The Educational System of Pakistan and National Integration:

Critical Analysis

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Abstract	Keywords
Pakistan has multi-aspect diversity. It is politically, religiously, ethnically, culturally and geographically a very diverse country. However, it is still based on one political entity. But with passage of time, different movements of provincialism, ethnic identity and regionalism have always emerged in the country. In this regard, national integration is indispensable for a country having multiple ethnicity and cultural diversity. Education is the most appropriate source and mechanism for the unification of a diverse nation. However, Pakistan educational system has many flaws to get national unification. The purpose of this research paper is to critically evaluate whether the educational system of Pakistan is an instrument of national integration or a scheme of socio-economic cum ideological stratification and national disintegration.	

Introduction

Pakistan is multi-ethnic and multi-culture state which has been running through federal parliamentary constitution. One part of the country got separated from the rest of the country owing to multiple socio-economic-cum-political problems. National integration/nation-building and disintegration are a very interesting phenomenon in Africa and Asia. The integrative crisis that has occurred in multi-ethnic countries should be viewed from historical perspective and political development. The phenomenon of integration and disintegration is present in old as well as new states (Nazrul Islam. M, 1990, 14). Pakistan has been facing multifarious problems to integrate the diverse units and ethnic groups.

This research paper is comprised on three parts; part is on the educational system of Pakistan in the light of education's concepts and its fundamental purposes defined by various

educationists and scholars. The educational system has been thoroughly evaluated. The second part is contained on national integration in modern nation states era. National integration in a complex society like Pakistan has been facing severe constraints and it has been explained that what types of minds and citizens have been producing by our educational system. The third part is based on critical analysis of educational system and its role in the national integration of Pakistan. Secondary data has been consulted and descriptive-cum-interpretive method has been adopted to get research objectives.

Both the terminologies i.e. education and national integration are explained following.

What is Education?

According to Oxford Dictionary education is "a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills". There are various definitions of education, the most comprehensive is; the word education has been derived from Latin word '*educare*" *educattum* or *educere*" which mean to train, to lead or to nourish.

Education is the development of self-confidence and self-consciousness of inner self of human while some scholars have explained that the fundamental purpose of education is to differentiate between the right and wrong, between virtue and sin. Aristotle had defined education as 'education is a process to create a sound mind in a sound body". Mawdudi has said that 'education means to reveal the potential good of human being. In this context education is a process to polish and motivate the inner-self of human and to energize the potentiality of human to bring all human abilities for the goodwill of humanity.(www.barkeby.com/37/1//html, visited 8/08/2019).

The most concise and comprehensive definition has been posed by Dewey; "education is a socially facilitated process of culture transmission."(Jackson, Philip W. 2012, 09). One of the basic tasks of education is focusing and channeling thought's movement to put it on right track. Education is also defined in sociological perspective that it is designed according to the nature, needs and requirements of a society. According to sociology, education is to enable individuals to live and understand their society. A dictum is said that an educated man is constructive at thinking and positive in character. This means that education is to provide civilized, cultured and well behaved citizens to society. Education in every society is to transfer the culture of a society to the young generation. In doing this great function; the teachers, the parents and other members of the society perform their primary role. It is the responsibility of the state to transmit knowledge for the survival of society. In this regard, the home impart informal education, the school provide formal education and open society articulate non-formal education. (www.nou.edu.ng, visited on 10/11/2020).

The Educational System of Pakistan

The contemporary educational system of Pakistan has been inherited from the pre-independence British India. An assessment of the educational system suggests that little changes have been inserted in the system. (Amir, Shamailia, 2020, 02).

Pakistan's education sector has three parallel and mostly disconnected systems, has been working simultaneously. These categories are:
  (i)   Non-elite private and public schools
  (ii) The elite private schools
  (iii) The religious seminaries i.e. *madrasahs*. (Lodhi, Maleeha. 2011, 257)

A scholar has divided the education system in four categories i.e. (i) government schools (Urdu Medium), (ii) private non-elite (English Medium) Schools, (iii) high standard expensive regular English Medium School, and (iv) religious institutions (*Dini Madaris*). (Islam, Amjad. 2012, 13)

Almost 67% school going children are enrolled in public schools; approximately 29% are in private schools---mostly in non-elite private sector and 4% students go to religious seminaries. The three different schools systems do follow their own curricula, syllabus, teaching methods and examination procedure and process. There have been three parallel education systems in Pakistan, stratified in three dimensions: ideological, qualitative and socio-economic. Children from the destitute segment of society are largely enrolled in *madrasahs*. Majority students from lower-middle to middle socio-economic classes belong to non-elite private schools and public schools. Elite private schools are mostly occupied by rich section or upper middle class. The latter represented by those schools system who prepare students for London University or Cambridge 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations. These three systems are so isolated from each other that students go through their academic life without exchange of views and no intellectual discussion take place across the system . (Lodhi, Maleeha. 2011, 257-58).

Ideological and Socio-economic Stratification through Education System

Polarization of education has stratified the society ideologically, politically and socio-economically. The *madrasahs* system is the most publicized system where students from the poorest segment of society get religious education. Ideologically, a small number of students get radicalized; mostly the ratio of radicalization has always been exaggerated. These seminaries do focus merely on religious education and producing conservative and narrow-minded graduates throughout in the country. (http://www.usip.org/events/2006/trip_report.pdf, visited, 20/09/2020). The Urdu-medium government education system provides to 60% (almost 90% of children population) of school-going children of the country. Majority of the students from socio-economically middle/lower middle class go to public sector schools. (Yusuf, Moeed. 2008, 03). The textbooks were re-designed during General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation process and religious contents were incorporated to a great extent which does reflect Pakistan a state besieged one side by India and anti-Islam West on the other side. Such textbooks contents created paranoid outlooks amongst the students which make the youth susceptible to radicalization and Islamist ideologies. (Nayyar, A.H. and Salim, Ahmed. 2004, 9-72). The elite class has abandoned the public sector schools and sends their children exclusively to Private English Speaking Schools which provide much better education than public sector schools run by the government. While these schools have been bounded to follow state's syllabi in courses such as Pakistan studies, which has been altered according to their designed teaching mechanism, and is being taught by such methodology which promoting objectivity and critical thinking among students. Unfortunately, the private sector has designed such socio-economic screening framework which can be accessed only by the elite class. (Yusuf, Moeed. 2008,13).

Ideological Stratification

The socio-economic stratification through tri-partite educational system has resulted into three ideological different camps in the society and at state level. The students of religious seminaries seem to be pro-*jihad* and believing on the establishment of an Islamic state, an outlook which is reflected in their religious literature and interpretation of Islam and is taught in their *madrasahs*. Students of government Urdu-medium schools are comparatively more tolerant and less accustoms to the concept of *Jihad*, but still has greater influence of religious narrative than private schools students of elite class. There is no social rapprochement amongst the students of the country. Students of the elite class, nonetheless, are intolerant and having disdainful attitude towards their counterparts of state-run schools, particularly from socio-economically lower stratum of the society and *madrasahs* background. Majority students from the elite class adopt western culture and way of life; they consider themselves

liberal, modern and more superior than the rest of the students of the public sector schools and religious seminaries. This segment of elite class has gradually secluded itself from the majority young population of Pakistani society. (http://www.tariqrahman.net/language/Pluralism%20and%20Intolerance%20i n%20Pakistani%20Society. visited, 15/10/2020).

National Integration

The concept of national integration is defined by various scholars. The term national integration is compound of two words "nation" and "integration" which needs further explanation. **Nation** is a stable community of a specific territory, historically evolved, having common psychological make-up and economic life and same goals either independent or struggling to get independence from external occupation. (Khan, Ziauddin. 1983,02). People live in a specific land for long period having same economic objectives and combined values become successful to develop strong feelings of oneness and unanimity. They start common struggle for getting their common goals. Cultural peculiarities and psyche of individuals are very much essential for creating sense of oneness. It is indispensible to understand the psyche of individual for the sense of oneness, because it is related to emotions and emotions can be positive if the desires of individuals are fulfilled and in case of denegation of their objectives, aggression of the attitude will disrupt the stability of the society and system. Nation is a terminology which refers to a political entity that has cultural and social, rather than legalistic connotation. (Majeed, Gulshan. 2014, 67-79).

A nation is a group of people that wants self-government through an autonomous state. (Neil, Patrick O. 2007, 47). If a group is marginalized despite being in majority, then the feelings of oneness emerge under the feelings of nationalism to get its specific identity and achieve their goal of an independent state. Members of a nation believe that they belong to same entity on basis of shared values, culture, identity and history. (J.Sodaro, Michael, 2001, 145).

The second term "**integration**" is explained by Dictionary of Political Thought as, diverse group within a territorial jurisdiction having the same civil and political rights in constitutional law that notwithstanding exercise unjust privileges, despondent educational, recreational and social institutions. Integration is political process, where all such socio-political institutions are provided to all residents of the state irrespective of religion, creed, ethnicity, origin and race with the objective of establishing a united civil society within the boundary of a unified state. (Scruton, Roger. 1982, 227). Integration is socio-political process by which multiple and different races, ethnicity and group of a society enjoy equal opportunities and creature comforts without any type of cultural discrimination. They have equal opportunities to develop their specific cultural identity and national character. (www.theoxyert.com.pk. Visited 10/12/2020).

For consolidating the process of national integration, it is indispensable to design a system at national, which has the capacity to provide a sense of complacency to all sub-systems at regional and national level. All the communities should be the part of national political system to get involved in political education and policies making, to feel that their reservations are addressed in the system. Integration means the unification of different ideological, cultural and social group interests into a single compound community, representing a national discourse and perspective. A consensus on myths, norms, values and goals among representing groups is essential for the establishment of national community. (Rai,Hameed A.K, Malick, Saeed Osman. 1989, 339).

A strong national community can only be formed when different races, ethnic groups and all the segments of a society become the active part of policy-making process and rule out petty quibbles and small differences for playing an essential role at national level.

Integration is a cohesive system, adjustment to structure and coexistence-ism, the establishment of common principles, bridging the gap between the elite and mass and resolution to composition of political behavior. A cohesive and organized system has capability to diminish discrepancies among different segments of society. (Lindberg, Leon N, Hayward, Fred M, 1970, 316).

National integration can be judged through people's identification with national unity and to what extent citizens of a country show their submission with state commandments. Individuals with combine goals can start a common policy to get these goals and ends. The combine goals will increase the process of national integration. Simply, integration is a process through which socially and culturally different groups are brought under one umbrella in a specific land to grow a sense of oneness among diverse groups through bringing them into mainstream. Multiple groups and ethnicities are given opportunities to decide their fortune themselves. (Majeed, Gulshan, 2014, 67-79).

Education an Instrument of National Integration or Scheme of Disintegration: Critical Analysis

Pakistan has three parallel educational systems, the elite class get educate their children in 'O' and 'A' Level examinations system, well versed in English Language. The mentioned class does perform well in CSS (Central Superior Services); an examination conducting for recruiting central bureaucracy. Mostly, the top echelons of civil services have been occupied by the elite class owing to well planned and managed education system based on English medium as compare to public sector schools. (Kazmi. M.R. 2009, 278). The students of government run schools can't be prepared well in flawed system to compete the graduates of 'English Medium Schools' in these competitive exams at large level. The word 'superior' in 'CSS' itself signifies that bureaucracy appointing through the said examination is a 'special class' having been colored in western education and culture which is considered 'superior' than the rest of society. So, the framework made for appointing top level bureaucrats through CSS has created a huge 'gap' between government's officials (bureaucracy) and masses. Those youth who miss out or not fit to compete in this process, they tend to feel gloomed, disaffected, aggrieved and may become isolated and marginalized from their society. Particular portion of societal hierarchy may be at loss even if the upper class/elite class of the state at the way of progression. Sense of deprivation and marginalization leads the youth to radicalization and dissension. (Lodhi, Maleeha. 2011, 253).

The radicalized and marginalized youth are induced very easily by the insurgents and irredentists to use them in anti-state anarchic activities and terrorism which is led to the disintegration of state and society. Assessing the case of Sierra Leone, Paul Richards has argued that youth violence has been the consequences of state negligence and alienation of a specific group or individuals. The 'deprivation', 'marginalization' and 'grievance' literature has argued that groups or individuals that feel suppressed, discriminated and secluded from mainstream society have greater chances of joining terrorists groups and armed insurrections. (Richards, Paul.1996, 132) The aggrieved youth in Balochistan and former FATA have been seduced by the non-state actors, while religiously radicalized youth in seminaries have been a soft target of terrorist groups in Pakistan. It has been observed by the foreign intelligentsia that Pakistan's education system particularly '*madaris*' (religious schools') provoked militancy in the country and region. (Talbot, Ian. 2013. 03).

Christine Fair has acknowledged that some famous *madaris* have *Jihadist* links. She has ascertained that militant attitudes are also perpetrated by state-run schools as well as religious seminaries' students. She has also argued that militant outfits with regional and

local operational potentiality, such as *Jama'at-ud'dawa* are likely to employ well-educated people from the society. (Fair, Christine. 2007, 107-34).

So, the third parallel religious education system (*madaris*) of Pakistan has been encouraging militancy, extremism at ideological level and disintegration and chaos at operational level. Pakistan has the lowest primary enrollment in the region, and global studies have linked low educational attainment and conflict outbreak. Countries having the lowest primary school enrolment ratio have faced greater violence and conflict. Secondary school education has also been linked to low enrolment ratio and inversely high level of internal conflict. (Dixon, Jeffrey. 2009, 707-35).

Curriculum contents have also been used deliberately to follow agenda-driven course contents and to create a particular mindset through fabricated version of history or a perspective that may create discriminatory and exclusionary approach. Learning materials, curricula, syllabus and teaching method that promote parochial attitude, narrow minded views and intolerant behavior are not suited to peaceful accommodation and national integration. Here, despondency caused by agenda-driven curriculum, unskilled education with less economic opportunities and low educational ratio have provided great opportunity for insurgents to recruit frustrated youth from destitute society. (Lodhi, Maleeha. 2011, 253). According to Pakistan Economic Survey, the literacy rate is 60% in 2018-19, which is the lowest in South Asian Countries.(https://www.thenews.com.pk , visited on 07/01/2021)

The low enrollment number at primary level, ideological stratification and socio-economic division through educational system of Pakistan cannot be considered the nation-builder department and scheme of national consolidation.

Conclusion

Analyzing the educational system of Pakistan and its role in the national integration of Pakistan has shown a gloomy picture of the proposed phenomenon. National integration which is defined in this paper cannot be achieved through the stratified educational system of Pakistan. The educational system of Pakistan has comprised on three parallel system which does produce three different sections of people who are poles apart in three dimensions which can never been reconciled. The three different systems have disintegrated the society in three different lines. Ideologically, the society has been stratified into extremist, conservative and liberal lines. There is no point of rapprochement between them. While economically, the society has been divided into three strata; the elite class or upper class, the middle class and lower section of society. These sections of the society are linked to these three different educational systems. The same system has also divided the society on basis of social status. The elites are mostly engaged in business and occupied high bureaucratic echelons, the middle class have been in professional lines while the religious segment has been an unskilled and lumpen proletariat part of the society. So, the educational system of Pakistan is not an instrument of national integration rather it is supported the scheme of disintegration of nation and society.

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