In urban centres private schools account for 51% students as compared to 49% in public schools. Press reports citing Pakistani government estimates, claim that about 10% of all Pakistani school children attend madrassas, that constitutes to 3.6m children.

2.1. Percentage Share of Public Sector and Private Sector

There are 182,477 (71%) education institutions in the public sector and 73,611(29%) in private sector. Enrolment wise, public sector has an enrollment of 25,213,894 (67%) in various categories of educational institutions whereas 12,248,990 (33%) enrolment is in the private sector. The total teaching staff is 1,363,501, out of which 0.756 million (56%) is in the public sector and 0.606 million (44%) in the private sector.

2.2. Gender-wise Enrollment and Teachers

The total male enrolment is 21.133 million (56%), whereas the total female enrolment is 16.329 million (44%). Out of the total 1,363 million teachers, 0.617 million (47%) are male and 0.695 million (53%) are female teachers.

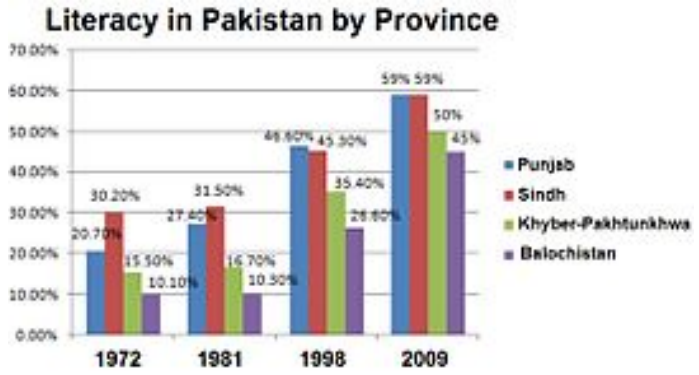
2.3. Deeni Madaris:

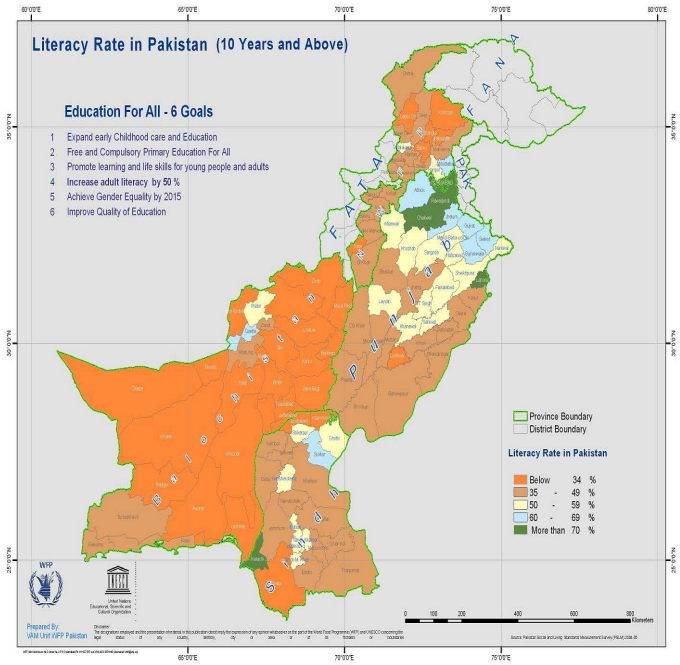
There are total 12,448 Deeni Madaris of which 363 (3%) are in public sector, whereas 12,085 (97%) are in private sector. The total enrolment in the Deeni Madaris is 1.603 million of which 0.454 million (3%) is in public sector, whereas, 1.558 million (97%) is in private sector.

Pakistan is currently embroiled in the War on Terror on its home front and faces increasing unrest in many key regions of the country where militancy has slowly started to take root. While militia outfits were previously limited to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the western Balochistan regions, lately they also started to spread their influence to other parts of the country as well, namely southern Punjab, interior Sindh, central Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and parts of Gilgit-Baltisitan. The common denominator that all these disparate regions share is that, collectively, they are some of Pakistan's most under developed

areas, lacking even the most basic infrastructure facilities – including basic health care and effective primary education. As of December 26th, 2010 alone saw 53 suicide bombings; while most of these can be traced back to one of these regions, 37 of these attacks took place in the highly volatile Pashtun belt of FATA and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa – originating, again, from the under developed FATA region. The most alarming fact, at this point, is that not only is this number comparable to that of Iraq and Afghanistan, the effective strike rate and magnitude of these bombings are also similar to those of these war torn countries.

The following map and chart clearly reflect that Punjab province which has the highest number of schools has a high literacy rate leading to a better and a more peaceful society, whereas the least peaceful places are those which have fewer number of schools like the tribal areas and Balochistan.





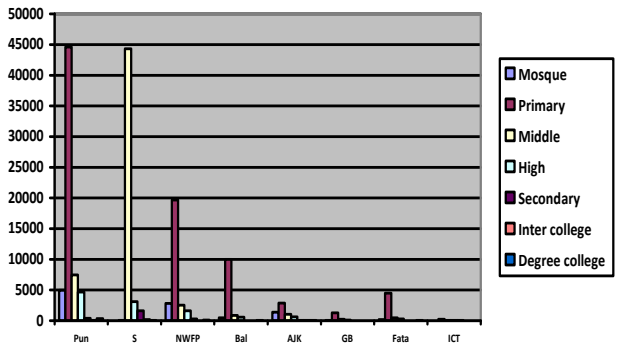


Chart showing the no of schools per province.

While our country has been marred by terrorism, violence, economic problems, and political dissidence, it's really wonderful to read stories about Pakistanis that highlight the positives in the country. Ibrahim Shahid, a student of a private School System, Boys Branch, set a new world record by scoring 23 As in Cambridge O level exams.

Earlier, Ali Moeen Nawazish, also a Pakistani student, had set a world record by securing 23 As in A level Cambridge exams.Ali Nawaz-ish from Rawalpindi broke a world record when he passed **23** A-levels in subjects including pure mathematics, travel and tourism, and sociology. The 18 year old received 21 A grades and a B and a C, and will be a part of the Guinness Book of World Records for his achievement. Now studying Computer Science at Cambridge University, Ali sat all the exams within 12 months at Rawalpindi's Roots College International.

Arfa Karim's story is inspirational to a whole lot of people in Pakistan and around the world. At just 10 years old, Arfa Karim Randhawa, of Faisalabad, is one of the youngest Microsoft Certified Professionals (MCPs) in the world. Babar Iqbal a 12 year old now and started programming at the age of 5. He is the youngest XNA Game Developer, Microsoft Surface Developer, Youngest Certified Internet Web Professional (CIWA) and youngest Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) at age of 9, Youngest Certified Wireless Network Administrator (CWNA), Microsoft Students Partner (MSP) at 11 and Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist (MCTS) at 12. In 2009 he was awarded by the President of Pakistan, Interior Minister and National Assembly. All these high achievers come from areas where there is high literacy rate and a number of good schools where as all the terrorist activities are found to take origin from the areas which lack schools.

3. Recommendations

- Education should be recognized as a priority, political interference in running the education department should be banned and head teachers should be more empowered to run their schools effectively.
- Budget allocation for education especially must get more funds, government to be pressurized. Raising public expenditure on education at least 4% of GDP, as recommended by UNESCO with particular emphasis on improving the quality of Education.
- All schools-private schools, public schools, madrassas should all be made to follow the same curriculum. The curriculum to equip all students with knowledge, skills and competencies to help them grow into useful members of the society.
- An appropriate regulatory environment for the provision of education in private, public schools and madrassahs to be established. Both the private education sector and the State have a responsibility to work together to ensure that education establishments are meeting State standards, and this within a child rights framework. Civil society groups, NGO coalitions and the State should work together in creating an appropriate regulatory environment for the provision of education services
- The energy of our youth should be channelized positively. They must under-stand that this World is one, we *have* to work together. They have to be taught to be more tolerant. Thus, revolution is required in the thinking pattern of our leaders especially religious leaders to change the existing notion of power.
- Tomorrow is best handled by literate and confident people, that is only possible when everyone is educated and supported by the government as equal beings to benefit from the latest technology and contribute efficiently to the country's uplift.
- Media (TV, Radio Newspapers and Films) that has the power to mould public opinion needs to play a positive role in the development and education of the people in all areas and the government's support has to be unconditional. A TV/radio channel for basic education is the need of the time.

I'm sure that if we all start to take responsibility we can help to create a virtuous circle which would help everybody.

4. Conclusion

This article has focused on illuminating the relationship between schools and society and militant madrassahs and terrorism.

All the above mentioned world record holders had one thing in common they all mentioned that their schools promoted student centred attitudes with core values, believed in their abilities and provided timely mentoring to achieve the best.

Most of the children who were involved in terrorist activities mentioned the absence of schools and attending particular madrassahs where they were taught to fight in the name of religion.

School directs the society, reforms the society and ensure the progress of the society by analyzing the principles and rules and selecting only those which have some good effects on society. If the school fails to do it, the society will become a stagnant organization.

"(Community cohesion) is about acting out the values articulated in the school's mission statement in ways that serve and strengthen our human relationships with our neighbours."

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