

Education in Pakistan: Developmental Milestones

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The tradition of writing books on academic topics is not very strong in Pakistan. Particularly, there is a lot of quench for indigenous, authentic and research based books on Education in Pakistan. *Education in Pakistan: Developmental Milestones* is a very welcome addition to existing published literature on the subject. This book presents one of the rare research based critical chronological account of the development of Education in Pakistan since independence. In addition, the book also builds on the old historical roots of education in subcontinent and reflects on the implications for the post-independence education system.

The book comprises of nine chapters following the chronology of developmental milestones of education in Pakistan. It starts with contribution of Aryans in the development of culture and tradition in the region and moves to the influence of Muslim education with establishment of Sultanate of Delhi. The same tradition continued in the Mughal era and discrimination nurtured in Hindu and Sikh era was abolished by Mughals to make education free, unrestricted and uncontrolled by state. Another important aspects addressed in the chapter relates to changes introduced under the British colonial rule. The author successfully highlighted the fact that even in post independence era our education system was a continuation of British policies which was a direct contradiction to the purpose of making an independent state. The second chapter of the book (in search of direction) very logically highlights the confusion/debate predominant in early years of independence to adhere to Islamic system of education or shift to western system. It is highlighted that deliberation of National Educational Conference in 1947 played pivotal role in attempt to provide direction of education in Pakistan but later policies showed we are still in search of direction and failed to built upon partial consensus developed in the conference. The chapter also focuses on policies and direction of education

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under various military and civil governments and points out variation in various educational policies over this period.

There is a strong view that educational infrastructure in Pakistan has not developed as desired since independence but the author very rightly makes it evident in chapter 3 that number of schools and related facilities have considerably grown during first two decades of independence. The data provided in this chapter thoroughly supports this argument and shows systematic growth in primary, secondary, higher and technical education. The process was hampered by disintegration of Pakistan in 1971 and the government was forced to set new targets. The author's idea to discuss the development of first two decades and post 1971 developments desperately is unique and very helpful in understanding the hard realities of slower pace of development of education in Pakistan. A very comprehensive account of education policy 1972, the education policy 1979 and their respective five year plans.

After giving a comprehensive analysis of current situation of education developments author moves to measures needed for entering into new millennium (chapter 5). The future direction of education was drawn from the trends visible in international community, commitments of government of Pakistan as member of international community through various forums/treaties of education and political and social ground realities of education in the country. The argument is based on the commitments made by the government of Pakistan in the past, successes and failures in implementation of these commitments and political will as evident from actions of successive government.

Owing to the importance of science education a separate chapter has been devoted. The chapters discusses efforts for improvements in science education, place of science education in various education policies, establishment of different institutions for promotion of science education and science teacher education. The book concludes with enlisting challenges and issues facing our education at present and in future. The author has focused in quality of education, curriculum, examination system and language as the key challenges faced by nation for further progress. The emphasis has been laid on having uniform education system, controlling dropout, rethinking pedagogies used in schools, revamping teacher education, purposeful changes in curriculum as central to enable us meet the challenges of coming time.

It can be concluded that the book provides an impartial analysis of the developments in education with a reasonably balanced criticism based on empirical evidence from various government and non-governmental sources of data.