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Children and Sustainable Development

Ecological Education in
a Globalized World



 Springer

Chapter 29

Ethics and Education in Pakistan: Principles, Policies and Practice

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Abstract Ethics is a code of conduct, that an individual, group or society holds as definitive, in differentiating right and wrong. Pakistan as per its constitution, follows the Islamic principles as guiding path. In Islam, the concept of *taqwa* means the moral ground that underlies human actions and signifies the ethical sense which makes human beings aware of their responsibility to God and the society. The concept of social life of the Prophet of Islam—Muhammad (Peace be upon Him—PBUH); to whom, God in Quran called *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen* (Blessing for the World), is very much positive and constructive. According to him, the loftiest service is the service to humanity. To serve humanity in an appropriate manner, the better way is to guide him; or in a broader term, educate him. The Quran's first revealed verse began with the word "*Iqra'a*" meaning—"read". It is thus surprising that some people in the name of Islam, destroy centers of learning, schools and mosques, and also shoot at girls who go to school. The reason may not be simple but the lack of education and perhaps vested interests, feeling threatened from the "educated" people, who try to find the truth, may be some of the major reasons.

According to a 2014 report, there were 52.91 million school age (5–16 years) children in Pakistan. Among them, only 27.89 million children attend an education institution; whereas, 25.02 million remain out of school. Some of them may be attending Madrasah, offering mainly religious education along with boarding and lodging. It is a considered opinion that substandard or no education, disparities in wealth distribution and injustices in the society, are some of the root causes of unethical social behavior of young people and their mentors. The content of curriculum being taught in Madrasah is perhaps not guiding the tender and immature minds towards positive thinking; instead, highlights the disparities in the society.

There is need for making some fundamental reforms in Madrasah system. Therefore, the role of schools and universities in Pakistan becomes crucial towards

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contributing to the promotion of tolerance among the national environment of the country. Lately, the efforts have been made by the Government, whereby, standardization of curricula and training of teachers, is being given more importance. More recently, Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan announced "Hand-Holding of Schools". Under this Programme the university faculty and students will provide volunteer tutorship to local school students by organizing lectures on specialized topics as well as allow access of students to their laboratories for experimentations.

29.1 Ethics and Education in Pakistan: Principles

Ethics is a code of conduct, that an individual, group or society holds as definitive stand in differentiating right and wrong (Saulat 2014); while, education is considered central to the moral fulfillment of individuals and the well-being of the society in which they live (OECD 2013). Education is vital to the development of a country. It raises human skill levels that are essential for leading the economy to a sustainable future (Rajper 2015).

The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan states in its preamble:

Whereas sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to Almighty Allah alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of Pakistan within the limits prescribed by Him is Sacred trust. (Uzmi and Nakhoda 2015)

Pakistan as per its constitution follows the Islamic principles as guiding path; wherein, the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah (Uzmi and Nakhoda 2015).

Islam as a comprehensive way of life, encompasses a complete moral system that is an important aspect of its world-view. We live in an age where good and evil are often looked at as relative concepts. Islam's moral system is striking in that, it not only defines morality, but also guides the human race in how to achieve it; at both, an individual as well as a collective level (Saulat 2014). God says in Qur'an

Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of God is the most pious. (Al-Qur'an, Verse 49:13)

The Islamic moral system stems from its primary creed of belief in One God as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, defines universal fundamental rights and standards for humanity by which actions may be deemed moral or immoral. In Islam, the concept of *taqwa* means the moral ground that underlies human actions and signifies the ethical sense which makes human beings aware of their responsibility to God and the society. From an Islamic perspective, the purpose of human life is to worship God, by leading this worldly life in harmony with the Divine Will, and thereby achieve peace in this world, and everlasting success in the life of the

hereafter. Muslims look to the Glorious Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet as their moral guides (Khalidy 2008).

The Glorious Qur'an says:

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing. (Al-Qur'an, Verse 2:177).

The concept of social life of the Prophet of Islam—Muhammad (Peace be upon Him—PBUH); to whom, God in Quran called, *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen*—Blessing/Mercy to the Worlds (Al-Qur'an, Verse 21:107), is very much positive and constructive. According to Him, the loftiest service is the service to humanity. He (PBUH) reminded people that high ethics was one of the ways of making belief perfect by saying,

The most perfect believer in terms of belief is the one who has the highest ethics and who treats his family in the nicest way (Saulat 2014).

Thus the better way to serve humanity in an appropriate manner, is to guide him or in broader term, *educate* him. The Quran's first revealed verse began with the word "*Iqra'a*" meaning—"read"! (Al-Qur'an, Verse 96:1).

Quran reveals:

Are those who know, equal to those who do not know? (Al-Qur'an, Verse 39:9).

There is another verse in Quran asking the Prophet (PBUH) to pray;

Lord! increase my knowledge (Al-Qur'an, Verse 20:114).

We find many sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on this subject, he said; "Acquiring knowledge (education) is obligatory to every Muslim male and female"; "Seek knowledge, from cradle till grave"; "Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China" (Questions on Islam 2009). China was perhaps considered a far away from the Muslim base of the time and a difficult journey! Allah Almighty makes the path to paradise easier for him who walks on it for getting knowledge (Shaukat 2012).

Islam inherently and irrefutably gives women, the rights and respect as equal before God and also in this world (Shaukat 2012). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always demonstrated a great respect for women and held his wives and daughter in great esteem and his attitude towards women is characterized by politeness, equality, love and respect (Khan 2015).

29.2 Ethics and Education in Pakistan: Policies

29.2.1 *State Obligation to Education*

Right to Education in Pakistan was not as precisely spelled out as it is now, nor was it binding. Earlier, Article 37 B of the constitution stated:

The state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimal possible time (MET and SHE 2014).

Clearly, the above article (37B) was not sufficient for initiating campaigns or filing petitions for instigating enforcement of Right to Education (MET and SHE 2014).

However, the introduction of Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment in 2010, has brought a number of significant changes in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 and the inclusion of Article 25-A in the Chapter of Fundamental Rights, changes the circumstances and responsibilities of the State (I-SAPS 2012) making it a justiciable right, thus obligating the state for right to education- *The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5–16 years in such a manner as may be determined by law* (MET and SHE 2014). Thus after enactment of 18th Amendment, education is now a provincial subject. All legislative and executive powers related to key subject areas of education like policy making, curriculum, planning and standards are the responsibility of provinces (I-SAPS 2012). Nevertheless, realizing the importance of national harmony, particularly in the wake of growing extremism, the Government of Pakistan in 2015, began a process of curricula reforms at federal level (MET and SHE 2014).

The provinces of Punjab, Sindh and ICT (Islamabad Capital Territory), have all passed bills regarding free and compulsory education; while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces are in process of formulating legislation. However, the Rules of Business have yet to be drafted to ensure implementation of the bills passed. Moreover, the provincial governments must set the stepping stone, upon which, future governments would build to ensure that Pakistan reaches the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); or at least comes close to its required targets (MET and SHE 2014). A major shift was seen in the budget of 2014–2015, wherein, all provinces doubled the amount of funds given to their respective education departments; focusing more on infrastructural development, enrolment and retention of students. Yet more needs to be done! (Riazul Haq 2014).

29.3 Education System in Pakistan

The formal education system in Pakistan can be divided into five levels (HEC 2015):

29.3.1 Primary

The standard national system of education is mainly inspired from the British System. Pre-School education is designed for 3–5 years old and usually consists of three stages (Play Group, Nursery and Kindergarten (KG)). After pre-school education, students go through junior school from grade 1 to 5.

29.3.2 Secondary

Middle school follows with grades 6–8. Single-sex education is still preferred in rural areas. Subjects include Urdu, English, Arts, Islamic Studies, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Computer Science where equipment is available.

29.3.3 Higher Secondary/Intermediate/College

Senior school covers grades 9–12 with annual examinations. On completion of grade 10, pupils may qualify for a secondary school certificate. If they wish to, they may proceed further to grade 12, following which they sit a final examination for their higher secondary school certificate. During this time, they opt for one of several streams that include pre-medical, pre-engineering, humanities/social sciences and commerce.

29.3.4 Tertiary Education/University

Entry is via a higher secondary school certificate that provides access to bachelor degrees in various disciplines. A pass requires just 2 years of study, and an honors degree takes 4 years. For the initial period, the curriculum is a mixture of compulsory subjects and specializations. After that, students specialize completely. Thereafter, they may continue with more advanced study i.e., Ph.D.

29.3.5 Vocational Education

Vocational education is controlled by the National Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA). This body strives to re-engineer the process in line with national priorities, while raising tutoring and examination standards too. There are provincial TEVTA institutions as well.

29.4 Parallel Systems of Education in Pakistan

There are three parallel systems of education in Pakistan; public schools, private schools and madrasahs.

According to official estimates there are almost 180,577 public schools, more than 74,693 schools in the private sector, and approximately 12,599 madrasahs. Other studies, such as a 2011 report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on public education and madrasahs, puts madrasah numbers closer to 20,000. According to 2014 reports the public sector accounts for 70 % of enrolment while private sector has 30 % of enrolment. In 2013 it was 74 % and 26 % respectively, and the shift continues (SAFED 2015).

29.4.1 Public Sector Schools

The Public Sector schools are fully funded by either the Federal Government or the Provincial Governments. Lack of resources particularly plague the government run schools, responsible for providing education to the vast majority of Pakistan's school-going children. Some of these schools lack not just school supplies but also basic facilities such as clean drinking water, toilets, boundary walls and electricity. The main language of instruction in public schools is Urdu (the national language) or other local provincial languages (such as Sindhi) (SAFED 2015). Pakistan also has an extensive network of Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) institutions with an estimated enrolment of at least 2.5 million students. Establishment of Non-formal Basic Education Schools for out-of-school children was an innovative initiative taken by Pakistan. Presently, more than 13,000 Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) are functioning throughout Pakistan, having a total enrolment of around 0.6 million (MET and SHE 2014).

29.4.2 Private Sector Schools

Private Sector has 30 % of enrolment. Private Sector is playing an important role in imparting education in Pakistan. Private sector enrolment is increasing because of its overall "better quality" of education as compared to public sector (SAFED 2015).

Within Private Schools, there are two categories: The costly private schools with far superior quality of education, mainly in urban areas. They use English as the language of instruction. Given the high fees associated with private education, these schools have traditionally been the main choices for the elite and wealthy sections of the society. While the low cost private schools catering to lower middle class families, have also sprung up and their numbers and enrolment have been growing rapidly, particularly in rural areas due to fast deteriorating quality of education in Government schools (Andrabi et al. 2008).

Pakistan has a number of schools designated as Public-Private Partnership (PPP) schools. These are often categorized as private schools in that their control and management does not lie with government but rather with educational entrepreneurs, NGOs or philanthropists interested in improving the quality of education. Where these PPP schools differ from other private schools, is that their students do not pay fees directly. Instead, the students are provided with vouchers or the fees are paid directly to the schools on behalf of the students, most commonly by an educational foundation provided with recurrent funding through government (Khattak 2015).

29.4.3 *Madrasahs*

Madrasah is an Arabic word and means any type of educational institution. It has been a source of all types of knowledge for Muslims where education, even in the science subjects, was provided. With the passage of time, the role of the traditional madrasahs has been restricted just to impart religious education (PILDAT 2015). Thus they have become just the seminaries (training schools for clergy). Traditionally, they refer to religious institutions, that may include an equivalent to school, college or university, operated mainly for the purposes of imparting religious education. Madrasahs are the most accessible source of education for many children, especially from poor families in rural areas. Madrasahs offer free education, food and lodging, thus enhancing their appeal to families who otherwise cannot afford to provide any kind of education to their children (Kamal 2014). According to the Societies Registration Act, madrasah refers to a religious institution that may include a Jamia, Dar-ul-Uloom, school, college or university, operated mainly for the purposes of imparting religious education and may even provide boarding and lodging facilities. The following schools of thought exist (PILDAT 2015):

1. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Arabia (Deobandi)
2. Tanzeem ul Madaaris (Barelvi)
3. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Salafia (Ahl-e-Hadith)
4. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Shia (Shia)
5. Rabita ul Madaaris al Islamia (Jamaat-e-Islami).

29.5 Ethics and Education in Pakistan: Practices (Facts)

In Pakistan, the last official Census was conducted in 1998. Afterwards only population projections have been made for various purposes. Latest study shows that in Pakistan there are 52.91 million children of school age (5–16 years) in population of around 200 million (over 25 %). Among them, only 27.89 million

children attend an education institution (public or private); whereas, 25.02 million children remain out of school (OOSC) (Alif Ailaan 2014). Pakistan has the third highest number of out-of-school female students in the world; i.e., 55 % OOSC in Pakistan are girls. While the current female net enrolment rate at primary level is 64 % compared with 72 % for male counterparts. There is vast regional disparity in providing girls with equal opportunities for education. Nationally, 15.9 million boys, between ages of 5–16, are enrolled, compared to just 11.9 million girls. As a result, 13.7 million girls and 11.4 million boys are out of school (Riazul Haq 2014).

According to the report published in Spatial Knowledge and Information Management (SKIM), March 2015, among children of primary-school-going age, almost one in every five is not in school and this proportion increases at higher levels of education. By region, the province of Balochistan is home to the highest proportion of OOSC, followed by the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In terms of overall distribution, meanwhile, more than half of the total number of OOSC are in Punjab. The data also reveal vast regional disparities in providing equal opportunities for schooling to girls, with the greatest disparity in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). For both girls and boys, access to schooling is more difficult in rural areas and the gap widens at higher levels of education. Similarly, children from the poorest families are more likely to be out of school compared to their counterparts belonging to richer families (Rajper 2015).

During the past two decades, there were two major education policy interventions; the National Education Policy of 1998–2010 and the National Education Policy 2009. Although National Education Policy of (NEP) 2009 addressed all important issues of education and envisaged strategic actions and clear targets; yet no mechanism could be instituted to follow up its implementation. As the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 2010 devolved school education to the provinces, statutory platform for coordination arrangement at institutional level among the provinces for primary and secondary education disappeared, or was weakened. Nonetheless, this important policy document—NEP 2009, still serves as a reference and a source of guidance for planners and education managers at various levels in the country (Bhatti et al. 2011).

However in September 2013, the Government of Pakistan formulated a National Plan of Action—NPA 2013–2016, to accelerate progress towards education related goals and targets identified by MDG/EFA for 2015/2016. The key objective of NPA was to accelerate the progress towards achieving education-related MDGs in the next 3 years. Specifically, the Plan aimed at: enhancing enrolment of out-of-school children in primary education; Increasing retention at primary level and completion of primary education by all enrolled children; Improving quality of primary education (Alam 2014). However the plan could not succeed due to various constraints and Government priorities.

In Pakistan, the weak governance in education sector, is a major constraint. District and provincial education planners and managers lack the required expertise and to some extent commitment and motivation and they need good quality training

to effectively implement education policies and plans in their respective regions. Shortage of school supervisory teams, partly due to financial constraints and partly due to recruitment policies, has resulted in irregular and low quality delivery of service by teachers and support staff across schools. Community participation in school matters is also not effective, thus failing in monitoring educational quality. Likewise, over the past decade, Pakistan has suffered rising insurgency and violent militancy, especially in its northern regions. Educational institutions, especially girls' schools in rural under developed areas have been regularly targeted and destroyed. Also, more recently, crime against young girls has been on the rise. As a result, security concerns have discouraged parents to send their children, particularly girls to school (MET and SHE 2014). Lately, terrorists have attacked mixed schools and even the universities and the incidents have amplified the security concerns.

The curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping the minds of the pupils and helps them reach their true potential. It forms the basic ideologies and the knowledge base of the masses. Unfortunately, what is actually taught in Pakistani schools is not up to the standards maintained by the developed countries. It still focuses on old styles and methods no longer used by the world. The books need to communicate effectively to cover all the objectives and simultaneously arrange the content in a logical, coherent and stimulating manner. Additionally, in most textbooks there are no self-test problems and activity pages (Rajper 2015). In Pakistan, there is dire need for execution of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education through Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) at primary and secondary levels.

Madrasahs of Pakistan are facing international scrutiny after the event of 9/11 in 2001 in the United States. Since then that event as well as all events of terrorism have been attributed to Islamic militancy around globe. The scholars have developed a dual opinion about Madrasahs. One group understood madrasahs "as jihad factories having less to do with education and more to do with political indoctrination; incubators of Muslim terrorists; origins of conservative violent ideologies, and thus, a security threat to the modern world". The other group of scholars presents madrasah playing peaceful roles in society; like, increasing literacy rate, spreading religious morality and human values, giving space to marginalized class of society, discouraging criminality, and thus, maintaining a social order (Butt 2012).

On the other hand instead of studying math, science and English, students spend large part of their days memorizing religious materials, without understanding (Ahmed 2015). The content of curriculum being taught in madrasahs is not guiding the tender and immature minds towards positive thinking. Inappropriate education and society's condemnation of madrasahs, perhaps encourages the youth towards militancy. Examination of madrasah curriculum incontrovertibly reveals intolerance and speaks volumes about the direction that Pakistan is headed. Students spend large portions of their days memorizing religious materials, chanting war songs, and venerating the state (Kamal 2014).

29.6 Conclusion

Islam promotes knowledge and education but some people in the name of Islam destroy centers of learning and institutions including the establishments of the armed forces, schools and mosques and also shoot at the girls who go to school. The story of Malala Yousafzai and her colleagues and more recently the assassination of Punjab Home Minister Mr. (Late) Shuja Khanzada in Attock in Pakistan and some other incidents in neighbouring Afghanistan involve young people in the terrorist activities; which despite a lot of efforts and expenditures by the Government, is not ending. The reason may not be just one but the lack of education and perhaps vested interests feeling threatened from the “educated” or knowledgeable people who try to find the truth, are major factors. The standard and quality of education in Pakistan is the major issue and many cases of fake certificates and degrees have been appearing in press during the last few years. There are numerous reports indicating low quality of education, absentee teachers and ghost schools. It is a considered opinion that substandard or no education, disparities in wealth distribution and injustices in the society are some of the root causes of unethical social behavior of young people and their mentors. Commenting on the issue, Stern 2004 claimed in a report that global Islamic militancy grows in Pakistani madrasahs, which are functioning without the government supervision; and thus, have become training camps of terrorists (Butt 2012). Since the content of curriculum being taught in madrasahs, is perhaps not guiding the tender and immature minds towards positive thinking; instead, the preaching at madrasahs mainly highlights the disparities in the society, especially against the religious and poor people, thereby instigating them to take revenge (Kamal 2014).

Thus there is dire need for making some fundamental reforms in madrasah system i.e., Madrasahs should not operate without registration and that the misleading Madrasahs should be banned, curriculum revision has to be properly carried out, and a universal curriculum including pure and social sciences should also be established, which would be acceptable to all the sects in the country (Kamal 2014) and execution of Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) at primary and secondary level be ensured to understand the truth of nature. Additionally, ‘Peace and tolerance’ should be taught as a separate subject just to mould the minds of young children along the lines of acceptability and tolerance, making them aware of the true picture of Islam. Chapters on peace should be related or taught in line with Islamic principals so the masses can accept such a change. More emphasis should be laid on the topics of ethics, tolerance, education and the true meaning of jihad and ‘jihad bin nafs’ (jihad within oneself) should be strengthened (Malik and Hussain 2015).

Therefore, the role of schools and universities in Pakistan becomes crucial towards contributing to the promotion of tolerance among students, staff, faculty, different ethnic groups, sects, civil society and the national environment of the country (Malik and Hussain 2015). Lately the efforts have been made by the Government since 2015, whereby standardization of curricula and training of teachers is being given more importance. More recently (2016), Higher Education

Commission (HEC) of Pakistan announced “Hand-Holding of Schools” under its Social Integration Programme for Universities. Under this Programme the university faculty and students will provide volunteer tutorship to local school students by organizing lectures and interaction on specialized topics as well as allow access of students to their laboratories for experimentations and also to organize open days for the students (HEC 2016).

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